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Gratitude, Grace, and the Word in "King Lear"

Mintz, Marilyn L., Ph.D.

City University of New York, 1990

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GRATITUDE, GRACE, AND THE WORD IN KING LEAR

by

MARILYN L. MINTZ

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty
in Theatre in partial fulfillment of the require-
ments for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy,
The City University of New York.

1990

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MARILYN L. MINTZ

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Theatre in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Abstract

GRATITUDE, GRACE, AND THE WORD IN KING LEAR

by

Marilyn L. Mintz

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Most gothically majestic of Shakespeare's plays, King Lear is also his most ambiguous and mysterious tragedy. It is proposed that the key to the play's ambiguity lies in the interaction of two theological principles: gratitude and Grace. The play's multidimensional structure creates an ambiguous tension between these principles, each operating from a different plane simultaneously. A realistic framework projecting the concept of gratitude is juxtaposed with an analogical reality by which the opposing principle, Grace, enfolds in Lear.

In theory, gratitude was regarded as an aspect of the Doctrine of Grace. But in practice, it obverted mercy, advocating a harsh retributive code. A widely held belief purported that ingratitude was a heinous sin; and furthermore, that the consequences of this sin had a progressively debasing effect on the ingrate who eventually degenerated lower than the beast. Contemporary theologians and ethicists justified damnation for ingratitude on the grounds that it was irredeemable. In line with this belief, Goneril's and Regan's regression is examined as prototypical of this degenerative process.

On the other end of the spectrum, Lear, Gloucester, and Edmund, to a lesser degree, defy this belief by changing for the better despite

their ingratitude. The disparities between the development and destinies of the three men imply a double meaning. On a realistic level, these characters suffer the punishment for their ingratitude through the consequences of their ingratitude. But on an analogical plane, they serve as archetypes of a higher justice, demonstrating the transformative and redemptive effects of Grace.

While the opposition of conflicting principles explains the play's ambiguity, it does not elucidate its mystery. More than doctrinal comparison, King Lear is an alchemical process, its mystery, a ritual enactment whereby Lear is transformed by the Word. It is proposed that the Word is the play's central metaphor, and its initiator, Cordelia, the Word Made Flesh. Within this alchemical framework, Lear is explored as the disciple, his progress traced as a series of infusions leading to transcendence.

DEDICATION

To Bertram L. Joseph
 who ignited the spark,
And to my Cordelia
 who made it flame.

But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.

Luke 6:35

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INTRODUCTION

King Lear is Shakespeare's most ambiguous play. A gothic frieze depicting the enigmatic destinies of Lear, Cordelia, Gloucester, and Edmund is chiseled out of the play's monolithic structure. Down through the centuries, audience reaction to Lear's tragic destiny attests to the elusiveness of the play's meaning. Doubtless, many spectators viewing a performance of King Lear for the first time would be apt to agree with the aged king's assertion that he is "a man / More sinn'd against than sinning" (3.2.59-60). And they are not alone in this belief; a long line of actors and critics, particularly those of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, would concur. Samuel Johnson believed that the pathos of the play's ending was unbearably tragic, a view shared by many in succeeding centuries.

In 1681, Nahum Tate's "notorious adaptation, which held the stage for a century and half,"¹ went so far as to alter the play's ending to a happily ever after formula in which Lear survives and Cordelia and Edgar wed. In the next century, David Garrick, although omitting "many of Tate's additions, retained the interpolated love-scene between Edgar and Cordelia, and also the happy ending."² Kean finally "restored the tragic ending in 1823,"³ but retained the love scenes, and still excluded the Fool.⁴ Although "Macready with some misgivings, reintroduced the Fool in 1838,"⁵ toward the end of the century, Bradley expressed ambivalence about the play's almost too tragic ending.

In this century, Robert Hunter points to Lear's proposal that he "expose" himself "to feel what wretches feel, / That thou mayst shake the superflux to them, / And show the Heavens more just" (3.4.34-36) as grim proof that Lear is "more just, presumably, than they [the gods] are."⁶ Hunter believes "any alert Christian can make theological sense of Lear," just as "he can make similar sense of Auschwitz and Buchenwald."⁷ Cosmic injustice suggests a single "final possibility" for this play, namely, that "there is no God."⁸

In contrast to Hunter, William Elton depicts King Lear not as a godless world, but rather manipulated by "a god of arbitrary and cruel injustice."⁹ "Disillusion of cosmic unrequital characterizes . . . Lear who for eighty years, had presumably, faithfully served and propitiated his gods."¹⁰ His "only reward is to be placed on 'the rack of this tough world' (V.iii.314) like Prometheus."¹¹ Furthermore, Lear is not the only victim of cosmic ingratitude. "The theme of divine betrayal and treachery" is "orchestrated . . . by betrayal on every level."¹² In any event, either of these views etches a bleak cosmic portraiture.

This study proposes that King Lear is less concerned with godlessness or cosmic ingratitude than with human ingratitude and God's way of dealing with it. How the God of King Lear deals with ingratitude is the key to the play's ambiguity. We have to know who this God is before we can understand his relationship to the play's ungrateful characters. The identity of this God eludes us because the play's structure and character development suggest two opposing concepts of Godhead. One punishes ingratitude with damnation, while the other transmutes

this sin through the power of love. One is the path of exoteric religion, the other an esoteric path of initiation and discipleship.

These two concepts of Godhead evade us if King Lear is interpreted literally as a realistic play. Regarded in this light, the God of King Lear is unforgiving and wrathful. Deeper investigation reveals an intricate fuguelike structure, mythic and allegorical in dimension, intimating transcendence through Grace.¹³ If seen in this way, the God of King Lear is forgiving and compassionate. Two concepts of Godhead embodied these two principles: a retributive deity for gratitude, and a merciful deity for Grace. In theory, the concept of gratitude advocated Grace, but in practice, its retributive code spurned the Savior God it self-righteously proclaimed.

Jacobean audiences would have recognized the presence of these two principles in King Lear. Despite the play's universality, its ambiguity perplexes modern audiences unaware of the tension between these two principles. Many are either inclined to regard the God of King Lear exclusively as a retributive deity, or project a twentieth century nihilism onto the play. Though the play's syncretism lends itself to a variety of interpretations, the modern spectator would judge the retributive nature of its deity more harshly than his Jacobean counterpart.

Further misinterpretation is likely to occur because it is no longer common knowledge that renaissance theologians, ethicists, and aristocrats condemned ingratitude as a heinous crime; and believed that the malefic effect of this sin initiated a degenerative process whereby the ingrate regressed to a level lower than the beast.

Compare this belief with that of H. L. Mencken who observed in 1920:

What is one to think of a man so asinine that he looks for gratitude in this world, or so puerilely egotistical that he enjoys it when found? The truth is that the sentiment itself is not human but doggish, and that the man who demands it in payment for his doings is precisely the sort of man who feels noble and distinguished when a dog licks his hand.¹⁴

He further berates those who would make a virtue of gratitude.

Nevertheless, the popular morality of the world, which is the creation, not of its superior men but of its botches and half-men--in brief, of its majorities--puts a high value on gratitude and denounces the withholding of it as an offense against the proprieties. To be noticeably ungrateful for benefits--that is, for the by-products of the egotism of others--is to be disliked. To tell a tale of ingratitude is to take on the aspect of a martyr to the defects of others, to get sympathy in an affliction. All of us are responsive to such ideas, however much we may resent them logically. One may no more live in the world without picking up the moral prejudices of the world than one will be able to go to hell without perspiring. . . .¹⁵

Mencken acknowledges that this view does not conform to the status quo. Yet by his time, even those who censured ingratitude were less vehement about it than renaissance detractors. At worst, ingratitude incurred dislike, but not regression and damnation. Nowadays, this more lenient view persists. Since our view of this virtue and its corresponding vice has changed drastically, we first must explore the meaning and implications of the renaissance theological concept of gratitude before trying to ascertain its relationship to the play.

Chapter I will define ingratitude, its corresponding virtue, and the malefic consequences of this sin individually and collectively. Gratitude will also be briefly compared to Grace, so as to enable us

to determine how and for what purpose the play uses the disparity between these two principles. The standard King James text is used for all biblical quotations. All play quotations are taken from The Arden Shakespeare, London and New York: Methuen, 1972, edited by Kenneth Muir. I have also consulted King Lear, edited by B. L. Joseph (London: The University of London Press, Ltd., 1966).

Chapters II and IV focus exclusively on the concept of gratitude. Chapter II paints a prototypical portraiture of Goneril's and Regan's ingratitude, while Chapter IV concentrates on Lear's ingratitude as a denial of Grace. Though Lear is portrayed more sympathetically than Goneril and Regan, he is still an ingrate. Judged in terms of the concept of gratitude, he would not be, as he claims, more sinned against than sinning.

Alan Hobson points out that:

The chaos he [Lear] has invoked enters into him. His curses fall upon himself. Indeed they always were upon himself; for it was he who rejected obedience and the bond of rule; it was he who was a thankless father and a biased partial one; it was he who was the faithless and ungrateful master. But, although he regrets what he has done, he does not yet know himself. Realization at first comes slowly. First comes regret, but not acceptance of his own guilt. . . .¹⁶

Honor Matthews censures Lear's ingratitude in even stronger terms.

Cordelia is bound to resist Lear's demand because it is essentially an impious one. He has sought for himself the absolute devotion which is due only to God. The seeds of the later madness are already in him, for his demand is that of a megalomaniac.¹⁷

Lear is not alone in his ingratitude; many ingrates inhabit the world of the play. In addition to the old king and his two daughters,

Edmund, Gloucester, Cornwall and Oswald are all ingrates, each damned when judged by retributive standards. In this world, Lear and Gloucester are punished as severely as the malefic Goneril and Regan although they are depicted more sympathetically. The rigidity of retributive law denotes a black and white morality in which there is no room for different degrees and kinds of ingratitude. A harsh morality of this kind results in uniform punishment for ingratitude.

As will become evident, Shakespeare's characters represent varying shades of ingratitude. These variations undermine uniform punishment for ingratitude. Although the degenerative process which eventually reduced the ingrate to a state lower than the beast was deemed irreversible, King Lear defies this belief; at the same time Goneril and Regan are degenerating into beasts, Lear, Gloucester, and to a much lesser extent Edmund, change for the better. By the end of the play, Lear has learned patience, humility, compassion, charity, tolerance and egalitarianism. These are qualities of a saint, not of a beast. Since retributive law deemed the degenerative process irreversible, the evolution of some of the play's ungrateful characters implies their development is molded by another principle. That principle is Grace. Chapters III and V will investigate the transformative effect of Grace upon ingratitude.

The extent of change varies with the ingrate. Edmund and Lear represent two ends of the spectrum, with Gloucester between, but closer to Lear. The illegitimate Edmund remains wicked until the final minutes of his life; his change of heart is abrupt and undeveloped, while Lear's

agonizing transformation is gradually and painstakingly developed. Chapter III will examine Edmund's ingratitude in relation to his illegitimacy, while the thrust of Chapter V will explore Lear's transformation as a graduated series of infusions and initiations culminating in transcendence.

The play's enigmatic ending neither negates Lear's transcendence, nor the implied censure of a double standard for illegitimacy. I intend to show that this ambiguous ending undercuts the arrogance of those who adhere to a retributive code prohibiting God from saving those whom he wishes to redeem. God certainly seems to want to redeem Lear. It is not God or "cosmic ingratitude" that is the problem in King Lear, but rather man's penchant for creating God in his own image. Angelo exhibits this kind of effrontery in Measure for Measure. Adhering to a harsh code of justice, Angelo's sin is to eventually rebound back onto him when he condemns Claudio to death. Angelo epitomizes the self-righteous hypocrisy of those who become the thing they condemn.

It is probably no coincidence that Measure for Measure was written the year before King Lear. It appears as if this dark comedy serves as a prelude to the later tragedy. Knowing when to be just and when to be merciful is the major theme of Measure for Measure. Angelo's way of rigid justice is roundly condemned, yet the immorality remaining at the end of the play implies that mercy alone does not suffice for many of its wayward and still unrepentant characters. One also wonders whether mercy alone will suffice for the seemingly repentant Angelo whose last minute conversion is far from credible.

The abruptness of Angelo's recantation might be ascribed to the darkly comic form of the genre since contrived conversions are characteristic of this mode. This contrived conversion could suggest what Shakespeare would have liked to believe about man in contrast to what he rationally knew to be true about him. Whether Angelo's unconvincing conversion can be attributed to the play's genre, or whether this genre is purposely used because Shakespeare could not resolve the question of the relative application of either standard, remains moot.

King Lear begins where Measure for Measure ends, the relative application of retributive law and Grace again a predominant theme, its tragic mode and complex structure building upon and heightening the ambiguous ambience of its tragicomic predecessor. Yet explaining King Lear in terms of ambiguity alone is insufficient; if ambiguity is the play's matrix, mystery is its nucleus.

As our exploration unfolds, we shall discover that while the dichotomous interplay between gratitude and Grace unmask the play's ambiguity, its mystery remains veiled. The play's ambiguity and mystery belong to two different dimensions. Ambiguity, with its juxtaposition of opposing principles, implies a dualistic flesh and blood world of form and substance. To plumb the wellspring of the play's mystery and imbibe its elixir, we must move beyond the world of duality to the ineffable realm of the Spirit. This realm is not ingested through the logic of comparative theology, but through the infused Word. Chapters IV and V will explore the Word as the play's central metaphor. For it is this Word which penetrates the depths of the play's mystery, illuminating the secret of Lear's destiny.

CHAPTER I

THE THEOLOGICAL CONCEPT OF GRATITUDE

Introduction

This chapter will explore renaissance concepts of gratitude and ingratitude in order to determine the influence of this virtue and its respective vice on contemporary theology. In subsequent chapters, these concepts will be applied to King Lear in three ways: to gauge the relative magnitude of the play's ungrateful characters, to demonstrate the malefic effects of this sin individually and collectively, and finally, to elucidate the interplay of gratitude and Grace as the cause of the play's ambiguity.

Gratitude and Dependency

According to Christian doctrine, man owes everything to God.

Dependence on God is a predominant feature of theological gratitude.

Indeed, man's feeling of dependence has often been represented . . . as the supreme source of theistic belief. And certainly, feeling of dependence has to do with it, whether in an eminent degree or not. Yet feeling of dependence is only the other side of gratitude--the Creator giving himself freely to the creature, and the creature responding to the significance₁ of this by dedicating himself unreservedly to the Creator.

Gratitude corresponds to the degree of an individual's dependence on his benefactor. Renaissance theology maintained that man's dependence on Divine Providence was absolute since God created him and everything he receives.

Roland Frye observes that in Milton's Paradise Lost, man's state prior to the Fall was "caught up in dependency on a larger order of existence."² Conversely, man's disavowal of this dependency caused the Fall.

So long as he exists in terms of this dependent sovereignty, all will be well, but his fall from integrity comes precisely at the point where he presumes to assign a name--it is his own name--deity, and to₃ assume for himself the prerogatives of independent godhead.

Secular gratitude differs from its theological counterpart in that dependence is usually based on mutual need. In theological gratitude, dependence is one-sided, God having no need of man. Conforming to this belief, Milton's sonnet, "When I Consider," negates mutual dependence.

God doth not need
 Either man's work or his own gifts, who best
 Bear his milde yoke, they serve him best, his State
 Is Kingly. Thousands at his bidding speed
 And post o're Land and Ocean without rest;
 They also serve who only stand and waite.⁴

The word "waite" means "to attend."⁵ The implication that man demonstrates his gratitude by merely standing and waiting or attending upon God underscores his dependence on a deity who has no need of any other gifts (including man's attendance on him).

In Paradise Lost, Milton associates Satan's evil with autonomy. Frye points out that Satan and the fallen angels act as if "they owe their existence only to themselves 'self-begot, self-raised.'"⁶ By perpetuating this illusion of seeming independence, Satan and the fallen angels are guilty of ingratitude. In abjuring their dependence, "the

very fact of creation is denied, for that fact is the basis for dependence, whereas autogeny is the basis for autonomy."⁷

Man's dependence on God was not the exclusive view of Milton or other Puritans. Elizabethans of the preceding generation, regardless of denomination, also shared this view. In "An Hymne to Heavenly Love," Elizabethan humanist poet, Edward Spenser, speaks of the angels "who about Him [God] wait, and on His will depend."⁸ Another influential Elizabethan humanist, Anglican theologian Richard Hooker, notes that the "adoration" of the angels for Divine Providence "is grounded upon the evidence of the greatness of God, on who they see all things depend."⁹

Ingratitude as Treason

Hooker also denigrates the overweening pride of the fallen angels. Pride caused them to apotheosize their "own sublimity and honor," forgetting "their subordination unto God" since "their dependency upon him was drowned in this conceit."¹⁰ The word "subordination" implies obedience as an aspect of dependence in that subordination to a higher ~~power~~ follows from obedience to its commands and wishes.

Thomas Becon, another theologian of the period, links ingratitude to disobedience and autogeny. According to Becon, the punishment that God visited upon the children of Israel for idolatry and persecution of their prophets was well deserved.

God therefore seeing how stiff-necked and hard-hearted they were, sent in their enemies on every side, which destroyed their cities, spoiled their goods, slew innumerable, and led the residue away captive for their disobedience and ingratitude.¹¹

Becon uses this example to warn his contemporaries against the dire consequences of ingratitude. God, he contends, would send "vengeance" as "in times past" by pouring "out his fierce plagues upon us"¹² if his "word . . . be not thankfully received, obeyed and followed."¹³

Condemned and sentenced for his disobedience, Milton's Adam:

So will fall
Hee and his faithless Progeny: whose fault?
Whose fault but his own? ingrate—he had of mee
All he could have;¹⁴

God's "sole Command"¹⁵ is simple: to refrain from eating the forbidden fruit; and it is within Adam's capacity to carry out this lenient decree, the "Sole pledge of his obedience."¹⁶ But Adam disobeys and is condemned when he "breaks his fealty, and sins."¹⁷ The only way in which Adam can "expiate his Treason"¹⁸ is "To pray, repent, and bring obedience due."¹⁹ Despite an atypical brand of theology, Milton follows traditional doctrine by integrating feudal concepts of gratitude into his own system. Milton's God is a benevolent Suzerain, and man the erring vassal punished for his ingratitude.

The feudal code equated gratitude with loyalty, liberally rewarding the vassal's fealty to his lord in the form of largesse. Conversely, ingratitude was linked with treason against the suzerain. Similarly, the divine Suzerain bestowed largesse upon man for his undying devotion, making him sovereign over all His other creatures. Adapted to theological ethics, disloyalty or ingratitude became treason against God.²⁰ The feudal equation of gratitude with loyalty was incorporated into Christian doctrine and used as a metaphor for man's Fall from Grace.

Ingratitude and Regression

Ingratitude as Unnatural and Irrational

The classical world also associated ingratitude with treason, deeming it an unnatural and irrational act.²¹ Christian cosmology adapted these two features into its rationally ordered schema known as the Great Chain of Being. Imaged as a ladder or scale, this Great Chain linked every species, sentient and insentient, in a hierarchical arrangement according to degree and kind. Any deviation from one's place within this fixed scheme was condemned because it defied order and degree. In relation to degree and kind, the principle of gratitude influenced two species: animals and humans. While gratitude was common to man and beast, the capacity for each species to show its thankfulness varied in proportion to its place on the Great Chain. Because it was lower on the scale than man, the beast expressed gratitude instinctually rather than rationally.

Although an animal's capacity for gratitude was supposedly more limited than that of man, many stories and parables of the Middle Ages and Renaissance glorified and anthropomorphized the beast's undying steadfastness and blind devotion.²² Adapted from classical sources, renaissance ethicists imbued these stories with a didactic message.

These legends served to crystallize in memorable form the concept of animal gratitude as a natural obligation. The animal instinct to show affection in return for food, protection, or any comfort extended by man becomes frequently the occasion for a kind of primitivistic sentimentalism and an indictment of mankind. One might almost say²³ that the "noble beast" becomes the subject of panegyric.

Exaltation of the faithful beast underscored the magnitude of man's sin. If a beast could show thankfulness for a simple favor rendered, what could be said for ungrateful man, endowed by Divine Providence with the preeminent gift of reason, empowering him with sovereignty over all of the creatures of the earth?

Reason also endued man with the greatest capacity for gratitude since he alone could comprehend and appreciate the glory of God's creation. Joseph Hall, another theologian of the period, advises:

Shortly then seeing the works of God are so excellent and well worth beholding; since our eyes were given us for this use; since God delights to have his works viewed; since there are so few that are capable of giving this glory to God; ²⁴
 . . . let us . . . come and behold the works of the Lord.

Man's sole purpose for living was to glorify God. The gift of reason was given to him for this purpose. His misuse of this superior faculty, a denial of this purpose, was deemed irrational.

In the medieval allegory Piers the Plowman, William Langland observes that "unkindness is against all reason: no one is ever so sick, sorrowful, or wretched that he cannot love others if he so chooses."²⁵ A synonym for ingratitude, unkindness meant not being true to one's kind, species, or natural function. Unkindness implied the ungrateful act and the unnatural circumstances which caused it.²⁶ Hardheartedness was an unnatural and irrational act in that God was love, and man was created in his image.

In A Discourse of Civill Live, an ethical treatise of the period, Lodowick Bryskett relates that a man who misuses "the gift of mine from God" enabling him "to discerne and chuse what is good"²⁷ is adjudged:

. . . not onely unthankfull, but foolishly thruste himselfe into the number of unreasonable creatures, while he will needs deprive himself of that he hath specially different from them.²⁸

This observation implies that man's rejection of reason resulted in the loss of his preeminent position on the Chain of Being. No longer a rational human being, the ingrate regresses to the level of a beast.

By and large, Bryskett's belief in regression as a consequence of ingratitude corresponds to traditional doctrine but is more lenient in the extent of degeneration. Bryskett suggests that the ingrate regresses to the same level as the beast; while according to Dunn, calling the ingrate "a beast . . . would be flattery, because the beasts of the earth obey the natural law of gratitude. A better designation for the ingrate would be that of a fiend or monster."²⁹ Though it lacked reason, the beast was able to "show affection in return for kindness"³⁰ relative to its capacity, whereas the ingrate's misuse of reason debased him lower than the beast.³¹ From there, it was reasoned that the ungrateful man was a monster and a plague who deserved to be eradicated from the face of the earth.³²

Associating the ingrate with a monster was another classical adaptation.³³ In Paradise Lost, the image of Satan as a monstrous beast is used as a literal and figurative metaphor. Frye observes that after his fall from the celestial realms, Satan further debases himself by embodying myriad forms of animal life appearing:

. . . in the even lower forms of vulture, cormorant, lion, tiger, toad and serpent. The highest pitch of self-pity comes when he concludes that he must enter the serpent to accomplish the betrayal of man, and so be constrained "into

a beast, and mixt with bestial slime. This essence to incarnate and imbrute."³⁴

But Satan need not change his form in order to disguise himself; no one would recognize him. The pervasiveness of Satan's inner deterioration overshadows his countenance so that the former angel of light is "unrecognizable by Ituriel and Zephron in the garden, even when he returns from the toad to his own likeness."³⁵

Similarly, the appearance of the fallen angels who emulate Satan has been so drastically altered that: "On the fiery lake of hell, Satan scarcely recognizes the once resplendent Beelzebub."³⁶ Frye suggests that Milton equates the demonic with the quality of being monstrous.

Here is perhaps the most striking irony of the life of Anti-Christ, one as it is with perverse opposites to the life of the Messiah: the demonic has its own form of incarnation--bestial, not humane, and with the object of securing man's subjection rather than his liberation, his death rather than his life. This preoccupation with domination and death is the essence of hell.³⁷

Because of its bestial character, the monstrous nature of ingratitude frequently was linked with the metaphor of devouring. In the medieval morality play Everyman, God censures "all creatures" for being "unkind,"³⁸ falling from Grace because they failed to remember the "shedding of" God's "blood red."³⁹ Mankind did "clean forget" "Charity,"⁴⁰ becoming "like traitors abject."⁴¹ If left unpunished, ungrateful mankind "will become much worse than beasts; / For now one would by envy another eat."⁴² To right this wrong, God sends Death as the instrument of retribution "to strike with" his "dart"⁴³ "Everyman . . . that liveth beastly."⁴⁴

Edmund Spenser's The Fairie Queen also uses the metaphor of devouring to depict the monstrous and bestial character of ingratitude. Red Cross, the undaunted Christian warrior, engages in a "dragon fight" with Error whose misshapen body takes on the monstrous form of a creature who is half woman and half serpent. She spawns offspring created in her image: "Deformed monsters, fowle, and blacke as inke."⁴⁵ After Red Cross slays this hideous aberration, he is "amazed, / To see th' unkindly Impes or heaven accurst, / Devoure their dam."⁴⁶

Ingratitude and Universal Discord

Disruption of Concordia

The malefic consequences of ingratitude also adversely affected the concord of civilized society. Adapted by renaissance ethicists and theologians from the Greeks and Romans, concordia was likened to a civil or public friendship based upon "an unbroken chain of benefits and gratitude."⁴⁷ This continuous interchange of good will, benefits, and gratitude served "as a bond of society and the main support of the state."⁴⁸ Ingratitude severed this bond of good will, creating the conditions leading to the disintegration of the social structure. Ciceronian ethics influenced Elizabethan and Jacobean beliefs about concordia. According to this code of ethics, ingratitude weakened "the liberal tendencies of the well disposed" and "thereby severed this bond"⁴⁹ of mutual good will and benefits. The victim of ingratitude was prone to suspicion and separatism, making him reticent to extend any further benefits.

Christian cosmology used the Chain of Being as a means of expanding upon the malefic effects of ingratitude. The belief that all species and realms were linked magnified the degenerative effect of this vice, empowering it to disrupt order and degree in the world of men and in the world of nature. The disruption of concordia reflected in macrocosm the ingrate's unnatural abuse of reason. B. L. Joseph relates that "man's transgression has left the universe capable of disintegrating into chaos; for he has rebelled once and is prone to rebellion again."⁵⁰ Joseph goes on to say, "every link in the chain is involved with every other, any break, however small in itself, can eventually lead to enormous repercussions."⁵¹ Ingratitude moves beyond the realm of civil strife to universal discord.

Furthermore, man's potential for ingratitude made him, after Satan, most capable of initiating this process of universal discord. For "man is far from being the least important of the links."⁵² "On the contrary, inferior only to God and the angels combining the spiritual and the material," man's "actions can affect everything inferior to him, the planets, the weather, imperilling or destroying the harmony maintained by Providence among sources of discord since the Fall."⁵³

The royal ingrate affected the commonwealth most adversely, for with the exception of God and His angelic legions, all were beneath him. Furthermore, the sovereign was regarded as Vicar of Christ, God's divine representative on earth. By analogy, an ungrateful ruler could be compared to Lucifer turned Satan, one preeminent among angels, the other among men. Satan influenced legions of angels to follow his

debased example; similarly, a degenerate monarch contaminates legions of loyal subjects.

In addition to the vertically interlinked aspects of the Chain of Being, Elizabethan cosmology was also structured as a horizontally arranged law of corresponding planes, each one replicating the other on a smaller or larger scale. The microcosm was a reflection of the macrocosm, and vice versa, the personal or microcosmic effects of ingratitude as a degenerative process spreading to the macrocosm which mirrored it on a larger scale as universal discord.

The Magnitude of Man's Debt to God

Salvation: The Greatest Gift

According to the doctrine of Original Sin succeeding generations of progeny inherited the legacy of Adam's ingratitude, remaining incarcerated in a bestial state until the coming of Christ. In "The Nativitie of Christ," Robert Southwell apotheosizes the birth of Jesus as the liberator, God's greatest gift to man.

Gift better then himselfe, God doth not know
 Gift better then his God no men can see:
 This gift doth here the geuer geven bestow:
 Gift to this gift let each receiver bee.
 God is my gift, himselfe he freely gave me:
 God's gift am I, and none but God shall have me.
 Man altered was by sinne from man to beast:
 Beasts food is haye, haye is all mortal flesh:
 Now God is flesh, and lies in Manger prest:
 As haye, the brutest sinner to refresh.
 O happie fielde wherein this fodder grew,
 Whose tast, doth us from beasts to men renew.⁵⁴

"None but God shall have" Southwell who surrenders his soul in recompense for freedom from debt and spiritual rebirth. By human

standards, this sacrificial gesture is the ultimate proof of man's gratitude. But this payment is inconsequential compared to God's greatest gift: his willing sacrifice to take on the cumulative sins of humanity. By this sacrificial act, Jesus balanced the scales of justice, obviating Original Sin.

Christ's willingness to bear the cumulative sins of mankind makes him, as William Alabaster's second sonnet suggests, the incarnation of kindness:

. . . o what a previledge of favoure tis to suffer for god's
cause, when Christ⁵⁵ give a grace of thanks: for haveinge
gotten this. . . .

Giving "a grace of thanks" to God the Father, Jesus, the perfected or grateful God-man, glorifies the Creator of the universe by his sacrificial death. For this honor, Christ sacrifices himself with humble gratitude considering it to be a "previledge" rather than a burden.

As the incarnation of gratitude, Jesus fulfilled the conditions of the old law, not only by the way he died, but also by the way he lived. Man's debt to God was paid according to the old law of justice because Christ embodied those virtues which man forfeited when he fell from Grace. Since gratitude was the primary virtue forfeited, it caused man's downfall. To make restitution, Jesus became the embodiment of this forfeited gratitude.

Joseph Hall represents a prevalent belief that Christ's kindness was a sacrifice made for man alone. God's willingness to sacrifice himself for man was a preordained gift given to man "by purchase . . .

in that he hath bought it for us, and us to it, by the price of his blood."⁵⁶ He further contends that "Since he . . . decreed it, . . . bestow[s] it, [Divine Providence] justly is . . . the God of our salvation."⁵⁷ God is not only a deity who bestows favors, but one who also gives completely of himself. Forgiveness is God's crowning glory; although ungrateful man affronted him, Divine Providence liberated him from bondage. The paradox of God's gift is that in fulfilling the old law, he expunged it. With justice satisfied, man is free. A new law of forgiveness and mercy supersedes the older order. This new law is God's greatest gift to man.

Catholics and Protestants agree that this last and greatest gift increased man's already infinite obligation so that he now owed Divine Providence a fourfold debt. In the medieval treatise On the Love of God, St. Bernard of Clairvaux delineates this fourfold debt. St. Bernard envisions God as "the most gratuitous Bestower of" man's "life" "in His providence" "most bountiful" the "devoted consoler" and "solicitous Ruler."⁵⁸ And with this final gift of himself, God now becomes "a most abundant Redeemer as well, an eternal Conserver, who enriches, One who gives glory."⁵⁹

Renaissance poet and clergyman William Alabaster believes the immeasurable magnitude of this last gift reverses the natural order of requiting:

and wheare for other guifts, wheareby wee when this bee had,
the rent, of thankes we render, for sufferings beforehand
wee must tender.⁶⁰

Although it is normal procedure to thank the giver after receiving, the magnitude of Christ's gift should be acknowledged beforehand. Alabaster's reversal underscores how inadequate and inconsequential man's recompense is when compared to the enormity of Jesus' kindness. In the official catechism used during the reign of Elizabeth, Alexander Nowell reiterates these same sentiments.

Therefore by Christ alone we have access to the grace of God. We, receiving this benefit of his free liberality and goodness, have nothing at all to offer or render again to him by way of reward or recompense.⁶¹

Gratitude and Justice

Man's debt to God would have been immeasurable even if he had never sinned. Measured by the law of justice, man's finite return falls far short of God's infinite love. The theme of "The Thanksgiving," a devotional poem by George Herbert, attempts to render a just requital. Herbert vows:

If thou dost give me wealth; I will restore,
 All back unto thee by the poore.
 If thou dost give me honour; men shall see,
 The honour doth belong to thee.
 I will not marry; or if she be mine,
 She and her children shall be thine.
 My bosome friend, if he blaspheme thy name,
 I will tear thence his love and fame.⁶²

His grand attempts to imitate the Lord are to no avail. Herbert may be able to: "Copie thy [God's] fair though bloudie hand"⁶³ but how, he asks, can he ever requite "thy [God's] passion," and adds, "I will do for that-- / Alas, my God, I know not what."⁶⁴ By this admission, Herbert acknowledges that human love can never equal the passion of divine caritas.

Secular ethics of the period considered "failure to pay what" was "due" a "violation of natural justice."⁶⁵ Theological doctrine was less exacting in its expectation of a just return. In line with this belief, St. Thomas Aquinas regards gratitude as an imperfect reflection of justice.⁶⁶ It was reasoned that since the benefactor is divine, gratitude can never be requited in just or full measure. However under the new dispensation, requiting according to the spirit of the law most closely approximates a just return for it demonstrates adherence to a higher principle in accord with the will of God. That principle is Grace, and its infused presence within the grateful recipient is expressed as the spirit of the law.

Gratitude and Love: The Spirit of the Law

Gratitude as Finite Grace

Exploring the nature of Grace provides a paradigm for recompense according to the spirit of the law. Because Grace is God's pure love, it redeems. In Agape and Eros, a study of the Christian idea and history of love, Anders Nygren defines this pure love or Agape as "spontaneous . . . unmotivated, uncalculating, unlimited and unconditional."⁶⁷ Since Agape is unconditional, it is freely given to all regardless of merit. Indifference to value makes Agape "a value creating principle."⁶⁸ As a result of this "creative love,"⁶⁹ the object of its attention now becomes worthy.

What is ultimately decisive for the meaning of Agape can only be seen when we observe that it is Divine love and therefore shares in the creativeness that is characteristic of all the life of God. Agape is creative love. God does not

love that which is already in itself worthy of love, but on the contrary, that which in itself has no worth acquires worth just by becoming the object of God's love.⁷⁰

It follows that justice would supersede mercy if God only loved the righteous since justice is conditional and calculated, while forgiveness is unconditional, spontaneous, and unmotivated. God's love is forgiveness or else it:

. . . would not in the last resort be spontaneous and unmotivated but would have an adequate motive in the infinite value of human nature. The forgiveness of sins would then imply merely the recognition of an already existing value.⁷¹

On the other hand:

. . . indifference to value does not mean indifference to response. Naturally, Agape seeks to be accepted by those to whom it is offered. Why else should it be offered?⁷²

Theological doctrine implies that gratitude should comply with the spirit of the law, expressing the ideal as unconditional, spontaneous, and unmotivated love. However, this similarity between divine and human love is relative rather than absolute since conditions and expectations sully human love to some extent, even at its most elevated level. Despite human limitations, the way in which Grace and gratitude are interchanged during mealtime prayers implies an interrelationship between these two terms. The two terms can be traced back to the same root word.

The nature of gratitude is not obscurely indicated in the fact that "grace" and "gratitude" are at root one and the same term, and the obverse side of the same fact--more clearly expressed, perhaps, in Greek, where one word, *xapis* [charis] is expressive of both.⁷³

The Greek word for "thanksgiving" or "eucharista"⁷⁴ became associated with the ritual consumption or acceptance of the bread and wine

as the body and blood or Grace of Christ. The Eucharist symbolizes the simultaneous interchange of divine and human love. Man receives and returns the same essence. The gratitude he requites can be compared to a finite form of Grace. Christian doctrine uses the similar derivation of these two terms to underscore the belief that man is saved ". . . not according to" his "works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given" him "in Christ Jesus before the world began" (2 Tim. 1:9). Although gratitude enables man to perform good works, Grace is the source of this finite love; without it, man can accomplish nothing.

St. Bernard relates that God desires man's gratitude because he is the embodiment of love, having "nothing better than Himself to give."⁷⁵ In loving God, man most pleases his maker because God is love.

The cause of loving God is God . . . for He is both the efficient and final Cause. It is He who gives the occasion, it is He⁷⁶ who creates the affection, He consummates the desire.

This passage suggests that since God is love, and gratitude its finite counterpart, by requiting God's love, man would be returning Divine Providence back to Himself.

Gratitude as a Model

The traditional belief that God's redemptive forgiveness was "the basis and model for human compassion and also the motive for thanksgiving,"⁷⁷ also linked Grace to gratitude. This belief played a predominant part in medieval and renaissance theology. The life of St. Francis of Assissi and Thomas A Kempis' Of the Imitation of Christ are two well-known examples of the Christed life as a perfected model.

It was believed man's gratitude should be patterned upon divine love which "consists not in getting, but in doing good."⁷⁸ Because this love is not based on value, it will neither be determined by the individual's personal relationship to the recipient, nor will he "love his enemies to the exclusion of his friends."⁷⁹ Apart from these considerations, "his loving" is unaffected "by the friendship or enmity shown to him by others."⁸⁰ This sense of detachment provides the impetus to live a Christlike life, enabling man to obediently follow "God's will."

On the other hand, for Edmund Spenser, there is a definite order of priority in regard to loving. In "An Hymne of Heavenly Love," he states that God's will directs man to love Him above all else, "Then next . . . love our brethren, that were made / Of that self mould, and that self Maker's hand"⁸¹ The next stanza explains that we should love our brethren:

. . . since that loving Lord
 Commanded us to love them for His sake,
 Even for His sake, and for His sacred word,
 Which in His last bequest He to us spake,
 We should them love, and with their needs partake;
 Knowing that, whatsoe'er to them we give,
 We give to Him by whom we all doe live.⁸²

We should love our brethren, Spenser continues, in order to "approve / How much Himselfe that loved us we love."⁸³ God by "His most righteous deede"⁸⁴ "Unto us taught"⁸⁵ "Such mercie."⁸⁶ Spenser believes God "Himself provides an answer to the question can we Thee requite for all this good?"⁸⁷ Emulating His mercy, "we should the like to the wretches shew."⁸⁸

Nowell, Bullinger, and other theologians of the period, frequently cite "The Lord's Prayer" as a paradigm for Christian life. Paraphrasing this prayer, Becon states "that, except we do forgive our debtors, our debts shall not be forgiven of God."⁸⁹ Similarly, Bullinger interprets the words "trespasses" and "those who trespass" in the lines "And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them who trespass against us,"⁹⁰ to mean "our debts" and "our debtors"⁹¹ respectively.

Gratitude and Humility

A self-righteous man cannot forgive others. The pride which rules him demands exact remuneration for favors owed. As a result of his self-imposed autogeny and separation from God, the proud man forgets he is an instrument of Divine Providence, attributing benefaction to himself alone. In contrast to the pride which engenders autogeny, gratitude relies on man's humble recognition of his dependence on God. Bullinger states that while God may use "the means and ministry of men and other creatures" gratitude goes not to them, but to "God only: for he is the only giver and author of all good things."⁹² Without humility, there can be no gratitude since it makes man aware that even love and virtue are not his own, but rather gifts from God.

Humility also moves man to acknowledge his sinfulness. A Kempis maintains:

Give unto God that which is God's and ascribe unto thyself that which is thine own; that is, give thanks to God for His grace; and acknowledge that to thyself alone be attributed sin, and the punishment due to sin.⁹³

This recognition magnifies man's sense of unworthiness and subsequent need for humility all the more.

Humility only reflected man's gratitude to God if it was freely rendered. Although Original Sin and the Fall sullied man's will and deprived him of freedom, after the reception of Grace, he regained the right to choose whether he would evolve or revert back to his former state. From this point on, the correct use of freedom governs the relationship of humility to gratitude. Hall relates that:

The gracious disposition . . . is humility, expressed here in the subject, the humble in spirit. Not he that is forcibly humbled by others, whether God or man:—so a wicked Ahab may walk softly and droop for the time, and be never the better: what thank [sic] is it if we bow when God sets his foot⁹⁴ upon us?—but he that is voluntarily humble in spirit.

Ingratitude and Damnation

The Malice of Ingratitude

Renaissance theologians and ethicists regarded ingratitude as the most heinous of crimes. In support of this belief, they looked to "the Persian view of ingratitude as the source of all evil."⁹⁵ Dunn recounts:

This concept of ingratitude was that of a fundamental and basic malice which disposed a man to evil of any kind however great. The malicious disposition of the ungrateful person was designated as "impudencie" or "shamelessness," the soil in which, so to speak, the seed of any great crime could easily take root.⁹⁶

The malicious nature of the ingrate rather than the act of ingratitude was regarded as the source of evil.

The ingratitude itself was not the evil which seems to have hated and feared but it was rather the wicked nature implied by act of unthankfulness. The benefit spurned might be a trivial thing, but it was the sign of moral decay already far advanced.⁹⁷

It was reasoned that although the initial benefit spurned might have been trivial, the malicious nature of the ingrate made him prone to and capable of any and every crime.

Since ingratitude was regarded as the potential source of impiety to the gods, neglect of parents, treason against the state and disregard of friends, it is not difficult to understand the severity of punishment prescribed for it. We are told in the Politeuphuia that the death penalty was assigned to it in Persia, Macedonia and Athens.⁹⁸

Aware of this harsh prescription, ethicist William Vaughan uses it, as Dunn points out, to remind his readers of "the penalty they would have received for ingratitude had they lived in Persia."⁹⁹

The Christian penalty for ingratitude was, in its own way, as severe as the Persian prescription, with one difference; retribution was not exacted in this world, but executed as damnation in the next. The Persian view of ingratitude as a sin of malice and the source of evil corresponded with Christian theology, and was integrated into its ethical code. In it, the Christian found support for the belief in damnation as an inevitable consequence of ingratitude.

Theological ingratitude was adjudged a threefold sin.

The obligation to render thanksgiving to God was regarded as a precept both of the natural law, and of Revelation as contained in Holy Scripture. The gravity of neglecting this precept can be comprehended by viewing the sin as an unnatural affront to God; as a rejection of the love which He has manifested in the Creation, in His Providence, and in the Redemption; and finally as a destroyer of grace in the human soul.¹⁰⁰

What the ancient called malicious and shameless, the Christian designated as graceless and hardhearted. A case in point is St. Bernard's belief that ingratitude is "a deadly evil which destroys the life of grace in the soul." It is "for him," Dunn maintains, "an internal enemy because it consumes the soul's graces from within, and demolishes the very core of spiritual life."¹⁰¹

Anglican and Catholic theology maintained that after the first infusion of Grace, self-effort was requisite to future infusions. Self-effort expressed man's gratitude for this gift, his choice as to whether he would continue to evolve in Grace, or deny it by reverting back in a pattern of regression. In support of this view, Thomas Cooper asks:

. . . what triall is this of my bounty to doe that which is due? Nay what will be exacted of mee whether I will or no? Ought I not therefore to doe good otherwise, where it is my choyce?¹⁰²

St. Bernard believed, as Dunn observes, in severe consequences for the wrong choice: "God withdraws further graces from those who have proved ungrateful for previous ones, taking care that He should not waste more of the supernatural aids which the ingrate has already shown a disposition to neglect."¹⁰³

Pointing out that St. Bernard addresses this sermon to the clergy as a "warning . . . that the monastic life in itself is not a guarantee to salvation,"¹⁰⁴ Dunn concludes that he made no distinction between monastic and secular ingrates. Langland also makes no such distinction. Comparing the Holy Ghost to the palm of God, he cautions "whoever sins against the Holy Ghost injures God in the place where he grips, and

deliberately murders His grace."¹⁰⁵ Furthermore, "the Holy Ghost" becomes "a God without mercy, and a Grace without life, to all those so depraved as to wish to quench true love, or destroy the very life which our Lord created."¹⁰⁶

Abnegation of Grace was condemned as murder since it was the Primal Life Force, the Source of all existence, and First Cause of all good. This belief implied that the ingrate could never evolve out of his graceless state. His will remained depraved, bound to an irreversible regressive process, culminating in damnation.

Conglomeration and the Deadly Sins

Building upon classical concepts of ingratitude, renaissance ethics compounded this sin, changing its nature and intensifying its heinous effects. In a study comparing ancient and renaissance concepts of ingratitude, Joseph Hewitt observes that:

From Sir Thomas Elyot, through Shakespeare to our own time, we find a deep, indeed an extreme, horror of ingratitude. I do not find anything like it in Greek literature, nor much in Latin until Seneca, who certainly gives the ingrate a very low place in the moral scale, ranking him below the homicide, the tyrant, the thief, the adulterer, and the traitor. Xenophon and Aristotle insist on the necessity of gratitude, but they do not put ingratitude in the same ill light in which Shakespeare views it. To him it is the worst of vices, cancelling all counter-obligations, even those of patriotism, and punishable by the severest penalties heaven or hell can send.¹⁰⁷

Differentiating between these two systems, Hewitt denotes:

. . . the modern broadens the scope of ingratitude and makes it include a multitude of sins, which to the ancient appear equally or more enormous, such as unfilial conduct, perjury, treachery, inhospitality. Ingratitude proves upon analysis to be a highly composite and complex vice.¹⁰⁸

By contrast, he continues:

The ancient sees and emphasizes the elements which go to compose it; the modern sees rather the monstrous product of those elements. The ancient will accuse an ingrate of forgetfulness or of injustice. Instead of ungrateful he will call him base, or shameless, (lacking in aiōs) or covetous, or suspicious, or peevish.¹⁰⁹

The difference between the ancient and renaissance concepts of ingratitude was not only one of degree but also of kind. For the ancient, ingratitude was one of many vices, but for the renaissance man, this sin had no separate and individual character of its own because it potentially encompassed and incorporated every vice. What Hewitt calls "the modern handling of ingratitude" (the term modern is relative only to the ancient world since it in no way corresponds to contemporary attitudes) is based on the following psychology:

You pick out the worst crime you can imagine, one that is generally execrated by men of all faiths and all degrees of morality. Then you fasten it onto your opponent, though the predominating element in his fault may as properly be designated by some other name. The ingratitude may be present,—sometimes not even clearly that—but it is often incidental.¹¹⁰

I have named the renaissance tendency to lump together and categorize a diverse number of vices as ingratitude, the process of conglomeration. The "exaggerated enormity and . . . enlarged scope" of ingratitude "are intimately related"¹¹¹ and can be attributed to this process of conglomeration. Conglomeration was a predominant feature of theological and secular ethics of the period. What distinguished these two systems was that each school applied this process of projecting ingratitude onto the particular vices relative to its own ethical standard.

That does not mean these two systems were mutually exclusive. The theological belief that ingratitude was treasonous is a case in point, for it was adapted from classical and feudal sources. Despite its incorporation of vices from other systems, Christian ingratitude of the period was predominantly an aggregation of six of the Seven Deadly Sins;¹¹² the six are as follows: pride, envy, avarice, sloth, wrath and lust. Gluttony appears to be the only D.S. not included in this process.

King Lear intimates ingratitude as an accretion of six of the D.S. Robert Heilman points out that:

In one of his mad speeches Edgar describes himself as "hog in sloth, fox in stealth, wolf in greediness, dog in madness, lion in prey" (III.iv, 95-96). If we can read madness as wrath and prey as covetousness, and consider that he mentions pride and lust literally (87,88,92), Edgar has six of the Seven Deadly Sins, not to mention other vices on the side. Not only is such a catalogue a useful auxiliary way of stressing the sense of evil that permeates the play, but it also—even in Edgar's incoherent speech—ties in with and supports the animal imagery of the rest of the play: man in his sins is animal-like.¹¹³

This passage indicates that conglomeration underscores the irreversible process of regression, the inevitable consequence of ingratitude.

Each of the six D.S. will be briefly analyzed in order to demonstrate how the Renaissance mind justified this tendency to amass all of these together as a singular vice designated as ingratitude.

Pride as Ingratitude

Thomas Becon defines the proud man as possessed by "presumption, boasting and cracking of his good deeds as if God were in his debt and

not he in God's."114 The proud man's presumption that God is in his debt characterizes him as an ingrate. Thomas a Kempis, a medieval predecessor representing the same view, maintains that the gift of Grace is withdrawn from the proud man who believes he merits it.115

Literature of the period also links ingratitude with pride. In Paradise Lost, Satan admits that God created him in "bright eminence,"116 and that he possessed the light or perception to understand that "service" to the Lord was not "hard,"117 for: "What could be less than to afford him praise, / The easiest recompense" would be to "pay him thanks."118 Despite this foreknowledge, Satan chose to forget "The debt immense of endless gratitude,"119 preferring to believe that it was "So burdensome, still paying, still to owe."120 It was "burdensome" for Satan to recompense God because "Pride and worse Ambition"121 delude him into believing that gratitude must be requited according to the letter rather than the spirit of the law. In retrospect he:

. . . understood not that a grateful mind
By owing owes not, but still pays, at once
Indebted and discharg'd; what burden then?122

Arrogance inhibits praise of God, and so God's goodness in him only "prov'd ill . . . And wrought but malice."123 Malice caused Satan to equate what should have been his grateful dependence upon God with "subjection."124 Satan thought that if he aspired "one step higher," he "Would set" himself "highest."125

Envy as Ingratitude

"A Prayer Against Envy," in The Primer of 1559 connects this vice with ingratitude. Man is warned that he has "no cause" for "grudge

or envy"; God gives "unto each man sufficiently" though he "deserve[s] it not."¹²⁶ The end of the prayer exhorts us to "praise" the "bounteous liberality" of God "as well in others," in doing so, we "magnify" the "Lord, the well of all gifts and goodness."¹²⁷ We are cautioned, "be not envious,"¹²⁸ not "murmur secretly with our selves against thy judgment,"¹²⁹ and never question "the disposing of" God's "benefits."¹³⁰ Instead of envying our neighbor, we should remain "quietly content"¹³¹ and "thankful for that we receive."¹³²

In keeping with scripture, Thomas Becon advocates a similar view.

When thou offerest a gift at the altar, and there dost remember that thy brother hath anything against thee, leave thy gift there before the altar and go thy way, be first reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.¹³³

More than a dutiful ritual, gratitude must reflect the love which God extends to all his creatures; for in loving them, one loves him. From this point of view, the envious man's rejection of others is tantamount to withholding his love from God.

Medieval and renaissance literature also associates envy with ingratitude. The following line from Everyman quoted earlier,¹³⁴ in which God says that "now" man "would by envy another eat," is a case in point. This line compares the ingrate to a monstrous beast whose envy drives him to devour his fellow men.

Similarly, because of his "worse ambition," Milton's Satan envies Divine Providence and desires to usurp his penultimate position. After his fall, Satan directs his envious feelings toward God's beloved creatures, Adam and Eve. Though mere mortals, they are innocents, and so as he watches their "kisses pure; aside the Devil turn'd / For envy."¹³⁵

Avarice as Ingratitude

William Vaughan's following warning in The Golden Grove links ingratitude to avarice.

O vngrateful wretches lis not your Landlord, and doth
not hee furter you enioye his lands without income and fines?
Onely this is his condition, that ye v[s]e the poore well,
and cheri[s]h the needie why then are ye coueteous, why doe
yee not perform this condition and bee liberall?¹³⁶

William Langland also connects ingratitude with avarice, warning that "the smoke and fumes that get in our eyes are covetousness and unkindness, and these extinguish God's mercy completely."¹³⁷ Using the example of Dives to underscore avarice as a form of ingratitude, Langland cautions:

When Dives died he was damned for his heartlessness in not giving food and money to men in need. So I counsel all rich men to remember Dives, and give their wealth back to God from whom all our gifts come. He who is unkind to God's people may expect to spend eternity with Dives. For unkindness is the contrary of God; it quenches the grace of the Holy Ghost, which is God in His very essence. What Nature creates, unnaturalness or unkindness destroys. What can we say, then, of those cursed, vicious thieves who, out of covetousness and envy, will slay a man for his goods—no matter whether they do it with their own hands or by the slander of their tongues? For they destroy that which belongs to the Holy Ghost—life and love and the flame of man's body.¹³⁸

Sloth as Ingratitude

In his copybook The Art of Giving, Thomas Cooper alludes to Prov. 11:24, joining together sloth with ingratitude: "God takes away riches when they are not thus employed."¹³⁹ Failure to use God-given talents was regarded as a denial of divine bounty, making it an act of ingratitude.

The Duke in Measure for Measure employs a similar line of reasoning, wisely counseling Angelo whom he has chosen to rule in his place during his self-imposed exile.

Thyself and thy belongings
Are not thine own so proper as to waste
Thyself upon thy virtues, they on thee.
Heaven doth with us as we with torches do,
Not light them for themselves; for if our virtues
Did not go forth of us, 'twere all alike. (1.1.29-33)

The Duke implies that the man who wastes his "belongings" or "virtues" is guilty of ingratitude because these are gifts from God. S. Nagarajan, points to Luke 11:33 and Matt. 7:16 respectively as possible influences on the line: "Heaven doth with us as we with torches do."

"No man, when he hath lighted a candle, putteth it in a secret place, neither under a bushel, but on a candlestick that they come in may see the light." . . . "Ye shall know them by their fruits."¹⁴⁰

The grateful man assiduously cultivates virtue by illuminating his "fruits." In this way, he pays tribute to God's glory, encouraging others to follow his example.

This point is reiterated as the Duke continues:

Spirits are not finely touched
But to fine issues, nor Nature never lends
The smallest scruple of her excellence
But like a thrifty goddess she determines
Herself the glory of a creditor,
Both thanks and use. (1.1.35-50)

The line "spirits are not finely touched / But to fine issues" means "great qualities are bestowed only so that they may lead to great achievements."¹⁴¹ Mother Nature scrutinizes these achievements carefully,

for Divine Providence uses her as an agent to determine the destiny of men. This "thrifty goddess" withdraws God's bounty from the man who fails to accrue great achievements or virtues through nonuse. There is a play on the word "use" since it also means "interest,"¹⁴² linking it to "thanks." While no "interest" or bounty is accrued for the nonuse of gifts, the assiduous or grateful man accumulates interest or "use" by using his gifts. This interest is the natural and logical consequence of "the glory of" his credit or achievements.

Satan's "worse ambition," alluded to earlier, is slothful ingratitude carried to its extreme. His ambition or slothfulness is active, involving the misuse rather than nonuse of God-given talents. King Lear depicts both kinds of sloth, Goneril, Regan, and Edmund representing the ambitious type, and Lear and Gloucester the indolent type.

Wrath as Ingratitude

Lily Campbell relates "that there was in Shakespeare's day an old and firmly founded philosophy of anger finding its sources in ancient medicine and . . . philosophy and in the mediaeval makings-over of these sources."¹⁴³ According to this philosophy, "pride or self-esteem" was "the condition in which anger" took "its rise."¹⁴⁴ This definition conforms to the concept of conglomeration, classifying anger as a form of ingratitude; by this reasoning, since the origin of anger is pride, and pride is a form of ingratitude, anger too is a form of ingratitude.

The connection between pride and wrath is related to self-righteousness. A need to exact vengeance for some real or imagined

wrongdoing triggers wrath. The wrathful person self-righteously believes himself to be justified in exacting retribution; fraught with hatred, vengeance is neither just nor merciful. By his presumption, the wrathful man usurps divine prerogative, defying the biblical injunction: "Vengeance is mine. I will repay, saith the Lord" (Rom. 12:19).

Lust as Ingratitude

In contrast to the modern definition of lust as a sin of the flesh, renaissance theologians applied a broader scope to this vice. Lust not only encompassed the act of fornication and incessant craving for it, but also implied any obsessive hunger other than the desire for God. Scripture repeatedly execrated the act of and desire for copulation. Jesus reiterates the sixth commandment (Matt. 5:27, 19:18; Mark 10:19; Luke, 8:20; Rom. 13:19; James 2:11),¹⁴⁵ reproving the act of adultery and the desire for it.¹⁴⁶ According to Matt. 5:28: ". . . that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." Heb. 13:14 and 1 Thess 4:3 imply adultery as a form of ingratitude since "fidelity to the marriage bond is enumerated among the obligations of Christians."¹⁴⁷ The Puritans were especially harsh in their judgment of adultery, some even advocating the death penalty.¹⁴⁸

Ingratitude was not only associated with adultery in particular, but all lust in general. The association of lust with ingratitude can be traced back to Johannine writings (1 John 2:16) which defined sin as a "lust of the flesh," a "lust of the eyes, and the pride of life."¹⁴⁹

The allusion to sin as a lust of the eyes suggests that sexual desire was regarded as an act of coitus.

St. Augustine defines lust as any obsessive desire which deflects man's passion away from God and onto an inferior object. Desire is a form of ingratitude because man no longer yearns for God, craving only the inferior object.¹⁵⁰ Even if the desired object is not in and of itself evil, it becomes so because it lures man away from God.¹⁵¹ Lear embodies this kind of lust in that his desire for Cordelia is emotional rather than sexual. In the guise of love, emotional lust appears less sinful than sexual lust, but it can be just as noxious. Comparing Lear's emotional lust to Goneril's and Regan's sexual lust attests that both types of obsession have an equally degenerative effect on the kingdom.

Yet in line with contemporary theology, Goneril's and Regan's sexual lust stands out as the most striking metaphor for regression at its most advanced stage. In 1545, Coverdale's translation of Erasmus' Enchiridion condemned sexual lust with the following warning: "If we enclyne to the flesh it maketh us beestes, desppisers of God, disobedient, unkynde and cruel."¹⁵²

Filial Impiety as Ingratitude

Although examined at length in the next chapter, filial impiety and its relationship to ingratitude is mentioned briefly here in order to point out that theological ethics adjusted this vice another form of ingratitude. The ancients regarded filial impiety as a separate

vice with an identity of its own, whereas for the renaissance theologian and ethicist, this vice became ingratitude. Joseph Hewitt's comparison of Oedipus at Colonus with King Lear underscores the difference between these two points of view.

Compare, finally, the Oedipus at Colonus with King Lear. In the ancient play, Oedipus is far from insensible to his sons' neglect of him. They are accused of impiety, villainy, and ambition, but not of ingratitude. His daughters, on the other hand, have been dutiful and filial in the extreme but there is no hint either that their conduct springs from gratitude or calls for any gratitude in return. In Lear we hear the note of unfilial conduct, but it is reenforced and indeed drowned by the accusation of ingratitude.¹⁵³

The renaissance association of filial impiety with theological ingratitude was supported by scripture; this sin violated the fifth commandment. Furthermore, filial impiety disrupted order and degree, adversely affecting the cosmological arrangement of correspondences. By analogy, the father was to the family what the king was to the state, and God was to the universal family or kingdom of heaven.

Filial impiety as ingratitude also implied regression.

Shakespeare also lays great emphasis upon the ingratitude of those who violate the ties of kinship, and later writers have used ingratitude, especially to parents, to depict and characterize the lowest moral depths to which human nature can sink. In ancient literature this motive is not prominent. The conduct in question is put on a family basis rather than on a general social basis, and is stigmatized as unfilial conduct.¹⁵⁴

This passage suggests that censure for filial impiety was directed solely toward ungrateful offspring. A double standard demanding obedience to parental authority was the rule at all times.¹⁵⁵ Parents were not expected to demonstrate the same blind loyalty toward progeny.¹⁵⁶ An

ungrateful offspring was little better than a pariah, while a wayward parent who reneged on parental obligation usually suffered no change in social position.

Ambiguity: Gratitude Versus Grace

Juxtaposing inexorable retribution with unconditional forgiveness casts the ambiguous relationship of gratitude to Grace in shadowed relief. On the surface, retributive law proselytized forgiveness, counseling the faithful Christian to express his gratitude in the spirit rather than the letter of the law. Those who adhered to Old Testament law rather than New Testament mercy were adjudged guilty of self-righteous ingratitude.

Grace stands in opposition to the law. Both Jews and Gentiles are saved through the grace of Lord Jesus (AA 15:11) [sic]. To hold to the law is to nullify grace (Gal 2:21); and when the Galatians accept the law, they have fallen from grace (Gal 5:4) [sic]. The Christian is not under the law but under grace (Rm 6:14f). Grace is opposed to what is owed (Rm 4:4) [sic].¹⁵⁷

Subsequently, "to turn back to the law . . . is to offend against this gift of salvation."¹⁵⁸ Abnegating forgiveness was regarded as ingratitude since adhering to the law implied that redemption depended on good works or merit rather than Grace. In contrast, "grace stands in opposition to works, which lack the power to save" for "if they had the power, the reality of grace would be annulled (Rm 11:5f; Eph 2:5, 7f; 2 Tm 1:9) [sic]."¹⁵⁹ Jesus' teachings are encapsulated in Luke 7:36-50 where he:

. . . presents growth in the love of God as a result of gratitude for the forgiveness of sins. This implies that genuine

love of God can only arise from the recognition of one's sinfulness, and that self-righteousness like that of the Pharisees is incompatible with love.¹⁶⁰

In theory, the principle of gratitude espoused unconditional love but, in practice, this ethic contradicted its own teachings by reverting back to the law it condemned. A concept promulgating regression and damnation as inexorable consequences of ingratitude is retributive rather than merciful.

Langland's Piers the Plowman exemplifies this type of contradictory reasoning.

So also the Holy Ghost is a God without mercy and a dead grace to all vicious natures; Christ himself bears witness of this—"Verily, I say unto you, I know you not." For though you pray, and give alms, and do penance day and night without ceasing, and though you gain every available indulgence and purchase all the pardons of Pampelona and Rome, yet if you are unkind or ungrateful towards your fellowmen, it will profit you nothing: the Holy Ghost will never hear or help you. For unkindness quenches His light so that He cannot shine or burn or blaze at all.¹⁶¹

This warning indicates regression and damnation as ineluctable consequences of ingratitude. A few lines earlier Langland appears to reject this harsh prescription in favor of the New Testament alternative. He avers that restitution must be paid to insure the forgiveness of sins, "yet if a man cannot pay at all, his sorrow alone is sufficient payment."¹⁶² Langland seemingly reasons:

the Father alone will forgive folk of humble heart provided they sorely repent and pay all they can in restitution. And if any man dying in such a mind cannot pay enough to make satisfaction, then Mercy will take his meekness into account and pay the rest for him. And again, just as a lighted wick alone will make a warm flame and cheer men who sit in darkness, so Christ also, if we beg for his mercy, will graciously forgive and forget, and furthermore pray to the Father of Heaven for our forgiveness.¹⁶³

Langland's forgiveness is a contradiction. He regards humility as prerequisite to the reception of Grace. Conversely, Grace is withdrawn from the ingrate due to overweening pride. With Grace withdrawn, the will becomes depraved, incapable of good works, virtue, or righteous intentions. Supposedly, Grace will return if contrition moves an ingrate to repent and beg Christ's forgiveness. But contrition is a virtue born of from a humbled heart, and the ingrate is incapable of virtue since it only arises after the reception of Grace. The presence of humility and remorse suggests that the seed of Grace has already been planted in the form of this desire. From this point of view, humility is not a prerequisite cause of Grace, but rather an effect of it. The ingrate is supposed to possess humility and contrition prior to attaining Grace, yet he cannot attain these virtues until he himself receives Grace. This convoluted logic shows that traditional theology was guilty of the sin it condemned, practicing retribution in the name of mercy.

Conclusion

This chapter has revealed that renaissance theology regarded ingratitude as a source of evil and a sin of malice. The ingrate had the propensity for any and every crime. The complex make-up of this sin reflected its malefic nature and heinous effects. Ingratitude was a composite vice consisting of six of the D.S. (all except gluttony), and also incorporated some classical and feudal vices.

The malice of ingratitude was attributed to the attitude of contemptuous indifference on the part of the recipient toward his benefactor

rather than the relative worth or merit of the gift. The malice of this sin imbued the ingrate with the following characteristics: hard-heartedness, shamelessness, disloyalty, treason, and autogeny. These pernicious traits were evidence of the ingrate's Fall from Grace and subsequent separation from God. Man's separation from God was adjudged a betrayal of the sole purpose for which he had been created: to show gratitude to his Maker. Eschewing this purpose was anathematized on the grounds that it was an unjust, merciless, unnatural, and irrational act.

Man's debt to God was immeasurable. He owed his Creator: life, sustenance, comfort and support, the superior faculty of reason (endowing him with a greater propensity for gratitude than all other creatures), his preeminent position on the Chain of Being, and finally, most important of all, Grace or salvation from his fallen state. Gratitude was man's recognition of his reliance on God for everything, assuring his everlasting humility because he could never requite this infinite debt according to the law. Only Christ's crucifixion could balance the scales of justice in favor of redemption. By taking on the inherited curse of Original Sin, the Savior did for man what he could not do for himself: pay back this debt according to the law.

The consequences of ingratitude had adverse repercussions individually and collectively. On a personal level, this sin resulted in progressive deterioration. The offender regressed to a state even lower than the beast, more akin to a monstrous fiend than an animal. Because this degenerative process was irreversible, it inevitably culminated

in damnation. Since the macrocosm reflected the microcosm, regression in the individual overturned order and degree, mushrooming into universal discord.

Finally, we have seen that a convoluted logic characterized the concept of gratitude since it interpreted man's desire for forgiveness as both a cause and effect of Grace. While overtly professing unconditional forgiveness, the principle of gratitude covertly perpetuated self-righteousness, the very sin it supposedly condemned.

CHAPTER II

GONERIL AND REGAN AND THE MALICE OF INGRATITUDE

Introduction

First, Goneril and Regan will be examined as prototypical ingrates. Conglomeration and filial impiety will be used to gauge the magnitude of their sin. Applying the theory of conglomeration involves analyzing the sisters' characters according to six of the D.S. From there, we shall explore the adverse effects of their ingratitude individually as regression, and collectively as universal discord.

Satanic Pride and Pride of Honor

It was pointed out that hardheartedness, shamelessness, and autogeny linked ingratitude with pride. Reflecting this definition, Goneril's and Regan's shamelessness is satanic in scope and influence. One such example occurs at the end of the play when Edmund attempts to justify his imprisonment of Lear and Cordelia. He justifies his position on the grounds that their continued presence would provoke an insurrection by eliciting sympathy among the troops. The disapproving Albany belittles Edmund's effort, reminding him that he is "but a subject of this war / Not as a brother" (5.3.61-62). Regan seemingly supports Edmund's position with the following so-called defense:

That's as we list to grace him;
Methinks our pleasure might have been demanded,

Ere you had spoken so far. He led our powers,
 Bore the commission of my place and person;
 The immediacy might well stand up,
 And call itself your brother. (5.3.62-67)

The effrontery of Regan's prideful defense of Edmund is not lost on Goneril who ironically retorts: "Not so hot; / In his own grace he doth exalt himself / More than in your addition" (5.3.68-69). Goneril astutely points out that Regan's seeming exaltation of Edmund is used as a pretext for self-apotheosis. Goneril is right for all the wrong reasons; the position from which she makes this accusation is as prideful as that of her sister. Unabashed, Regan replies: "In my rights, / By me invested, he compeers the best" (5.3.70).

Joseph Hall classifies pride into four types: "pride of honor" or aristocratic pride, "pride of knowledge"¹ or intellectual pride, "pride of beauty" or vanity, and "pride of strength," the manly equivalent of vanity. With the exception of pride of strength, Goneril and Regan embody all the above types of pride. In this instance, Regan is guilty of aristocratic pride. "How hard it is for eminent persons guilty of the pride of honor," Hall observes, "when they see all heads bare, all knees bowed to them, not to be raised up in their conceits, not to applaud their own glory and to look overly upon the ignoble multitude as those which are . . . worthy of nothing but contempt";² "proud ones" of this type, he goes on to say, "are incompatible with each other."³ Thomas Cooper also suggests the same kind of pride, observing that supercilious men "cannot endure eyther equall or inferiour."⁴

Regan considers Albany's denigration of Edmund a personal affront to her, believing her sovereign will alone empowers him. In this way,

Regan assures her superiority; she cannot bear competition from anyone, and Edmund is no exception. Regan's lust drives her to wed Edmund despite his illegitimate birth. She cannot endure him as an inferior because it tarnishes her image. For this reason, she feels impelled to elevate his status. On the other hand, she can scarcely abide him as an equal either. Shortly thereafter, Regan resolves this dilemma, telling Edmund: "Witness the world, that I create thee here / My lord and master" (5.3.7879). Elton suggests this declaration parodies Genesis.⁵ Regan's creation of Edmund as her "lord and master" and she, his subject, is pretense. In reality, she deifies herself by creating Edmund in her own image.

Regan's creation travesties man's gratitude to and dependence on Divine Providence who created him, and continues to sustain him. Furthermore, Edmund's illegitimate birth implies that he is unworthy of creation since, at that time, many regarded the bastard as subhuman. Edmund's illegitimate origin attests to his dependence on Regan; he is not at all her equal. Derived from Regan's creation and support of him, Edmund's sovereignty is a gift, not an inherited right. This inverted parallel can be extended further. Just as Divine Providence bestows Grace upon man, not because he merits it, but because He wills it, so Regan bestows this so-called sovereignty upon Edmund, not because he deserves it, but because she as deity deems it so. Edmund may not deserve her gifts, but Regan believes she merits all she receives.

Goneril is equally culpable and brazen. The rebuttal she hurls at Regan and her saccharine self-defense of Edmund are ploys to curry

favor with him and ward off her sister. Yet Goneril will not leave Edmund's choice to chance. She must guarantee her success. Recently widowed, Regan poses a threat to her desire for a future alliance with Edmund. Regan has the advantage as long as Albany remains alive. Goneril makes sure Regan will not be a threat for long. As this conversation is transpiring, poison is pervading every pore of Regan's body, poison planted by her venomous sister. Goneril's pride conforms to Hall's description, being incompatible with others of her type. Unable to confront her own mirror image reflected through her sister, Goneril, ever so conveniently and coldbloodedly, rids herself of it.

Theology and cosmography of the period maintained:

Had it not been for the Fall every part of the structure, [of the Great Chain of Being] would exist in an undisturbed order. But the sin of Adam was rebellion; an aspiring out of his place, an ignoring of degree. It was the result of the temptation of Satan, who with his fallen angels had aspired earlier in conflict with degree and had thus been excluded from the ordered universe.⁶

Choosing Satan rather than Christ as her paradigm, Regan excludes herself from the ordered universe. Similarly, the effects of Goneril's transgression extend beyond her own personal damnation. As ingrate, she has the potential to contaminate all those beneath her on the Chain of Being. Because of Goneril's and Regan's sovereignty the malice of their ingratitude has a greater potential to affect more people adversely.

Regan's sovereignty and its relationship to her presumptuous assertion of Godhead magnifies the degenerative influence of her ingratitude since the monarch was regarded as God's representative. Like Satan,

she cannot bear God to be superior or equal to her. Before their fall from grace, Regan and Satan were positioned at the apex of the Chain of Being, she as queen of mortals, and he as king of angels. Because the life of the state and church depends on the queen, Regan's pernicious influence encompasses two domains, bridging the gap between the world of men and the realm of the spirit. As anti-creator, Regan inverts the natural and rational order Divine Providence created to sustain life. In contrast to God's creation of life, the only thing Regan can create is death. Rather than being rationally ordered, natural, and nurturing in its life-giving quality, Regan's chaotic and unnatural creativity is sterile and lifeless.

Lear's earlier diatribe against Goneril after she has reduced his retinue expresses these same sentiments. Like her sister, Goneril "creates disorder"⁷ to usurp Godhead.

Hear, Nature, hear! dear Goddess, hear!
Suspend thy purpose, if thou didst intend
To make this creature fruitful!
Into her womb convey sterility!
Dry up in her the organs of increase,
And from her derogate body never spring
A babe to honour her! If she must teem,
Create her child of spleen, that it may live
And be a thwart disnatur'd torment to her! (1.4.273-281)

This tirade resorts to paradox, a frequently used renaissance truism.⁸ In this instance, paradox refers to the relationship between ingratitude, sterility, and fertility, , implying that in cases of filial ingratitude, sterility is preferable to fertility. Lear reasons that Goneril is figuratively sterile because she can only create chaos out of her ingratitude. Literal sterility is just retribution for her sin.

This paradoxical reasoning suggests Goneril is most fertile when sterile, and most sterile when fertile because she is a death-giving force, and it is unnatural for a death-giving force to give birth to life. But "If she must teem," or "bear children,"¹⁰ Lear further contends, "Create her a child of spleen" or "malice"¹¹ who, in its ingratitude, repays her with "disnatured" or unfilial "torment."

Goneril's enraged and horrified husband, Albany, later exposes her monstrously satanic nature.

Thou changed and self-cover'd thing, for shame,
Be monster not thy feature. Were't my fitness
To let these hands obey my blood,
They are apt enough to dislocate and tear
Thy flesh and bones; how'er thou art a fiend,
A woman's shape doth shield thee. (4.2.62-67)

Goneril is a "fiend." Conforming to the traditional stereotype, she has degenerated into a "monster." The superficial beauty that formerly entranced Albany no longer masks the hideous fiend within, and he knows her for what she is. Like an infectious disease, her contagion arouses even the noble Albany's baser instincts. He wishes to revenge himself on his depraved wife by either dismembering her or tearing her to shreds. His suppressed desire ironically underscores her brutishness, for as ingrate, she devours or bites the hand which feeds her.

Albany's desire for revenge is another malefic consequence of ingratitude. Ethicists of the period adapted the belief, advocated by Seneca and other classical writers, that ingratitude had a deleterious and corrosive effect upon the state.¹² It was maintained that ingratitude caused the injured party to respond with revenge.¹³ Renaissance

copybooks also contained references to ancient Persian concepts of ingratitude which adjudged the gravity of this sin to be punishable by death.¹⁴ This alternative supported revenge as a viable and acceptable form of punishment.

Albany's initial reaction to Goneril reflects this standard. In his anger, instinct temporarily seizes him, and he desires to punish her in an eye for an eye fashion. But he refrains from adhering to this primitive alternative. While Albany cannot forgive Goneril, he does not succumb to his own baser instincts. The potency of Goneril's fiendish influence is not limited to weakwilled or base individuals of similar inclination; it almost overpowers the virtuous Albany. His reaction demonstrates ingratitude's insidious potential to envenom righteous and sinful alike.

Albany alleges that Goneril's filial impiety is the originating impulse and cause of all later and larger forms of ingratitude.

ALBANY: O Goneril!
 You are not worth the dust which the rude wind
 Blows in your face. I fear your disposition:
 That nature, which contemns its origin,
 Cannot be bordered certain in itself;
 She that herself will sliver and disbranch
 From her material sap, perforce must wither
 And come to deadly use.
 GONERIL: No more; the text is foolish.
 ALBANY: Wisdom and goodness to the vile seem vile;
 Filths savour but themselves. . . .
 Send quickly down to take these vile offenses,
 It will come,
 Humanity must perforce prey on itself,
 Like monsters of the deep. (4.2.30-39, 47-50)

Goneril is "'slivered' from her father: she derives what she is from him."¹⁵ As child, she is the branch, and Lear, as father, is

the tree or origin of life from which she receives her "material sap." In denying her "material sap," Goneril must "wither." And in withering, she becomes sterile like her sister. Sterility results in a "deadly use" or disease which contaminates humanity. Universal chaos ensues, disrupting concord everywhere. All of humanity mirrors Goneril's filial ingratitude on a larger scale. And as she bites the paternal hand that feeds her, all of humanity similarly bites or devours the hand or community that nourishes it.

Albany's tree metaphor can also be interpreted as a profanation of Grace. Thomas Cooper uses tree, branch, and sap imagery as a metaphor for Christ, his devotees, and Grace. Devout followers of Christ are compared to "true branches" who derive their "goodness from the Vine Christ Jesus, performing and bringing forth fruit onely as we are engrafted in the Vine, and daily receive vertue and sap from thence to enable thereto."¹⁶

As monarch or Vicar of Christ, Goneril should serve in his stead as the vine, showering her dutiful subjects with the sap of Grace she receives from Divine Providence. Instead, she desecrates her divine function, coming to "deadly use" with a lethal effect on the body politic. John Danby relates that:

To be representative man the King must embody, so to speak, the whole pattern. He must be the fullest human expression of the community that co-operates to maintain him. He must, besides, be representative in a more ultimate sense. He must express in act the King everyman is in potency. The authority of the King in the state will be unquestionable so long as the image of the King is retained in each subject, and so long as that same image is expressed by the King himself. The two things are interdependent. To threaten or

overthrow the image in the individual is to threaten or overthrow it in the common weal. Collapse on one side will be followed by confusion on the other. The King thus stands for man at his best . . . the common birthright which makes us all Kings.¹⁷

This ideal of kingship as probity and "inwardness," Danby continues, has "disappeared" from "traditional thought."¹⁸ Modern thought presupposes a movement from the political to the moral in contrast to the movement from the moral to the political which conditioned older patterns of kingship.¹⁹ As a result of this belief, "the individual" was "aware of" this "pattern and its constituent parts in himself" and subscribed "to it in the state." For "in his little world everyman" could "and should be a King."²⁰ In this way, everyman could "discover and fulfill his right nature. The kingly part in man" made him "capable of being called the image of God."²¹ This part of man was to his nature as the king was to the state. Each stood for the whole "that all other parts must co-operate with and be subordinate to."²²

Goneril's profanation of the God or King within herself debases her sovereign right. Despite her unworthiness, she still retains temporal power, her venomous influence poisoning those subjects who abjure the King within themselves by following her debased example. Goneril deliberately reinforces and encourages this depraved form of emulation. As Act I, scene iii, begins we hear her asking Oswald if Lear has hit her gentleman for chiding his fool. When Oswald answers in the affirmative, she uses this incident as a pretext for accusing Lear of other crimes.

By day and night, he wrongs me every hour
He flashes into one gross crime or other,
That sets us all at odds: I'll not endure it:

His knights grow riotous, and himself upbraids us
On every trifle. (1.3.4-8)

Goneril now has a perfect excuse for telling Oswald to treat her father with "weary negligence" (1.3.13), "the fault of it" for which she will "answer" (1.3.11) if Lear complains. Yet the gentleman's insolence toward Lear indicates that he and other members of Goneril's court have detected her true inclinations. Shortly afterwards, she makes her feelings more blatantly known, advising Oswald to "come slack of former services" (1.3.10).

Since the Fool is Lear's servant, when Goneril's gentleman chides him without asking Lear's permission, he demonstrates contemptuous disregard for someone of superior rank;²³ by proxy, he denigrates the king through his servant.²⁴ Because the gentleman sees no need to ask Lear's permission to reprimand his fool, we can assume that he does not consider Lear's permission to be of any consequence. The gentleman's irreverence toward his former king reflects the decadence of a court which has imbibed the example of its debased queen.

Filial Ingratitude

We have seen how vine, branch, and tree imagery can be interpreted as a metaphor for theological and filial ingratitude. Entwining this imagery into a double metaphor suggests a correspondence between the microcosm and macrocosm. The father like the king is God's representative, his realm, the family or little kingdom. This analogous relationship explains the preeminent position theological doctrine accords to filial piety. William Vaughan believes that:

The first duty of children towards their parents is, they obey them in all things, for that is well pleasing unto the Lord. Also, they must remember, that the earthly father is the true representer of God the vniuersal father, and therefore next after God to be had in reuerence.²⁵

Vaughan is not alone in this belief. Bartholemew Batty, another ethicist of the period, concurs. Pearson points to his belief that obedient children should perform all "their seruices to" their parents "with a lowliness of mind as if to God himself."²⁶

Not all renaissance ethicists believe filial gratitude is "next after God to be had in reuerence." Although Gascoigne and Cooper pay due respect to filial piety, they change the order of priority so that reverence to one's king and country superseding the duty owed one's parents.²⁷ The play's complex branch, vine, and tree imagery leaves room for both points of view since this metaphor can be interpreted on two levels.

Filial piety had definite rules of decorum. Many believed that fear toward one's parents was the best demonstration of filial piety. Pearson takes note of William Gouge's belief that fear was not "slavish" when "mixed with love," for it gave "the child forbearance, causing him to speak only when spoken to, using modest and sober gestures, and making him wish to give his parents 'upper place' always."²⁸ Furthermore, there was no honor higher than that of fatherhood; even if a child "advanced to a higher position than that held by his father," he might take the "'upper place'" "out in society," but "at home he must never put himself above his father."²⁹ A specific code of etiquette is prescribed for obedient offspring.

If his father should stand uncovered before strangers, the son must stand uncovered too. Moreover, the son must never under any circumstances be too conceited to ask his father's blessing with reverent obedience, bending the knee with love in his heart to both father and mother.³⁰

Cleland, another ethicist of the period, believes that sincerity of heart and mind is requisite to formal displays as addressing one's parents with titles of respect, uncovering one's head, or bowing one's knee.³¹ This belief implies that without genuine devotion, formal displays degenerate into ritual. Although displays of filial piety were supposed to be imbued with spontaneous devotion and love, Elizabethans believed this so-called spontaneity needed to be cultivated.

Elizabethans had learned a lesson they gravely taught their children, who, in turn, impressed that lesson upon their own children--that gratitude is a virtue which must be taught before it can flow from the heart of man or beast, and the foundation for³² the virtue of gratitude is always obedience to moral law.

Elizabethan conduct books reflect this pragmatic approach to gratitude as an acquired virtue. It was commonly expressed that a child should never take "any step without the full approval of the family."³³

Vaughan feels "children must help their parents in their old age, and supply their wantes with all necessary compliments."³⁴ Gascoigne concurs, citing love and relief as the three requisite filial duties.³⁵ Another common belief maintained that "it was just as important to honor one's elders as to honor one's parents."³⁶

Three other features distinguish the renaissance definition of filial gratitude. Vaughan contends that it was the "duty of children . . . to assuage their parents anger."³⁷ Whether or not the father's

anger was justified was irrelevant; a double standard prevailed. According to Watson: "Even when the parents were mean and cruel, the admonition to respect them should override any imperfections they might show."³⁸ As evidence, Watson includes a quotation from Guazzo asserting that a child should remain dutiful despite his father's churlishness.³⁹ To understand Guazzo's assertion, the meaning of the word churl needs to be explained.

The code of honor equated gratitude with two virtues inherited from feudalism: loyalty and valor. A double standard, also adapted from feudalism, associated the potential for gratitude with aristocratic birth. Commoners or "coerls," later called churls, were believed to be naturally predisposed toward ingratitude.⁴⁰ The nobility regarded them as potential traitors and not to be trusted. Ingratitude came to be associated with disloyalty, treason, and base birth. Furthermore, any noble who was guilty of disloyalty was branded a treasonous ingrate and degraded to the status of a base "coerl" or churl.⁴¹

Guazzo transposes the feudal association of ingratitude with churlishness to the parent-child relationship. His leniency toward paternal churlishness also implies a double standard for parent and offspring. While the wayward father's churlishness is not condoned, it is also not condemned. Nicholas Breton prescribes forgiveness as a remedy for paternal churlishness but makes no mention of extending forgiveness to a churlish offspring.

The child that his father deerely louing
Who sees his fauths and greatly doth abhorre them;
Yet so from wrath will haue his thoughts remoouing,

As he will neither checke, nor chide him for them,
 But puts them backe, while Pitie stands before them;
 And doth not onely all his faults forgive
 But makes him kindly in his grace to live.⁴²

Filial disobedience was condemned except in rare cases when the father's desires or commands defied the will of God. Even then it was advised that the inclination toward filial disobedience should be preceded by fervent prayer.⁴³

Despite Cordelia's unconditional love for him, Lear brands her a filial ingrate because she refuses to fawn on him in exchange for a bountiful share of his kingdom. Self-righteously demanding love on his own terms, Lear adheres to a double standard, and projects it onto Cordelia. Projection blinds him so that he mistakes love for ingratitude and flattery for love. Cordelia never defies the double standard, only her father's desire to have her place him above God. Her failure to assuage his anger is justified.

In contrast to Cordelia, Goneril and Regan have no reason to disobey their father. They are hardly concerned with God and have been repaid in kind with an entire kingdom. Although the sisters have no reason to defame Lear, they do. Far from assuaging his anger, they continue to feed it, scheming to reduce him to a senile child. And their diabolical plan succeeds; first, driving Lear out into the raging storm, and later, driving him mad.

Goneril's and Regan's ingratitude does not surface until after they have ascended to power. But we sense their potential for it by the way they flatter Lear in the first scene. Cordelia's reaction to

her sisters' obsequious avowals of love for their father, at the expense of their husbands, also indicates a penchant for ingratitude. More well versed in the Bible than modern audiences, many Jacobean would have known that while filial piety was second only to the worship of God, this order of priority changed upon entering the state of holy matrimony.

Cordelia knows that her sisters betray the biblical law advising wives to "submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the lord" (Eph. 5.22). "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body" (Eph. 5.23). Furthermore, since the wife should pay "reverence to her husband," so should the husband be similarly advised to "love his wife even as himself" (Eph. 5.33). And by example, "as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing" (Eph. 5.24). The purity of Christ's love for the church can be compared to a man's love for his wife, holy wedlock reflecting its divine counterpart by its ability to "sanctify and cleanse" (Eph. 5.26).

"For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh" (Eph. 5.31). Since the marriage of man and woman closely resembles the mystical union between man and God, and Christ and his Church, after God, it should supersede filial obligations. Goneril's and Regan's supposed preference for their father prepares Jacobean audiences for later blatant manifestations of adulterous infidelity and filial impiety.

Two later tableaux counterpoint Goneril and Regan slavishly fawning on Lear with bowed heads and on bended knees. In all three tableaux someone is kneeling but, in each case, it means something different. In the first scene, kneeling, as dissembling ingratitude, masks itself in empty ritual. In the second tableau, the roles are reversed; now it is Lear who kneels before Regan, begging her to "vouchsafe" him "raiment, bed, and food" (2.4.153), after Goneril "hath abated" him of "half" his "train" (2.4.156), "Look'd black upon" him (2.4.157), and "struck" him "with her tongue / Most serpent-like, upon the very heart" (2.4.157-158). Regan's subservient masquerade is no longer necessary because she possesses sovereign power, a power vested in her by Lear.

Lear's self-deprecating entreaties are a desperate response to Regan's scornful proclamation:

O, Sir! you are old;
 Nature in you stands on the very verge
 Of her confine: you should be rul'd and led
 By some discretion that discerns your state
 Better than you yourself. Therefore I pray you
 That to your sister you do make return;
 Say you have wrong'd her. (2.4.143-149)

Regan dishonors Lear in three ways. The first line indicates an irreverence for age, underscored thereafter by the humiliated patriarch's response that he is old and "Age is unnecessary" (2.4.152). Irreverence for age recurs shortly after Goneril's arrival. Lear petitions the heavens to take his part and "Allow obedience" (2.4.189) "if" they "love old men" (2.4.188). But his entreaties are to no avail. He receives an answer, but not the one he has been hoping for. Regan scathingly mocks his advanced years: "I pray you, father, being weak seem so" (2.4.199).

She also deprecates his fatherhood, lawlessly sanctioning herself to command him to be "ruled and led / By some discretion that discerns" his state better than he does himself. Goneril and Regan team together to disgrace Lear yet again, taking it upon themselves to supplant him as parent. Used much the same way as the paradox of sterility and fertility, inversion of parent-child roles emblemizes the disruptive and chaotic effect of ingratitude on God's ordered universe. This violation of nature works like a bonfire, fanning out from private to public roles.

Shocked by Regan's decree that he ask forgiveness of Goneril, Lear incredulously replies: "Ask her forgiveness? / Do you but mark how this becomes the house" (2.4.149-150). The word "house" refers to "the royal house" and to "family relations."⁴⁴ Lear implies that this denigration of him would not only undermine the stability of the royal family, but also have an equally corrosive effect upon the body politic, upsetting order and degree.

At Goneril's instigation, Oswald shamelessly goads Lear by calling him, "My Lady's father" (1.4.78). This form of address denigrates Lear in two ways. Upon his abdication, Lear stipulated that he was to retain all the rights and privileges of his rank. Oswald's refusal to defer to Lear is a denial of his royalty. Furthermore, since Oswald is of much lower rank than the old king, he adds injury to insult when he bandies looks with him. Joseph points out that inferiors were expected to show respect "by kneeling, removing their hats, bowing low, where appropriate, serving with lowered eyes, not looking a superior in the face nor meeting his gaze."⁴⁵ Oswald knows his place, but deliberately

disregards propriety, aiming his barb with malicious intent. Determined "to assert himself" by "looking the king straight in the eyes," Oswald is well aware that this act will infuriate "Lear who is not accustomed to such behaviour from inferiors."⁴⁶

Since the father was to the little kingdom of the family what the monarch was to the larger kingdom of the commonwealth, Oswald's allusion to Lear as, "My Lady's father," profanes Lear's sovereignty and paternity. Oswald, like his mistress, chooses to forget that although Lear no longer rules, royal blood still sanctifies him; furthermore, abdication was by choice rather than fated by Divine Providence. When she defiles Lear's divine right, Goneril forfeits her own monarchical prerogative, the ideal of kingship within herself. She further debases her royal authority by usurping Lear's parental prerogative since her assumption of this role reverses order and degree.

Goneril patronizes Lear, using his weaknesses as a means of gaining power over him. To her: "Old fools are babes again and must be us'd / With checks as flatteries, when they are seen abus'd" (1.3.20-21). In order to gain control over her father, Regan also mixes "rebukes" with "soothing words."⁴⁷ Like her sister, she is not content to be queen but must also appoint herself queen mother. Regan takes advantage of her father's helplessness and vulnerability, moving him to confess that "Age is unnecessary" (2.4.152). Desperately, Lear pleads "on my knees I beg / That you'll vouchsafe me raiment, bed, and food" (2.4.152-153). Instead of placing her father above her, Regan literally and figuratively forces him into the kneeling position, ironically reversing the subservience she feigns in the first scene.

Perhaps the worst perversion of Regan's despotically acquired parental prerogative is the way she distorts the issue of clemency. Rather than begging Lear for forgiveness, which by all rights he deserves, she impudently demands that he beg forgiveness of Goneril. Her demand suggests that she too deserves an apology since she and Goneril share parental authority. Regan's audacity is all the more brazen because Lear has never spurned her, as he has Cordelia. Ironically, it is Cordelia who responds with humility and compassion to Lear's petition for absolution in the final tableau: "O! look upon me Sir, / And hold your hand in benediction o'er me, / No, Sir, you must not kneel" (4.7.57-59).

In contrast to Goneril's and Regan's contempt, Cordelia prohibits Lear from kneeling, deferring to him as "Sir." No empty ritual, this form of address denotes reverence for his sovereignty, paternity, age, and humanity. This tableau suggests that Cordelia is more than Lear's human daughter; she is also his Divine Mother.⁴⁸ A biblical parallel to this tableau can be found in the image of a kneeling Jesus being initiated by John the Baptist. Since John receives the power to infuse from Jesus, by actively seeking John out for initiation, Jesus demonstrates that he is the incarnation of humble gratitude. Similarly, the roles are reversed when Cordelia seeks Lear's benediction. Chapter V will explore this reversal as an initiatory rite, symbolizing the infusion of Grace.

Goneril and Regan also use the following ploys to further debase Lear: prevarication, inhospitality, avoidance, and disobedience.

Refusing to talk to Lear when he returns from hunting, Goneril lies to him, using Oswald to tell her father that she is sick. Regan employs the same ruse when an incensed Lear arrives at her home seeking hospitality, empathy, and comfort, after Goneril humiliates him by reducing the number of his knights. Their devious strategem works, further breaking down his spirit. Instead of the warm welcome that is his due, Lear receives the flimsy excuse that Regan and Cornwall are "sick" and "weary" having "travell'd all the night" (2.4.85-86). In violation of traditional concepts of filial piety, their inhospitality desecrates the homeless Lear, a father no longer the king of his, or any other, castle.

Disobedience peaks when Lear's retinue is completely eliminated, Goneril and Regan ignoring his earlier stipulation that upon abdication, he would continue to retain his retinue along with all privileges of his rank. In eliminating this retinue, Goneril and Regan break another filial obligation due Lear because of his paternity, age, and royal station. Their mental cruelty toward him vitiates any remaining relief they might pretend to administer. Driven to abandon the comforts of court, he braves the raging storm, enduring the harsh uncertainty of nomadic life on the barren heath.

The Persona in Relation to Other Forms of Pride

Goneril and Regan employ self-rationalization to justify their treachery toward Lear, using his mistreatment of Cordelia and Kent as a pretext for asserting that they are not attacking their father. The wily sisters rationalize that they are acting in self-defense against

a capricious tyranny which later might be directed against them. Typical of this line of reasoning is the way in which Goneril tries to persuade Albany of the need to reduce Lear's retinue.

This man hath had good counsel. A hundred knights
'Tis politic and safe to let him keep
At point a hundred knights; yes that on every dream,
Each buzz, each fancy, each complaint, dislike
He may enguard his dotage with their powers,
And hold our lives in mercy. (1.4.321-326)

But Goneril has other supposed reasons for checking Lear's power.

Earlier she tells Lear that his knights and squires are:

Men so disorder'd, so debosh'd, and bold,
That this our court, infected with their manners,
Shows like a riotous inn: epicurism and lust
Makes it more like a tavern or a brothel
Than a grac'd palace. The shame itself doth speak
For instant remedy. (1.4.239-244)

Goneril appears to be concerned over something more than maintaining her own personal power. Shrewdly pretending to display a civic regard for the well-being of her kingdom, Goneril projects the persona of a seemingly responsible and virtuous ruler who protects the court from the behavior of her father's dissolute retinue. This seeming prudence masks Goneril's hypocrisy. She is hardly worried about the degenerative effect that sexual impropriety might have upon concordia since she engages in the very sexual impropriety which she condemns.

Although Goneril and Regan are little more than a sum total of six D.S., they appear to be more complex and normal than they really are. Rationalization and self-justification fuel the convoluted schemes which churn over and over within their crafty minds. While the thought processes they use are complex, their minds are not; their desires and

perceptions are basely simple and quite limited. Rationalization and self-justification also undercut the sisters' ingratitude toward Lear, somewhat masking the monstrosity they will display later on as their regression gradually unfolds through time. Goneril and Regan project these convoluted rationalizations and justifications through two masks: a puritanical persona, and a monarchical persona. Each persona provides them with a normal seeming projection and a technically foolproof defense for their ungrateful actions.

In contrast to Edmund, Goneril and Regan do not usurp power; they inherit it. Inheritance assures them of a position above reproach. By assuming a monarchical persona and letting it work for them, they manipulate this situation to their advantage. While Lear's desire to retain his knights would be regarded as the prerogative of his rank, historical precedent could also be found for Goneril's and Regan's disbandment of his retinue. Goneril's "complaint" against Lear's retinue "carried weight" for "her insistence on the retainers' 'rank and not-to-be-endured riots' was hardly different from Henry's or Elizabeth's."⁴⁹

Lear's position finds historical support in the lives of "Catherine of Aragon after her repudiation, or Mary Stuart in her detention" who was "distinguished by a train of retainers."⁵⁰ At that time, "retainers were not only a sign of an aristocrat's prestige but a defense of his prerogatives."⁵¹ For this reason, "the sovereign often attempted to cut down retaining because of its potential danger, but no ex-king could imagine himself entirely without retainers, simply to show his rank."⁵² "From the vantage-point of the aristocratic ethos, there was nothing

odd about Lear's wanting to maintain the 'exhibition' of his former greatness, even after he had delegated its great function to others."⁵³ But "from the point of view of the new functionalism, equally, there was nothing peculiar about Goneril's and Regan's attempts to cut down their father's retinue: Elizabeth never allowed Mary Stuart a quota of armed servants."⁵⁴

Although Lear has abdicated, he would still be regarded as a great feudal lord capable of posing a threat to the monarchy since "loyalty was never entirely diverted from the great lords to the Crown, for all of Henry VIII's statutes and propaganda of the 'Faerie Queene.'"⁵⁵ Because the "Tudor monarchs . . . like King Lear . . . lacked soldiers,"⁵⁶ "in times of crisis," they "had to depend upon a very mixed army."⁵⁷ One large source was the "private trains" the "great lords contributed . . . in the old-fashioned way, to the sovereign's cause."⁵⁸

On the surface, Goneril and Regan are within their legal rights in defending themselves against possible encroachment by an ex-king and feudal lord. "The objections the daughters raised against the knights were those of a practical, modern, civilizing, rational social orderliness; their objections were, in fact, received opinion."⁵⁹ Lear's earlier denunciation of Cordelia and Kent makes their position seem all the more legally justified. But Goneril and Regan's so-called fears are unfounded.

Although Lear responds to their abusive treatment with continual rantings, imprecations, and promises of retaliation, he never alludes to seeking revenge by rallying his former forces together. Colie

observes that Lear "lets his defenders slip away from him as if their 'real' function had never crossed his mind. Indeed, for him, the knights were simply a means of signalling his dignity to himself and others, never defences against his nearest kin."⁶⁰ Lear's distribution of his kingdom somewhat in the manner of a feudal lord makes Goneril's and Regan's feigned need to exercise their monarchical prerogative all the more ironic; for this feudal system, in the person of their father, has been responsible for the acquisition of the kingdom they profess to defend.

Goneril and Regan's intellectual pride makes them clever politicians whose strategy even extends to manipulations. They appear to be technically or legally "right," in contrast to Lear, who appears to be technically or legally culpable. While Goneril's gentleman chides Lear's fool, it cannot be proved that she told him to do so or intimidated it. At this point, she cannot be held legally accountable for this transgression. Enraged by this act, Lear strikes Goneril's gentleman. This action would be inexcusable according to the aristocratic code.

No person of base rank could expect to be immune from a beating from an irate superior or his servants, and mutilation or whipping by officers of the law. But any gentle person accepted as adult in this society was not expected to tolerate or be exposed to such treatment.⁶¹

Through covert means Goneril adroitly manages to incite Lear to break the letter of the law which he is attempting to defend.⁶²

This pattern is repeated with Oswald, only this time the audience has direct proof that Goneril instigated Lear's mistreatment. At the time Lear abuses Oswald, he has no knowledge of this conspiracy; and

so again, Lear defies the law of decorum he is trying so hard to have others adhere to in regard to himself. Although Oswald "has provoked him by ignoring his royalty, calling him, 'my lady's father' and neglecting to serve him efficiently,"⁶³ Lear still "ought not to treat Oswald like a menial."⁶⁴ Oswald "is . . . almost certainly accepted as gentle" for "he wears a sword and is Goneril's steward."⁶⁵ Despite his contemptuous disregard for the king, he is within his rights in objecting to "the names which Lear heaps on him."⁶⁶

And if it was not considered permissible for one of royal rank to strike a gentle person of much lower rank, what can be said for Kent who trips Oswald shortly after Lear beats him? Since Kent is disguised as a commoner, his offense would be considered unpardonable because it defies order and degree. He is, according to Goneril's description, one of Lear's "disorder'd rabble" (1.4.253-254) who would "Make servants of their betters." It appears as if Kent's offense goes unpunished; but he pays for it later on when Regan puts him in the stocks for striking Oswald. By this action, Regan demonstrates that she possesses her sister's manipulative cunning. Gloucester tries to prevent this insult to Lear's honor, warning Regan that "the King must take it ill" (2.2.141); for her "purpos'd low correction / Is such as basest and contemned'st wretches" (2.2.138-139) receive, "For pilf'rings and most common trespasses" (2.2.138-140). Regan is resourceful enough to find a legal excuse for her action, claiming that her "sister may receive it much more worse / To have her gentleman abus'd, assaulted, / For following her affairs" (2.2.144-146).

Like her sister, Regan also manages to convey the idea that she works within the framework of the law. She uses as an alibi, the order of priorities advocated by many renaissance ethicists, placing monarch and country before parents and family. Lear is no longer king; he is merely Regan's father. Goneril is now queen or joint ruler over Lear.

Regan pretends to protest that siding with Lear would offend Goneril and the divine office she represents. Her so-called concern for the laws of deference is fraudulently exposed when she and Cornwall mercilessly extrude Gloucester's eyes.

The question of rank is relevant also to the "punishment" of Gloucester. Though noblemen could be, and were, put under attainder and executed for treason, they could not be hanged, as Regan suggested, and certainly could not be blinded. Neither were they properly subject to the summary "justice" meted out by Cornwall (who was himself uneasy about it [3.7.24-7]). The blinding of Gloucester is shocking dramatically, humanly, and socially.⁶⁷

Cornwall may be uneasy about the blinding but Regan is not. Not content with piercing only one of Gloucester's eyes, she instigates Cornwall to gouge out the other. A further bit of social irony underscores this horror since Gloucester also happens to be Regan's and Cornwall's host. So much said for Regan's ghoulish observance of the social amenities.

Goneril and Regan delude themselves, never realizing Edmund has a better understanding of their motives than they do of his. Each sister suspects that the other desires Edmund. But neither believes that he is playing one off against the other, manipulating the situation to further his ambitions. Goneril's and Regan's deluded misjudgment of Edmund provides a salient contrast with their accurate description of

Lear's lack of self-knowledge in the first scene. A little later on, Goneril arrogantly presumes that she knows Lear's heart (1.4.329). But how can Goneril know his heart when she lacks one herself? A "dog-hearted"⁶⁸ or "fierce, pitiless"⁶⁹ soul, she can anticipate Lear's reactions, but cannot intuit his thoughts or empathize with his feelings.

Goneril and Regan are unable to distinguish between premeditated reason and spontaneous intuition because they have fallen from Grace; without Grace, there is no heart; without heart, there is no intuition; and without intuition, there is no insight. The recipient of Grace receives that wisdom or perception born of the intermarriage of heart and mind. This intermarriage of thought and feeling is foreign to Goneril and Regan. They do not perceive, but rather diabolically calculate. Heilman aptly calls their impetuous line of thinking, "madness in reason,"⁷⁰ implying a contrast with Lear's "Reason in madness" (4.6.173).

Self-righteous Pride and Intellectual Pride

Goneril disclaims complicity for Lear's abandonment: "Tis his own blame; hath put himself from rest, / And needs taste his folly" (2.4.288-289). Regan echoes her sister's sentiments: "For his particular, I'll receive him gladly, / But not one follower" (2.4.290-291). Even after their craft accomplishes its baneful purpose, driving Lear away, Goneril and Regan continue to rationalize their perfidy, claiming they never deserted him, but rather that he abandoned them. The stipulation that they made about his retainers, they argue, was for the

welfare of the country. If Lear did not wish to stay and partake of their hospitality that was his own choice and fault.

In justifying their mistreatment of Lear, each sister wishes to convince the other of the righteousness of her cause. Their pretense is a form of mutual self-deception. Goneril and Regan would like to believe they are acting within the sanctioned limits of their monarchical roles. They differ from Edmund who, while deluding himself to some extent, does admit his villainy in no uncertain terms. Paradoxically, this admission makes him more of an honest malefactor than either of the sisters. He possesses a certain degree of self-awareness which they lack.⁷¹

Many sixteenth century theologians considered self-righteousness the worst form of pride.⁷² Much like Angelo in Measure for Measure, Goneril's and Regan's puritan persona masks a self-righteous pride which hypocritically embodies what it condemns. As Elton suggests, these two characters may have been used to undermine Puritan hypocrisy.⁷³

One instance of sexual hypocrisy already mentioned is Goneril's attack on Lear's "debosh'd" knights. Her hypocrisy is implied by Edgar's slur on Oswald, "a serviceable villain / As duteous to the vices of thy mistress / As badness would desire" (4.6.249-251). Oswald's accommodating demeanor has sexual overtones, implying that Goneril is an adulteress at the time she accuses Lear's knights of debauchery. Her sexual hypocrisy is not surprising, for as an ingrate, she is incapable of either fidelity or honesty.

Goneril's and Regan's self-righteous hypocrisy is also a form of intellectual pride or pseudo-logic which appears to have a utilitarian purpose. Attempting to persuade Lear that the retention of his retainers is wasteful and extravagant, Goneril reasons that she has a large number of servants who could easily attend to his needs. Goneril's suggestion appears to be logical, pragmatic, and most important of all—frugal. This frugality enhances her puritan persona. But Goneril's supposed frugality magnifies her self-righteous hypocrisy. She is more extravagant and wasteful than her father. Later on, she contradicts her earlier position, asserting that her manor is too small to lodge his large retinue. Expediency rather than frugality is Goneril's main concern.

Extravagant and self-indulgent, she prides herself on who she is, and what she owns; she lives in a spacious palace, retains a large number of servants, and attires herself in alluring raiment. Her frugality is arbitrary; she is pragmatically utilitarian only when it suits her which means, she is frugal for Lear and not for herself, something he points out to her.

O! reason not the need; our basest beggars
 Are in the poorest thing superfluous:
 Man's life is cheap as beast's. Thou art a lady;
 If only to go warm were gorgeous,
 Why, nature needs not what thou gorgeous wear'st,
 Which scarcely keeps thee warm. (2.4.262-268)

Lear accuses Goneril of hypocrisy for dismissing his retainers as superfluous. It is Goneril who is superfluous, her gorgeous raiment is seductive, serving no practical purpose. From a practical standpoint, Lear's entourage is superfluous since Goneril's servants could attend to his

needs. But Lear associates his retinue with honor, and to him, honor is rational, not superfluous; honor reflects order and degree, "reason not need" is his priority.

Adherence to reason not need reflects the principle of plenitude, the belief that nature was a generous, abundant, and expansive expression of God's infinite creativity. Neoplatonic in origin, the belief in plenitude appeared in the writings of Pseudo-Dionysius, unknown mystic of the fifth century. It later became a pronounced feature of medieval theology. This principle:

. . . constitutes the essence of his [Pseudo-Dionysius] conception of the divine attribute of "love" or "goodness," anthropomorphic terms which usually mean with him, as they appear frequently to mean in medieval theology, not compassion, nor the alleviation of human suffering, but the immeasurable and inexhaustible productive energy, the fecundity of an Absolute not conceived as truly possessing emotions similar to man's. God's "love," in other words, in medieval writers consists primarily in the creative or generative than in the redemptive or providential office of deity. . . .⁷⁴

Furthermore, the "Absolute's own infinite 'superabundance'" reverberated throughout the Chain of Being, "extending to all possible things."⁷⁵

Modeled upon the redemptive principle, gratitude and Grace exalted sacrificial participation through the practice of poverty and self-abnegation, whereas the generative principle which plenitude embodied encouraged a creative participation of all God's creatures according to degree and kind.

Lear subscribes to this belief in plenitude. Measured by this standard, Goneril is niggardly rather than frugal. Lear attacks the one-sided manner in which Goneril practices her life style rather than

her life style itself. He believes that as a creature of God, Goneril has a right to partake of God's abundance; but so does he. Lear protests against being unfairly deprived of the same benefits Goneril enjoys. As royalty, Goneril has received more of God's abundance than those who are placed lower on the Chain of Being; and so should Lear, as her equal in rank. In Piers the Plowman, Willian Langland condemns "those to whom God gives most, give least to others,"⁷⁶ a fitting description of Goneril whose parsimony toward Lear profanes Divine Providence.

Vanity

Lear's "reason not need" speech not only reveals what kind of attire Goneril wears, but also suggests her motives for wearing it. Never fooled by Goneril's persona, Kent succinctly sizes her up as the allegorical morality vice, Lady Vanity.⁷⁷ Goneril's pride in her beauty is related to her licentiousness, her scanty attire intimating that she dresses to entice. Goneril's alluring raiment undermines the credibility of her puritan persona all the more, for she is neither frugal, practical, nor chaste.

Avarice

Neither Goneril nor Regan is content with what they have received. Unappeasable greed drives each to acquire as much as she can for herself alone. Unsatisfied with half of a kingdom, they want all of it. If the sisters are to gratify their greed, they must eliminate each other. Rumors of impending civil war⁷⁸ suggest gratification of this mutual covetousness as an impending reality. Goneril's and Regan's desire

for civil war conflicts with Lear's original intention to divide the kingdom before his death and avoid "future strife" (1.1.43). If Lear was irrational in denouncing Cordelia and Kent, the same thing cannot be said about his desire to preserve concordia.

Civil war never materializes but not because Goneril and Regan have had a change of heart. The sisters rationalize that they must first rid themselves of Lear as a potential threat to their power; but as mentioned, their justifications are pretense. With the arrival of Cordelia's troops, this potential threat becomes an actuality. Since strength in numbers would fortify their chances of victory, Goneril and Regan continue to maintain their specious alliance. Yet this alliance cannot last. Heilman points out that they:

. . . are not joined by a common cause which transcends the individual but are allied by reasoned considerations of advantage; but the reasoners are not immune to the nonrational, and, since their nonrational impulses find no discipline in a nonrational loyalty such as that which binds Kent to Lear, the partnership disintegrates. Each goes her own rational way, driven by her own impulse and scheming against the other precisely as both schemed against Cordelia and Lear.⁷⁹

Envy and Wrath

Inflamed by the possibility that the recently widowed Regan might lure Edmund away from her, Goneril rashly risks losing her portion of the kingdom and grandiose dreams of simple sovereignty. Goneril's envy surpasses her greed. Passion takes precedence over politics when she breaks her alliance with Regan, knowing it will place Cordelia's troops in an advantageous position. Unappeasable envy pushes her to the limits, culminating in sororicide.

Goneril's wrath is as implacable as her envy. Regan's rage matches that of her sister. Both are possessed by a maniacal fury upon learning that Gloucester secretly plans to align himself with Cordelia's forces. Goneril and Regan's vindictive reaction to this information results in their most barbaric atrocity, the extrusion of Gloucester's eyes. Goneril masterminds this execrable act, and Cornwall executes it. Cornwall hesitates to perform this atrocity, not because of any moral considerations, but because Gloucester is of noble birth. The ignoble murder of Gloucester might create a precedent for disregarding the priorities of rank. But Regan's bloodthirsty fury goads him on. Not content with only one eye, she savagely demands that he pluck out the second as well. Finally to top off her rage, Regan stabs the valorous servant in the back as he attempts to thwart them.

Sloth

Two types of sloth were mentioned: idleness and ambition, the first type related to the nonuse of God-given talents, and the second, to the abuse of them. Ambition consumes Goneril and Regan; as a result, they misdirect their energy. Energy of this type is counterproductive, adverse to learning. Paul Jorgensen observes that Goneril and Regan:

. . . have absolutely no inclination toward learning anything, particularly if learning will prove painful. Their attitude toward learning is best summed up in Goneril's advice to her husband: "Never afflict yourself to more of it" (I.iv.313). And when Albany advises Goneril, "See thyself, devil" (IV.11.59), she replies only, "O vain fool!"⁸⁰

Goneril and Regan disdain learning because it is an internalized process aimed at transformation, whereas ambition is an externalized

process aimed at acquisition. Rather than recreating themselves through the gift of reason, they desire to recreate the world in their own image. Goneril's creation of chaos and Regan's parody of Genesis are the odious effects of a titanic ambition which seeks to usurp the power of Godhead.

The Monstrous Effects of Ingratitude

Regression and Universal Discord

To modern audiences unacquainted with the law of deference, Lear's initial reaction to his daughters' behavior might seem exaggerated. But when Regan puts Kent in the stocks, Lear echoes contemporary sentiment condemning this breach of decorum "as worse than murder [murder]" (2.4.22). While this judgment sounds harsh to modern ears, renaissance audiences would use it to explain Goneril's and Regan's earlier filial impiety as the cause of their later savage abominations. The classical belief that the ingrate was potentially capable of every crime in part influenced this stringent judgment of filial impiety; but more important was the contemporary belief which attributed the source of evil to the ungrateful attitude rather than the relative worth of the spurned benefit. Goneril and Regan are guilty of figurative patricide, this judgment determined more by their irreverence toward Lear than the grandiosity of his gift.

Goneril's and Regan's debasement can be divided into two phases. Mental cruelty characterizes the first stage of the degenerative process since the torment they inflict upon Lear, at this point, is psychological rather than physical. After the second act, their method of torture

and changes. Wanton brutality supersedes mental cruelty. During the first stage of deterioration, Goneril and Regan resemble rational animals, while the second phase demonstrates that they have regressed to the more primitive level of unthinking organisms.

Goneril's and Regan's abandonment of Lear marks the turning point between these two phases. This deranged act is of a hybrid nature, sharing some of the characteristics of both stages. Since they never directly abandon Lear but manipulate the situation so that he is driven to leave them, their method is a form of psychological warfare illustrating the first phase. Like the Chinese water torture, drip by drip, they erode away his sanity. The first phase ends when they make no attempt to stop Lear from leaving. Goneril and Regan expect a man of Lear's age, breeding, and unstable mental condition to die. Instead of physically abusing him themselves, they allow the storm to do for them what they will later do to others.

After Act II the sisters complete their regression, no longer content to let the storm do their dirty work. Gloucester seeks Kent out in the middle of the third act to warn him that the sisters are now actively conspiring to rid themselves of Lear forever. The mental cruelty Goneril and Regan inflict upon Lear is as demented as their later physical brutality. Appalled by the way Goneril has tormented her aged father, Albany lambastes her:

Wisdom and goodness to the vile seems vile;
 Filths savour but themselves. What have you done?
 Tigers, not daughters, what have you perform'd?
 A father and a gracious aged man,
 Whose reverence even the head-lugg'd bear would lick,

Most barbarous, most degenerate! have you madded. (4.2.38-43)

The animal gratitude motif reveals Goneril is more debased than the simple "head-lugg'd bear" who true to its nature licks the hand that feeds it. Rather Goneril is a ferocious tiger who tears off and devours the hand which feeds it. This image calls to mind an earlier remark by the Fool who warns Lear: "The hedde-sparrow fed the cuckoo so long, / That it's had it head bit off by it young" (1.4.213-214). Lear echoes this devouring motif, crying: ". . . filial ingratitude! / Is it not as this mouth should tear this hand / For lifting food to 't?" (3.4.15-16). In contrast to her devouring sisters, the compassionate Cordelia observes that a savage storm would move her to provide shelter and warmth for "mine enemy's dog. / Though he had bit me" (4.7.36-37).

After Gloucester confesses he abetted Lear in his escape, Regan lives up to this ferocious animal imagery. She and Cornwall gouge out Gloucester's eyes. In his defense of Lear, Gloucester ironically portends his own fate, declaring he:

would not see
Thy cruel nails pluck out his poor old eyes;
Nor thy fierce sister his anointed flesh
Rash boarish fangs. (3.7.54-57)

Regan initially prescribes hanging to punish Gloucester's disloyalty. Her prescription is designed to humiliate Gloucester since hanging was considered a base form of execution unbefitting those of noble birth. Hanging was reserved either for the most hardened of criminals or those of common birth. Regan's prescription is neither sadistic nor barbaric

enough for Goneril who suggests a more fitting alternative, namely, to "Pluck out his eyes" (3.7.5). While initially not as ghoulishly precocious as Goneril, Regan's later dissatisfaction with only one of Gloucester's eyes reveals that she has caught up to her sister; it is she who tells Cornwall, "One side will mock another; th' other too" (3.7.69).

Cornwall's longtime servant recoils in horror at this depraved prescription, and attempts to avert this outrage.

Hold your hand, my Lord.
I have serv'd you ever since I was a child,
But better service have I never done you
Than now bid you hold. (3.7.70-73)

Since the aristocratic code considered commoners incapable of loyalty, Cornwall uses this belief as a pretext for branding his compassionate servant a treasonous ingrate. It is ironic that Cornwall reacts to his servant's entreaty by calling him, "My villain" (3.7.76), "perhaps punning on" "serf," "the old meaning of the word,"⁸¹ for he is the villain and his servant, the noble. Cornwall's disloyalty toward Lear, his father-in-law and feudal lord,⁸² and barbarism toward Gloucester prove basely treasonous in contrast to his so-called "villain's" humane ethic.

Enraged at the servant for trying to dissuade her husband from plucking out Gloucester's other eye, Regan calls him a "dog" (3.7.73). With chivalric deference, he replies: "If you did wear a beard upon your chin / I'd shake it on this quarrel" (3.7.74-75). The servant will not engage in a quarrel with Regan because she is a woman. But

Regan is neither a woman, a human being, nor even a beast, but rather a monstrous fiend who responds to the servant's gallantry by stabbing him in the back.

Regan's backstabbing proves she lacks valor, the other feudal virtue denoting aristocratic gratitude. She and Cornwall react to the servant in base fashion, losing self-control, while the servant's following challenge to his master is uttered with aristocratic aplomb: "Nay, then, come on, and take the chance of anger" (3.7.77) or "run the risk of fighting while angry."⁸³ Regan's and Cornwall's cowardice and lack of composure are more characteristic of the peasant than the aristocrat. Atypical of the craven stereotype attributed to his class, the noble servant undauntedly draws a sword against his master, knowing his doom is imminent regardless of whether he wins or loses.

Inversion of roles is a paradox, disorder the instrument for upholding order. The servant's unorthodox rebellion against an established but degenerate order enables a more humane regimen to assert its prerogative. Although the aristocratic code excludes those of common birth from engaging in honorable combat, in this instance, the servant has a right to challenge his tyrannous master because he serves as an instrument of a higher order. The inverted relationship between coerl and master is a metaphor for the disruption of concordia, the pervasive effect of Goneril's and Regan's ingratitude on the social structure. Another metaphor for their pervasive ingratitude is the storm. This tempest ravages the kingdom through its abandoned king, the desecrated Lear, symbol of divine order. From so-called civilized society the

sisters' unbounded virulence spreads to the world of nature, and the result is universal discord.⁸⁴

Lust as a Metaphor for Regression

The play contains a plethora of misogynistic allusions to lust, copulation, and adultery. Lear's rage at being abused by his two daughters partially explains these diatribes. Although Englishwomen appear to have had more freedom than their continental sisters, the stigma of Eve still persisted. In theory, Puritan exaltation of holy wedlock established an equality of sorts between the sexes, condemning adultery equally for men and women. But a comparison between the adulterous Gloucester and Lear's adulterous daughters reveals that, in practice, women were more severely condemned. Shakespeare views the adulterous woman with suspicion and revulsion. His portrayal of the adulterous man does not reflect this same aversion. Gloucester is an insensitive fool, but not without some merit, despite his sexual transgressions.

Yet the adulterous man is severely chastised in the blinding of Gloucester. Edgar reminds the dying Edmund that retributive law is exacting in using him to punish Gloucester.

The Gods are just, and of our pleasant vices
Make instruments to plague us;
The dark and vicious place where thee be got
Cost him [Gloucester] his eyes. (5.3.169-172)

This harsh assessment of Gloucester's sin previews the Puritan attitude toward adultery. On one level, the gouging of Gloucester's eyes seems to support a retributive punishment for his adultery. But on a deeper level, this execrable act is aimed at arousing audience

sympathy for him. The empathy we feel for Gloucester suggests Shakespeare was undermining rather than supporting the Puritan position.

Although Gloucester's adultery is condemned as the cause of his ingratitude, he defies the law of regression. He changes for the better, whereas Goneril and Regan do not. His transformation can be attributed to a double standard that execrated the adulterous woman more severely than her male counterpart. Gloucester is not consumed with copulation in the way that Goneril and Regan are. This dissimilarity cannot be attributed to their age difference because even in his youth, Gloucester regarded fornication as a diversion rather than an obsession. As he tells Kent, there was "good sport at" Edmund's "making" (1.1.22).

Although Christian doctrine condemned Gloucester as an adulterous ingrate, he would not necessarily be adjudged so by secular standards. A fusion of classical and feudal virtues, the code of honor execrated ingratitude as strongly as Christian ethics. But in many respects this ethic diverged from Christian values, and its treatment of ingratitude reflected this disparity. A double standard prevailed for illegitimacy, and sexual promiscuity was tolerated for the nobility.

If Gloucester fails by Christian standards, he compensates for this sin by possessing many virtues which were exalted by the code of honor. Gloucester's defense of Lear attests to his loyalty and valor. These two virtues are requisite to the feudal concept of gratitude. Furthermore, the possession of these two virtues confirms Gloucester's greatness of heart or magnanimity, a classical virtue much admired by

renaissance noblemen. Paradoxically, by secular standards, Gloucester remains noble, while by Christian ethics, he is base.

Despite his adulterous ingratitude, Gloucester elicits more sympathy than the equally adulterous Goneril and Regan. He embodies a greater number of virtues. Possessing no virtues, Goneril and Regan more closely resemble simple morality abstractions than complex characters. They are portrayed less sympathetically because, as women, their guilt is determined by the absence of chastity and fidelity. Without these, other virtues are inconsequential. Because these virtues are the sole determinants of a woman's probity, it follows that a woman's ingratitude would manifest itself as lust. This belief which implies women were more inclined to lust than men explains why coitus is an obsession for Goneril and Regan and mere sport for Gloucester. As a man, he succumbs to lust, while they, as women, become it. Norman Council relates that:

Most writers on the subject are agreed that a woman's chief obligation is to protect the honour implicit in her chastity, for she is incapable of positively gaining honour by performing virtuous deeds. Indeed, protecting that chastity is often thought possible only if the woman remains obedient to appropriate male authority, for unaided she is morally incapable of preserving her unique "honour."⁸⁵

Cordelia's attempt to convince Lear of her probity exemplifies the association of virtue with virginity and chastity. In defense of her honor, she points out that:

It is no vicious blot, murther or foulness,
No unchaste action, or dishonour'd step,
That hath depriv'd me of your grace and favour. (1.1.226-228)

At first glance, Cordelia appears to be referring to five separate vices. Two of these, "vicious blot" and "dishonour'd step," are general

allusions. The other three vices, "murther," "foulness," and "unchaste action," while appearing separate and distinct from each other, actually refer to the same sin.

According to Joseph, Dr. Hilda Hume "has advanced substantial evidence for reading murder, with the sense: "amorous sporting,"⁸⁶ and foulness as a synonym for "unchastity."⁸⁷ Since Cordelia only alludes to this one vice, her statement might be interpreted to mean that she is innocent of unchastity, the "dishonour'd step" which would cast a "vicious blot" upon her honor and besmear her family name. It is significant that Cordelia defends her chastity since its absence meant she would be guilty of ingratitude.

Because lust was the primary cause of degeneration in women, Shakespeare conforms to the beliefs of his time by using it as a metaphor for Goneril's and Regan's regression. Furthermore, as a physical rather than a cerebral sin, lust best emblemizes an advanced form of degeneration, lower than the beast, and beyond redemption. Obsessive lust is the root cause of many of Goneril's crimes. Goneril intends to murder Albany so that she can marry Edmund. She eliminates her sister to remove any threat of competition for Edmund. And she kills herself when Albany thwarts her plan to possess Edmund. Adultery is always on her mind, as it is for Regan.

Regan has every intention of engaging in intercourse with Edmund, but Goneril outmaneuvers her. By this intention, according to scripture, she brands herself an adulterous ingrate although coitus is unconsumated. "But I say unto you," Jesus warns, "That whosoever looketh on a woman

to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matt. 6:28). The desire for illicit relations was condemned along with the actual adulterous act.⁸⁸

Regan displays a pattern of soliciting, lewd in its provocative-ness. She propositions Oswald, offering to love him much if he would include a letter from her along with that of his mistress. In her letter Regan informs Edmund of her husband's death, hoping to win his favor and gain the advantage over her sister. One might assume that Goneril has committed adultery with Edmund, but it is never overtly stated. During the discussion that she and Edmund have on their journey back from Regan's palace, Goneril expresses her hope that: "Our wishes on the way / May prove effects" (4.2.14-15). The word "wishes" either could apply to Goneril's desire to consummate her lust or murder her husband.⁸⁹ In all probability, Goneril is referring to the latter; shortly thereafter, she tells Edmund that she will send Oswald to him at a later date to express her "command," implying her wish to murder Albany.

Lewdly bidding Edmund farewell, Goneril tells him: "Decline your head: this kiss, if it durst speak, / Would stretch thy spirits up into the air. / Conceive, and fare thee well" (4.2.22-24). Romantic adoration hardly inspires Goneril to yearn for the lips of her beloved. She clearly wants something more than either holy rite or sentimentality. For Goneril, a kiss is not a thing of exquisite beauty to be savored for its own intrinsic value, but rather related to something else apart from itself. Consumed by greed, Goneril can only relish a kiss for

what it can do to Edmund, namely, arouse his "spirits" or passion. Albert Bermel believes that Goneril's suggestiveness could also be a ploy on her part to inspire him to fight better with her as the prize, so she thinks.⁹⁰

The word "stretch" suggests arousal in a more general sense, and to erection in a more specific sense. Goneril intends her kiss to stretch Edmund's spirits or penis up in the air. Spirits can also mean semen.⁹¹ Erection coupled with semen implies ejaculation. Furthermore, the term spirits is linked to the word conceive which also has two meanings. Conceive either could mean "to understand," or it might refer to fertilization.⁹² By arousing Edmund to the point of an erection, Goneril wants him to conceive or understand that her kiss is a prelude to future assignations. Or, if "conceive" refers to fertilization and is linked to "spirits" as ejaculated semen, it might be underscoring Goneril's measure of a true man as a virile animal, rather than her desire for motherhood; cold-blooded self-interest hardly moves her in that nurturing and self-sacrificing direction.

Shortly thereafter, she compares Albany to Edmund, commenting on "the difference of man and man. / To thee a woman's services are due: / A fool usurps my bed" (4.2.26-28). Attracted to Edmund's animal magnetism and narcissism, and disdainful of Albany's compassion and sensitivity, Goneril interprets these qualities as weaknesses. For her, Albany is a "milk-liver'd man! / That bear'st a cheek for blows, a head for wrongs" (4.2.50-51).

To use modern terminology, Goneril is attracted to a stud. And since a stud can be compared to a bronco buster, he is the perfect archetype for Goneril and Regan. Lear says: "Down from the waist they are Centaurs, / Though women all above" (4.6.123-124). As women, Goneril and Regan are supposed to be compliant, receptive objects of pursuit. But they are active, aggressive, and intent on conquest, like the centaur who epitomizes unbridled masculine sexual energy. Devoid of maternal tenderness, devotion to their father, or compassion for their fellow men, all so-called feminine qualities, Goneril and Regan have become men in women's bodies. Their masculinity, a gross perversion of nature, upsets the inherent order and balance of the relationship between the sexes, illustrating another dire consequence of defying retributive law.

In addition to the centaur image, the distaff and sword also connote the inversion of sexual roles since they were the respective insignias of the feminine and masculine sexes.⁹³ Telling Edmund that she "must change arms at home, and give the distaff / Into my husband's hands" (4.2.17-18) is Goneril's way of saying that she intends to give her distaff or femininity to Albany by seizing the phallic sword of masculine initiative from him.

Prior to ensnaring their victim, Goneril and Regan are akin to stampeding centaurs or slashing swords, forging ahead to seize and conquer the object of their passion. Lear suggests afterwards that after the conquest they become even more deadly.

Down from the waist they are Centaurs,
 Though women all above:
 Beneath is all the fiend's: there's hell, there's darkness,
 There is the sulphurous pit—burning, scalding,
 Stench, consumption; (4.6.123-128)

This passage traces the degeneration of Goneril and Regan in microcosm. By thriving on the region beneath the girdle, the malefic sisters relinquish those upper areas or centers that God seeks to awaken through Grace. This move from higher to lower centers debases them from human beings capable of attaining oneness, to centaurs, and finally, to fiends. Continuous preoccupation with, and activation of, this lower region is fiendish, engendering complete identification with the pudendum, all creative energy now directed toward it. The pudendum or sulphurous pit is a literal and figurative metaphor for hell above the earth, and now below in the life to come. A living hell resulting in physical and mental deterioration befalls the incontinent man ensnared by this Venus fly-trap.

This sulphurous pit is consumptive, the victim lured, overwhelmed, and finally consumed by sexual passion. More consuming is the consumptive disease copulation engenders. The location of the sulphurous pit below the waist implies the consumptive disease to which Lear alludes is not tuberculosis but syphilis. Both diseases eat up, choke, and consume their victims. The word, "sulphurous" was associated with virulence, evoking the image of a malignantly pervasive disease.⁹⁴ Furthermore, sulphur has a putrid stench as does syphilis in its final stages. Since it was believed that a burning, scalding, consumptive stench permeated the infernal regions, the rank sulphurous odor reeking from the

puendum connects it to the underworld. Succumbing to this sulphurous pit doomed the libidinous man to a living hell culminating in madness and death, and afterwards, transporting him to an external inferno, damning his immortal soul.

Syphilitic imagery is also suggested elsewhere by Lear's imprecation to the Gods to invoke the "nimble lightnings" to "dart" their "blinding flames / Into her scornful eyes!" and "Infect her beauty" by summoning the "fen-suck'd fogs, drawn by the pow'rful sun, / To fall an blister her!" (2.4.162-165). Lear attacks Goneril's pride, determined to infect the beauty which enshrouds her diseased body, masking it from those she would ensnare and befoul. Goneril ironically speaks of herself when she accuses Lear's men of infecting her court "with their manners" "epicurism and lust" (1.4.240-241).

Goneril and Regan are a syphilitic disease. They infect men with their syphilitic bodies and contaminate the commonwealth with their syphilitic minds. On the one hand, coitus causes syphilitic madness. On the other, heartless rationality becomes the paradigm for a social madness, inciting wayward subjects to follow their coldblooded example.

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that Goneril and Regan embody prototypical concepts of ingratitude. On a personal level, their development and destinies exemplify the processes of conglomeration and regression. In the earlier stages of degeneration, the sisters' ingratitude is a composite sin comprised of six of the D.S. But this process of

conglomeration eventually wanes as a consequence of their moral debasement. At this point, lust becomes their predominant vice, underscoring the finality of their degenerate destinies.

On a larger scale, the pernicious repercussions of Goneril's and Regan's ingratitude extend beyond the personal sphere. The sisters' refusal to fulfill their monarchical obligations as Vicars of Christ magnifies their malefic influence. They make a mockery of the divine laws they are supposed to represent and execute. Universal in scope, their lawlessness disjoins the links in the Chain of Being, disrupting concordia and upsetting the balance of nature.

Yet Goneril's and Regan's conformity to the prototype should not be interpreted as an unequivocal endorsement of traditional concepts. As our exploration progresses, it will become evident that they are the only major characters who embody the prototype. The ambiguous disparity of the play's ingrates implies that these differences serve to undermine uniform punishment of this sin. Our antipathy for Goneril and Regan, sympathy for Lear and Gloucester, and mixed reaction to Edmund, support a relative rather than absolute standard of justice. In subsequent chapters, the magnitude of Goneril's and Regan's sin will serve to gauge the ingratitude of Lear, Gloucester, and Edmund.

CHAPTER III

EDMUND'S INGRATITUDE: ILLEGITIMACY AND AMBIGUITY

Edmund too is an ingrate guilty of filial impiety. But in contrast to Goneril and Regan, he is neither of royal birth nor legitimate parentage. Although Edmund's ingratitude will be explored briefly in relation to the D.S., a full analysis would reveal that his transgression conforms to the traditional pattern of conglomeration. Renaissance theology would regard Edmund as a special kind of ingrate because of his illegitimate origin; for this reason, his ingratitude will be examined in relation to it.

From there it will be shown to what degree Edmund's transgression conforms to traditional theology which, at least, regarded the bastard as more prone to ingratitude, and at most, as predetermined to it by his base birth. Because sectarian differences determined the degree of harshness by which the sin of adultery was judged, these will be pointed out when pertinent. But it should be kept in mind that despite sectarian differences, all groups uniformly practiced a double standard for illegitimacy and ingratitude.

Edmund conforms to the traditional stereotype for ingrates in general, and illegitimate ingrates in particular, in all respects except one: his last minute deathbed transformation. This metamorphosis is contrived, requiring a large dose of a willing suspension of disbelief

on the part of the audience since Edmund has had no time to gradually develop toward the good. Furthermore, Edmund's spur of the moment transformation is not in keeping with the play's otherwise flawless tragic style.

Why would Shakespeare choose to mar the play's otherwise perfect tragic symmetry by including an event incongruous with its internal structure? The second part of this chapter will explore the implications of Edmund's transformation and enigmatic destiny in relation to three conflicting standards: the aristocratic code of honor, the concept of gratitude, and the Doctrine of Grace. This juxtaposition sets off Grace as the superior system by undermining the following aspects of the other two principles which contradict it: magnanimity, retributive law, and the double standard toward illegitimacy.

Illegitimacy and Traditional Doctrine

The double standard practiced toward illegitimacy and ingratitude invites us to explore the extent to which Edmund's base birth causes his ingratitude, and how it conforms to the double standard. According to Bridget Gellert Lyons, Edmund's ingratitude "is more comprehensible than that of Lear's bad daughters because his depravity is largely explained by his illegitimacy. He is what so-called 'natural' children were supposed to be."¹ "Edmund's behavior" is "recognizable also in terms of dramatic tradition"² in that "the Elizabethan stage abounds with bastards . . . who are envious and villainous because they are dispossessed and whose actions reveal the 'secret blemish' of their minds."³

Legal treatises of the Middle Ages helped to disseminate this view of illegitimacy. These treatises, "often compendia of commonplace morality," demonstrated "the extent to which traditional moral thinking made the bastard susceptible of emblematic treatment."⁴ Up until the final minutes of his life, Edmund's character and actions correspond to this emblematic definition. The bastard was judged according to a double standard, the character type stereotyped rather than individualized. With the exception of royal illegitimate progeny, all bastards were condemned as evildoers.

Edgar refers to the traditional stereotype after mortally wounding the illegitimate Edmund.

The Gods are just, and of our pleasant vices
Make instruments to plague us;
The dark and vicious place where thee he got
Cost him his eyes. (5.3.169-172)

To which Edmund responds: "Th' hast spoken right, 'tis true" (5.3.172). In his introductory monologue, Edmund attempts to justify the illicit circumstances of his begetting. But at this point, he no longer has anything to gain from self-delusion, and agrees that "the dark and vicious place" spawned his ingratitude.

It was pointed out that traditional theology regarded ingratitude as an inherited sin. Similarly, Lear's following diatribe against Goneril reflects this view.

But yet thou art my flesh, my blood, my daughter;
Or rather a disease that's in my flesh.
Which I must needs call mine; thou art a boil,
A plague-sore, or embossed carbuncle,
In my corrupted blood. (2.4. 219-223)

Conforming to this concept of inherited ingratitude, Gloucester's sin is similarly passed on to Edmund. In both cases Divine Providence uses ungrateful offspring to exact retribution upon ungrateful parents. Retribution comes to Lear in the form of madness and to Gloucester as ocular extrusion.

Some Puritans might have regarded Gloucester's harsh punishment as just since they exalted the state of wedlock and advocated severe penalties for adultery. The Sixth Commandment forbidding adultery sanctified the nuptial rite; and Gen. 9:7 deemed coitus within the bounds of matrimony a natural act: "And you, be ye fruitful and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein."

Conversely, adultery was a sacrilege, an unnatural act which contaminated the sinful couple who thereby infected any forthcoming progeny. Reflecting this view, Lear warns Regan if he knew she was not glad to see him, he "would divorce" himself "from thy mother's tomb, / Sepulchring an adult'ress" (2.4.128-129). At this point, Lear believes adultery to be the primal cause of ingratitude.

In The Last Testament of Wills, Henry Swinburne subscribes to a common renaissance belief that bastards are:

. . . the brood . . . commonly infected with the leprosie of the Sires disease: and being encouraged with the example and patterne of their fathers filthinesse, they are not onely prone to follow their sinful steppes, but do sometimes exceede them and others in all kinds of wickedness.

This description applies to Edmund. Not only has he inherited his father's propensity for adulterous ingratitude, but he also far exceeds Gloucester in the extent and depravity of his thanklessness.

As mentioned, the coming of Christ expunged the curse of inherited ingratitude as an inevitable consequence of Original Sin. The gift of Grace, if accepted, rescinded the curse of ingratitude. While all mankind shared the legacy of inherited ingratitude, those conceived in holy wedlock were in a better position to have this curse expiated than their illegitimate brethren. Because an adulterous union was unsanctified, conception was consummated in a graceless state. A child conceived in a graceless state would most likely remain immured in it in contrast to his legitimate counterpart sired in holy wedlock and sanctified by Grace.

The harsh Puritan attitude toward adultery was based on a literal interpretation of Old Testament Law. Deut. 23:22 prescribes the death penalty "for both parties"⁶ and Ezek. 16:40 similarly advocates "stoning."⁷ In "an earlier period" (Gen. 38:24), "burning was threatened for Tamar, a betrothed widow, by Judah."⁸ The severity of Old Testament law toward adulterous ingratitude had long been established as precedent. Since adultery was adjudged as "a crime akin to murder,"⁹ some Puritans felt justified in advocating the death penalty for adultery. "Among the Puritans endorsing retribution against adultery was Thomas Cartwright, a leading exponent of Presbyterianism, who insisted on capital punishment."¹⁰ This severe penalty demonstrates the extent to which Old Testament law influenced the Puritan ethic.

The gouging out of Gloucester's eyes dramatizes another Puritan alternative for adultery. Despite the savage cruelty of this act, Thomas Becon recommends "blinding . . . as a punishment for adultery" and

insists "that English law was too lenient."¹¹ Whereas other Christian sects might believe that Edmund was more prone to ingratitude than legitimate offspring, Puritan ethic maintained he was not more prone to this sin, but rather predisposed to it.

Again, Old Testament law was used in support of the belief that the bastard was contaminated. Deut. 23:2 provides an example exerting a noticeable influence upon renaissance theology: "A bastard shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord." Henry Cornelius Agrippa endorses this belief, prohibiting illegitimate offspring from entering a church of God.¹² Even those Christian sects which were seemingly more flexible than the Puritans indirectly denied salvation to the bastard who was irredeemable, and not worth saving. No wonder Edmund appeals to the degenerate goddess of nature for help since all ethical recourse is closed to him.

There were a few exceptions. In contrast to rigid Old Testament ethic, Thomas Becon holds a New Testament view. According to Pearson, he was:

ahead of his time . . . when he admitted that if a bastard who had been denied the comfort of companionship at church left "the wicked and ungodly ways of his father," he could not be hindered from embracing "true godliness" for "all the days of his life."¹³

Instead of maintaining that base birth predetermines regression and damnation, Becon implies that the bastard can change for the better despite the church rather than because of it.

Thomas Ridley's view falls midway between Becon and Puritan ethics, being neither too merciful nor too harsh. Ridley believes while "it

be no such sin for a bastard to be a bastard, yet it is a defect in him to be such a one and a thing easily subject to reproch [sic]."¹⁴ Even though Ridley regards illegitimacy as a defect rather than a sin, he too supports the double standard, believing the bastard should be excluded from honorable combat.¹⁵

Elitist in outlook, the aristocratic code espoused that only those of noble birth were capable of gratitude. For this reason, a double standard was practiced whereby those of common and illegitimate birth were excluded from honorable combat. In contrast to theological doctrine, aristocratic exclusion of commoners from combat was incompatible with so-called Christian egalitarianism. But Christian ethic was inconsistent, for it did not apply this same egalitarian standard to illegitimate offspring; it too practiced a double standard. The bastard was excluded from honorable combat because the blood of illegitimate offspring was stained and unworthy of honor. Using this inconsistency in support of a double standard, Ridley contends that since "the Apostle calleth Marriage honourable, whereupon it must follow that the opposite thereof is a shame."¹⁶ Because of the shameful circumstances of his begetting, a bastard could "neither challenge Honour nor Armes from the Father" or "Mother."¹⁷

The bastard was not only prohibited from church and honorable combat, but also from inheritance. Again, Old Testament law justified this prohibition. Swinburne alludes to Gen. 21:10 whereby Sara advises Abraham to:

Cast out this bonde woman and her sonne, for the sonne of
 this bond woman shall not be heire with my sonne Issak.
 Abraham by the commaundement of God hearkened to the voice
 of Sara. . . .¹⁸

From Ridley's following description it can be ascertained that
 the rules for excluding the bastard from inheritance were enforced.
 The bastard is:

repelleth . . . from all succession descending from the Father
 or the mother, whether it be in goods or Lands, unless there
 be some other collaterall, prouision made for the same:
 for that all such Lawes and statutes as are made to any of
 these purposes, were intended to benefit of such as are
 Legitimat, and are next of kin¹⁹ by lawfull succession, and
 not by unlawfull coniuration.

There were some exceptions. Pearson relates that, on occasion,
 some upper class families bequeathed the father's inheritance to legiti-
 mate offspring and the mother's legacy to illegitimate progeny. But
 the strength of the bastard's claim needed to be enforced by wealth
 or power, or else his position remained insecure. And even then the
 outcome was not always assured if greater wealth or power opposed him.²⁰

Edmund's introductory monologue indicates four reasons for his
 ingratitude: illegitimate birth, being second-born, Gloucester's insen-
 sitive treatment of him, and prohibitions barring him from inheritance.
 Three of these reasons are mentioned at the beginning of Edmund's intro-
 ductory monologue.

Thou, Nature, art my goddess; to thy law
 My services are bound. Wherefore should I
 Stand in the plague of custom and permit
 The curiosity of nations to deprive me,
 For that I am some twelve or fourteen moonshines
 Lag of a brother: Why bastard? Wherefore base?
 When my dimensions are as well compact,
 My mind as generous, and my shape as true,

As honest madam's issue? Why brand they us
With base? with baseness? bastardy? base, base? (1.2.1-10)

In Paradise Lost, John Milton equates pagan deities with the devil. Edmund's appeal to the pagan goddess of nature implies a similar association. The pledge he makes to her is a pretext for his ingratitude. For his purposes this logic seems justified since, more than likely, he will be damned by the Christian standard. Edmund reasons that he may as well align himself with the devil anyway. His pledge to the goddess and her legion of dark powers is reiterated in the last two lines of his monologue: "I grow, I prosper; / Now gods, stand up for bastards!" (1.2.21-22).

In addition to his spurious birth, Edmund is "some twelve or fourteen moonshines / Lag of a brother" (1.2.56). The law of primogeniture which also bars him from inheritance, stipulates that only the first born can inherit the entire parents' estate. He stands a chance of inheriting Gloucester's estate only if Edgar is dead or discredited. Edmund's plot accomplishes the discrediting and he wins Gloucester's favor.

The last part of Edmund's introductory monologue reveals exactly what he intends to do.

Well then,
Legitimate Edgar, I must have your land:
Our father's love is to the bastard Edmund
As to the legitimate. Fine word, "legitimate"!
Well, my legitimate, if this letter speed,
And my invention thrive, Edmund the base
Shall top th' legitimate—. . . . (1.2.15-21)

Edmund's repetition of Gloucester's earlier declaration that his "love is to the bastard Edmund / As to the legitimate," is a sardonic response

to his father's hypocrisy. Gloucester acts two-faced toward Edmund. On the one hand, Gloucester states that Edgar is "no dearer in" his "account" (1.1.19) than Edmund, while less than ten lines later, he tells Kent that he has kept Edmund out of court for nine years and intends to send him away again soon. If Gloucester loves both sons equally as he claims, he has a strange way of demonstrating it, referring to Edmund as a "whoreson" who "must be acknowledged" (1.1.23).

Gloucester intends to "acknowledge" Edmund by sending him away, but not before he callously refers to his illegitimate son's conception as a "fault" (1.1.15). Gloucester's pun on the word fault could either refer to his "misdeed," or the "loss of scent by hounds."²¹ Since "Shakespeare often compares sin to a bad smell,"²² Gloucester's pun mocks Edmund's existence by glossing over his past shame and present indifference to the base circumstances of Edmund's conception.

Gloucester admits while in the past, he "blush'd to acknowelge" Edmund, "now" he is "braz'd to'it" (1.1.9-10). Braz'd means "made insensible, hardened, literally 'plated with brass.'"²³ Time has not only made Gloucester indifferent to his own adulterous ingratitude, but also to the illegitimate issue of this union. Plated brass is a perfect metaphor for Gloucester's attitude toward and relationship with Edmund. The cruel barbs he aims at Edmund, in a seemingly affectionate manner, are hard like brass. Furthermore, Gloucester surrounds himself with a metaphorical coat of brass by making himself and the court inaccessible to Edmund. And finally, since this metal is inferior to the philosopher's stone or alchemical gold, it might also allude to Gloucester's insincere and hypocritical treatment of Edmund.

Gloucester's insensitivity toward Edmund would not only be tolerated but lauded by many of Shakespeare's contemporaries.

In Sir John Fortescue's commendation of the English laws of the fifteenth century, for example, he particularly praises their intransigence towards illegitimate children (their exclusion from inheritance even if their parents eventually married) as being in accord with biblical examples.²⁴

Many at that time would agree with Fortescue, considering "Gloucester's initial action in disinheriting the bastard son, whom by his own admission he loves as much as his legitimate son," to be "entirely in accord with the legal notion of justice."²⁵

Such was not always the case. Prior to 1560, "peers . . . often" left "bequests to bastard children in their wills."²⁶ Puritans turned the tide against aristocratic tolerance. "Reluctance to mention bastards in wills was" a means of counteracting promiscuity.²⁷ But this repressive influence did not completely quash aristocratic tolerance for those of base birth. By 1586, the older rule that "even a legitimized bastard might not sit at his legitimate brother's table except for invitation,"²⁸ "had become old-fashioned . . . and in many noble families bastards were generously treated."²⁹

But the word generous is relative. What an aristocratic or Puritan family, seemingly at the other end of the scale, might consider to be generous, would be far from charitable by modern standards. For Swinburne, generosity consists of giving illegitimate offspring "competent alimentation or relieve: that is to say, for their foode, clothing, lodging, and other meete and conuenient necessities, according to the wealth and abilities of the parent."³⁰ He believes "all creatures,"

even the "brute beasts," have the instinct "to provide for" and "bring vp" "their yong [sic]." ³¹ Furthermore: "poore infants ought not to be punished (at least not to perish for want of foode, by occasion of the fathers faulte, whereof they are altogether faultlesse)." ³²

Swinburne's professed compassion for the apparently "faultlesse" offspring of illicit unions is neither unconditional nor egalitarian. He appears to negate the sin of inherited ingratitude when alluding to illegitimate offspring as "faultlesse." But he was quoted earlier as saying that this "brood" is "commonly infected with the leprosie of the Sires disease." And that illegitimate offspring not only inherit the "filthinesse" of their parents but exceed them in wickedness. ³³

Swinburne's attitude toward illegitimate offspring is hypocritical. He preaches New Testament compassion while implying Old Testament justice. For Swinburne, generosity consists of preventing illegitimate offspring from perishing. His belief that even the lowest beast has the instinct to care for its young is closer to natural law than Christian charity. Swinburne would do for the bastard what he would do for the beast; how much more he would do remains uncertain. So is Gloucester's hypocrisy toward Edmund. Although Gloucester professes to love both sons equally, he actually follows Swinburne's prescription. He provides Edmund with food, shelter, and other necessities but keeps him away from court. As a result, Edmund is deprived of his father's affection and company, as well as any opportunities for advancement.

Gloucester's hypocrisy toward Edmund is undermined by Kent who does not appear to share his attitude. When Gloucester denigrates Edmund

by punning on the word "fault" or the sinful circumstances of Edmund's birth, Kent replies: "I cannot wish the fault undone, the issue of it being so proper" (1.1.16-17). Kent's favorable reaction to Edmund, whom he has just met for the first time, reflects the aristocratic tolerance of which Stone speaks.

Despite appearances, Kent's tolerance should not be confused with Christian charity and egalitarianism. Elsewhere he displays a decided elitism. Edgar later observes that when Kent meets him as the disguised Tom O'Bedlam, "having" seen him "in" his "worst estate, / Shunn'd" his "abhorr'd society" (5.3.208-209); Kent embraces Edgar only after he learns his true identity. As an aristocrat, Kent adheres to the double standard but in a subtler, more refined form. Despite its so-called tolerance, the nobility practices its own brand of discrimination.

To gain his inheritance, Edmund has only one recourse, legitimization. Although under the Church of Rome there was more than one recourse to legitimization, under the later Protestant system only an act of Parliament could legitimize a bastard.³⁴ Getting parliamentary approval was no easy matter. Parliament rarely exercised this power. This act was introduced to benefit royalty, giving the monarch or prince license to legitimize "his vnlawfull issue capable of whatsoeuer by will deuisable hee dooth give or bequeath vnto him."³⁵ This license implied a greater tolerance for bastards of royal blood.³⁶

From Gloucester's past behavior toward him, Edmund knows that his father will never agree to legitimization. Gloucester's slothful nature would make him unwilling to go through the necessary complicated

procedures. Edmund's plot against Edgar is a ruse to propel Gloucester to act. Someone of Gloucester's position "knew the importance of male issue"³⁷ and "the need for an heir."³⁸ Edmund realizes that with Edgar out of the way, Gloucester's need for male issue would supersede his reluctance to legitimize him.

As part of his scheme, Edmund cleverly uses the double standard to his advantage, duping Gloucester with Edgar's supposed plot to murder him. According to Edmund, Edgar retaliated with the following threat:

Thou unpossessing bastard! dost thou think
If I would stand against thee, would the reposal
Of any trust, virtue, or worth in thee
Make thy words faith'd? No: what I should deny,--
As this I would; ay, though thou didst produce
My very character--I'd turn it all
To thy suggestion, plot, and damned practice:
And thou must make a dullard of the world,
If they not thought the profits of my death
Were pregnant and potential spirits
To make thee seek it. (2.1.66-75)

With this speech, Edmund ingenuously insures his own credibility. After Edmund's plot against Edgar succeeds, Gloucester falls right into his trap. Colie notes that Gloucester is aware of "the legal difficulties involved in such a transfer of rights,"³⁹ promising Edmund that he will "work the means / To make thee capable" (2.1.83-85). The slothful Gloucester is now all too willing to act on Edmund's behalf.

The Magnitude of Edmund's Ingratitude

Conglomeration: The D.S.

Edmund conforms to Swinburne's belief that the bastard sometimes exceeds his wayward parents in wickedness. The law of conglomeration

reveals that Gloucester's ingratitude is rooted in four vices (lust, greed, sloth, and pride), while for Edmund, six D.S. (all but gluttony) predominate. Pride and autogeny impel Edmund to pledge himself to the dark powers. Desire for a title, land, wealth, and revenge for the mistreatment he has suffered spur him to make this pledge. Greed and slothful ambition drive him to attain these desires in any way he can; for Edmund the means justify the end.

"Proving" his so-called superiority provides Edmund with a pretext for justifying his ingratitude. Furthermore, he believes "the lusty stealth of nature" imbues him with "More composition and fierce quality" (1.2.11-12) than the supposedly foppish (1.2.14) Edgar. In his deluded rationalization, Edmund sounds like a modern geneticist who manages to overturn God's ordered universe with a scientific advance. He regards the hybrid bastard as superior to the legitimate product imbred of a "dull stale, tired bed" (1.2.13). His argument is specious, serving as a pretext for him to follow his father's libidinous example and indulge his inherited predisposition. He is also motivated to commit other myriad forms of lawlessness which cannot be so glibly rationalized.

The introductory monologue also suggests that of all Edmund's vices, envy and wrath predominate. Edmund foams furious when comparing himself with Edgar. Alliterative repetition of the words "base" and "bastard" underscores the depth of his envy and rage. Envy, as much as the desire for land and position, drives him to "top th' legitimate" (1.2.21).

The magnitude of Edmund's sin also exceeds that of Gloucester's in that it is rooted in malice while Gloucester's is not. Although Gloucester has regressed as a result of ingratitude, his initial shame degenerating into indifference, this indifference, while cruel in its insensitivity toward Edmund, is never deliberately malicious. Gloucester's indifference is a defensive rather than offensive act. He prefers to avoid rather than accept responsibility for his transgression. Hiding Edmund away is Gloucester's way of hiding from his sinfulness.

In contrast to Gloucester's craven indifference, Edmund suffers no recriminations after each of his betrayals; no matter who it is, members of his family or the royal family, he remains unmoved. His malice is not only hardhearted; it is shameless. In public, he pays obeisance to Cornwall, his suzerain, but in private, he is all too willing to commit adultery with his master's wife. Furthermore, he is not above engaging in sexual liaisons with both sisters, and revels in playing them off against each other to his advantage.

Universal Discord

Gloucester's sin remains circumscribed within the world of the family. But Edmund's ingratitude spreads like a bonfire, ravishing four worlds in the process: the world of his family, the world of the royal family, the world of the commonwealth, and the realm of the cosmos.

First, Edmund infects his family by turning his father against his half brother. Cornwall later turns against Gloucester, again at

Edmund's instigation. Gloucester secretly confesses to Edmund that he intends to help Lear. When Edmund betrays this confidence to Cornwall, he and Regan retaliate by gouging out Gloucester's eyes; the origin of this barbarous act is Edmund's betrayal of Gloucester's confidence. Although he is now heir to Gloucester's entire fortune, insatiable greed and ambition impel Edmund to destroy his father rather than wait for his legacy.

When Edmund becomes entangled with Goneril and Regan, the malefic effects of his ingratitude spread from his own family to the royal family. Edmund's involvement with the sisters causes envious rivalry between them which has a degenerate effect upon the kingdom. The play intimates that only the arrival of Cordelia's troops prevents this rivalry from erupting into civil war. Goneril later poisons Regan in order to prevent her from marrying Edmund. And after Edmund is arrested for capital treason and her adultery with him exposed, Goneril kills herself.

Edmund also adversely affects the other members of the royal family. He issues the nefarious writ on Cordelia's life. He is also indirectly responsible for Lear's death since the old king dies of a broken heart as a result of Cordelia's murder. Either directly or indirectly, Edmund has eradicated the entire royal family.

Two inversions emphasize the disruptive effect of Edmund's ingratitude upon order and degree. The first involves his duel with Edgar. Since honorable combat was a right reserved strictly for those of noble blood, Edmund's participation in this aristocratic rite unravels the

social fabric.⁴⁰ The transposition of Edmund's and Cordelia's deaths is another discordant effect of his ingratitude. The play's structure suggests that this transposition works on two separate planes: one realistic, the other analogical. Interpreted from either plane, this inversion symbolizes a breach in the cosmic order. Pertinent to a realistic interpretation is the way Cordelia dies. Her death by hanging, considered too base for those of noble blood, was reserved for those of common blood or illegitimate birth. Cordelia's hanging implies that she dies the death meant for Edmund who is of spurious birth; while he, on the other hand, dies in a manner reserved for those of noble birth.⁴¹ Cordelia's royal birth heightens the dichotomy of this transposition; she and Edmund are at polar ends of the scale in blood, virtue, and essence.

Furthermore, as queen or God's representative, her regicide could be regarded as a symbolic murder of God. An analogical interpretation magnifies the symbolic implications of her death. Within this framework, her life becomes an analogue for the Christ, and her death a metaphor for the Crucifixion. Further support for this interpretation can be inferred from the Gentleman's assurance to Lear as he leaves for Cordelia's camp: "Thou hast one daughter, / Who redeems nature from the general curse / Which twain have brought her to" (4.6.202-204).⁴²

If Cordelia is a Christ figure, Edmund's betrayal of her becomes a betrayal of the Christ. Cordelia and the historical Judas die in the same way--each hanged. This correspondence suggests that Edmund serves as an analogical metaphor for Judas since he, rather than Cordelia,

is the one who should have been hanged. The hanged Cordelia dies the death meant for Edmund, the play's analogical Judas figure, while the historical Judas similarly dies by hanging himself. The most discordant effect of Edmund's ingratitude upon the Chain of Being manifests itself as a Judaslike betrayal resulting in crucifixion.⁴³

Edmund's Transformation

Ingratitude and the Aristocratic Code

After the disguised Edgar challenges Edmund, they engage in honorable combat and Edmund is mortally wounded. From the time he accepts the challenge until the moment of his death, Edmund changes for the better. Although this change takes place in a very short span of time, it suggests evolution rather than degeneration. This last minute transformation deviates from his former projection. Deciphering the implications of Edmund's incongruous projection is the key to the play's ambiguity. His projection is incongruous, and his fate problematic because of a fluctuating relationship to the doctrine of gratitude. Throughout the play he epitomizes the traditional stereotype, but in his final moments, he defies it. Edmund's behavior in the last minutes of his life undermines the concept of gratitude in two ways. First, it contradicts the double standard toward illegitimacy and ingratitude; and second, it defies the irreversible law of regression. A comparison between gratitude and Grace revealed that despite an outer harmony, on a deeper level, these two principles are incongruent; one adheres to the law of justice, while the other advocates a higher Law of Grace.

As a result, the possibility of salvation for the ingrate varies accordingly; by the law of justice, he is doomed, by the Law of Grace, he might be saved. This situation describes Edmund's plight. His uncharacteristic adherence to an aristocratic ethic in the final scene compounds the incongruous implications of his enigmatic destiny by juxtaposing three divergent principles: gratitude, Grace, and honor.

Edmund's transformation is divided into two stages. In the first stage, the aristocratic code of honor is undermined when Edmund is elevated from ingrate to aristocratic gentleman. In the second stage, this pseudo-knight falls under the beneficent influence of Edgar's grace bestowing power, suggesting a change from aristocratic to Christian values. To make Edmund's change from illegitimate ingrate to aristocratic gentleman credible, he is depicted as a caricature rather than an embodiment of aristocratic ethics. This travesty of aristocratic values is underscored in two ways: by contrivance and incongruity. Edmund's transformation is contrived because it is abrupt. In contrast to Lear's painstaking progress over an extended time, the sudden shift of Edmund's character undercuts the credibility of his transformation. This contrived change serves to undermine the elitist ethic he now chooses to follow.

Edmund's transformation is not entirely undeveloped or unmotivated. As early as his introductory monologue, he exhibits a bitter preoccupation with his lack of a pedigree. The oath of dishonor he pledges to the degenerate goddess of nature is inverted chivalry. Edmund might be described as a faustian gentleman in the service of the dark powers.

In contrast to Goneril and Regan who express no desire to serve anyone but themselves, Edmund's pledge to the goddess suggests that perhaps if other means were available to him, he might have served others instead of serving himself. But until the unknown knight challenges him, no other recourse has ever been available to Edmund. The unknown knight's challenge presents him with the golden opportunity to indulge his most cherished fantasy—the desire for knighthood.

Edmund's transformation underscores the antagonism between honor and Grace. This change from ingrate to aristocratic gentleman is incongruous because he chooses to adhere to code which equates ingratitude with base birth. His aristocratic pretensions are a means of vitiating elitist ethics. Even more ridiculous than Edmund's aristocratic pretensions is his desire to emulate an ethic opposed to the Christian Grace which could save him.

The absolution Jesus grants an adulteress and his admonition to those who would have stoned her suggest that the New Testament ethic obviates the double standard exacted by Old Testament law. Edmund's primary exposure to Christianity has been to those who hypocritically practice retribution in the name of the Grace. But Edgar's beneficent influence eventually alters his past experience of Christian hypocrisy.

Edmund as Magnanimous Man

Because the features of magnanimity, the foremost virtue of the aristocratic code, were common knowledge to renaissance audiences of all classes, they would have recognized Edmund's caricature of this

virtue. But since this so-called virtue is no longer common knowledge, the rest of this section will illustrate how Edmund's travesty of this virtue conforms to the traditional stereotype.

Aristotle defined magnanimity in his Nichomachean Ethics. For the most part, the renaissance adaptation conforms with the Aristotelian definition.⁴⁴ The most prominent features of this virtue are greatheartedness,⁴⁵ courage,⁴⁶ and generosity.⁴⁷ Closely following the Aristotelian definition of magnanimity, Lodowick Bryskett observes that this virtue is only attained by those who "are furnished with all other virtues."⁴⁸ He believes magnanimity to be a "singular gift of mind" only "attained with great difficultie."⁴⁹

What Bryskett and other ethicists of the period believed to be the preeminent virtue was not regarded in the same light by Christian adherents who considered it prideful. Aristotle extols the magnanimous man's honor and courage. A man of this type "takes great risks" and is "unsparing of his life" "when he faces great danger" because to him there are some circumstances in which it is not worth living."⁵⁰ Similarly, Bryskett's perfect gentleman intrepidly "little esteemeth any perill."⁵¹ Conforming to Christian standards, the magnanimous man's sense of derring-do is burlesqued in Edmund's acceptance of the unknown knight's challenge. Goneril points out "By th' law of war" Edmund "wast not bound to answer / An unknown opposite" (5.3.151-152). Since the challenger's identity is unknown, Edmund need not accept the challenge. Pride motivates him to accept this challenge, going against his better interests.

Edmund is not pragmatic at this point. He deludes himself into taking his newly won nobility more seriously than his own life. By this act, he travesties the magnanimous man's belief that the loss of his so-called honor would be one of those circumstances in which it was not worth living. The ultimate travesty is Edmund's readiness to put his life in peril in order to preserve a sense of honor which he, as a bastard, could never possess.

Edmund's forgiving Edgar after being mortally wounded by him is another illustration of his prideful magnanimity. Edmund first asks the disguised Edgar: "But what art thou / That hast this fortune on me?" and adds: "If thou'rt noble, / I do forgive thee." To which the disguised Edgar replies: "Let's exchange charity / I am no less in blood than thou art, Edmund; / If more, the more th' hast wrong'd me" (5.3.163-167). This exchange contrasts two types of forgiveness, conditional and unconditional: one, advocated by the aristocratic code, the other, exalted by the Doctrine of Grace.

Character contrast underscores the superiority of Christian ethics. Edmund embodies conditional forgiveness because he will forgive the unknown challenger only if he is worthy of being forgiven; and for Edmund, noble blood constitutes worth. Ironically, Edmund's conditional mercy implies that he would never extend forgiveness to anyone of base birth like himself.

Edgar's line, "Let's exchange charity," reveals an egalitarian awareness based on Christian principles. The word "let's" or "let us" includes both Edmund and himself. Unaffected by Edmund's base birth,

Edgar forgives the half brother who usurped his title, land, and fortune, turned his father against him, and instigated the betrayal resulting in Gloucester's blindness and subsequent death. In contrast to Edmund's elitist pride, Edgar's humility is echoed in the line: "I am no less in blood than thou art, Edmund." Edgar's understatement is echoed in the next line: "If more, the more has wrong'd me." Edgar never says he is of more noble blood than Edmund, or even that he is more virtuous than him.

True to the Christian ethic, Edgar recognizes he is not above reproach for fatally wounding of Edmund. During his enforced exile, Edgar confronted his own potential for evil in the person of Tom O'Bedlam, discovering that he, like everyone, carries within him the stain of Original Sin. This realization grounds his humility and humanity in hard won experience.

According to Vaughan, the magnanimous man will neither "respect what the common people speake of him, nor will hee measure his action according to their applauses."⁵² This description corresponds to Edmund's reaction to the unknown challenger. If the challenger is common, Edmund will neither respect nor forgive him. The ironic incongruity of a bastard who aspires to an aristocratic ethic suggests that it is Edmund's elitism rather than his base birth which makes him churlish or common. By analogy, all nobles who follow a similar code of ethics are debased to the same churlish state they attribute to those of common birth and illegitimate origin.

The way Edmund extends forgiveness denotes his pretentiousness. Prototypical of Aristotelian pride, he must forgive his unknown challenger first. His gesture caricatures the magnanimous man who "is disposed to confer benefits" but "is ashamed to accept them, because the one is an act of a superior and the other that of an inferior."⁵³ Edgar's Christian egalitarianism contrasts with Edmund's aristocratic elitism. Edmund forgives the unknown challenger not out of charity but rather "because it is beneath a magnanimous man to remember things against people especially wrongs; it is more like him to overlook them."⁵⁴ He forgives Edgar because of his so-called honor and desire to be superior to a blueblood. Ironically Edmund's poppycock projection communicates the opposite effect, especially when compared to that of the charitable Edgar.

Gratitude Versus Grace: Damnation or Salvation

The caricature of Edmund's magnanimity serves two functions, undermining aristocratic ethics and retributive law. Edmund evolves beyond a travesty of an inferior standard of ethics, to a propensity for, and even possible acceptance of Grace. Edgar's proffered forgiveness implies that he is an agent of Grace.

A formal symmetry knits the main and subplots, linking Cordelia and Edgar as vehicles of Grace. As Cordelia's grace transforms Lear, so Edgar's grace transforms Edmund. Correspondences also weave together threads of Edmund's and Lear's respective deaths. Lear and Edmund change for the better although each is guilty of ingratitude. Their transformations defy the traditional belief that regression is an inevitable and

irreversible consequence of ingratitude. Deviation from the doctrine of gratitude undermines its retributive consequences. Since the transformations of Edmund and Lear ultimately obviate the influence of the doctrine of gratitude, their development must be influenced by another code of ethics. Regardless of sectarian differences, renaissance Christians of all denominations shared the belief that Grace was the sole agent of evolutionary change.⁵⁵ Since Edmund and Lear both change for the better, their transformations must have been caused by the workings of Grace.

Edmund's reaction to Edgar's heartrending account of Gloucester's suffering and death is the first indication he is changing for the better. "This speech of yours hath mov'd me, / And shall perchance do good; but speak you on;— / You look as you had something more to say" (5.3.198-200). If Edmund is not genuinely affected, why does he urge Edgar to speak on as his life ebbs away? According to retributive ethic, the malice of Edmund's ingratitude would make him incapable of exhibiting any positive feeling. Furthermore, the law of regression would deem Edmund's progressive degeneration irreversible. But Edmund, moved by Gloucester's suffering, is more human than bestial.

Edmund's reaction to the deaths of Goneril and Regan further attests to his growing humanity. When the bodies of the dead sisters are displayed before him, he observes: "Yet Edmund was belov'd: / The one the other poison'd for my sake, / And after slew herself" (5.3.238-240). Edmund is now preoccupied with love rather than lust. Jorgensen contends that:

Even more than with Kent, a good case could be made for his [Edmund's] humanity. He suffers from the good-natured, but nevertheless humiliating attitude of his father toward him as a bastard. He is obviously deeply motivated to prove his worth. Indeed, as a bastard, he would have more motive than anyone else in the play to establish--though not necessarily to discover--his own identity. Probably his most significant line in the play, suggesting his genuine need for recognition, is "Yet Edmund was belov'd."⁵⁶

Heilman minimizes Edmund's discovery that he "was belov'd," interpreting it as narcissistic. Edmund's remark, he opines, shows no concern over the deaths of Goneril and Regan. His "sole thought is only of himself."⁵⁷ Heilman concentrates on Edmund's reaction as an isolated occurrence instead of considering it as part of a sequential progression of interlinked events. The positive implications of Edmund's reaction to the deaths of Goneril and Regan become more apparent when related to two other events.

The first, occurring just prior to his discovery of their deaths, has been mentioned, namely, the way in which Edgar's account of Gloucester's suffering and death affects Edmund. The other, shortly to follow, is Edmund's attempt to rescind the writ he issued on the lives of Cordelia and Lear. All three events are woven together to form one progressive movement toward the good. Edmund's reaction to the deaths of Goneril and Regan is not an isolated occurrence. It marks the beginning of a self-discovery during which he learns to distinguish between love and desire.

Battenhouse believes the juxtaposition of "Edgar's tale of pilgrimage" with "the news of Goneril's suicide"⁵⁸ triggers Edmund's self-discovery. "This episode," he goes on to say, "provides" Edmund with

"a contrasting story of how his own vicious life has become an instrument of plague both on Goneril and himself."⁵⁹ In contrast to what Heilman would call "vain sentimentalism," Battenhouse sees "grim irony" in Edmund's discovery that he "was beloved."⁶⁰ For "the love with which he has been beloved by Goneril is of a far different kind from the love Edgar bestowed on Gloucester."⁶¹ Goneril's "love which inspires poisoning and suicide as its sacrificial offering contrasts toto caelo with that which inspires" Edgar's "rescuing deeds."⁶² "A moment earlier" Edmund "had confessed to being much moved by Edgar's story," intimating that it "shall perchance do good."⁶³ He is now "faced by new evidence of how deadly his own evil has been."⁶⁴ "Panting for 'life' instead of lust,"⁶⁵ Edmund "thereupon resolves to 'do some good despite his own nature.'"⁶⁶

The "good" Edmund means "to do" "despite" his "own nature" (5.3.242-243) moves him to rescind the writ on the lives of Cordelia and Lear. Although this attempt comes too late to save them, something on the order of Christian mercy motivates this final impulse. For Honor Matthews, Shakespeare's intentions regarding Edmund's ambiguous behavior can be inferred from this last merciful impulse to do good.⁶⁷

There is no need for a volte-face from Edmund in order that word of Cordelia's peril should be brought from the prison; the fact that Shakespeare finds space for it suggests that he felt it to be important. How can it be so if not as evidence that Edmund submits himself to the divine pattern and recognising his own need of mercy attempts to render it at last.⁶⁸

Since Grace is the mother of mercy, it appears as the cause of the mercy Edmund receives and renders. Matthews would concur:

His [Edmund's] movement towards good is clumsy and ineffective; he has no time to grow in grace, but unless Shakespeare meant our imaginations to take a final leap with his and accept the reality of Edmund's salvation, why—in this desperately crowded moment of his play—did he spend time in leading us so far along that path?⁶⁹

Edmund's following account of Gloucester's suffering and his own pilgrimage intimate that Edmund is moved to feel compassion for his father and inspired to follow Edgar's example.

O! our lives' sweetness
That we the pain of death would hourly die
Rather than die at once!--taught me to shift
Into a madman's rags, t'assume a semblance
That the very dogs distain'd: and in this habit
Met I my father with his bleeding rings.
Their precious stones now lost; became his guide,
Led him, begg'd for him, sav'd him from despair;
Never--O fault!--reveal'd myself unto him,
Until some half-hour past, when I was arm'd;
Not sure, though hoping, of this good success,
I ask'd his blessing, and from first to last
Told him my pilgrimage: but his flaw'd heart,
Alack, too weak the conflict to support:
'Twixt two extremes of passion, joy and grief,
Burst smilingly. (5.3.183-197)

Edgar refrains from revealing his identity to his father with an almost superhuman sense of self-abnegation, strength, perseverance and greatheartedness comparable to Christian magnanimity. In contrast to the Aristotelian virtue, Christian magnanimity is marked by compassion rather than self-interest.⁷⁰ Characterized by this type of magnanimity, the compassionate Edgar will do anything to help his father, even if it means denying his identity and good works. In contrast to the pride which Edmund takes in his supposed honor, Edgar needs no recognition from Gloucester, keeping his identity hidden until necessity moves him to do otherwise. It is enough for him to love, and for this reason his love is selfless and unconditional, asking nothing.

Charity and humility are the two most important features of Christian gratitude. Edgar "begg'd" for Gloucester, became his "guide," and "sav'd him from despair." He has become the embodiment of these two qualities, an example for those ready and willing to follow. Prior to Edgar's exile and spiritual pilgrimage, Edmund rationalized that the lusty stealth of his base blood caused him to be more virile, more manly, and stronger than the supposedly foppish Edgar, bred of "a dull stale, tired bed" (1.2.13).

But listening to Edgar's account of his suffering has taught Edmund that true strength comes from self-sacrifice born of compassion. This strength becomes a model for a now admiring Edmund. No longer naive or weak, Edgar has reached spiritual maturity. In the course of his night ordeal, he has confronted the shadow side of his nature, which he plays out as Tom O'Bedlam.⁷¹ This ordeal is the source of Edgar's strength and his ability to forgive Edmund. In Edmund, he is able to see himself.

I agree with Battenhouse that Edmund's "surprising conversion" has been "influenced" by "the charity in Edgar, even more than Edmund's own experience of the justice of the gods in plaguing."⁷² But I also believe Cordelia's sacrificial death plays a greater part in influencing Edmund's transformation. The Gentleman points out Cordelia's main purpose. She is the one, "who redeems nature from the general curse" (4.6.203). No such allusion is made about Edgar. In contrast to Cordelia, he becomes perfect, while she is already perfect. A perfected disciple, Edgar is able to act as a vehicle for Cordelia's grace, but

only she can redeem. Edgar renders forgiveness to Edmund right about the time that Cordelia is being hanged, implying that the one is empowered and the other saved by her sacrificial act.

Cordelia's hanging is an analogue of the crucifixion of Christ, each savior dying in a manner considered base during their respective epochs. The Gentleman's use of the word "general" in the phrase "general curse" suggests that Cordelia comes not to save the select few but all of humanity. And Edmund is a part of humanity. The transposition of Cordelia's and Edmund's deaths intimates a different meaning than previously mentioned. When adjudged according to retributive law, this inversion is a metaphor for universal discord, embodying the pernicious effects of Edmund's illegitimate birth on the cosmic order. But from the point of view of Grace, this inversion is harmonious rather than chaotic, symbolizing the birth of a higher order, wrought by Cordelia's sacrificial death. Cordelia takes on Edmund's sins by dying the death meant for him. Her sacrifice purifies and uplifts Edmund, figuratively ennobling him. Seen in this light, his death is not a discordant effect of base birth but rather a harmonious sign of his newly redeemed state.

The transposition-sacrifice motif absolves three types of ingratitude. First, this inversion eradicates inherited ingratitude. Within an allegorical framework, Edmund becomes the prototypical Everyman guilty of Original Sin, and Cordelia, the Savior who redeems mankind through him. Second, this transposition purges ingratitude knowingly committed through choice. Again, the framework is allegorical. Edmund is now Judas to Cordelia's Christ. Hanging underscores the betrayal-sacrifice

motif, but with a twist. Instead of having Edmund hang himself like Judas, Cordelia forgives her betrayer by being hanged in his place. And finally, Cordelia's sacrifice extirpates a double standard for illegitimate birth and ingratitude, taking on Edmund's spurious origin through her base death.

It was suggested that the transposition of Edmund's and Cordelia's deaths demonstrates the malefic consequences of Edmund's ingratitude carried to its extreme. This interpretation seems to contradict the redemptive purpose of her sacrificial death. But these two purposes are contradictory only if Edmund's development and destiny are made to conform to one standard. The respective evolutions of Lear, Gloucester, and Edmund contradict the law of regression, suggesting that another standard, that of Grace, has molded their development. However, the regressions of Goneril and Regan imply that the retributive ethic persists.

It does not appear that one principle is being advocated to the exclusion of the other, but rather that Edmund's ambiguous development and destiny are used as a means of determining the limits of each. In my opinion, the interplay of these principles is the cause of his enigmatic projection, development, and fate. Edmund could be regarded as having two alternate and opposed destinies, each influenced by a different principle.⁷³ These alternate destinies are used to contrast two ethical codes. The play's structure suggests that these destinies are developed on two different planes, a realistic plane to work out his fate in accord with the principle of gratitude, and an analogical

plane in accord with the Doctrine of Grace. Edgar mortally wounds Edmund in the name of justice. Yet in the service of Grace, this same Edgar becomes a vehicle for Cordelia's forgiveness. Similarly, Cordelia is a victim if judged by a retributive ethic, and the Savior, if alternately regarded from the Doctrine of Grace.

The transposition of Edmund's and Cordelia's deaths can also be explained in terms of these two principles. Within the framework of the concept of gratitude, the transposition of their deaths demonstrates the malefic consequences of his ingratitude carried to its extreme. But when judged according to the Doctrine of Grace, this same transposition is the cause of Edmund's redemption as Everyman-ingrate, as Judas-betrayer, and as bastard.

Superimposing a double framework onto Edmund's salvation sets limits on the relative application of both principles. The need for retributive justice is implied in order to either check or eradicate the malefic and far-reaching consequences of ingratitude. Furthermore, justice is needed before Grace can be appreciated and accepted. Justice is rendered when Edgar fatally wounds Edmund. After this act of justice comes Grace. The play's structure implies that since Grace follows justice, it is the final, superior, and triumphant principle.

Chapter V explores the empowering effect of Grace on Lear's development. For contrary to retributive law, he evolves rather than regresses. In addition to Edmund and Lear, Gloucester also changes for the better. The transformations of not one but three ungrateful characters intimate the predominance and superiority of Grace to

retributive law. The sympathy which two of these three ingrates arouse further supports the preeminence of Grace. Lear and Gloucester possess some virtue, albeit of an inferior kind, since it is based on aristocratic rather than Christian values.

Retributive law paints a black and white picture of ingratitude but analysis of the play's ungrateful characters reveals that shades do exist. Although Lear's and Gloucester's adherence to an inferior ethic is the primary cause of their ingratitude, at least, it suggests a potential for good. Goneril, Regan, and Cornwall possess no such potential. Furthermore, the suffering which Lear and Gloucester endure moves the audience to forgive them. The empathy which these characters elicit suggests that Shakespeare wishes God to forgive them also. If not, why are they depicted sympathetically?

Because of his base blood and the hardhearted malice of his sin, Edmund would not have elicited the same sympathy from renaissance audiences. But I believe his lack of merit is used to undercut gratitude and elevate Grace. Edmund's lack of merit implies salvation is not contingent on virtue, good works, or blue blood. In theory, the concept of gratitude discounted merit, judging as prideful the belief that good works are requisite to salvation. But in practice, a double standard for illegitimacy and ingratitude implies that salvation was based on birth and merit. Those who adhered to this belief would themselves be guilty of righteous ingratitude.

Aware of the prideful snare of righteous ingratitude, Edgar addresses the brother who betrayed him as "My Lord" (5.3.167), even after

learning that Edmund has issued a writ on the lives of Cordelia and Lear. Having confronted his dark side, Edgar realizes there is no such thing as salvation based on merit. Regardless of rank or virtue, all are tainted at birth by the sin of ingratitude and are in need of forgiveness. Edgar's recognition of his need to be forgiven for fatally wounding Edmund attests to his worthiness for the dispensation of Grace.

His deferential form of address is a means of undermining righteous adherents who would judge the illegitimate ingrate, according to a rigid code of justice. As an exponent of Grace, Edgar follows the New Testament prescription given in Gal. 2:21: "to hold to the law is to nullify grace"; and in Gal. 5:4: "when the Galatians accept the law, they have fallen from grace." Depicting a bastard who is predisposed to Grace not only suggests the preeminence of this principle, but also intimates why it is superior to gratitude. Edmund's predisposition transcends the law or man's interpretation of the law. God saves not those whom man thinks He should save, but rather God saves whom He will.

Edmund's predisposition for change is also used to question the double standard for illegitimacy and ingratitude. Again, superimposing a double framework representing alternate ethical codes or realities for Edmund is a means of exploring his enigmatic destiny, the effect of base birth in determining salvation or damnation.

One instance already cited supports a retributive solution in Edgar's comment: "The dark and vicious place where thee [referring to Edmund] he got / Cost him [Gloucester] his eyes" (5.3.171-172). The second piece of evidence supporting the double standard occurs when

Lear reacts to Goneril's decision to reduce his retinue. He storms out of her court but not before calling her a "Degenerate bastard!" (1.4.251). By this accusation, Lear reveals that he equates her ingratitude or degenerate behavior with illegitimacy.

The last instance occurs right after Lear arrives at Regan's court seeking refuge from Goneril's unkindness. Thinking that Regan is different from her sister, Lear responds to her greeting by expressing his belief in her sincerity, but adds: "if thou shouldst not be glad, / I would divorce me from thy mother's tomb, / Sepulchring an adult'ress" (2.4.127-129). By equating illegitimacy with ingratitude, Lear implies adultery as the primal cause of ingratitude. At this point, he believes that all ingrates must be bastards.

This view later changes when the by now mad King stumbles upon Edgar and the blinded Gloucester.

I pardon that man's [Gloucester] life. What was thy cause?
Adultery?
Thou shalt not die: die for adultery! No:
The wren goes to't, and the small gilded fly
Does lecher in my sight.
Let copulation thrive; for Gloucester's bastard son
Was kinder to his father than my daughters
Got 'tween the lawful sheets. To't, luxury, pell-mell!
(4.6.109-116)

When Lear forgives the adulterous Gloucester, he reverses his former position. The first part of this speech compares the death penalty prescribed for adultery by Mosaic law with Jesus' admonition to those who would stone an adulterous woman to death. "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her."⁷⁴ Lear attacks the hypocrisy of a doctrine that professes Grace, but reverts back to a primitive ethic by denying forgiveness to the adulterer.

Although Lear's new position bespeaks a more merciful view of adultery and illegitimacy, theory and practice diverge. Far from exemplifying true forgiveness, at this point, he holds the right belief for all the wrong reasons. Deficient insight and insufficient knowledge cloud his ethical judgment, inciting him to look for someone to blame. Anger at Goneril and Regan, rather than compassion and forgiveness for Gloucester, is what motivates Lear's so-called clemency. Since anger is an offshoot of Old Testament wrath, Lear still follows the doctrine he seems to be attacking. His belief that the bastard Edmund is kinder to Gloucester than his own legitimate daughters are to him, is based on incomplete knowledge. As spectators, we have superior knowledge that Edmund is as guilty of ingratitude as Goneril.

Although Lear's wrath undermines his new position, he has evolved beyond his previous adherence to the double standard. This evolution coincides with his growing tolerance for adulterers and bastards. Chapter V will demonstrate that the source of this budding tolerance is Grace. Since Grace is an egalitarian system, the abolition of a double standard is implied.

Comparing Edmund's development in the final moments of his life with that of Goneril and Regan also supports the abolition of a double standard. For the most part, the subplot mirrors the main plot; but there is an exception, Edmund's demise does not correspond with the deaths of Goneril and Regan. He evolves despite his illegitimate origin, while the sisters regress although they are of legitimate parentage, noble birth, and royal blood. If Shakespeare is advocating a double

standard, why does the bastard Edmund display a propensity for change, while the legitimate and royal Goneril and Regan do not? Cordelia's relationship to her sisters' deaths further undermines a double standard for bastards and legitimate offspring. One might suppose that if Goneril and Regan had survived, they would not have been hanged. Being men of honor, Albany and Edgar would have executed them in a manner befitting their royal station. In any event, Cordelia would not have died the death meant for them, whereas she does die the base death meant for the bastard Edmund, taking his sins upon herself.

Although Edmund's salvation is suggested rather than stated, it appears as if he is redeemed. While he never directly asks for mercy, Edmund's desire to do some good despite his own nature implies that he has been forgiven. Since fallen man was considered to be incapable of desiring or doing good without God's Grace, Edmund's desire to do good implies he has been infused with the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, the manner in which Cordelia dies intimates she has paid off his debt to God, freeing him to be redeemed.

Conclusion

Edmund's moot destiny appears to be a device deliberately contrived to undermine the double standard toward illegitimacy. Juxtaposing two contradictory principles presents the possibility of two alternate destinies for Edmund. Instead of preaching a message of reform, it is left up to the audience to decide whether they prefer damnation according to retributive law or salvation according to Grace.

The largely non-Puritan composition of Shakespeare's audience points to Grace as the preferable alternative. The adverse reaction of Jacobean spectators toward the death penalty and ocular extrusion as retributive consequences of adulterous ingratitude further intimates leniency toward illegitimacy. Seen in this light, Lear's speech against the death penalty is more than a sign of his growing tolerance; it also expresses the view of Shakespeare's audience. Measure for Measure, probably written just prior to King Lear, also reflects disapproval of the death penalty. Supporting the death penalty or ocular extrusion would hardly be beneficial to the well-being of the largely non-Puritan audience, and its libertine aristocracy in particular.

Elton observes: "In general, blindness and lechery . . . were associated in the Renaissance view."⁷⁵ While blinding as a punishment for adultery never became practice, its threat was real enough for "the blinded Milton in his Second Defence of the People of England (1654)" to "seriously" defend "himself against charges of such retribution."⁷⁶ Pointing to "the terrible gratuitousness of Gloucester's blinding,"⁷⁷ Elton avers that this view was "advocated by Puritans, who were inimical to the stage" but "displeasing to James" and "hardly . . . applauded by many in Shakespeare's audience."⁷⁸

He believes it "may be doubtful" "that Shakespeare's spectators, including patrons of nearby stews, could sympathetically entertain the notion of ocular extrusion as "just punishment for fornication."⁷⁹ Because "the audience was composed mostly of non-Puritans, presumably unfavorable to such extreme positions, it is more probable that

Shakespeare would have chosen to indicate the horror, rather than the justice, of that punishment."⁸⁰

The overall aversion to Puritan retributive morality created a climate for more lenient attitudes toward illegitimacy. With this view in mind, Kent's politeness to Edmund in the opening scene seems to encourage a return to the more tolerant attitude toward illegitimacy practiced prior to the Puritan reform. Furthermore, since Shakespeare's spectators would be inclined to forgive adultery, more than likely, Edmund's change of heart is an alternative to retributive law, suggesting the possibility of absolution for ungrateful offspring of spurious origin.

CHAPTER IV

LEAR AND THE MISUSED WORD

Introduction

Although more sympathetic than Goneril, Regan, and Edmund, Lear is also guilty of theological ingratitude. Analyzing Lear's transgression and its relationship to the D.S. would reveal that his ingratitude conforms to the traditional concept of conglomeration. But it is not my intention to examine Lear's ingratitude in relation to the D.S. The symbolic nature of his transgression and eventual transformation better lends itself to an analogical approach.

An analogical approach is a natural method to apply to Shakespeare since this mode of imaging was inherent in the Elizabethan consciousness. Shakespeare wrote:

. . . for an age accustomed to think analogically; he therefore simplified the great Christian scheme of things into the pattern of events of the dramatic action, appealing to the imaginations of his audience rather than trying to outline the scheme of things in detail in the manner of the morality plays.¹

Mack points out analogical parallels between King Lear and the biblical parable of the Prodigal Son. Bethell appears to have been the first critic to make an analogical comparison between Cordelia and the Christ. Milward, another critic who supports this view, traces the Christ metaphor as part of a lineage extending from Cordelia, as the embodiment

of Grace, "down through the subsequent romances in the personages of Marina, Imogen, Perdita and Miranda, in uninterrupted succession."²

Lear's analogical kinship to the Prodigal Son reveals itself in two ways. The Prodigal and Lear choose to separate themselves from God, denying his Grace in favor of going their own prideful ways; and both return to God, respectively symbolized by the Prodigal's father, and Lear's daughter, Cordelia. More specifically, Lear's reunion or homecoming with Cordelia corresponds to Christ's affirmation that He is the Way.

This parable cycle of rejection and return will be the subject of the next two chapters. The abnegation of God will be explored in this chapter, while the last chapter will concentrate on the return.³ Interpreting Cordelia's relationship to Lear metaphorically rather than literally establishes his rejection of her as a denial of Grace. This exploration will reveal that within this framework, she is an analogue for the Christ.

While the observations of Bethell, Milward, and others give credence to Cordelia's messianic function, these references are more or less mentioned in passing rather than analyzed in detail. John Danby's penetrating analysis of Cordelia's fourfold function is an exception.

Cordelia is the other Nature Edmund, Goneril, and Regan ignore. In our view she is a figure comparable with that of Griselde or Beatrice: literally a woman; allegorically the root of individual and social sanity; tropologically (Charity) that suffereth long and is kind; anagogically the redemptive principle itself.⁴

Danby's analysis, while insightful, is for my purposes a starting rather than ending point. More sufficient proof of Cordelia's

divinity is needed before Lear's rejection of her can be established as an abnegation of Grace.

Scripture provides the means of demonstrating Cordelia's Christhood. According to the New Testament, the Logos or Word of God is the primary means of infusion and the Christ or Word Made Flesh, the instrument of infusion. The play suggests a similar pattern with Cordelia the embodiment of the Word Made Flesh, her reticent utterances evoke the infused Word. After exploring Cordelia in relation to the Logos, Lear's rejection of Grace will be examined in relation to his abjuration of her word. The first scene uses the following devices to underscore Cordelia's divinity and method of infusion: her paradoxical use of the mantralike word "Nothing," her silences, her laconic nature, her mirrorlike projection, and role as destroyer of Lear's ego. Investigating Cordelia's nature, behavior, and relationship to Lear will reveal that his betrayal of her constitutes a threefold denial of the creative, transformative, and redemptive power of the Holy Spirit.

Cordelia and the Christ: An Analogy

Cordelia's connection to the Christ can be inferred from the following: direct allusion, indirect inference (either describing her or the effect she has on others), her fixed position or lack of development within the play, the sacrificial implications of the manner in which she dies, and the transposition of her death with that of Edmund. Bethell, Milward, and others find support for Cordelia's Christhood pointing to the Gentleman's statement to Lear that he ". . . hast one

daughter, / Who redeems nature from the general curse / Which twain have brought her to" (4.6.202-204). This observation is a direct allusion to Christ; like him, Cordelia does not merely redeem the select few but rather all of nature. The "general curse" refers to Original Sin and Lear is "nature" or fallen humanity whom Cordelia, the Savior, redeems.⁵

As mentioned, the Gentleman's detached and impartial allusions to Cordelia as the Christ carry the weight of authority and truth. The Gentleman's lack of involvement in the major thrust of the action adds to his impartiality. He is more of an onlooker than a participant. As an observer, the Gentleman might be regarded as the author's *raisonneur*.

Cordelia not only redeems; she also restores. Gazing on the sleeping Lear with whom she is finally reunited at last, Cordelia prays: "Restoration hang / Thy medicine on my lips, and let this kiss / Repair those violent harms that my two sisters / Have thy reverence made!" (4.7.26-29). Cordelia's lips administer the medicine of compassion, her restorative function prefiguring the reunion with Lear shortly thereafter.

Cordelia's "O dear father! / It is thy business I go about" (4.4.23-24), suggests her desire to heal Lear. The healing occurs on four levels: physical, psychological, political, and spiritual. She returns to England to restore Lear's crown. But the political situation will not change until Lear's consciousness is transformed. The restoration of Lear's inner sanctum or Christed kingship would free the state

from the retributive law, enabling it to be reborn into a state of Grace. By restoring Lear's true function, Cordelia would be going about her mortal father's business, and in a greater sense, about her Divine Father's business. Pointing to Luke 2.49, Bethell and Milward parallel the business Cordelia goes about and Christ's: "Knew ye not that I must goe about my father's business."

Cordelia's initial reaction to Goneril and Regan's mistreatment of Lear also implies her divinity. In his poignant description of her reaction, the Gentleman tells Kent:

Faith, once or twice she heav'd the name of "father"
Pantingly forth, as if it press'd her heart;
Cried "sisters! sisters! What? i' th' storm! i' th' night?
Let pity not believe it!" There she shook
The holy water from her heavenly eyes,
And clamour moisten'd, then away she started
To deal with grief alone. (4.3.25-32)

Cordelia's love runs too deep for words.⁶ In this instance, Cordelia heaves her heart into her mouth which is, ironically, what she could not do when Lear asks her to prove her love. The "holy water" Cordelia shakes from her "heavenly eyes" restores and redeems. Through this sense of sight she can feel the suffering of humanity "as if it press'd her heart." Compassion unlocks the holy water from her eyes. Baptismal founts, these eyes release the waters of compassion, cleansing and purifying.

The Gentleman relates how at first, "now and then an ample tear trill'd down / Her delicate cheek; who, most rebel-like, / Sought to be king o'er her" (4.3.12-15). Cordelia's tears reveal that her great passion is to redeem. In contrast to Lear, this passion never fomented into "a rage" (4.3.16) but rather:

. . . patience and sorrow strove
 Who should express her goodliest. You have seen
 Sunshine and rain at once; her smiles and tears
 Were like, a better way; those happy smiles
 That play'd on her ripe lip seem'd not to know
 What guests were in her eyes; which parted hence
 As pearls from diamonds dropped. In brief,
 Sorrow would be a rarity most belov'd,
 If all could so become it. (4.3.16-24)

Cordelia's passion never degenerates into wrath because she has mastered her emotions. Self-mastery manifests itself as "patience and sorrow" for the downtrodden and a willingness to sacrifice herself for them. She later tells Lear: "For thee, oppressed King, I am cast down; / Myself could else out-frown false Fortune's frown" (5.3.5-6). Master of her passions, Cordelia is never sad for herself, only for those who have not attained her unitive state. She also possesses the following virtues: patience, quietude, eventemperedness, detachment, chastity, and courageousness.

These manifold virtues intimate she is the sum total of all virtue. Cordelia does not merely have compassion, she is compassion. With her "smiles and tears," "sunshine and rain," she moves beyond a sum total of the virtues into a mysterious union of opposites, transcending the realm of good and evil, of which virtue is a part. Cordelia is larger than virtue, making "sorrow" "belov'd." What would be dark in others, becomes her. Cordelia's ability to make light that which is dark within herself, transfigures her personality.

Just as three figures witness Christ's transfiguration, Peter, John, and James, three figures recognize Cordelia's transfigured state, France, Kent, and the Gentleman. Her transfigured presence so overwhelms

France, he becomes "inflam'd" not with lust, but with "respect" (1.1.254). Bethell and Soellner compare France's recognition of Cordelia as "most rich, being poor; / Most choice, forsaken; and most lov'd, despis'd!" (1.1.249-250) to 2 Cor. 6.11: "As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things." France's recognition that Cordelia is her own dowry connotes spiritual wealth as a metaphor for transfigured consciousness. Marrying himself to her becomes a spiritual union or oneness with God. Cordelia's transfigured presence also affects Kent. Although Kent loves Lear more than his own sense of personal honor, or even life itself, he still chooses to convince Lear of Cordelia's innocence at his own risk. The Gentleman's worshipful observations about Cordelia also suggest he follows her unreservedly.

Cordelia's transfigured presence inspires all three apostlelike characters. Although their individual relationships with her differ markedly; the Gentleman has an impersonal relationship to her; France has must met her for the first time; and Kent has a personal relationship with Cordelia, having known her all her life. Kent's long acquaintance with Cordelia and reverence for her validates France's worshipful first impression of her. On the other hand, the Gentleman's detached position confirms that Kent's reverence for Cordelia is not based on personal bias.

Cordelia's fixed development throughout the play implies that she has no need to change as she is already perfect. Her perfected state explains why she remains offstage for most of the action. Because

dramatic action is patterned on change or character development, Cordelia does not fit into this framework. She is not the only character whose development remains fixed. Kent also undergoes no discernible evolution during the course of the action. His relative perfection and onstage presence for a good portion of the action are used to undermine the ideological flaws of the aristocratic ethic. Juxtaposing Kent's relative perfection with Cordelia's transcendent perfection provides a means of exalting the Christian ideal over its aristocratic counterpart.

Edgar, the only other character approaching Cordelia's perfection, has one weakness, a Parsifal-like innocence. He must be purged of spiritual naivete if he is to evolve. For this reason, his development is not fixed. Casting Edgar as the pariah, Tom O'Bedlam, ultimately transmutes Parsifal-like innocence into Arthurian kingship. He eventually attains self-mastery, but in contrast to Cordelia, serves as a vehicle for rather than embodiment of the Holy Spirit. As perfected king, Edgar marries courage, probity, and adherence to the law with compassion, wisdom, and mercy. His development is a lesson in discriminating between the relative application of justice and mercy.

The incarnation of Grace, Cordelia has mastered the appropriate application of justice and mercy. Her sense of discrimination characterizes her as the Christed ideal, while Edgar must evolve into this ideal. The transposition of Edmund's and Cordelia's deaths reinforces her messianic function. By dying the death meant for Edmund, Cordelia takes on the sins of the bastard. In purging him of his illegitimate origin, she not only removes the general curse for the select few, but for all of humanity.

Although hanging was considered a base form of execution during the Renaissance, mythological tradition links it with crucifixion. The Scandanavian god Odin, a case in point, is often depicted as a hanged god. The sacrificial death of this hanged god who gives himself to himself⁷ parallels the death of Jesus. The tree from which Odin hangs symbolically corresponds to the Christian rood.⁸ Like Jesus, Odin's side is pierced by a spear.⁹ In both cases, a storm marks their respective deaths. Odin's death on the stormy ninth night implies the end of a world cycle since nine is the last new numeral introduced into the number sequence. Similarly, Cordelia's hanging ends the old cycle of the "general curse" or Original Sin as mercy supercedes retributive law.

Nothing as a Denial of Grace

With Cordelia's divinity established, we can now move on to Lear's rejection of her proffered Grace. Paradoxically, the same word is used to suggest Cordelia's proffered gift and Lear's refusal. This ambiguous word is nothing. The word nothing can be interpreted in four possible ways, three of which are related to Christian doctrine. The first, an exoteric view, associates nothing with nonbeing, making it part of a paradox of miraculous creation. The second, a more esoteric or mystical interpretation, links Nothing¹⁰ with Something, incorporating it into a paradox of Godhead as formless, all-pervasive consciousness. These two definitions of the word nothing, while both Christian, are markedly divergent. Regardless of this divergence, Lear's rejection of this

word would be regarded as a denial of Grace from either point of view. The third equates nothing with the virtue of humility. Humility, as nothing, is an effect of Grace, for through its power, one dies to the world and is reborn emptied of ingratitude.

In contrast to the theological implications of this word, Lear represents a fourth or materialistic interpretation of nothing opposed to the Christian view. In this sense, nothing is used as a device to dichotomize Cordelia and Lear. Their conflict, symbolized by divergent interpretations of the word nothing, begins when Lear asks Cordelia to prove her love for him in the presence of the entire court. But she refuses to demean her love through flattery as her sisters have just done. Furthermore, Lear's ego has become so inflated by Goneril's and Regan's groveling, that mere flattery will not do.

If she is to please him, Cordelia must not only fawn upon Lear, but top her sisters. "What can you say," he asks, "to draw / A third more opulent than your sisters? Speak." In answer to his demand that she barter her love in exchange for the richest portion of land, Cordelia can only reply: "Nothing my lord." To which an amazed Lear responds with an incredulous "Nothing?" Cordelia reiterates her original reply with the singular word "Nothing." Her response elicits a threat from Lear that she had better mend her speech or else "nothing will come of nothing" (1.1.84-89).

Cordelia does not heed his warning. She further infuriates Lear, telling him it is not inherently part of her nature to "heave" her "heart into" her "mouth" (1.1.90-91). Although Lear attributes this seemingly

insensitive response to her pride, in an earlier aside, Cordelia reveals that even if she would do what he demands, she could not will it. "What shall Cordelia speak? Love, and be silent" (1.1.61). A similar aside follows Regan's obsequious declaration of love for Lear: "Then poor Cordelia! And yet not so; since I am sure that my love's / More ponderous than my tongue" (1.1.75-77). The ponderous magnitude of Cordelia's love intimates that she desires to recreate Lear anew from her Silence or Nothing. This desire suggests the Christian paradox of creation from nonbeing.

Creation from Nothing

William Elton relates that: "a keystone of the accepted theology of Shakespeare's day was the paradox that God created the world out of nothing."¹¹ Theologians of both faiths used this paradox to interpret scripture.¹² Since man was part of creation, it would follow that "Shakespeare's audience knew God created that sublime essence, man's soul of nothing."¹³ The origin of this belief appears to be Christian; there is no evidence to suggest that it is derived from Old Testament sources.¹⁴ Christ, or "Creator-Logos," was regarded "as the Agent of creation out of nothing or to use a term that was common to biblical philosophical language, out of nonbeing."¹⁵ "In the fullest sense only the Creator could be said 'to be' "¹⁶ since all other "creatures had their being by derivation from . . . and participation in the Creator."¹⁷ "Participation in the Creator" is unknown to Lear because he does not recognize Cordelia's function as "Agent of creation out of nothing or

. . . nonbeing." Ironically, Cordelia's nothing is proof of her love, an intimation of her desire and capacity to awaken Lear from his state of nonbeing or nothingness to a life of participation in Grace.

Lear's skeptical assertion that only "nothing will come of nothing" reflects a materialistic view of creation. This position was adopted by renaissance skeptics and scientific thinkers from the following classical sources: Epicurus, Democritus, Aristotle, and Lucretius.¹⁸ The classical materialist believed matter was eternal, reasoning that something cannot be created from nothing. In Christian terms, Lear's response is anathema since this belief suggests that matter is "coeternal with the Creator."¹⁹

Lear's refusal of Cordelia's offer to create him into existence implies his rejection of nonbeing prior to creation or reception of Grace. As far as Lear is concerned, he cannot be created or changed. What he is, he always was, and always will be. Lear's choice to remain immured in this state of nonbeing is a denial of the evolutionary process²⁰ and of God's plan for mankind. Nonexistence results in his banishment of Cordelia or separation from God.

Nothing as the Word

A more esoteric yet equally Christian interpretation of Nothing equates it with the eternal life of the Holy Spirit or infused power of the Word. This interpretation provides even more evidence of Lear's rejection of Grace. From this point of view, Lear directly profanes the transformative power of the Word rather than indirectly denying

the Word Made Flesh or Son by refusing to be recreated in his image. Exploring Lear's denial of Grace as a negation of the Word requires analysis of its meaning and purpose. Knowledge of the Word and its place within Christian theology will elucidate Lear's transgression and the ambiguous effects of his later transformation. This chapter examines Lear's denial of the Word as a metaphor for ingratitude, the first stage in his development. The next stage, explored in Chapter V, traces his evolution as a series of infusions, each elevation of consciousness either directly or indirectly initiated by the Word.

The Meaning and Purpose of the Word

John 1:1 and 14 state the meaning and purpose of the Word: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." The Word and God are capitalized, revealing that they are the same. And the phrase ". . . and the Word was God" restates the divinity of God and his Word.

God is distinguished as being the same as, and yet different from the Word. As transcendent deity, God is beyond form or sound, while the other two aspects of the trinity embody God as form or sound. In Eastern scripture, the Word is called mantra and defined as "sound energy, or mystical energy encased in a sound structure."²¹ The second aspect of the trinity is the Son or creative power of the Word Made Flesh who "dwelt among us." And the Word which "dwelt among us," as the Holy Spirit of the third aspect, "dwells" within us upon infusion.²²

In contrast to the Son or agent of infusion, the Holy Spirit or Word is the infused energy.²³

The mantric power of the Holy Spirit is magical and alchemical. The term magical includes all outer directed or creative energy, while the word alchemical designates all inner directed or internal processes. The magical and alchemical functions of the Word are not limited to God. Man can also use this energy to affect change externally in a creative way, or internally, through the process of alchemical transformation. As God creates the universe through the Word, similarly, a corresponding creative energy is released in the world when man uses the Word magically to affect external change.

By using the name of Christ in a creative way, his "apostles were able to heal the sick" (Acts 3.6, 9.34), "cast out demons" (Mark 9.38; Luke 10.17; Acts 16.18, etc.); "preach the gospel, baptise" and "lay down their lives."²⁴ In John 16:23 and 24, Jesus confirms the manifold powers of the Word: ". . . Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give to you." "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive that your joy may be full."

By using the Word in an alchemical way, the devotee facilitates the process of purification. This alchemical or purifying process involves the constant repetition of the Word. The ultimate effect of mantric repetition is salvation and at-one-ment.²⁵ John 31 and 32 confirm that at-one-ment depends on mantric repetition: "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed"; "and ye shall know the

truth and the truth shall make you free." And again, in Rom. 10:13: "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

The Fire of Love, by Richard Rolle, reveals the importance fourteenth century English mysticism placed on the repetition of the Word and its practical application. Rolle declares that no one will receive the gifts of Christ: "unless he has a special love for the Name of Jesus, and so honours it that he never lets it out of his mind, except in sleep. Anyone to whom this is given will, I think, achieve this very thing."²⁶ Rolle's insistence that the devotee "never let" the name "out of his mind," and Jesus' affirmation ". . . to continue in my word" indicate the need for vigilance. Participation in this alchemical process is requisite if the devotee is to reap the full redemptive and transformative benefits of the Word.

The twofold nature and purpose of mantric repetition underscores its potency. As a form aspect of God, the Word is not only the means but also the attainment. Man transforms himself into the Word through the repetition of it. "The Prayer of Jesus," by a Monk of the Eastern Church, expands upon the concept of the Holy Spirit as means, process, and attained transcendent goal. By means of the Word, the devotee evolves through three stages of development. First, "one leans on the name"²⁷ for comfort. "In the second formula, there is a movement toward the name, a dynamic relationship of finality which presents the name as a goal to be attained."²⁸ And finally, "the attitude is a static one; it expresses the repose which follows the attainment of the goal and a certain interior attitude or immanence."²⁹ After attaining this

stage of immanence, "the spirit is transported 'into' the name, within the name, it is united to the name and makes its abode there."³⁰

In John 14:25 and 26, Jesus says his physical presence on earth as the Word Made Flesh will be shortlived, while that of: ". . . the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." In contrast to the rare and sometimes shortlived reappearance of a living incarnation, the Word lives on as God's legacy to man, a reminder of His continued presence in the world. Jesus confirms that it is the Holy Spirit rather than his physical form which will remain to finish his work long after he has gone. Christ might be crucified or Cordelia hanged, yet the ever-present potency of the Word remains in the image of Cordelia's moving lips which Lear envisions even after her physical death.

A similar meaning is implied in Luke 12:10: "And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven." This passage suggests that the Holy Ghost should be more revered than the Son of man because it is the Word or power of God, the final agent of transformation, without which there would be no transcendence.³¹

The first mantriclike word Cordelia utters is "Nothing." Its esoteric implication connoting the paradox that it is something. Medieval Europe corroborated this mystical paradox on the material plane with its discovery of the reality of zero. This discovery of an:

. . . apparent "nothing" enlarged man's thinking in important ways. Practically, it created the decimal system, and philosophically it concretized the astounding paradox that "nothing" is really something, and that this nothing occupies space and contains power.³²

Analogous to zero, the mystical Nothing too "occupies space," although of another inner kind, and also "contains" the "power" of the infused Word. The Cloud of Unknowing, that anonymous English medieval classic of spiritual wisdom, perhaps best describes the mystical paradox of Nothing as something. The anonymous author of this work first exalts this Nothing.

For I tell you truly that I would much rather be nowhere physically, wrestling with that obscure nothing, than I would be some great potentate who whenever I wanted could be anywhere I liked, and enjoy everything as if it were my own.³³

This passage intimates that this "obscure nothing" is more real than so-called tangible reality, precisely because of its transcendental intangibility.³⁴

A description of the obscure nature of Nothing follows.

Let go this "everywhere" and this "everything" in exchange for this "nowhere" and this "nothing." Never mind if you cannot fathom this nothing, for I love it surely so much the better. It is so worthwhile in itself that no thinking about it will do it justice. One can feel this nothing more easily than see it, for it is completely dark and hidden to those who have only just begun to look at it. Yet, to speak more accurately, it is overwhelming spiritual light that blinds the soul that is experiencing it, rather than actual darkness or the absence of physical light.³⁵

Nothing is used as a metaphor for the enfoldment of Grace. Obscure or hidden from the neophyte, the purifying power of the Holy Spirit later culminates in inspiration and renunciation. To those who have experienced it, this Nothing is a divine something. Awareness of its

existence comes not through the finite senses. It can only be experienced by surrendering to the "overwhelming spiritual light that blinds the soul."³⁶

In one sense, Lear is right in maintaining that only nothing can come from nothing since the Christian paradox defines Nothing as an intangible something indiscernible by ordinary means. Although Lear's logic is correct, it is deluded by a materialistic ethic. He only regards the tangible as real and cannot "feel" the incorporeal gift of the Holy Spirit.

The Cloud of Unknowing intimates the twofold nature of Nothing as the goal attained and the means of attainment.

When a man is experiencing in his spirit this nothing in its nowhere, he will find that his outlook undergoes the most surprising changes. As the soul begins to look at it, he finds that all his past sins, spiritual and physical, which he has committed from the day he was born are secretly and somberly depicted on it. They meet his gaze at every turn, until at last after much hard work, many heartfelt sighs and many bitter tears he has virtually washed them all away.³⁷

The phrase "much hard work" implies vigilant repetition of the Word Nothing. The following passage, also from this work, suggests the necessity for mantric repetition. "And though your natural mind can now find 'nothing' to feed on, for it thinks you are doing no thing, go on doing this no thing, and do it for the love of God."³⁸ "Therefore," the author continues, "do not give up but work vigorously on that nothing, with vigilant longing and will to have God, whom no man can know."³⁹

Slothful Lear does not have this longing or will to possess God. The Cloud of Unknowing describes a man of his type.

Who is it then who is calling it "nothing"? Our outer self, to be sure, not our inner. Our inner self calls it "All," for through it he is learning the secret of all things, physical and spiritual alike, without having to consider every single one separately on his own.⁴⁰

Enslaved by his passions, Lear is an "outer" man whose rejection of Nothing has alienated him from his "inner self." The deluded Lear is disassociated from his inner self which is omniscient and omniscience of "the secret of all things, physical and spiritual alike" is attained only after the acceptance of this Nothing which is "All."

Nothing and Humility

The way in which the mantralike Nothing repeatedly springs up throughout the play sets Lear's rejection of it in bas relief. It is as if the echo of this rejected and unrepeatable word reverberates with mantralike repetition, time and time again, in order to remind Lear of the infinite love he cast aside. The Fool's insight into the meaning of Nothing contributes to this ironic effect. The Fool's superiority to Lear will be accounted for in Chapter V where he is analyzed as an analogue for Lear's higher mind. As Lear's higher mind, the Fool acts as chorus, raisonneur, alter-ego, and conscience. He awakens Lear by projecting the Word Nothing into his conscious awareness.

Through the Fool, Lear eventually undergoes a process of self-confrontation, learning what Nothing is and how to strive for it. The Fool makes him aware that he must become nothing and own nothing before he can receive Nothing. In other words, when Lear becomes humbled or empty, he will be filled with the Holy Spirit or Word. Being emptied

means dying to the world through a process of renunciation or detachment from worldly possessions and relationships. Lear's attachments are material and emotional; his strongest attachment is emotional, the egotistical desire to control and manipulate others.

The Fool also uses the no-number zero in conjunction with the Word to awaken Lear to his folly, and to reiterate the need for humility as prerequisite to transcendence. There is an affinity between the paradox of Nothing and the paradox of zero; each can be simultaneously regarded as empty or full. Steindl-Rast points out that: "the very shape of zero written as 0, expresses emptiness."⁴¹ But "the full circle also signifies fullness. Zero stands for nothing, but by adding zero to a number we multiply it tenfold, a hundredfold, a thousandfold."⁴² The uroboros, or snake biting its own tail, also symbolizes infinite zero, a spiral where zero becomes an infinite ladder of circles. Another example is the Holy Spirit, or kundalini energy, coiled at the base of the spine in zero-like fashion before it is awakened. When awakened, this energy ascends in interlinked zeros or spiral fashion from the lower to higher centers of consciousness.

The Fool's barbs at Lear's expense reveal a knowledge of the double meaning of zero as emptiness and fullness: ". . . now thou art an O without a figure. I am better than thou art now; I am a Fool, thou art nothing" (1.4.189-191). The Fool speaks on two planes of action. On a realistic plane, Lear is a negative zero when judged by materialistic standards; emptied of wealth, land, and honors, Lear is a nonexistent nothing. Ironically, the Fool is something, retaining his title

or integrity, no matter how lowly it might be regarded by some; despite outer appearances, he is more than Lear. On an analogical plane, Lear is also a negative zero since he has refused to empty himself out in order to receive the fullness of Cordelia's grace. Filled with himself, he degenerates into a nonexistent nothing.

The Transcendent Father: Silence and Nothing

Cordelia's first aside prefigures her response to Lear's demand for proof of her love: "What shall Cordelia speak? Love and be silent" (1.1.61). She knows Lear expects to be overwhelmed by words, especially since her declaration will follow that of her fawning sisters. Even at the risk of inciting her father's wrath, she refuses to imitate their obsequious insincerity, preferring instead to remain true to herself.

Cordelia muses that to remain true to herself she must utter the single word "love," and then "be silent." She later does exactly what she says. After repeating the single word Nothing, Cordelia remains silent despite Lear's demands for a more ostentatious display of her love. Her terse utterance and silence intimate the depth of her love. She will give Lear all of her love, in her own person as the living incarnation of Word Made Flesh, and as the mantralike Nothing of the Holy Spirit.

According to Rudolf Otto, "Devotional Silence may have a threefold character."⁴³ In the Catholic Mass, "there is the numinous silence of Sacrament," while "the silence of Waiting" is a major feature of Quaker belief, and finally, there is "the silence of Union or

Fellowship,"⁴⁴ transcending sectarian differences. Cordelia's Christlike character suggests she is established in a state of oneness. Attainment of this state intimates that her silence is one of constant "union or Fellowship." The silence following Cordelia's "Love and be silent" and her later "Nothing" imply that after uttering her mantralike Word, she returns once again to the soundless realm of the Absolute.

Exoteric Christian dogma anthropomorphizes the first aspect of deity, in contrast to the Buddhist and Hindu transcendent aspect of Godhead, a silent or formless and empty all pervasiveness, referred to as the Void. Exceptions to traditional dogma can be found in the esoteric Christian theology of Meister Eckhart and The Cloud of Unknowing, each closer to the oriental definition of the first aspect of Godhead. Allusions to that "obscure nothing" or exhortations to exchange "this 'everywhere' and this 'everything' . . . for this 'nowhere' and this 'nothing,'" suggest that the author of The Cloud of Unknowing uses Nothing as a metaphor for the Void. Both are formless and all-pervasive. Although Nothing implies the Word or form aspect of Godhead, what it describes is formless, in contrast to the type of mantra which refers to a particular name, incarnation, or emanation of God such as Jesus or Krishna.⁴⁵

Similarly, Cordelia's silence suggests her state of consciousness, oneness with a transcendent Presence beyond sound or form, while her mantralike utterance, Nothing, implies the act of infusion, or desire to transmit her state to Lear. Cordelia's mantralike offering, the embodiment of her love, derives its profundity from her union with the Great Silence.

Long ago John Ruskin intuited that Shakespeare used nothing and silence to suggest saintly character.

In the whole compass of Shakespeare's conceptions, the two women whom he has gifted with the deepest souls are Cordelia and Virgilia [in Coriolanus]. All his other women can speak what is in them. These two cannot. The "Nothing my lord" of Cordelia, and the "gracious silence" of Virgilia, are the everlasting seals set by the Master of the human heart upon the most sacred writing of its folded and golden leaves. Shakespeare himself could not find words to tell what was in these women.⁴⁶

Perhaps Shakespeare could not find words to tell what was in Cordelia because she is an intangible something beyond description. Instead Cordelia is best described and characterized by her union with Silence and her relationship to Nothing. Unable to heave her heart into her mouth (1.1.91), she can only speak the mantralike Nothing and remain silent. What more is there left to say when love and silence evoke Godhead in its entirety as form, and as unmanifested, formless, all pervasive consciousness? Milward points out that Cordelia's:

. . . utterance of this "nothing," . . . seems to echo the silence of Christ in his Passion, both when asked by the chief priest in Matt. xxvi.62: "Answerest thou nothing?" and when before the Roman governor in Matt. xxvii.12 "he was accused of the chief priests and elders" but "answered nothing."⁴⁷

Cordelia's Laconic Nature

Cordelia's laconic nature also suggests that she serves as an instrument of mantralike infusion, her projection conforming to saints of diverse traditions who exhibit "simplicity" in their choice and quantity of words, and "hesitancy" in their style of communication.⁴⁸ Rohit Mehta points to Jesus' Sermon on the Mount as an illustration of the

richness of simplicity. Cordelia's Nothing suggests this same simplicity. The singleness of this word and its meaning indicate an absence of the superfluous; only the essential, or Root Word as Source and Primal Cause, exists.

Lear's effusive language is the antithesis of Cordelia's simplicity, conforming to Mehta's belief that when language is embellished with the superfluous, "life within is hollow."⁴⁹ Kent shares this view. ". . . What would'st thou do, old man? / Think'st thou that duty shall have dread to speak / When power to flattery bows? To plainness honour's bound / When majesty falls to folly (1.1.145-148). Kent rebukes Lear for confusing verbosity or seeming fullness with sincerity. "Thy youngest daughter does not love thee least; / Nor are those empty-hearted whose low sounds/Reverb no hollowness" (1.1.151-153).

Hesitancy, the second feature distinguishing the speech of saintly persons, implies humility, a virtue as necessary to infusion as it is to reception. Humility connotes a nature emptied of the lower self, free to receive and transmit the Holy Spirit. "In this form of transmission" Mehta relates, "there is a humility, a hesitancy due to the realization that the majesty and the grandeur of Communion itself is sought to be conveyed to those who have not known it."⁵⁰ Furthermore, "grace . . . modesty, . . . hesitancy and . . . humility" arise from "a feeling of one's own unworthiness to receive one that is truly great in a dwelling that is too poor."⁵¹

Moses epitomizes this description. After investing Moses with the mantra "I AM THAT I AM," God instills within him the power of

infusion: "Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you" (Exod. 3:14). God reiterates the infusive power of the Word and Moses' mission in Exod. 3:15: "Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The LORD God of your fathers, . . . hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations."⁵²

A profoundly humble man, Moses feels unworthy of administering mantric initiation: "O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue" (Exod. 4:10). To which God replies: "Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD?" (Exod. 4:11). For God, Moses' ineloquence attests to his worthiness. Moses is a perfect vehicle for infusion because he has been emptied of his own words or lower self. It is this empty nature, God reassures Moses, that enables him to be used as an instrument of divine will: ". . . and I with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say" (Exod. 4:12).⁵³

Cordelia resembles Moses in her inability to heave her heart into her mouth (1.1.90-91), her ineloquence an indication of emptiness. An instrument of divine will adverse to imitating the gilded tongued language of her sisters, she acknowledges the power and rightness of her position: "Then poor Cordelia! / And yet not so; since I am sure my love's / More ponderous than my tongue" (1.1.75-77). The word "ponderous" embodies the magnitude or heaviness of Cordelia's love. When this heavy or infinite love attempts to take finite form through the

articulated word, it becomes blocked or reticent, too vast to be contained or uttered.

Cordelia as Ego Destroyer

Reticent speech is also a strength⁵⁴ which affects transformation through the language of gesture and symbol rather than "so-called knowledge."⁵⁵ A laconic nature implies reverence for the sacrosanct power of the Word. One who is in harmony with the power and purpose of the Word, and uses it sparingly, will be imbued with the strength of its creative and transformative power.

This strength or transformative power sets the individual who possesses it apart from other men, frequently manifesting itself as behavior which defies the status quo. Moses smashing the bronze idols and Jesus defying the moneylenders in the temple demonstrate this type of behavior. Similarly, Cordelia's refusal to use the quantitative language of the market place to profane an infinite love which cannot be articulated defies the status quo demanded and exacted by Lear.

It appears as if Cordelia's use of quantitative language contradicts and undermines her resistance to it. In answer to Lear's demand that she "mend" her Nothing "speech a little, / Lest" she "mar" her "fortunes (1.1.93-94), Cordelia responds with the following quantitative evaluation.

Good my Lord,
You have begot me, bred me, lov'd me: I
Return those duties back as they are right fit,
Obey you, love you, and most honour you.
Why have my sisters husbands, if they say
They love you all? Happily, when I shall wed,

That lord whose hand must take my plight shall carry
 Half my love with him, half my care and duty:
 Sure I shall never marry like my sisters,
 To love my father all. (1.1.95-102)

Offended by his own reflection, Lear incredulously asks her:

"But goes thy heart with this?" To which she answers: "Ay, my good Lord." Lear responds with: "So young, and so untender?" and she counters with "So young, my Lord, and true" (1.1.103-106). Lear attributes her seeming lack of tenderness to prideful ingratitude. There have been some critics who, while not judging Cordelia as harshly as he, do go so far as to suggest that she has inherited some of her father's pride, stubbornness, and calculating attitude toward love.

It is easy to see how Cordelia's response could be misinterpreted. Her words sound stiff, weighted, measured, and calculated. The line "I / Return those duties back as they are right fit" seems to indicate effortful duty rather than spontaneous gratitude. But this projection is an act. Cordelia pretends to measure and mete out her feelings, requiting Lear what is owed him according to law, no more or less; Cordelia's future husband shall receive half of her love, and Lear the other half. Her calculated behavior mirrors that of her father who measures and metes out his kingdom according to how much love he receives in return.

Cordelia's quantitative language belies her true purpose which is not to imitate her father's example, but rather to destroy it. As Lear's master, Cordelia's primary function is to obliterate his lower nature because his redemption depends on it. Mal. 3:2 alludes to the

purifying power of the Master: "But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? For he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap." Mal. 3:3 explains the purpose of the Master's awesome power. "And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness." In the same way, Cordelia uses quantitative language to refine and purify Lear's lower nature.

Danby defines her paradoxical projection as "a combination of gentleness and toughness" which "belong together" because "they are aspects of the same thing. What this is" he "can only describe as an eminent degree of 'integration': the reconciliation of passion with order, or impulse and law, of duty and desire."⁵⁶ Danby concludes that "it is" Cordelia's "romantic wholeness" in the first scene "which makes her toughness . . . indistinguishable from her gentleness."⁵⁷

This paradoxical fusion of gentleness and toughness is a metaphor for the marriage of spirit and matter. Cordelia's ultimate aim is gentle for the spirit part of her nature seeks to infuse Lear with Grace. But the matter part of her nature knows that she must be tough with him since it is the only means of annihilating his lower nature. This aim molds her projection and explains why Cordelia does not seem to care if she offends Lear. Rather than pleasing Lear by affecting a seeming virtue which would appeal to him, Cordelia recognizes that what her father considers virtue is vain sentiment. Yielding to Lear's caprice will only perpetuate his self-delusion. Instead, she chooses

to risk losing his so-called love by resorting to an unconventional purifying method which will displease Lear in order to shock him into wakefulness.

She uses a mirror technique frequently employed by masters of diverse traditions. Since the Master has no ego to project, he is able to mirror the disciple's nature so that it rebounds back on him with startling alacrity. Working on Lear in this fashion, Cordelia's calculated demeanor and language project a so-called love governed by the dictates of dutiful obedience.

Good my Lord,
You have begot me, bred me, lov'd me:
Return those duties back as are right fit,
Obey you, love you, and most honour you. (1.1.95-97)

In the guise of conditional love, Cordelia reflects back to Lear his projection expressed in quantitative terms.

Why have my sisters husbands, if they say
They love you all? Happily, when I shall wed,
That lord whose hand must take my plight shall carry
Half my love with him, half my care and duty:
Sure I shall never marry like my sisters,
To love my father all. (1.1.98-103)

Because Lear spurns her unconditional love, she can only return to him what he is at this point in time, no more, no less. Ironically, Lear abhors the quantitative love Cordelia projects back to him, the mirror image of the conditional love he embodies.

Multiplicity: The Cause of Ingratitude

Prov. 14:23 states: "In all labor there is a profit: but the talk of the lips tendeth to penury." This passage implies that a

multiplicity of words depletes man of his spiritual wealth or communion with the Great Silence, the Word Made Flesh, and the Primal Word. The result is separation from God and subsequent regression. St. Thomas Aquinas also sees multiplicity as the cause of man's inability to attain at-one-ment. Underhill points to Aquinas' belief that "this desired vision of the Divine Essence, this discovery of the Pure Act" "is only withheld from" "man" "by the apparent necessity which he is under of turning bodily images, of breaking up his continuous and living intuition into conceptual traps; in other words, because he cannot live the life of sensation without thought."⁵⁸ "Therefore the man who would know the Divine Secret must unshackle himself . . . from the tyranny of" this "image-making power."⁵⁹ Or else he becomes the slave of his thoughts, identifying with the myriad images that inundate his mind, unaware that "it is not the man," but "merely his mental machinery which is under this 'necessity.'"⁶⁰

A comparison between Lear and Cordelia fits this description. A continuous stream of thought waves and images barrage Lear's mind, in contrast to Cordelia who reposes in a thought-free state, liberated forever from the "tyranny of" this "image-making power." Cordelia's freedom comes from her attunement to the Great Silence which lies even beyond the power of the Logos. The famous passage in John 1:1: "In the beginning was the Word, . . ." implies that formless all-pervasive Silence existed before the Word. The Logos or form aspect initiated time and space, becoming the medium by which God first thought or created the universe into existence. The mundane word serves an analogous

function when transposed to the world of men. It would follow that from letters come words, from words images, and finally, from identification and attachment to these images, comes thought.⁶¹

Underhill compares the tyranny of Aquinas' image-making power to "a prism" which shatters "the White Light of Reality" into "a succession of colored rays."⁶² This process is regressive; it "translates, analyses, incorporates in finite images the boundless perceptions of the spirit."⁶³ As a consequence, the thought free or unitive state is deflected from God and directed toward the many, resulting in myriad desires. A corresponding thread runs through "Augustine's observation that man's falling away from God resulted in the multiplicity of the temporal forms around him and his own sensibilities, so that abundance becomes laborious and his needs become abundant."⁶⁴

Neoplatonism influenced Christian concepts about the regressive effect of multiplicity. Neoplatonic cosmology identifies "the One" "with the Creator, reasoning that multiplicity must represent the farthest point from the Source of all things."⁶⁵ Christian theology incorporates this degenerative view of multiplicity into its doctrine of the Fall, linking it with the debased word. The serpent's unctuous tongue embodies the derogate word and adverse effect of proliferation on Adam and Eve. The seductive power of the serpent's words works upon Adam and Eve, conjuring up many hitherto unthought of desires. The creation of these thoughts and desires results in the loss of free will or the Fall. In the same way, Goneril's and Regan's wily words entice Lear with false promises of unconditional love.

Eccles. 10:10 implies that after the Fall the serpent's seductive words became contagious: "Surely the serpent will bite without enchantment and a babbler is no better." Babbling is synonymous with multiplicity since it profanes the Primal Word. The link between babbling and the serpent that suggests multiplicity caused the Fall, and will continue to cause a fall with the accompanying regression in individuals who abuse the sacrosanct Word. Lear is such an individual, for he metaphorically bites Cordelia and Kent with banishment after abjuring the singular Nothing. Verbose tirades mark the betrayal of his most loving daughter and most devoted vassal. As a consequence of his babbling and attraction to the prattle of others, Lear must, like the famed serpent, metaphorically crawl from one satanic daughter to the other, whereupon the hollowness of their flattery returns to haunt him.

Eccles. 5:3 attributes the cause of evil to the attraction for and use of a multiplicity of words: "For a dream cometh through a multitude of business; and a fool's voice is known by a multitude of words." Multiplicity causes the dream state. The yogic tradition equates the dream state with maya or delusion. Christian theology similarly calls this dreamlike maya or delusion which ensnares Adam and Eve evil. The phrase "fool's voice" underscores multiplicity as the cause of evil.

Two opposing definitions of folly influenced Christian concepts of gratitude. The New Testament associated folly with humility, poverty, and simplicity. The disciple who embodied this virtue was known as God's fool, whereas in the Old Testament, the man who embodied folly was condemned as an ingrate.

Sin is often called folly, and the sinner is a fool (Dt. 32:6; Je 4:22, 5:21) [sic]. This can be used as an extenuating word, but in the OT a self-made fool is not treated with sympathy. One who deliberately releases a harmful influence is a fool.⁶⁶

It was mentioned that renaissance theologians branded ingratitude a sin of malice. In Old Testament scripture, the term fool had a similar connotation. By analogy, folly and ingratitude are linked since the fool "who deliberately releases a harmful influence" commits an act of malice.

The fool in the OT is one who is witless, but the words imply much more than a lack of intelligence. Folly in the OT is malicious, and the malice comes from the fact that the fool rejects wisdom.⁶⁷

Furthermore, "the malice of the fool appears in the description of the fool in wisdom literature. The mouth of the fool by its unrestrained speech causes ruin"⁶⁸ (Prov. 10:14). This definition implies that ingratitude and folly are synonymous; both are sins of malice with a common origin which can be traced to a denial of Grace or wisdom. In each case, a multiplicity of words results in an act of malice.

With this understanding of the Old Testament meaning of "fool," let us re-examine the passage from Eccles. 5:3: "For a dream cometh through a multitude of business; and a fool's voice is known by a multitude of words." Attraction to multiple forms, thoughts, and desires is folly. Since folly turns its perpetrator away from the One Source or Center of Being, it is evil. By rejecting the Primal Word for a multiplicity of words, the fool commits an act of malice.

A fool of this kind, Lear eschews the Primal Word for a multitude of words. Furthermore, his folly is also evil. After his betrayal

of Cordelia, Kent warns him: "I'll tell thee thou dost evil" (1.1.164). Much later on, following his reunion with Cordelia, Lear petitions her: "Pray you now, forget and forgive: I am old and foolish" (4.7.84). Lear's admission implies a recognition that his folly or betrayal of her was evil. His willingness to surrender at that point also suggests he has finally learned that self-effort without Grace is of no avail. James 3.7 and 3.8 underscore the malice of the misused word and its indomitable hold on man, maintaining that although he has tamed all the creatures of the earth "the tongue can no man tame: it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison."

Eccles. 10:12 intimates the consequences of Lear's folly: "The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious; but the lips of a fool will swallow himself up." This passage reveals that Grace bestows wisdom, while lips, the vehicle by which the fool denies the Word or source of Grace, will "swallow" him up or cause his regression. Eccles. 7:25 connects folly and madness: "I applied mine heart to know and to know, and to search and seek out wisdom, and the reason of things, and to know the wickedness of folly, even of foolishness and madness." The link between folly and madness implies madness as a consequence of ingratitude. Conforming to this belief, Lear's regression manifests itself as madness.

Universal Discord

The irony of Lear's seeming beneficence is that it is neither spontaneous nor unconditional. Yet the kind of love he attempts to

buy with his so-called generosity is beyond price, free, spontaneous, and unconditional. In his demand for love Lear outmaneuvers himself, depriving his daughters of choice. A demand for love of this kind negates gratitude, eliciting a dutiful rather than spontaneous response. Since Lear only gives to get, he gives no love at all. Alluding to scripture and other ethical sources, Cooper states that beneficence "must be free, . . . from a franke mind"⁶⁹ (Luke 6.33-35; Prov. 25) "from the heart,"⁷⁰ (2 Cor. 9.7) not given "sparingly and grudgingly, but bountifully."⁷¹ Although Lear's gift of an entire kingdom appears bountiful, it is but a sparing and grudging gesture, a conditional form of beneficence sullied by stinginess or greed.

Lear is miserly, adhering to a rigidly meted out code of justice based on an absolutist rather than relative standard. His arrogant adherence to this rigid standard results in regression, abandonment, and madness. The degenerative effect of Lear's ingratitude has more adverse repercussions extending beyond his own personal ordeal. As the macrocosm reflects the microcosm, so the commonwealth reflects the degenerative pattern of his personal folly. Universal discord spreads from court to commonwealth, and finally, to all of nature. Lear's sovereignty, his analogical relationship to Cordelia as a Christ figure, and correspondence to Adam as an Everyman prototype, magnify the malefic influence of his ingratitude.

Prov. 16:10 declares the monarch an oracle of God: "A divine sentence is in the lips of the king: his mouth transgresseth not in judgment."⁷² Although this passage suggests that the king's word is

divine or sancrosanct, Lear's words are not sancrosanct, and he is not an oracle of God. By his attraction to multiplicity and flattery, Lear forfeits this divine right when he abjures Cordelia's word.

According to Prov. 15:4: attraction to the misused word is perverse. "A wholesome tongue is a tree of life; but perverseness therein is a breach of spirit." The Tree of Life symbolizes the enlightened man who derives his divinity from a wholesome tongue. The tongue that has imbibed the elixir of the Word becomes pure and whole, the source of all life. Lear's "breach of spirit" or separation from Cordelia is perverse because he has failed to make his "tongue" "wholesome" by repeating the Word.

In dethroning Cordelia, Lear "transgresseth in judgment," losing the potential for Christed kingship within himself. This act deprives the country of the golden age which is its rightful heritage. Resembling the Fisher King of the Grail Legend, Lear's absolute justice imprisons the commonwealth through a multiplicity of words. The proliferation of words and actions infects the kingdom, and universal discord ensues. The body politic contracts and fragments as Goneril and Regan plot against Lear, Cordelia, their husbands, and each other. Yet they are only executing the "sovereign injustice"⁷³ that Lear alone has initiated. Victim of its fallen king, the dying country withers as it waits for the redemptive Word of the One who will lift the "general curse," freeing it at last from the oppressive snares of absolute justice. In effect, Lear has been responsible for retarding the evolutionary process.

Some renaissance theologians and ethicists would consider Lear more guilty of ingratitude than Adam. William Vaughan believes that Adam and Eve's Original Sin is less heinous than ingratitude committed after the coming of Christ.⁷⁴ He reasons that Adam and Eve had no recourse to salvation since Christ had not yet come. On the other hand, an ingrate after the coming of Christ, having prior knowledge of the Savior and his redemptive power, knowingly commits this sin through choice. An ingrate of this type would be more guilty of ingratitude than either Adam or Eve who, despite initial ignorance of their sin, are offered no alternative for redemption. From this point of view, Lear is more guilty than Adam and Eve; Cordelia, his savior, has come, is incarnate, and offers him her redemptive word.

Despite this difference, Lear and Adam are linked analogically. Each is the originator of ingratitude among his respective race, and each transmits it to succeeding generations. As Adam's sin contaminates the murderous Cain, so Lear's ingratitude similarly infects the treacherous Goneril and Regan. It is true, as Lear claims, that Goneril and Regan have forgotten "the offices of nature, the bond of childhood, / Effects of courtesy, dues of gratitude" for the "half o'th kingdom" (2.4.176-178) that he has bestowed on them. But shortly thereafter, Lear is forced to admit to Goneril that she is akin to "a disease that's in my flesh, / Which I must needs call mine: thou art a boil, / A plague-sore, or embossed carbuncle, / In my corrupted blood" (2.4.220-223).

The image of Goneril and Regan as the corrupted issue of Lear's seed calls to mind Mal. 2.2 and 2.3, where priests are advised "if" they do not "give glory to my name, saith the LORD of hosts, I will send a curse upon you." As monarch or Vicar of Christ, Lear can be compared to a priest, his accursed fate, portended in Mal. 2.3, demonstrates the dire consequences of this curse: "Behold I will corrupt your seed, and spread dung upon your faces, even the dung of your solemn feasts; and one shall you away with it." Goneril and Regan are the corrupted seeds who manage to "take" Lear "away with it." In taking Lear "away with it," they resemble Edmund; all three serve as instruments of divine retribution. In all three instances, the sins of the sire are visited upon the sons who repay their fathers in kind.

Conclusion

M. D. H. Parker makes three important points about Shakespeare's use of inherited ingratitude in his earlier plays, two of which apply to the later King Lear.

Shakespeare derived from his historical sources the idea of the sins of the fathers visited upon the children, an idea common to Greek tragedy and Jewish scripture, and implying a kind of justice which is already tending to be not so much moral justice as moral consequence, in its operation on the family rather than on the individual. It is noticeable, however, in these earlier plays, that Shakespeare stresses the idea less than it is stressed in Hall. Whenever he has the opportunity, as in his treatment of Henry VI and John, he emphasizes the personal as well as the inherited sin of his victim. . . .

Alluding to the effects of retributive law as moral consequence rather than moral justice describes the workings of gratitude in King

Lear. Parker's description of Shakespeare's dual concept of sin as personal and inherited corresponds to my theory that in King Lear, he varies the magnitude of ingratitude relative to the perpetrator in order to undermine uniform classification and punishment of this sin.

What does not apply to this later play is Parker's observation that moral consequence is directed against the family rather than the individual. In King Lear, the degenerative effect of ingratitude affects the individual as adversely as the family. It is not an either/or situation. Ingratitude first defiles the individual perpetrator, then befouls family, court, and kingdom, subsequently moving beyond the civilized world of men to the realm of nature.

The regressive effects of ingratitude initiated by Lear are nurtured by Goneril and Regan who inherit the corrupted seed of his sin. The "general curse" or Original Sin which Lear transmits rebounds onto him, and is subsequently passed on by them, bringing this degenerate process to its farthest or most regressed state. All of society and nature suffers from the ingratitude Lear initiates and perpetuates through his tainted daughters. James 3.6 encapsulates the cause of Lear's ingratitude and the breadth of its corrosive influence. "And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature, and is set on fire of hell."

CHAPTER V

LEAR'S TRANSFORMATION AND THE DOCTRINE OF GRACE

Introduction

Lear's rejection of the Word should cause him to regress, but he does not. As with Edmund, Lear's evolution defies traditional concepts of ingratitude. He deviates even more markedly from the traditional pattern than Edmund. We sympathize with him throughout, whereas Edmund remains distinctly villainous until the final minutes of his life. Since traditional doctrine defined the ingrate in dire terms, with no redeeming features or even shades in between, the growing empathy, compassion, admiration, and awe we feel for Lear cannot be squeezed into a narrow retributive framework; it is too large. If too large, we must find a system great enough to encompass it. Grace is that system.

Grace provides the means to explain Lear's evolution since theological doctrine deemed divine will the sole cause of all positive change. But what of Lear's abandonment and madness? Are not these indications that retributive justice has been exacted? The answer is a qualified yes in that the process of Grace also uses abandonment and madness to cleanse and transform. Both processes apply to Lear. Defining Lear's development and destiny in terms of two opposing principles is the play's central paradox and key to its ambiguity. I intend to

show that the transposition of each principle to a different plane enables Lear to develop along two contradictory lines of action at the same time.

This intricate web of ambiguity ensnares many of the play's major characters. To a lesser degree, this double technique also applies to Edmund's destiny and the ambiguous question of his salvation or damnation. But it is not relevant to his regressive development which strictly conforms to traditional concepts of ingratitude. On the other end of the spectrum is Cordelia. Her behavior may be ambiguous, but her character is not. Cordelia's destiny also remains suspended between two doctrines, casting her in the double role of savior and victim. Although unexplored in this work, Gloucester's ambiguous pattern like that of Lear, has a similarly enigmatic effect upon his development and destiny. Even Edgar must play an ambiguous role as arbiter of justice and dispenser of Grace.

Despite the punitive workings of retributive justice, Lear evolves rather than regresses. His evolution in the midst of this other inexorable force implies the preeminence and superiority of Grace. For this reason, Lear's development will be analyzed primarily in terms of Grace. Evolution is a three part process involving: the dissipation of Lear's D.S. in its initial stages, infusion, and finally initiation into higher levels of consciousness.

Although Lear's ingratitude has not been explored in relation to conglomeration, an investigation of this type would reveal that it consists of six of the D.S. A complex process, purification uses the

following methods to expunge Lear of his D.S.: self-inquiry, the impulse to seek out a surrogate teacher in Cordelia's absence, the relentlessly critical promptings of Lear's fool or interior teacher, and madness.

The meaning of the term purification should be qualified. Although used here to refer to the first stage of Lear's development, it is an ongoing process continuing up to the moment Lear attains oneness. Purification, as I interpret it, refers to the dissipation of Lear's ingratitude to the extent that he comes to consciously know, understand, and respond to the effects of Grace working on him in the stages prior to taking the higher initiations.

These cleansing techniques are a necessary prelude to higher initiation, preparing Lear to consciously accept the infusion of Cordelia's grace. His progress shall be traced as he passes from ingrate to devotee, from devotee to disciple-initiate, and finally from initiate to transcended being. When pertinent, Jungian archetypes are used to clarify Lear's relationship to the Fool and Tom O'Bedlam. But this line of analysis is applied only to the extent that it elucidates Lear's evolution in relation to the Doctrine of Grace.

Lear's Purification

Self-Inquiry

Prior to his transformation, Lear projects his guilt onto others. But as his suffering increases, his focus shifts from an externalized world view distinguished by projection, to an internalized world view characterized by self-inquiry. This process of self-inquiry has discernible transformative effects on Lear's sloth and pride.

Advocates of Eastern and Western meditative systems practice self-inquiry as a means of attaining enlightenment. Meister Eckhart introduced its esoteric counterpart into Christianity.¹ The antithesis of slothfulness self-inquiry involves vigilant self-effort directed at overcoming the lower nature. By initiating this process of self-inquiry, Lear demonstrates that he is beginning to overcome his spiritual inertia. The answers he inevitably finds lead him to accept responsibility for his ingratitude.

The purpose of self-inquiry is to find out who one is, and how one fits into the divine scheme of things. Prior to his transformation, Lear never asks; he only states or commands. As sovereign, Lear believes his fiat a God-given right. According to Christian doctrine, this sovereign prerogative is natural only if accompanied by humility. In this way, the ruler would be governed by God's will rather than his own tyrannical inclinations. Humility and receptivity imply a flexible nature aware of its limitations. A true king in the service of Christ is flexible because he is humble, recognizing that God alone is omniscient. Flexibility and humility make him receptive to the wise counsel of others.

Lear's imperative mode of address defies this model of kingship, revealing an inflexible arrogance resistant to the wise counsel of Cordelia and Kent. A deluded belief in his own omnipotence and omniscience causes him to identify with an "archaic"² rather than Christian archetype of kingship. According to Kirsch:

. . . an archaic king . . . under primitive conditions, is considered the source of fertility and of all blessings of the country. If the carrier of so much mana does not realize his humanity—in other words, if he does not differentiate between himself as a human being and his₃ great office—he must necessarily feel omnipotent, a god.

The archaic king's feeling of omnipotence is incompatible with the Christian ideal which differentiates between the king and his office. Awareness of this distinction humbles the Christian monarch who no longer deifies himself apart from God. Humility arises from the recognition that he is merely a vehicle for the mana rather than the cause of it. In the first scene, Lear embodies the archaic prototype acting "like" an arbitrary "god who can give and take away as he pleases."⁴ "The paradoxical thing" Kirsch goes on to say, "is that Lear behaves most like a god at that moment when he considers his mortality."⁵

That moment occurs when Lear begins to ask rather than command. At this point, he no longer sees himself as omniscient. Self-inquiry has caused a shift from an archaic to a Christian world view, resulting in a partial diminution of intellectual pride. This shift marks the first major turning point in Lear's development. The first evidence of self-inquiry surfaces immediately prior to Goneril's decision to reduce his retinue. As she talks of the insolence of his retainers, Lear incredulously asks:

Does any here know me? This is not Lear:
Does Lear walk thus? speak thus? Where are his eyes?
Either his notion weakens, his discernings
Are lethargied--Ha! waking? 'tis not so.
Who is it that can tell me who I am? (1.4.223-227)

More than a shocked father's retaliation against the daughter who has abused him, these questions also represent a psychic intrusion

of the speaker's own as yet unrecognized search for self-identity. Although Lear half-believes he is ridiculing Goneril, unknowingly he mocks his own lethargy and blindness. Two metaphors underscore Lear's self-deluded condition: life as a dream, and eyes as consciousness. Despite his self-deluded condition, the change in Lear's style of communication from fiat to question reveals that the awakening process has begun. The process of self-inquiry Lear initiates, resembles a complicated meditative practice. This practice consists of an intricate series of questions and responses aimed at finding out the identity of the seeker.

The prominent feature of this process is that question and answer never vary: "Who am I," the repeated question, is always followed by a negation. In Eastern practice, this repeated negation, "neti, neti," or "not this, not that," takes on a ritualistic resonance. With the same goal in mind, the Christian Eckhart also uses negation to deny will, memory, understanding, imagination, and all sense perceptions which camouflage the true self.⁶

Lear's speech suggests this process of question and negation. "Who am I?" is echoed in Lear's "Does anyone here know me?" And "This is not Lear" is his responding negation. This pattern is followed by a series of questions and another negation: "Does Lear walk thus? speak thus? Where are his eyes? / Either his notion weakens, his discernings / Are lethargied--Ha! waking? 'tis not so" (1.4.223-226).

Vigilance characterizes this process of self-inquiry. Lawrence Le Shan points out, "There is no rest It must be done with a

kind of continued fierceness that constantly states the rejection of the previous answer and searches for the next answer in order to reject and go past it."⁷ "After each response there is an active, dynamic search for the next answer."⁸ Corresponding to this description, a fierce dynamism impels an anguished and desperate Lear to repeat his original question: "Who is it that can tell me who I am?" (1.4.227).

Before he can answer this question, Lear must cast off the false persona with which he has identified himself. Self-inquiry uses negation to strip away "the many false selves with which we ordinarily identify ourselves."⁹ Each question removes another layer. After being driven out onto the storm ravaged heath, Lear uses a similar series of negations and questions.

Thou wert better in a grave than to answer with
thy uncover'd body this extremity of the skies.
Is man no more than this? Consider him well.
Thou ow'st the worm no silk, the beast no hide,
the sheep no wool, the cat no perfume. Ha! here's
three on's are sophisticated; thou art the thing
itself; unaccommodated man is no more but such poor,
forked animal as thou art. Off, off, you lendings!
Come; unbutton here. (Tearing off his clothes.) (3.4.99-
107)

Divestiture is a metaphor for the discarding of Lear's many false selves. The aged king makes the, at first, unwanted discovery, that the "uncover'd body" of "unaccommodated man" is "the thing itself." Power, position, honor, and wealth are those false selves which must be discarded. All these have prevented him from finding out who he is. Ascribing to an elitist code of honor, Lear scorns the "uncover'd body" or essential self, believing himself superior to the beast.

Formerly, he used these false selves as proof of his superiority. Now he is just beginning to learn that he has been deluding himself.

On the surface, Lear's first divestiture speech echoes the theology of Montaigne. Montaigne contested the assumption of man's supposed superiority to the beast, maintaining that he could learn much from this seemingly inferior creature. Because the beast knew more about the necessities of life, it was capable of surviving with less effort than sophisticated but helpless man who adulterated the earth with his decadently refined sensitivities.¹⁰ Resembling Luther in his denigration of man's arrogant presumption that he was superior to other creatures, Montaigne denied these distinctions of order and degree, believing man was no better than the beast.¹¹

Despite the similarity of Lear's divestiture speech to certain aspects of Montaigne's theology, on a broader scale, the play's cosmology is patterned upon an Anglican concept of order and degree. As mentioned, in this arrangement, man is superior to the beast because he has been graced with the gift of reason, endowing him with a greater capacity for gratitude. Humility is the fruit of reason, if this gift is used wisely in accord with God's will. The presence of this virtue attests to the source of this gift, God's Grace rather than man's worthiness.

The pride Lear takes in his own knowledge prevents him from utilizing that discriminating reason which distinguishes man from beast. Lear's reaction of Cordelia's grace and Kent's counterattempt to prevent her banishment are evidence of his abuse of reason. Since his abuse of reason is a denial of the purpose for which he has been created,

Lear regresses, forfeiting his preeminent place on the Chain of Being. Before he can find out what it is to be a man, Lear must first learn what it is to be a beast. The divestiture speech uses Montaigne's equation of man and beast as a metaphor for the degenerative process inflicted on Lear as a result of his ingratitude.

But Lear's degraded position as beast does not remain a permanent condition. Danby points to another influence that of the Anglican Hooker who argues: "though Nature involves self-control and self-limitation, it does not demand self-mutilation. It is large and free-handed. Nature is not a niggard. This, too, is stated emphatically in King Lear."¹² Material poverty is not a standard by which to measure spiritual wealth. Rather "destitution, the bare minimum, is" regarded as "anti-human and unnatural. The ideal for man is not the beggar but the King."¹³ In theory, Christed kingship was not elitist but egalitarian; man was fit to rule only after recognizing his unity with all of creation. This unity is what Lear unknowingly seeks when self-inquiry impels him to explore the relationship of man to beast.

As self-inquiry begins to reverse the degenerative process, reason gradually gains ascendancy over intellectual pride. At this point, Lear begins to question his relationship to the beast. Lear's questioning is a partial recognition of his culpability and forfeiture of his esteemed position on the Great Chain of Being. As this unconscious admission begins to work on him, a noticeable change begins to take place. Lear's prideful sense of honor is somewhat deflated by his inability to find out where he belongs. No longer exalted above others,

Lear's growing awareness of his degraded position impels him to alter the focus of his self-inquiry. His earlier "Who is it that can tell me who I am?" (1.4.227) now becomes "Is man no more than this?" (3.4.101). The use of the impersonal word "man" rather than the personal word "I" reveals that Lear no longer preoccupies himself with his own fate to the exclusion of all others. Shortly before the divestiture speech, he expresses the desire to: "Expose himself to feel what wretches feel" (3.4.34). Lear's willingness to experience the common lot of the lowest strata of society is an indication of his newfound kinship with the beast. Now his vision not only embraces all of humanity but all of created life.

Lear's behavior, at this point, reflects a common theological belief in self-righteousness as the worst form of pride, and hence most difficult to eradicate. Although elitist honor and intellectual pride begin to dissipate fairly early in the action, self-righteousness remains much in evidence until his reunion with Cordelia; a shred of it even remains after she initiates him. Lear acts from mixed motives when he chooses to "Expose himself to feel what wretches feel." He not only undergoes this ordeal to rectify past negligence and irresponsibility toward this "houseless poverty" (3.4.26), but also to presumptuously "show the Heavens more just" (3.4.36).

A consistent metaphor throughout the play, divestiture symbolizes the stripping away of Lear's pride in its diverse forms. The first speech joins divestiture with man and beast imagery to suggest the partial diminution of elitist honor and intellectual pride. The second

speech combines the stripping and donning of apparel as a prelude to reunion with Cordelia. Divested of his garments, the sleeping Lear is adorned with raiment more befitting to his kingly status. Donning of new apparel, or the taking on and wearing of a new state of consciousness, intimates Lear's receptivity to Grace. But even after infusion, the cycle is incomplete; some pride remains. Recurrence of this motif at Lear's death completes the cycle, annihilating the last vestige of pride.

A marked difference distinguishes the first and final divestiture speeches. In the first speech, Lear impatiently commands, demands, and rips off his clothing: "Off, off, you lendings / Come; unbutton here. (Tearing off his clothes.) (3.4.106-107). Lear is wrathful and self-righteous, believing he and humanity are victims of cosmic ingratitude. While self-inquiry moves him to question the justice of heaven, only Cordelia's death drastically alters his pattern of projection. At this final stage, he neither commands nor demands, but requests: "Pray undo this button: thank you Sir" (5.3.308). The respect Lear shows to his perspective benefactor and the self-effacement with which this request is uttered reflect humility and patience which eventually transform Lear into the embodiment of Christian gratitude.

Lear's Search for a Master Teacher

The Fool as Inner Master

Lear's desire for a master teacher is another purifying device which works on his extinguishing his D.S. This desire indicates a

considerable expansion of consciousness. No longer believing himself to be omniscient, Lear wishes he could find someone who knows all. There is, as yet, a considerable disparity between Lear's desire for a master teacher, and his willingness to listen to the voice of wisdom he supposedly yearns to hear. His ambivalent response to the wisdom of the Fool underscores this disparity. As the action progresses, this initial ambivalence is tempered. The first hint that Lear's resistance is beginning to change is revealed early in the action. Actively eliciting the Fool, ". . . lad; teach me" (1.4.136), Lear now relates to him as a surrogate master in Cordelia's absence, this transposed projection reflecting his unconscious desire for oneness with her. As Lear begins to respond to his inner voice or Fool, there is a corresponding change in his consciousness.

Interpreted in this way, the Fool functions as a master on two planes of action: the externalized real world, and the internalized world of the psyche and spirit. Interwoven and complementary, these two dimensions are interrelated rather than mutually exclusive functions or realms. While keeping his dual relationship to Lear in mind, this study will concentrate on the Fool as an aspect of Lear's psyche. This line of investigation is preferred, as my purpose is to explore Lear's evolution of consciousness; and evolution is an inner plane process. Serving as conscience, higher mind, and Christ consciousness in the final stages of the old king's journey, the Fool's relationship to Lear depicts the internal workings of the evolutionary process.

Theatrical and courtly convention provide precedence for the Fool's role as master teacher. In both traditions the fool played the diverse, at times, contradictory roles of jester, moron, lunatic, and seer.

"Innocents" as these fools were called, inspired "mingled feelings of awe, amused contempt and something like pity."¹⁴ This paradoxical attitude of awe and contempt can be traced "far back to the racial history of man" where a "taboo" was inculcated "that set apart the divine madman or fool as kind of a seer."¹⁵ "Out of this mixed attitude toward the fool grew his license to speak freely and act capriciously."¹⁶ "Since he was not held accountable for what his tongue wagged the fool might clatter or speak truths with comparative impunity."¹⁷

Despite this unbridled license, on occasion, the fool was either whipped for his impudence or chastised like a naughty child.¹⁸ On two occasions, Lear threatens to whip the Fool after he has been taunted for relinquishing kingdom, position, and power. The Fool manages to remain unscathed; rather, it is Lear who is seared by his gibes. The Fool's effect on Lear suggests he uses the guise of a babbling simpleton as a camouflage for his sagacity.

Around the twelfth century, a fusion took place between the natural fool or imbecilic innocent and the artificial or sane fool who assumed the guise of a natural for his own reasons.¹⁹ While critics differ in their classification of Lear's fool, I agree with Goldsmith's belief that this character represents the artificial or sane type. If regarded as an artificial jester, Lear's fool is perfectly suited to play the role of master teacher. As simpleton, lunatic, and seer, all rolled

up into one, the Fool is a most bizarre and unorthodox teacher. Paradoxically, this bizarre orthodoxy makes him the most suitable of teachers, a proficient dispeller of Lear's D.S.

Dissipation of intellectual pride takes the form of "reason in madness" (4.6.173). Contrary to appearances, Lear's attraction to the Fool, and later to Tom O'Bedlam, two of the most seemingly unfit and unlikely of teachers, reflects this growing "reason in madness." "Reason in madness" is a metaphor for that intuitive interior wisdom able to distinguish between appearance and truth. Partial diminution of self-righteousness and elitist honor also indicate Lear's growing attunement to a mad wisdom; negation of the world of appearance is his criterion for choosing a master teacher. It follows that a man possessed by pride would be blinded to the mad wisdom of the Fool, choosing instead a mentor by his pedigree or persona.

Kirsch points out that:

If one compares Kent with the Fool, one realizes that although Kent was the first to perceive Lear's mistake, and although he assumed the attitude of a physician toward Lear, it is the Fool alone who from the very beginning has a deep understanding of the whole situation.²⁰

Although the perfect vassal, Kent is ensnared by an elitist pride which obstructs him from plumbing the depths of the mad wisdom. Kirsch goes on to say that Kent "has in common with Lear" an "irascible quality . . . that limits his understanding. He must therefore share Lear's fate to some degree."²¹ The Fool's strange and sudden disappearance from the action suggests he functions on an internal plane, abstracted from the logical cause and effect sequence of the play's externalized

world. While the ultimate destinies of Lear and Edmund remain ambiguously moot, at least, as witnesses to their deaths, we do know what happens to them in this world.

No such incontrovertible death, or for that matter life, exists for the Fool after his disappearance. He simply vanishes, his fate veiled in mystery. He is last seen with Kent bearing Lear's body off to Cordelia's camp at Dover. But Lear arrives without him. Somehow waylaid on the way, arrayed in fantastical garb with a crown of weeds, Lear wanders aimlessly until he meets the now-blinded Gloucester and Edgar; the Fool nowhere in sight, a Gentleman and attendants from Cordelia's camp eventually come to retrieve Lear.

Regarding the Fool as Lear's higher mind and connecting him with Cordelia's return clarifies the Fool's disappearance. Although functioning as a surrogate teacher during Cordelia's absence, after her arrival, his presence is no longer needed. Furthermore, the Fool's abandonment of Lear intensifies and accelerates the cleansing process in readiness for his infusion. Abandonment is a recurring motif.²² First, Lear abandons his higher self when he abjures Cordelia's grace. Self-abandonment recurs with Kent's exile. A reversal occurs and others abandon Lear: first, Goneril and Regan, now seemingly the Fool, and later, the experience of Cordelia's death.

Lear has come to depend upon his higher mind for guidance and support; without it he is lost. The seeming abandonment of his higher mind exacerbates Lear's suffering, and a form of mental crucifixion ensues. Lear's Christlike attire, "fantastically dressed with wild

flowers,"²³ suggests his state of mind. This combination of abandonment, mental crucifixion, and subsequent suffering push Lear to the limits of his endurance. In mystical tradition, it is said that, precisely at this point, the Master appears; a similar pattern unfolds with the reunion of Cordelia and Lear in the next scene.

Regarded in this light, the Fool's disappearance, or return to the recesses of Lear's psyche, is a necessary and positive part of the transformative process. Although he vanishes, Lear's final monologue alluding to his "hanged fool" (5.3.304) intimates that he has never left. After his disappearance, he continues on as an internal rather than externally projected transformative agent. His function never varies, only the plane from which he operates.

Throughout this section, Lear's transformation has been coupled with the term purification. In common usage, purification means elimination or eradication. These terms are misleading if applied to Lear's purification. According to Jung, the dark nature can never be eliminated, only repressed or denied. Purification is an integrative rather than eliminative process involving a recognition and acceptance of all parts of one's nature. If the dark side is repressed and denied instead of accepted and integrated, it continually strives for predominance. But if the shadow self is encouraged and accepted, the higher nature gains sovereignty and self-mastery is attained.

Puritans and other "fire and brimstone" groups of the period who divided good and evil into two opposed and mutually exclusive categories would adjudge an integrative process or synthesis of opposites as

anathema. Although a modern approach to transformation, the Jungian union of self and shadow appears in the union of spirit and matter, alluded to by Christian esoteric texts of the period. Frances A. Yates believes "it can be accepted as a fact . . . that the thought of The Merchant of Venice is influenced by the Christian Cabala of Francesco Giorgi."²⁴ Similarly, Giorgi's and other esoteric texts of the period could have influenced King Lear. Lear's relationship to the Fool and Tom O'Bedlam's relationship to Edgar are metaphors for the transformative process, in the more esoteric sense, as the union of spirit and matter.

As an inner dialogue between spirit and matter, the interaction between Lear and the Fool externalizes the internal integrative process. Believing that he has been taken prisoner by Cordelia's attendants, Lear refers to himself as "the natural fool of Fortune" (4.6.189). In addition to the more obvious meaning that Lear "is born to the sport of fortune,"²⁵ the "quibble on natural . . . can mean imbecile as well as born."²⁶ This allusion to imbecility implies an interrelationship between Lear and the Fool in which the old king is the less evolved of the pair. As a natural or imbecilic fool, Lear is matter. In contrast, the Fool, as artificial or wise and witty type, corresponds to spirit.

Complete integration of spirit and matter, or union between Lear and his higher mind, remains unconsummated until the deaths of the Fool and Cordelia in the final scene. Prior to that time, these two aspects are, in varying degrees, polarized rather than harmonized. Lear is a divided soul, driven to externalize his inner conflict through this

dichotomy. "Dost thou call me fool, boy," he asks, to which the Fool retorts, "All thy other titles thou has given away, that thou wast born with" (4.6.145-147). This exchange vivifies two biblical concepts of folly. The Old Testament description of folly and its consequences fits Lear; debased by the malice of his folly, he loses all. The Fool is entitled to scoff at Lear for in the spirit of the New Testament, he plays God's humble fool.

The crucifixion motif also links these two characters as polarized aspects of each other. Lear, the lower man, suffers the retributive consequences of his ingratitude, "bound / upon a wheel of fire" (4.7.46-47). The initiate Fool undergoes a similar trial for entirely different reasons. His metaphorical death at the same time and in the same way as Cordelia implies that the Fool's hanging is redemptive rather than retributive.²⁷

As with Cordelia, word play on nothing underscores the antithesis between Lear and the Fool. Eastern scripture refers to the Christ self as the witness. Correspondingly, the Fool is the witness or that part of Lear which watches his lower nature. As witness, the Fool takes note of this difference in evolution and tries to make Lear aware of it: "Now thou art an O without a figure. I am better than thou art now; I am a Fool, thou art nothing" (1.4.189-191). As spirit or no-thing tangible, the Fool opposes Lear who, as matter or nonbeing, remains an uncreated 0, having made little progress since his initial denial of the Logos. Lear reacts to the Fool in exactly the same way as he did to Cordelia. In response to the Fool's question, "Can you make

no use of nothing, Nuncle?," Lear replies, "Why no boy; nothing can be made out of nothing" (1.4.129-130). The Fool implies the need for Grace, and Lear once again rejects it.

This exchange further links the Fool and Cordelia since he utters the same mantralike Nothing as she, and elicits the same denial from Lear. His repetition of her word qualifies the Fool as the perfect surrogate teacher in Cordelia's absence. By imbibing the Word, he becomes it. As a result, his words, like those of Cordelia, have the power to cut through Lear's darkness. The correspondence between his metaphorical hanging and her literal hanging also suggest this motif of perfected discipleship.

My theory of conflicting principles transposed to different planes elucidates the Fool's enigmatic fate. His ambiguous destiny no longer perplexes us if it is regarded as dual planed. Within this framework, he has two destinies: one transposed to a realistic plane corresponding to the principle of gratitude, and the other to an analogical plane corresponding to the Doctrine of Grace. On a realistic plane, the Fool's fate is veiled, hidden from ungrateful man as a consequence of the Fall. But on an internal plane, he is that awakened Grace which metaphorically resurfaces from the recesses of Lear's psyche at the time of Cordelia's death.

Lear's initial response to Cordelia's death appears to be projected onto the Fool: "And my poor fool is hang'd!" (5.3.304). This projection is more than just a confused, crazed, or anguished inability to cope with his loss if the Fool is regarded as his higher self. Seen in

this way, he makes the discovery that Cordelia's sacrificial death has eradicated the curse of his ingratitude. This act releases and frees the Fool or higher nature, enabling him to rise to the surface of Lear's conscious mind to be hanged in the manner of his master. This fused image of literal and metaphorical hanging implies death of the lower nature. Lear's projection of Cordelia's hanging onto the Fool does not suggest a grief-stricken inability to accept her death, but rather the last cry of a dying ego in the throes of confronting its own annihilation. Metaphorical hanging culminates in the triumph of initiate Fool over ingrate Lear.

There are diverse opinions about the possible meaning of Lear's allusion to the hanged fool. Some believe this allusion refers to Cordelia alone, attributing Lear's slip of the tongue projection to his traumatized reaction to her death.²⁸ Others maintain that Lear refers to the Fool alone;²⁹ and a third view regards it as an androgynous "image of the Fool and . . . Cordelia . . . united in one."³⁰ This last view is the most convincing. The identical deaths of these characters are not isolated events, but part of a larger pattern forming a consistent link between Cordelia and the Fool throughout the action.

The first implication of this link occurs early in the action, even before the Fool has appeared onstage. Inquiring as to the whereabouts of his Fool, Lear adds: "I think the world's asleep" (1.4.47). Although his observation could be interpreted literally, it also intimates that he half intuitively senses his own slumbering divinity, and seeks to awaken it. Less than thirty lines later, he again inquires as to the

whereabouts of the Fool and is told by his knight: "Since my young Lady's going into France, Sir, the Fool hath pined much away" (1.4.71-72). This line suggests the soul's grief over its separation from God. Lear is a divided soul whose Fool or higher self, mourns over Cordelia's exile. Even at this early stage, Lear feels the stirrings of his conscience, the Fool's grief "well" (1.4.73).

After this point, the Fool's relationship to Cordelia begins to shift. Through repetition of Cordelia's word and the sacrificial implications of his metaphorical hanging, the Fool takes on more and more of Cordelia's characteristics, and in the end merges with her.

The Fool as a Dispeller of Darkness

Well suited for the role of alchemical master, the Fool's dual function as simpleton-seer empowers him with unorthodox and bizarre teaching methods. Regarding the Fool as a dispeller of Lear's darkness explains his seeming insensitivity toward the old king and the scathing barbs he makes at his expense. Kirsch points out that in this way:

The Fool acts as a typical spiritus familiaris, the objective spokesman for Lear's unconscious. Like a battering ram, the Fool breaks down these walls by telling Lear that he is a counterpart of his former self. He means that Lear is now close to the unconscious and has to assimilate all those contents which he has walled off in the past.³¹

Grief over the loss of Cordelia's company triggers the Fool's seeming insensitivity toward Lear. On a symbolic level, his behavior implies the higher mind's awareness of Lear or lower nature as the cause of its separation from God. Using the same alchemical technique as Cordelia, the Fool mirrors Lear's lower nature. Just as Cordelia's

measured use of words reflects Lear's equation of love with the trade and barter of a marketplace transaction, the Fool's effusive verbal bombardments echo Lear's equation of love with multiplicity. His callous treatment of Lear is just rather than cruel. As Lear profanes the single Word, so he too is assaulted by a multiplicity of words.

The following two examples illustrate the Fool's alchemical technique. In the first instance, the Fool mocks Lear by offering his coxcomb to the disguised Kent as a reward for his devotion to the old king: ". . . if thou follow him thou must needs wear my coxcomb. How now Nuncle! Would I had two coxcombs and two daughters!" "Why my Boy?" asks Lear, falling right into his trap, and the Fool quips: "If I gave them all my living, I'd keep my coxcombs myself. There's mine; beg another of thy daughters." Piqued by this barb, Lear warns: "Take heed, sirrah; the whip." This threat is fearlessly ignored as the Fool's next retort shows: "Truth's a dog must to the kennel; he must be whipp'd out when the Lady Brach may stand by th' fire and stink" (1.4.103-111).

Falsehood refers to flattery,³² setting up a dichotomy between truth and pretense. This definition seems likely since, at that time, the term "Lady" and "Brach" commonly referred to hounds, and Shakespeare often associates dogs with flatterers.³³ In its most obvious sense, "Lady Brach" refers to Goneril and Regan. Their fawning behavior toward Lear in the first scene brands them as bitches. Even more shameless, their lies are not limited to the private or family world, but impudently paraded out in the open "by th' fire" of the public world for all the court to see.

Goneril and Regan are not the only dogs to whom the Fool refers. Lear's attraction to flattery, at the expense of the Word, also makes him doglike. His higher self has been denigrated, ignored, and repressed back into the "kennel" of his unconscious, while "Lady Brach," or Lear's false self, stands out by "th' fire" or out in the open of his conscious mind, dominating and defiling it with the "stink" of flattery. Lear's threat to whip the Fool unmasks a dark side of his nature he does not wish to acknowledge.

There is a play on the imagery of whipping. Lear uses it in a literal sense as a punitive measure, while the Fool employs it in an alchemical sense as a means of dispelling Lear's attraction to flattery or self-delusion. This method of whipping or dispelling is inverted from its usual order. Ordinarily, darkness must be whipped out of or dispelled from an individual since it is hidden within, far away from the conscious light of self-confrontation. In this case, truth, in the form of the Fool, or higher mind, must be whipped out of or rise from within Lear's unconscious, so that "th' fire and stink" of "Lady Brach," his false persona, can be dispelled without.

Another instance where the Fool serves as a dispeller of darkness occurs after Lear initiates the process of self-inquiry. In response to Lear's question, "Who is it that can tell me who I am?," the Fool replies: "Lear's shadow" (1.4.227-228). The lower man asks a question, and the higher man tersely responds with a cryptically veiled teaching which can be interpreted in a number of ways.

Kirsch believes, "in this context, the term 'shadow' shows that Lear is now a bleak, two dimensional remnant of his former self, a weak, dependent man who is in no sense his own master."³⁴ While the abuse Lear suffers and the subsequent dependency into which he is forced contribute to the degenerative process, his rejection of Grace is the sole cause of regression. Without Grace, he is a zero or shadow. This implied association between the shadow and loss of Grace is the precursor of the modern Jungian archetype, with the difference that the shadow allusion fits into a Christian framework and relates to the theological beliefs of its time. Keeping these two systems in mind will clarify the Fool's relationship to Lear.

The more well-known definition of the Jungian shadow associates this image with the primitive, animal part of man's nature. The shadow is malefic, all that is potentially harmful to oneself and others. For this reason, it is either feared, ignored, or repressed. A Jungian interpretation applied to Lear, Kirsch relates, suggests he "has become identified with the archetype of the shadow; that is, a change of personality has taken place in Lear, in which ego is no longer the ruler of the personality."³⁵ Instead, "Lear now becomes subject to, even victim of, his own unconscious."³⁶ If transposed to Christian doctrine, the shadow's domination of the conscious mind corresponds to Lear's ingratitude and subsequent loss of Grace. Lear's domination by the shadow world would be regarded as madness or a form of regression, the retributive consequence of his ingratitude.

King Lear is not the only Shakespearian protagonist to embody the malefic aspects of the shadow nature. Macbeth is perhaps the most pronounced example of the shadow as malefic. Upon learning of his wife's death, Macbeth observes in this well-known monologue:

And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow; a poor player,
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more: it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing. (5.5.22-28)

Two shadow players are alluded to: Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, each guilty of folly or idiocy. As punishment for the folly of ingratitude, God withholds his boundless bounty. Depleted of spiritual wealth, each degenerates into a "poor player" or profaner of the Word No-thing beyond form or attribute. Death or multiplicity, the end result of this degenerative process, is a barrage of "sound and fury" signifying zero or nonbeing, in life as well as in death.

Lord Talbot, in Henry VI, I, is another character overpowered by the malefic influence of his shadow nature. When the Countess of Auvergne accuses him of tyrannizing the kingdom and slaying many subjects, he points to the absence of his true self or "substance." Talbot's play on the word "substance" implies that he speaks on two levels. On a literal level, his retort mocks the Countess, "substance" referring to his soldiers who wait outside her chamber ready to suppress any rebellious outbursts. On a deeper level, Talbot defensively rationalizes the predominance of his shadow nature:

No, no, I am but shadow of myself:
 You are deceiv'd, my substance is not here;
 For what you see is but the smallest part
 And least proportion of humanity:
 I tell you, madam, were the whole frame here,
 It is of such a spacious lofty pitch
 Your roof were not sufficient to contain't. (2.3.49-55)

Talbot points out that he is dark and light, a beast driven by his shadow or "smallest part," as well as a "spacious and lofty" consciousness attuned to the higher frequencies or "pitch" of the Primal Sound. His true or God nature, he argues, "is not here"; it is too "spacious and lofty" to be contained in a finite universe. Like the infinite love with which it is filled, Talbot's higher nature now pervades the entire universe, dwelling in a realm beyond form and substance. Unfortunately for Talbot, this divine nature is beyond reach, not because it dwells in another realm, but because the smallest part of him, that is, his shadow nature, has separated or driven him away from it.

Lear's ignorance of the Fool as a higher aspect of himself also corresponds to a positive side of the Jungian shadow generally less well known than its malefic counterpart. The Jungian concept of the shadow encompasses the unconscious in its entirety, and may either be bad or good. It represents that hidden or repressed part of an individual for good or ill of which he is unaware or chooses not to acknowledge. Aronson relates that the same shadow which motivates the primitive or animal drives "may display, when properly disciplined, qualities of creative insight and visionary impulse."³⁷ This description fits the Fool as that potential visionary impulse within Lear. The shadow to which he refers is not only malefic and regressive, it is also

positive and evolutionary. The Fool alludes to what Lear has become as a result of his ingratitude, and to what he could become if he listens to the dictates of his higher mind.

Though at first Lear either ignores or battles with the Fool, his positive shadow gains increasing ascendancy. By the time he is driven out onto the storm ravaged heath, Lear no longer takes him half-seriously. Nor does he regard the jester as a thorn in his side. Instead, he accepts him as a young child to be protected from the raging elements. The old king's desire to care for the Fool reflects an unconscious need to foster his own, as yet, seedling Christ nature. This desire depicts a transformation in process whereby the humanitarian need to serve others is gaining ascendancy over narcissistic self-involvement. Acceptance of the Fool marks the first major step in an integrative process leading to transcendence.

Tom O'Bedlam as Shadow and Mirror

Although the positive side of the shadow teaches Lear through the Fool, he also needs to confront its negative counterpart if he is to marry spirit and matter. His meeting with Tom O'Bedlam, that dark side of Edgar possessed by the "foul fiend" (3.4.78), provides him with this opportunity. Lear is attracted to Edgar's shadow side because he identifies with it. Despite appearances to the contrary, Edgar is not an integrated individual. His Parsifal projection is a mask or persona which camouflages the "foul fiend" within. This mask must be shattered in order to let the fiend, and the D.S. he engenders

(3.4.83-92), rise to the surface of Edgar's consciousness to be confronted, accepted, and integrated. Edgar too must undergo the purifying fire of the Holy Spirit. Only then can he assume his rightful place as initiate-philosopher.

Lear and Edgar mirror each other. Upon meeting, each is jolted into self-recognition, perceiving the beggar or that spiritually deprived part of himself in the other. Lear's recognition of Tom O'Bedlam as his philosopher intimates a self-acceptance requisite to integration. Edgar's willingness to play the fiend suggests a similar propensity for self-acceptance and integration. Kirsch points out that "the shock of seeing Edgar in the tattered clothes of a typical madman"³⁸ rekindles Lear's interest in self-inquiry; except now his earlier question, "Who is it that I am?" (1.4.227) is reworded "as the existential question: 'Is man no more than this' [3.4.100-101]."³⁹ Tom O'Bedlam not only shocks Lear into self-confrontation, he also expands his understanding of the shadow as a universal component; that each man contains within himself a foul fiend to be tamed and joined with its opposite.

Tom O'Bedlam's presence at Lear's mock trial of Goneril and Regan in absentia emblemizes the negative shadow as a essential component of this joining of opposites. Fool and O'Bedlam, or light and dark teachers, are chosen as arbiters. They are regarded as compatriots, equally venerated. Lear needs that "most sapient sir" (3.6.22), the Fool, his "yoke fellow or equity" (3.6.37), and O'Bedlam, "most learned justicer" (3.6.21) and "robed man of justice" (3.6.36) to help him decide upon a fair verdict.

Madness as Teacher and Transformer

Madness is a most potent dispeller of Lear's darkness. It appears as if Goneril's and Regan's abandonment of him sparks Lear's madness, but its underlying cause is his abandonment of Cordelia. Shortly after Cordelia's expulsion, Lear acknowledges his awareness of the Fool's grief in her absence, but chooses to repress this message from his higher mind. Later on, despite his wrath, Lear too pines for the daughter he so cruelly exiled.

O most small fault,
How ugly didst thou in Cordelia show!
Which, like an engine, wrench'd my frame of nature
From the fix'd place, draw from my heart all love,
And added gall, that let thy folly in,
Striking his head.
And thy dear judgment out! . . . (1.4.264-270)

Lear now sees Cordelia's "fault" as "most small" or "non-existent."⁴⁰ With this admission of her innocence dawns an awareness of the consequences of his ingratitude. He goes on to say that the effect of Cordelia's "small fault" has "wrench'd" his "frame of nature / From" its "fixed place." If he had shown gratitude to God in the form of Cordelia, Lear would have remained secure in his "fixed place" on the Chain of Being. His unnatural treatment of her displaces him. "Folly," or ingratitude, draws love from his heart, "striking" "dear judgment out." In the next scene, he confesses: "I did her wrong" (1.5.24).

But change is painstakingly slow and uneven and Lear soon reverts back to his previous pattern of accusation and projection. Finally, after much suffering, a new pattern emerges when the itinerant Lear meets Edgar and the by now blinded Gloucester shortly before his reunion

with Cordelia. Paradoxically, mad reason has been transmuted into what Edgar calls, "O matter and impertinancy mix'd; / Reason in madness" (4.6.172-173). Lear's garb emblemizes this state of sane madness. He is "fantastically dressed with wild flowers,"⁴¹ his crown of thorns.⁴² Edgar responds to the fantastically garbed king with an anguished: "O thou side-piercing sight!" (4.5.6). Milward finds parallels between this line and the spear that pierced Christ's side.⁴³ A little further on, Lear adamantly insists: "No, they cannot touch me for coining, I am the King himself" (4.6.83-84). Coining was press money paid to recruits.⁴⁴ Lear could be suggesting that his Christed self remains inviolate because he cannot be bought off. His fantastic appearance and Edgar's distraught response to it suggest a link between madness and Christed consciousness.

Madness is tearing down the walls of his logical pride, leading him slowly, but surely, to a boundless self which transcends the narrow confines of reason. In response to Gloucester's desire to kiss his hand, he humbly replies: "Let me wipe it first; it smells of mortality" (4.6.132). Madness is emptying him into nothing; as a result, he can now distinguish between the divine and misused word. No longer attracted to multiplicity, he declares, "They flattered me like a dog" (3.4.96), but "I smelt 'em out. Go to, they are not men o' their words: they told me I was everything; 'tis a lie, I am not ague-proof" (4.6.103-105). Lear's reason in madness or that Christed aspect of his higher nature enables him to see that the way to transcendence is through the Word. His reaction to Gloucester's observation that he sees the world

"feelingly" (4.6.147) is an ironic reversal of roles. After exclaiming to Gloucester, "What! art mad?" (4.6.148), Lear proceeds to expound on the cause of his dementia.

A man may see how this world goes with no eyes. Look with
thine ears: see how yond justice rails upon yond simple
thief. Hark, in thine ear: change places, and, handy-dandy,
which is the justice, which is the thief? (4.6.148-152)

Ironically, according to Lear, the eyeless Gloucester is mad because he believes that truth can be perceived through the eyes. Choose to remain blind Lear counsels him and "Get thee glass eyes; / And, like a scurvy politician, seem / To see the things thou dost not" (4.6.168-170) or "with no eyes" attain the truth through "thine ear" which is attuned to and aligned with the Word. If Gloucester is to perceive truth, he must utilize the organ of perception which will open him to God's Grace. Mad reason attunes Lear to the inner ear, and through hearing, he begins to see with an egalitarian vision which makes no distinction between thief and magistrate; all are equally guilty of ingratitude. Lear is beginning to learn, if only momentarily, to balance the scale in the other direction. He reasons that if all are adjudged equally guilty according to the law of justice, all are also equally forgiven according to the Law of Grace. A new judgment ensues, and Lear pronounces his verdict: "None does offend, none, I say, none" (4.6.166).

Lear's reason in madness corresponds to the divestiture motif, each a means of stripping away another layer of his lower nature. Reason in madness forges through the barriers of mad reason, expanding Lear's

vision. From this egalitarian vantage point, he now perceives that regardless of wealth or position king, "cozener," (1.6.161) or "whore" (1.6.159) all share a common lot: none is above reproach, yet none is beneath forgiveness.

Self-Effort and Grace

Following Lear's "reason in madness" speech, he bemoans the fate of mankind, advising Gloucester to remain patient. But this state of mind does not remain for long. His seeming resignation and acceptance of the sorry lot of man abruptly reverses. In a fit of rage, he exclaims: "And when I have stol'n upon these son-in-laws, / Then kill, kill, kill, kill, kill!" (4.6.184-185). Opposed to the budding Christ consciousness he exhibits prior to this outburst, this reversal appears regressive; many of the D.S. that erupted in the first scene resurface. Wrath and envy are most pronounced. The self-righteous fury Lear projects indicates that pride still remains.

Lear's inability to control his rage is slothful since he fails to use the gift of reason which distinguishes him from the beast. To understand the contradictory implications of Lear's development, we need to return to the first scene and trace his pattern from there. If the first scene alone is used to gauge Lear's behavior, he would regress according to the pattern prescribed by retributive law; but he does not. Lear's change for the better implies that another process is influencing his development. Regardless of sectarian differences, theological doctrine maintained that Grace was the sole cause of

evolution; man was powerless to change by his own effort. Reasoning from this point of view, Grace must have caused Lear's transformation since a marked elevation of consciousness is perceived after his reunion with Cordelia.

While it appears as if the Holy Spirit is infused for the first time in the reunion scene, the play's structure and traditional concepts of Grace intimate that Lear initially receives it in the first scene. On the surface, he spurns Grace, but unconsciously accepts it. The need for self-inquiry, the impetus to seek out a master, and an attunement to the promptings of "reason in madness" are signs of expanding awareness. It is significant that all take place prior to the reunion scene. These changes imply that despite Lear's initial rejection of Grace, it never rejects him. Though he exiles Cordelia, she never leaves Lear, remaining within him in the form of the infused Word Nothing. It is this infused Word which transforms Lear's self-will, initiating those changes prior to his conscious acceptance of Grace.

Anglican and Catholic doctrines maintained that Grace was a graduated process, infused in stages, each individual responding according to his capacity. Lear initially does not possess the capacity to respond. He does, in time, after Grace has worked on him. This doctrine of graded infusions elucidates Lear's evolution and infusion. As an ingrate, Lear is undeserving of Grace, but receives it anyway because divine love is unconditional.

Many rigid Protestant sects condemned self-effort as an incentive to further Grace, denouncing it as prideful. On the other hand, Anglican

and Catholic doctrine advocated "that after the initial infusion a man must by good works merit further grace through which he rose by stages into blessedness."⁴⁵ Although Grace was the sole cause of evolution, future infusions depended on self-effort. Good works in and of themselves meant nothing, but self-effort was man's way of demonstrating gratitude for the gift of Grace. Self-effort did not insure man's power to evolve, but it did underscore his sincere desire to change; and it was this desire which attracted the possibility of future infusions. This interpretation conflicted with "many Protestant churches" which, "on the contrary, considered grace the sole cause of" the recipient's "justification, and esteemed his efforts toward good results rather than causes of grace conferred."⁴⁶

From the first scene until his reunion with Cordelia, Lear's behavior conforms to the Anglican-Catholic belief in self-effort as an incentive to further infusions. Grace ignites the spark, and Lear follows through: initiating the process of self-inquiry, seeking out a master teacher, and becoming more receptive to the psychic intrusions of his higher mind. Desire to help the poor and destitute, "houseless poverty" (3.4.26), and need "to feel what wretches feel" (3.3.34) are the first fruits of Lear's self-effort. Instead of indulging his personal inclinations, he is now moved to do good works. After his second infusion Grace continues to intensify his capacity for self-effort. A similar alternating pattern of infusion and self-effort is repeated in all of Lear's subsequent infusions.

Despite his progress, Lear's development does not move in a linear line of ascent but rather in a fluctuating pattern of evolution and seeming regression. The incongruous implications of Lear's outburst to "kill, kill, kill, kill, kill, kill" (4.6.185) "these son-in-laws" (4.6.184) prior to his reunion with Cordelia hardly seems to support the premise that he is being refashioned by Grace. This vitriolic fit appears more regressive than evolutionary. But in the reunion scene following Lear's tirade against "these son-in-laws," the Doctor assures Cordelia that "the great rage, / . . . is kill'd in him" (4.7.78-79). The Doctor's assurance suggests that Lear's development is not regressive but part of the purifying process. The Holy Spirit has burned "the great" rage out of Lear.

The intensity of these tirades intimates that the secret workings of Grace are burrowing deeper and deeper into Lear's darkest regions, weeding out his most dire deeds and thoughts. Often, the darkest deed is the most difficult to root out since it is most veiled from the conscious mind. Grace works gradually on these negativities until pressure builds up, finally inundating the conscious field of awareness with a torrential blackness which appears at first to be regressive. His evident progress in the next scene indicates it is not.

Exhausted from the cathartic effects of his outburst, Lear falls into a deep sleep. "It is symbolically significant" Kirsch points out, that Lear's "garments have been changed"⁴⁷ after he is "brought in" in a "still sleeping"⁴⁸ state. Attiring Lear in new raiment implies the growth or taking on of a new layer or level of consciousness.

Donning of new apparel is a metaphorical ritual, a prelude to the actual initiation rite soon to follow.

Moved by compassion at the sight of her slumbering, freshly attired father, Cordelia petitions the "kind Gods, / Cure this great breach in his abused nature" (4.7.14-15). With restorative medicine on her lips, she kisses him, hoping to "Repair those violent harms that my sisters / Have in thy reverence made" (4.7.28-29). Milward compares "the kiss of Cordelia" to a the parable in Luke XV.20 where the father of the prodigal "fell on his neck and kissed him."⁴⁹ As a metaphor, sleep symbolizes Lear's unconscious state prior to his reunion with Cordelia; it is the sleep of delusion. Not knowing who Cordelia really is, Lear receives her grace unwittingly. From that time until his reunion with her, he stumbles around, groping for wakefulness, unaware that his seedling efforts are the sprouts of her infused Word.

Cordelia's restorative kiss awakens Lear from the sleep of delusion. Upon awakening, the Prodigal Son not only recognizes her true identity, but also his past ingratitude and present desire to serve her. Lear's awakening suggests initiation into a higher state of consciousness. Initiation is executed in two stages: first, by a restorative kiss, and then, by two mantriclike phrases, "And so I am, I am" (4.7.70), and "No cause, no cause" (4.7.76). In all three instances, lips are vehicles of infusion. Since the articulated Word depends on lips for execution, these two images are blended into a fused metaphor. A recurring motif, lips and Logos are the method of infusion in all but one of Lear's four initiations, and even the one so-called exception makes indirect use of it.

In Lear's first infusion, Cordelia's lips are used in two ways: to evoke her divinity, and as a means of infusion. By refraining from using her lips, the laconic Cordelia intimates a union with inscrutable Silence beyond sound or form. Through her lips, this Silence takes form as the Word Nothing, infusing Lear with her essence. For Lear's second initiation, lips infuse in two ways: through the restorative kiss and mantric utterances. Lear's fourth and final infusion culminates in his transcendental vision of the life in death image of Cordelia's silent yet moving lips. The lone exception is hanging or crucifixion which replaces lips as the means of infusion for Lear's third initiation. But crucifixion is inseparable from resurrection, and in her resurrected state, Lear perceives Cordelia's silently moving lips; so even here lips are linked to initiation.

Lear's second infusion unfolds as Cordelia awakens him with a restorative kiss. Since the transition from the sleep of delusion to wakefulness involves taking full responsibility for one's transgressions, Lear's second initiation is a painful and terrifying process. The difficulty of this transition explains why when Lear first awakens, he bemoans his new state; the shock of self-confrontation is almost more than he can bear.

You do me wrong to take me out o'the grave;
Thou art a soul in bliss; but I am bound
Upon a wheel of fire, that mine own tears
Do scald like molten lead. (4.7.45-48)

Muir points out that when Lear awakens he "thinks he is in hell."⁵⁰

The New Testament Apocrypha alludes to the "wheel of fire" which

"although not scriptural, is traditional in the medieval legends and visions of Hell and Purgatory."⁵¹ Lear's imaginings of hell connote the stirrings of an awakening consciousness. Because this process of awakening involves death of the lower nature, as Lear experiences the beginning of annihilation, he believes himself in hell. He is unaware that his lower nature is being buried in the grave because he is still attached to it. Furthermore, he identifies with it to the extent that he perceives himself to be dead without it. Even so, a faint recognition of Cordelia's Christed state glimmers through the sleep of self-delusion when he intuits her to be a "soul in bliss" (4.7.46).

But delusion proves stronger than intuition when he mistakes her for a dead spirit. "Where did you die?" (4.7.49), he asks Cordelia, and her reply, "Still, still, far wide" (4.7.50), reveals that she believes his wits are still "astray, wandering."⁵² The Doctor assures her that this condition is temporary. Lear has not yet come fully to his wits because: "He's scarce awake" or not yet aware of his true nature. As Lear attains a greater degree of wakefulness, he begins to ask a series of questions: "Where have I been? Where am I? Fair daylight? / I am mightily abus'd" (4.7.52-53). A recurring motif, self-inquiry is repeated here and in successive initiations as a tool for attaining oneness. Each initiation triggers a different set of questions, each set of questions suggesting progressively higher levels of awareness. First, Lear must know who he is; after that, he wants to know where he is.

The shifting focus from person to place shows an awareness of identity and purpose, but an uncertainty as to their attainment. He awakens to Cordelia as the Way, the Light, and the Truth and reverently kneels at her feet. Pride is greatly diminished by this humble act of contrition for past ingratitude and present desire to worship and serve her. Cordelia has become for him, his identity, his life, and his purpose. Although he has discovered Cordelia as the means to attainment, in his present state of uncertainty, Lear wonders whether a recurrence of delusion or madness will prevent him from serving her. His questions reflect this concern about his past and present status and their relation to each other. Has he fallen? Will he be saved? Cordelia answers the aged king by asking him to rise and give her benediction, indicating by this act that they are one. Vacillating between fear and acceptance, Lear believes that she is mocking him because he still adheres to a rigid code which demands justice for ingratitude. A brief confession, in the form of a supplication, ensues: "Pray do not mock me: / I am a very foolish fond old man" (4.7.59-60). Lear's allusion to folly suggests the Old Testament sense of the word as a sin of malice, while the word *fond* means "dotage."⁵³ He confesses that an obsessive attachment to Cordelia in a worldly rather than spiritual sense caused his ingratitude.⁵⁴

After this confession, fear about his present condition and destiny again clouds Lear's vision. He remembers not "What this place is," whose "garments" these are, "nor / Where" he "did lodge last night" (4.7.66-68). He is "doubtful" (4.7.65) as to the true identity of

Cordelia and the doctor. Yet consciousness finally flowers, and the following formal recognition between father and daughter unfolds.

Lear. Do not laugh at me;
For, as I am a man, I think this lady
To be my child Cordelia.

Cor. And so I am, I am. (4.7.68-70)

This formal recognition implies mantric infusion. Grace is infused through the repeated phrase: "And so I am, I am." Western tradition classifies the Word into two categories. The phrase "And so I am, I am" falls into one of these two categories. The first class, known as Abstract mantra,⁵⁵ directly invokes the power of the transcendent Father, while the second type, or Deity mantra,⁵⁶ uses the second aspect of the deity as a means of effecting union with the Father.

Since Eastern scripture defines these two categories more comprehensively, it will be used, when applicable, to illuminate corresponding Western concepts about the Word.⁵⁸ Yogic tradition states that transcendence can be achieved by either of these two types of mantras. The Abstract type is the most powerful because it provides a direct link with the formless Absolute. Sister Vandana relates that in the Christian tradition, the transcendent "Father whose Son Jesus is . . . extends His fatherhood to all who believe in the Son" (John 20.17).⁵⁹ Yet on the other hand, "in manifesting of his disciples the name of the Father (John 17.6.26) Jesus makes known to men that the name 'Father' is the one that expresses the essence of God most profoundly."⁶⁰ Similarly, Cordelia's: "And so I am, I am," expresses the name of the Father but in a different way from her earlier Nothing which is also an Abstract mantra.

A brief explanation of two main types of Abstract mantras clarifies Cordelia's use of the name of the Father in both instances. Eastern tradition considers Om, the first type of Abstract mantra, the most powerful manifestation of the Word. Aham Brahmasmi, translated as I Am the Absolute (Brahman), and Hamsa, meaning I Am That, are two examples of the second class known as the I Am mantric group. Western tradition provides parallel examples in Jehovah's "I Am the Lord" (Exod. 6-8) and "I AM THAT I AM" (Exod. 3.14).⁶¹ Similarly, Cordelia's "And so I am, I am" also falls into the I Am mantric category. As mentioned, the mantra becomes more potent with repetition. Corresponding to this belief, Jehovah's double "I AM," and Cordelia's double "I am," resonate with repetitive potency.

Although there is no direct parallel for the Om type of Abstract mantra in Western tradition,⁶² the Word Nothing most closely approximates it. In contrast to the first person I of the I AM group, Nothing resembles Om in its abstractness and formlessness. Furthermore, both mantras are single words rather than phrases, implying that the superfluous has been eliminated; all that remains is the Root Word or Primal Cause of all existence. A common thread runs through three of Lear's initiations. All use Abstract mantras as the means of infusion: the formless Nothing in the first initiation, the double I am in the second initiation, and Cordelia's silently moving lips in the final initiation.

In a recent study Milward points out:

In reaffirming her father's recognition of herself, Cordelia seems to echo that eternal I AM, as manifested to Moses in Exod. iii.14: "I am that I am," and as referred

by Christ to himself in John viii.58: "Before Abraham was
I am."⁶³

Long ago John Ruskin similarly intuited the mantric potency of Cordelia's infused phrase, observing that as "the house of life is filled with the odour of ointment--all Cordelia is poured forth in the infinite 'I am' of fulfilled love."⁶⁴ The poignant exchange following infusion of "And so I am, I am" transmits the depth of this "fulfilled love."

Lear. Be your tears wet? Yes, faith. I pray weep not:
 If you have poison for me, I will drink it.
 I know you do not love me; for your sisters
 Have, as I do remember, done me wrong:
 You have some cause, they have not.

Cor. No cause, no cause. (4.7.71-76)

This exchange juxtaposes two polarized standards: retribution and regression versus forgiveness and evolution. Lear initially cannot accept Cordelia's unbounded forgiveness because he projects his standard of values onto her. This projection reveals he would seek to vindicate himself through retribution if placed in her position. Lear's life has been dominated by cause and effect.

Cordelia's life is beyond cause and effect. There is an inter-relationship between the No Cause she embodies here and the Nothing she embodies in the first scene. Because Cordelia is no-thing tangible, she is not of this dimension, beyond cause or no cause. "No Cause, no cause" is the same as no-thing, and since no-thing is divine love, it follows that no cause is this same love. Being love, God needs no logical or just cause to save a soul; love transcends justice.

Furthermore, the double repetition of "no cause" links it with "And so I am, I am," suggesting mantric resonance as a common feature

of both phrases. As pointed out, even the most mundane words are suffused with a mantric vitality when uttered by the power of the Word Made Flesh. Cordelia utters three laconic phrases from the time Lear awakens to the time he asks for forgiveness. Two of them, "And so I am, I am" and "No cause, no cause," are mantralike utterances used for the express purpose of infusion. The third, "Still, still, far wide" (4.7.50) is not used for infusion, alluding instead to Lear's deluded condition just after he has awakened. Although a mundane word, the repetition of "still" is imbued with a mantric resonance, evoking the Great Silence through the image of repose.

Lear's second initiation occurs in three stages. First, Cordelia infuses him into semi-consciousness with a restorative kiss. At this point, he is not yet truly awake; adherence to retributive law still sullies his outlook. Infusion of two mantralike phrases, "And so I am, I am" and "No cause, no cause," dispels his adherence to a harsh justice. Cordelia utters the first mantric phrase in response to Lear's formal recognition of her. She responds to this acknowledgment by infusing him with who she is, phrased in a way to suggest, I Am That Love . . . , I Am. But Lear still fears her and reacts by projecting his code onto her. He expects that she will exact retribution since he believes he deserves to be punished. Cordelia's second mantralike phrase aims at dispelling this fear. In addition to infusing him with love, or who she is, Cordelia also fills him with what she or this love is; and "No cause, no cause" is what this love is. I interpret Cordelia's mantralike reply to mean: That love which I Am is forgiveness which is beyond cause.

After this infusion Lear still wants to know where he is, and Kent assures him: "In your own kingdom, Sir" (4.7.76). Kent's reply is a confirmation of Lear's initiation. Now Lear has two kingdoms, England without, and the kingdom of heaven within. Kirsch finds, in this line, a parallel to the life of Christ: "Lear has become king, and his kingdom is also 'not of this world.'"⁶⁵

But Lear's disoriented state reveals that although he has arrived at or become aware of his inner kingdom, he has yet to master it. Self-mastery comes with a state attained only after Cordelia's death, marking his final initiation. At first, Lear is reticent to believe he has arrived in his own kingdom. This reticence makes his transformation more credible than Edmund's because it is gradually developed. Although "the great rage" (4.7.78) "is kill'd in him" (4.7.79), the Doctor cautions that Lear needs "further settling" (4.7.82), implying that the full effects of infusion will not be evident until Lear becomes more tranquil and adjusted to his new state. Initiation is a trying process; and Lear has just passed through one ordeal and is about to enter a more intense stage which he is not ready to take on.

Regardless of Lear's state, the power of Grace is stronger, and immediately begins to work on him. The first visible signs of change occur about ten lines later. Lear entreats Cordelia to "bear with" him, to "forget and forgive" (4.7.84-84). He is, by his own admission, "old and foolish" (4.7.84). Lear no longer projects his guilt onto others, and with the awakened consciousness of the disciple, confesses the folly of his ingratitude. No longer bound by a retributive code

of justice, Lear's contrition suggests he has been infused with Cordelia's "No cause, no cause" and now embraces it as his life's goal.

Initiation and At-one-ment

Ambiguity and Transcendence

If Edmund's fate is perplexing, the enigmatic destinies of Lear, Cordelia, and the Fool are compounded, especially since they are all interrelated. Transposing two conflicting principles upon these interwoven destinies creates a labyrinth, challenging us to find a way out. One popular view regards the ending as a Last Judgment, using as proof, the horrified reactions of Kent, Edgar, and Albany to the heartrending sight of Lear approaching with the dead Cordelia in his arms.

Kent.	Is this the promis'd end?
Edg. Or image of that horror?	
Alb.	Fall and cease. (5.262-263)

Muir suggests that "the promis'd end" to which Kent refers is the Last Judgment.⁶⁶ Albany's line intimates the Last Judgment, "Fall and cease" implying "Let the heavens fall, and everything comes to an end."⁶⁷

It is plausible to interpret "the promis'd end" as "the Final Judgment of God, His final and irrevocable judgment on Lear."⁶⁸ On this level, heaven punishes Lear and Gloucester for their ingratitude by using unkind offspring as instruments of retribution. Lear's suffering is more acute because of its irony. Heaven again uses offspring to exact retribution, but this time perpetrator and victim are not equally guilty. The wanton slaying of the daughter who means more than life to Lear devastates him. It also devastates the audience, especially

since Lear has been wrought into gold by the alchemical fire of the Holy Spirit. If the Divine Smith refashioned Lear, why is he punished as if he had never changed?

Is inexorable justice more powerful than Grace? And is justice just, if the harshness of Lear's final punishment surpasses that of Goneril and Regan, even though he has evolved and they deserve to die? Considered from this point of view, the play seems dismal. However, Edmund's enigmatic fate glimmers with the possibility of redemption. Could the same possibility exist for Lear? The rest of this chapter will demonstrate that it is more than a possibility since Lear deserves to be redeemed and Edmund does not.

Edmund and Lear are at different stages of evolution. At death, Edmund is a beast on the verge of recognizing his humanity. At death, Lear is a human being on the threshold of recognizing his divinity. Edmund's and Lear's growth respectively illustrates the two ways in which Grace works. Edmund's fate illustrates the power of Grace without self-effort, while Lear's destiny evinces the power of Grace working with and through self-effort. Edmund's way is the exoteric path of the common man redeemed, while Lear travels the esoteric route of initiate man deified. Edmund's salvation is intimated. We never see him evolve in stages through Grace; with Lear we do.

The effects of Grace and self-effort culminate in Lear's transcendent vision of the dead Cordelia's silently moving lips. To some, this vision indicates madness rather than saintliness. But why would Shakespeare undermine a doctrine he spends the entire action developing?

Lear is no cardboard Edmund, nor is his transformation abrupt and contrived. The audience not only witnesses but cathartically experiences the effects of his transformation as an ongoing process gradually developed through time. By contrast there is nothing ambiguous about Goneril's and Regan's regressive development which would lead one to believe that they are redeemed.

If Shakespeare wanted his protagonist to conform to retributive concepts of ingratitude, he would have created Macbeth, not Lear. Macbeth develops in a descending spiral from ingrate to beast to monstrous fiend, not born of woman. Lear develops in an upward spiral from ingrate to devotee to disciple-initiate. Since Lear evolves rather than regresses, it is more plausible if his final stage culminates in transcendence rather than madness. And yet, if Lear attains transcendence, why are his final moments seemingly clouded?

There are two reasons for Lear's ambiguity. The more complex explanation involves his stage of initiation at the time of death. The nature of this initiation which has the double aspect of suffering and victory will be discussed at length in the final section of this chapter. The second reason for Lear's ambiguity is related to my theory of double destinies. Analysis thus far has shown that by this ambiguous means, Shakespeare seeks to exalt Grace not undermine it. As with Edmund, Gloucester, Cordelia, and the Fool, Lear develops along two lines of action which are transposed to two different planes. We witness the retributive consequences of Lear's ingratitude on one plane, while

at the same time, experiencing his attainment of the unitive life on another. At times, the play's mazelike structure makes it difficult to separate one line of action from another. A case in point is the economical use of Lear's madness to suggest both principles. His dementia might be alternately regarded as a retributive consequence of his ingratitude, and as a manifestation of the purifying process.

Creating a double destiny for Lear underscores the preeminence of Grace far better than if developed as a single line of action. Because the two systems are juxtaposed, we are better able to experience the mercy of the one, and the harshness of the other. The make-up of Shakespeare's audience substantiates this point of view. Because these spectators were predominantly non-Puritan, the retributive consequences of Lear's ingratitude would have profoundly moved them. This point of view would have also found favor with James I, as the Puritans were no favorites of his.

The juxtaposition of these two ethical codes is not a question of either/or but rather the relative application of each. Ingratitude is not depicted as uniformly evil; the appropriate use of justice and mercy varies with the ingrate. Choice of the most appropriate standard is clear-cut for Goneril, Regan, Cornwall, Oswald, and Cordelia's murderer; for them, justice alone suffices. For Edmund, Gloucester, and Lear the choice of the most suitable standard is not so clear-cut or self-evident since they all defy the law of regression. This deviation from retributive law connotes that forgiveness has been rendered, but not before a price was paid; mercy alone does not suffice because all

of these characters would have initially abused it. In all cases, justice precedes Grace. Justice is satisfied when Edgar mortally wounds Edmund in a duel. Yet this same Edgar serves as an instrument of divine infusion immediately thereafter. Through the gouging out of Gloucester's eyes, retributive law exacts its harsh justice. The mercy Edgar later extends to Gloucester suggests Grace has been infused and forgiveness rendered. Lear's transformation is the slowest and most complex. He unknowingly receives Grace in the first scene, rejects it, and is punished until he learns what he has spurned. Awareness dawns after retributive law purges him of his pride, at which point, he is able to accept Cordelia's grace.

Kirsch suggests that Kent's question, "Is this the promis'd end?" (5.3.262) could also "mean: 'Is this the final state?'—the ripeness which Lear is intended to achieve?"⁶⁹ The interplay of retribution and ripeness accounts for the tension between these two alternative codes in Lear's final speech. On a realistic plane, we see what Lear deserves to get according to retributive law, while on an analogical plane, we witness what we would like him to receive according to the Law of Grace. On one plane, we are presented with the harsh "reality" of absolute justice while on another plane, we are offered the ripeness of transcendence as an alternative solution.

Lear's Final Initiation and At-one-ment

This alternative reflects Anglican and Catholic concepts of Grace. We witness the evolution of Lear in its entirety as he continues to

rise to more elevated states of blessedness. Conforming to the Anglican and Catholic concept of self-effort, Lear's development, from the time of his reunion with Cordelia until her death, is a burning ground in preparation for another infusion. He has faithfully aligned his will with hers. This budding alignment is first intimated in the reunion scene. But at this point, though the devotional offering of self has been made, discipleship is not as of yet an established way of life.

This point of evolution is attained as Lear and Cordelia are being taken off to prison. In response to Cordelia's question as to whether he would like to "see these daughters and these sisters," Lear reacts with an emphatic: "No, no, no, no! Come let's away to prison / We two alone will sing like birds i'th' cage / When thou dost ask me blessing, I'll kneel down, / And ask of thee forgiveness . . ." (5.3.7-11). Self-will no longer drives him to self-righteously avenge himself against his adversaries. No trace of pride, wrath, or envy incites him to "prosecute" Goneril and Regan in the name of justice.

Lear's total commitment to Cordelia alone rather than to his own interest attests to the purgation of all the D.S. Commitment to Cordelia is a recognition of his dependence on her. This recognition transforms him into that gratitude which she embodies. As the embodiment of gratitude, Lear's focus shifts from the affairs of this world to the realm of the spirit. As a result, he no longer interests himself with Goneril, Regan, or the intrigues of court life, and tells Cordelia so. In prison, he reasons, they can be in this world but not of it.

so we'll live,

And pray, and sing, and tell old tales, and laugh
 At gilded butterflies, and hear poor rogues
 Talk of court news; and we'll talk with them too,
 Who loses and who wins; who's in, who's out;
 And take upon's the mystery of things,
 As if we were Gods' spies: and we'll wear out,
 In a wall'd prison, packs and sects of great ones
 That ebb and flow by th' moon. (5.3.11-19)

With discipleship established as a way of life, Lear receives the fruit of his self-effort, another infusion. This infusion elevates him to initiate. No longer merely a follower of Cordelia, this "child-changed father" (4.7.17), now matured, participates in the agony and transcendent mystery of her sacrificial death. Lear's final lines intimate that this participatory experience culminates in his transcendence.

And my poor fool is hang'd! No, no, no, life!
 Why should a dog, a horse, a rat, have life,
 And thou no breath at all? Thou art come no more,
 Never, never, never, never, never!
 Pray you, undo this button: thank you, Sir.
 Do you see this? Look on her, look, her lips,
 Look there, look there! (Dies) (5.3.304-316)

Lear's final monologue is divided into four parts: first, the hanged fool motif, second, Lear's doubt and agony, third, his divestiture, and finally, infusion of Cordelia's word. Most problematic is the second part of this speech since, at this point, the dichotomy between realistic and analogical planes is most pronounced. The counterpointed symmetry between Lear's repeated "no" and "never" on a realistic plane, with Cordelia's "no-thing" and "no cause" on an analogical plane, creates a sense of tension between nonexistence or zero and the all-pervasive everything of No-thing tangible.

On a realistic plane, the repetitive reasonance of these negatives resembles an anti-mantra. Lear's anti-mantra intones the futility or nonexistence of a life ruled by retributive law, demanding punishment for his ingratitude. But on an analogical plane, these repeated negations connote evolution and hope rather than futility and nonbeing. The hanged fool motif comprising the first part of this speech has been discussed elsewhere as a fused metaphor which unites Lear with his higher self and Cordelia.⁷⁰ Because of its symbolic affinity with crucifixion, hanging implies self-mastery. Self-mastery is a twofold victory: first, over the lower animal man or ingrate, and next, over the common nature of the ordinary man or devotee.

In this stage, Lear changes from ordinary devotee to disciple, the initiate-Fool who becomes by his hanging, a participant in Cordelia's agony. This participatory rite explains the synchronicity of her literal hanging with his metaphorical hanging. At this point, Lear's spiritual quest has not culminated in transcendence because he mourns Cordelia's death and feels separated from her. The theme of hanging images Lear's sense of separation, intimating that union with her is incomplete.

Hanging also symbolizes suggests suspension between heaven and earth.⁷¹ The initiate in transition between two realms feels lost and alienated, not yet transcended, but no longer an ordinary mortal. Lear is a man suspended between these two realms. Oneness has not yet been established as an inner state because he still depends on the worship of Cordelia's form. His dependence on her physical presence makes Lear's experience of Cordelia's state only temporary despite his participation

in her agony. As initiate, he can experience the unitive state, but is unable to sustain it since transcendence is the exclusive province of the Christed being.

Before the initiate Lear can become a transcended God-man, a final infusion is needed. Lear's belief that his union with Cordelia seemed to end with her death plunges him into the depths of despair; he yearns to experience her divinity as a permanent state of consciousness. The second part of his final speech evinces the titanic effort he puts forth in order to attain this state. No vestige of the slothfulness which once characterized this "child-changed father" (4.7.17) remains. The additional infusion received as a result of Cordelia's sacrificial hanging empowers him with the indefatigable will to undergo this final ordeal. At this point, Cordelia's hanging becomes more than just a participatory experience. The realization that he is separated forever from her becomes for him an individual crucifixion rite, triggered by, but independent of her death. Lear no longer suffers vicariously. Now his suffering is his own.

His crucifixion takes the form of a series of negations. The sense of isolation, torment, and futility which these repeated negations convey embodies a stage in the mystic quest called divine abandonment. He has already experienced abandonment in earlier initiations, but never at this level of intensity. Lear reacts to divine abandonment with an anguished and effusive outburst: "No, no, no life! / Why should a dog, a horse, a rat, have life / And thou no breath at all? Thou'lt come no more, / Never, never, never, never, never!" (5.304-307). Up

until this point, Lear's faith in God as Cordelia remains undaunted. This faith is now shaken to its roots, as doubt deepens his sense of despair and isolation. But this doubt is temporary, a test of faith symbolizing the final expiation.

Jesus' "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Mark 16:34) is the most well-known example of this type of divine abandonment and doubt. Rev. Alexander Murray conjectures that Jesus' question connotes despair at being abandoned by his own God consciousness.⁷² Paradoxically, by this display of doubt, Jesus becomes for the aspiring initiate, a perfect model. The inspiring example of an almost mortal Jesus, questioning rather than faithfully accepting this divine abandonment, provides comfort, strength, and illumination for those indefatigable souls determined to persevere through the dark night vigil toward at-onement.

And such a soul is Lear. The synchronicity of the Fool's metaphorical hanging with Cordelia's literal hanging intimates that Lear's higher nature seeks to follow her not only in life, but also in death. The doubt and despair that Jesus and Lear experience symbolize divine abandonment as rite: a prelude to, and model for the unitive life. Although Lear resembles Christ in his reaction to divine abandonment, it serves a different function for him. Since he is already perfect, Christ undergoes this ordeal purely for inspirational and instructional purposes. For the as yet unascended initiate Lear, divine abandonment has another twofold purpose: to purify and transform in preparation for transcendence.

Regardless of appearances to the contrary, this stage of divine abandonment and its accompanying doubt fortify the initiate's faith, humility, and compassion. Prior to this ordeal, he becomes increasingly aware of his approaching divinity. Although pride appears dissipated, this knowledge inflates the ego, bringing any remaining vestiges to the surface of consciousness. At this point, Grace has become such an established part of the aspirant's life, he may be apt to take it for granted. Or the effects of Grace have so detached him from the affairs of the world that he may lack compassion for the suffering and ignorance of ordinary men since he no longer identifies with their problems.⁷³ The initiate mistakes his separation in isolation for the enlightened being's detached state of unity in isolation.

The consequence of this elitist sense of isolation is divine abandonment, the initiate temporarily demoted to an ordinary man. Thrown back on himself, he is forced to relive his life prior to receiving Grace. Any pride in one's own effort is quickly deflated by the effects of this simulated graceless state. The initiate once again learns that he is nonbeing or zero without the Holy Spirit. The resulting anguish of abandonment purges any remaining elitist detachment which had formerly alienated him from his fellow men. The compassion the aspirant now feels for his ordinary, uninitiated brother impels him to participate and share in the common man's experience of a seemingly graceless, unjust, and senseless universe.

Lear's reaction to Cordelia's death dislodges a hitherto immovable faith now shaken to its core by divine abandonment. With Cordelia gone,

he loses his connection to divine life and his budding Christ consciousness. Without access to his higher nature, Lear experiences life as it was for him prior to receiving Cordelia's grace. This seeming demotion humbles him and the old king is realigned with his fellow men. Prior to this realignment, Lear severs his ties with the world as he and Cordelia are taken off to prison. He revels at the prospect of separation from his fellow men since he no longer identifies with them or their problems. Lear's desire for isolation connotes a prideful sense of difference from others, a subtler form of his earlier elitism. But following the final divestiture metaphor, his despairing reaction suggests he no longer places himself in a pristine realm beyond the cares and sorrows of ordinary men.

With Cordelia and his own higher consciousness seemingly gone, Lear must turn to these same so-called ordinary men for help. And so he humbly implores with the deepest respect: "Pray you, undo this button: thank you, Sir" (5.3.308). Lear has become the embodiment of gratitude. His respectful use of the title "Sir" reveals that he no longer places himself above others. This attitude is a far cry from his earlier arbitrary demand to be divested of lendings. Now the old king neither expects nor demands. What was once fiat is now supplication. At last, patience temperately governs wrath.

Lear gains patience because he has lost Cordelia who was everything to him. All his hopes were projected onto her. Without her, he has no expectations, and so he can afford to wait. In this sense, by her death, Cordelia does something for Lear she could not do for him in

life. Her death drives Lear to embody gratitude as a finite form of Grace. Since Cordelia's *caritas* is unconditional, unmotivated, and free of expectations, so too, Lear's gratitude must be molded into this ideal; for even at this point, he has expectations.

Prior to Cordelia's death, Lear expects to live happily ever after with her in prison, and afterwards in the faraway heaven beyond. Death is regarded as a permanent unitive state which he and Cordelia mutually experience and share. But it is a false concept of union. A union of this type, while appearing to be a more rarified type of love, will not culminate in at-one-ment because it is misdirected. Instead of reflecting an interior state of being, Lear projects this desire outwardly onto Cordelia. He knows that Cordelia is God, but has as yet to learn that his own "kingdom of heaven," or union with her, lies within. An interior union of this type is eternal. Cordelia's death expunges Lear of his expectation to live happily ever after with her. His severed attachment, or loss of union as an outer state, plunges him into the depths of despair. Desperation moves him to return, if only temporarily, to the world of men, the world he shunned ever since his reunion with Cordelia.

With Cordelia gone, it is the world of men that is responsible for assisting Lear in purging him of the last vestige of his false self. This last layer is his presumption that he is above the affairs of men. Lear's need for the assistance of a gentleman to divest him of his garments calls to mind his previous desire for a surrogate teacher prior to his reunion with Cordelia. It is ironic that Lear cannot die to

the world without the assistance of the world. In asking the Gentleman to slay or divest him of his final dark layer, Lear acknowledges his unity with all men.

This request for assistance also suggests his need to depend on God. Upon reuniting with Cordelia, he came to realize that by self-effort alone he could achieve nothing. From this realization came the discovery of his dependence on Cordelia as the instrument of his transformation. With Cordelia seemingly gone, he projects this need for dependence on the world of men. Instead of the the Fool or Tom O'Bedlam serving as teacher in Cordelia's absence, the world becomes his mentor following her death. Lear's willingness to play disciple to those seemingly beneath connotes equality consciousness; he sees God in all of humanity, and himself as part of it. Dependence bespeaks readiness for another infusion. In God's absence, a lesser man would have pridefully remained sufficient to himself alone, seeking justification for his autogeny in God's seeming abandonment of him. But Lear's patience, endurance, dependence, and humility have made him the most grateful of men. A man almost beyond men, Lear is now ready for the final infusion.

The final infusion comes in the form of a vision of Cordelia's moving lips: "Do you see this? Look on her, look, her lips, / Look there, look there! (Dies)" (5.3.309-310). One might conjecture, as some critics have done, that Lear's vision is a deluded inability to accept the reality of Cordelia's death. But a comparison with Gloucester's bittersweet death dispels this assumption. Parallel lines

of action which characterize the play's main and subplots are most pronounced in relation to its respective protagonists. As protagonist of the subplot, Gloucester's development corresponds to Lear's on a smaller scale.

If Gloucester's development reflects Lear's, it follows that his death would, in its simpler fashion, also mirror Lear's passing; it does. Both deaths are marked by a bittersweet reaction to the paradoxical loss and gain of a beloved child and master. Following Lear's agony over Cordelia's crucifixion the resurrection comes in the form of an ecstatic vision of her moving lips. When in his final moments Gloucester learns that the son whom he scorned remained ever present at his side as guide and master: "his flaw'd heart, / Alack, too weak the conflict to support! / 'Twixt two extremes of passion, joy and grief, / Burst smilingly" (5.3.195-198).

Most significant is Gloucester's state of mind at the time of his death; he is sane. Since his development more or less parallels that of Lear, more than likely, Lear's state of mind corresponds to his; if Lear is mad, his lunacy is divine possession rather than delusional insanity. Lear's vision of Cordelia's moving lips is not a hallucination, even though the other characters do not see it. If he has attained a higher state of consciousness than the other characters, how would they be able to experience his reality?

In the last line of the play, Edgar observes of Lear: "The oldest hath borne most: we that are young / Shall never see so much, nor live so long" (5.3.324-325). Allusion to age is used in a metaphorical and

literal sense. Lear has borne most because he is the oldest or most evolved among them. For this reason, none of them will ever "see so much"; and what they cannot see is the transcendental vision of Cordelia's moving lips. Only Lear, who has lived "so long," or experienced all, can see these instruments of divine infusion.

Kirsch appears to be the only critic to point out the relationship of Cordelia's lips to Lear's transcendence.⁷⁴ But he goes no further: "We are not told what he [Lear] sees but it can only be a vision which is projected on her and in which her lips move in some way."⁷⁵ Although Kirsch links Lear's vision to the physical movement of Cordelia's lips, he makes no mention of them as the cause of Lear's transcendence. Kirsch believes Lear's death culminates in transcendence, but he secularizes the process of attainment. This secularized process reflects modern psychology not renaissance Christian theology.

Since he [Lear] is completely concentrated on her being dead, the emphasis on her "lips" suggests to me that in this fantasy image of Cordelia-Fool, the lips possibly speak--at any rate, come to life. Please notice that it is the image and not the actual Cordelia he is observing.⁷⁶

Kirsch neither interprets Cordelia's moving lips as a miraculous emanation, nor as an intrusion from another realm initiated for the purpose of divine infusion. All elements of the miraculous are rationally explained away by Kirsch as being an imagined projection of Lear's psyche.

For Kirsch, the aged king's transcendence is an androgynous wedding between Lear and his anima or that interiorized feminine aspect of himself symbolized by Cordelia. While this view is easily incorporated into a Christian framework, with Cordelia that "heavenly kingdom" within

Lear, it still does not explain the reason for her moving lips. The credibility of Lear's sanity becomes suspect, if his vision is stripped of its miraculous implications.

A renaissance Christian interpretation of Cordelia's moving lips might be influenced by four features. Cordelia would probably be regarded as a metaphor for Lear's union with the kingdom of heaven within, and as an independent Christ figure with her own separate identity. As an independent Christ figure, Cordelia is the sole cause of Lear's inner union. Since theological doctrine exalted the creative and alchemical potency of the Word, her lips are instruments of infusion. Instead of negating the miraculous implications of Cordelia's moving lips, a theological analysis would interpret this act as either a transcendental visitation, emanation, or an interiorized psychic intrusion or vision (as opposed to an imagined projection).⁷⁷

Lear repeatedly tells the others present to "look on her, look, her lips" (5.3.309). They cannot see because a revelation of this type is only revealed to that initiate ready to receive it. A short while before his final speech, Lear recalls Cordelia's predominant feature: "Her voice was ever soft, / Gentle and low, an excellent thing in a woman—" (5.3.271-272). Since every sound Cordelia utters is the Word, Lear's remembrance of her voice suggests his now conscious knowledge of its mantric potency, setting the stage for his final initiation.

Lear's final initiation is distinguished from previous infusions because he sees rather than hears the Word. This image implies that Lear cannot hear Cordelia's silent word because it is so powerful in

a transcendental sense that it can neither be transposed to nor expressed in this dimension. In exploring the Kabbalah, renaissance esotericists incorporated some of its beliefs into Christian theology. One wonders if Shakespeare was aware of the Kabbalistic belief in "the tetragrammaton YHVH," also known as "'the lost word,'" which "was above all others the 'saving' name in the tradition of Israel."⁷⁸

The lost word is an Abstract mantra, offering "the possibility of direct actualization of the divine presence."⁷⁹ In ancient times, when men were pure of heart and mind, they were able to invoke the Word and withstand its awesome power. But the dark age descended, "even before the destruction of the Second Temple," and "the spiritually fallen people" were forbidden "to invoke or even merely to pronounce the tetragrammaton."⁸⁰ "It was not generally known how the name had to be pronounced, nor how it was proper to vocalize the separate letters. . . ."⁸¹

"The prevailing ignorance as regards the pronunciation of the 'explicit name' is not the result of mere 'forgetfulness' nor a purely human decision arrived" at "more than two thousand years ago."⁸² Leo Schaya maintains that:

The suppression of the teaching and pronunciation of this name—by decree of the traditional authority—is so categorical and so radical in its consequences that it can be affirmed that God himself has withdrawn this name from the mass of the people of Israel. However, such intervention "from above" expresses not only the rigour, but also the mercy of God, who foresaw that the human recipients of "the last days," no longer possessing the requisite theomorphism, would be shattered by the weight of his lightning descent.⁸³

Since the colossal energy evoked by the "complete name" would shatter mortal men with its power, it "cannot be the medium for deifying

invocation in our age, which in the prophecies is called the "'end of time.'"⁸⁴ The world of King Lear is in the throes of a spiritual dark age. Even the best must root out the O'Bedlam within. How many in this world could bear the "lightening descent" of "the lost word" without being shattered by its power? Does the vision of Cordelia's moving lips suggest the end of time, or a new age to come where the complete name will be invoked once again?

Down through the ages an "esoteric 'chain of tradition'"⁸⁵ whose "function" was "initiatric transmission—uninterrupted through the ages" continued to invoke "the holy names."⁸⁶ But "except for the extremely restricted 'elect' who retain the high function of guarding and secretly invoking the 'complete name,' no one may know its exact pronunciation."⁸⁷ Is Lear one of the initiated few, privileged to know or see the Word but not hear it pronounced? Is this the reason for Cordelia's silently moving lips?

Or perhaps the power of the Word is so potent that Lear can only hear it in death. While still living, he sees or has an intimation of it. Reception of this sound implies transcendence, but also physical annihilation; is Lear annihilated because he heard the Word? The image of Cordelia's silently moving lips or unuttered mantra invokes a sense of the Void or Silence of the transcendent Father beyond form or attribute. It appears as if Lear does not hear the Word because it is beyond form or sound. Instead he sees or is illuminated by this formless Word. Infused with the consciousness of the Great Silence which lies beyond the uttered word, Lear dies to the world. He no longer seeks, or knows, but Is.

Conclusion

Before he is, Lear must become. Becoming is what the play is all about. This process of becoming, perhaps even more than the attainment of this process, is the major focus of the play. It is this soul searing yet amazing process which transforms Lear from ingrate to God-man. It also transforms us. The extent of our transformation depends on our identification with Lear, and how deep within ourselves we are willing to probe for the meaning and purpose of our existence. For L. C. Knights, King Lear is a "highly complex metaphor" which "unfolds, and goes on unfolding, in our own lives"; as "we live the metaphors we have assimilated."⁸⁸

The play works on us on two levels: didactically and alchemically. On a didactic level, it teaches through ambiguity and comparison. We see and compare the effect of two opposing principles. The juxtaposition of justice and Grace arouses compassion for those who must suffer a graceless existence. The play's didacticism also moves us to question the nature of justice. Is what we deem justice, God's justice, or is it what man interprets God's justice to be? Our response to the extrusion of Gloucester's eyes, Cordelia's death, and Lear's agony, gives us our answer. Grace is the preeminent system and the inflexible justice we witness, a man-made infringement on it. That this law is necessary, we have seen. Without it, the Gonerils, Regans, Cornwalls, and Oswalds would overrun the earth. Our reaction to Lear's and Gloucester's suffering reveals that while justice is necessary, it should be relative rather than absolute. For when justice is relative, there is room for Grace.

It is plausible that Shakespeare used the ambiguous interplay of these two principles to underscore the shortcomings of the Puritan ethic for his largely non-Puritan audience. But if reformation was his main purpose, King Lear would be reduced to a renaissance version of the modern social problem play. The narrow confines of a play with a message can never circumscribe the gothic grandeur of King Lear. King Lear is not a message but an experience. Any message it might have had to say has long since passed away. The Western world no longer advocates the death penalty for adultery, or mulls over the horrific possibility of ocular extrusion as a retributive penalty for adulterous ingratitude. And still King Lear lives on.

King Lear survives not because it seeks to reform, but because it seeks to transform. The key to the play's mystery is its alchemy, a magical process which refines character and spectator alike. King Lear teaches us to contemplate, leads us to self-inquiry. Down through the ages Lear's enigmatic destiny has awakened the spectator to question his own equally enigmatic destiny, inspiring him to ask Lear's same question: "Who is it that can tell me who I am?" (1.4.227).

CONCLUSION

Applying the following three critical methods would enrich our understanding of the play's ambiguous theology: a comparative approach, a multileveled approach, and an esoteric approach. A comparative approach can be used to gauge the play's Christian ambience. Comparing King Lear with Timon of Athens and Coriolanus gives further evidence of its Christian treatment of ingratitude. In all three plays, the sin of ingratitude is a major motif presented in a pre-Christian setting. But only King Lear depicts forgiveness as an alternative to retributive law. The Roman plays present ingratitude from an aristocratic rather than Christian point of view. Forgiveness is a Christian concept that has no place in the code of honor, nor in these Roman plays. Coriolanus is strictly aristocratic; and while in some respects, a Christian undercurrent ripples through Timon of Athens, it remains an unexplored rather than predominant motif. Measured with these two plays, King Lear is decidedly Christian.

Moving on to plays with a decidedly Christian overtone also would prove fruitful. A comparison with Macbeth which unswervingly adheres to traditional retributive concepts would set the play's ambivalent attitudes toward regression and uniform punishment for ingratitude in bas relief. An exploration of the relative application of justice and mercy in The Merchant of Venice and Measure for Measure would enhance

our understanding of the way it is used in King Lear. In its treatment of justice and mercy, Measure for Measure perhaps resembles King Lear more than any other play. But even this resemblance has its limits since the characters do not develop on double planes, and neither gratitude nor Grace is depicted as a gradual process unfolding through time. The play's mixed genre and simpler structure undercut the gravity and complexity of its ambiguous mood and texture so that it intrigues rather than disturbs us. King Lear disturbs us with a fuguelike intricacy interpenetrating structure, character, theme, and rhythmic movement, bombarding us on all levels.

Comparative analysis only skims the surface of the play's ambiguous texture. Because its unique gothic structure does not correspond with any of Shakespeare's other tragedies, an approach more organic to the play's framework is needed in order to unlock its hidden meaning. John Danby points to a medieval method of structuring literature organically corresponding to that of King Lear. "Shakespeare stood closer to the allegorizing Middle Ages than we do now."¹ And "the Middle Ages," Danby observes, "had its own theory of the different levels of meaning" which "were defined with the kind of exactness we have not yet found either possible or necessary."² Dante used this method, referring to The Divine Comedy as "'polysemous'" or having multiple meanings.³

He was not alone in his use of polysemous structuring. There is an English version, "A conscientious early fifteenth-century account," designed "by Master Ripon of Durham," "to guide the medieval homilist," analogous to Dante's "four meanings."⁴ The four levels of meaning are as follows:

The first degree is the literal or historical sense: this is what the words seem to say on a first glance. Then comes the allegorical sense, "when one thing is said and another thing is understood by it"—for example, Abraham's two sons by his wife and his maid-servant signify the two Testaments. The third is the tropological or moral: this emerges when some general application can be made of either the literal or the allegorical senses. Finally there is the anagogical sense, when a scripture expounded in any of the three foregoing senses is further applied so that it "signifies again some portion of the supernal things of eternal glory."⁵

It is most significant for my purpose that King Lear contains all four senses; and furthermore, that these senses correspond to my theory of double planed principles and destinies. When this theory is analyzed in relation to these four senses, the ambiguous interplay of gratitude and Grace can be deciphered. Operating within a realistic framework, the principle of gratitude fits Danby's description of the historical or literal sense, revealing what the play says, or seems to say, "on a first glance." At first glance, the play emblemizes the workings of ingratitude, depicting the magnitude and malefic effects of this composite sin. Individually, the effects are irreversible regression and damnation, and collectively, universal discord. On an individual level, Goneril and Regan embody this degenerative process.

However, they are the only major characters to undergo the malefic workings of this degenerative process in its entirety. Interpreting the play from a strictly historical or literal level does not explain why Edmund, Gloucester, and Lear undergo a transformation despite the so-called irreversibility of the degenerative process. Their transformations are clarified if this deviation from traditional doctrine is analyzed allegorically. At this level, a different process based on

purification and evolution is refining and rearranging the development of these ingrates.

Cordelia's problematic death also lends itself to an allegorical interpretation. Interpreted in a literal or historical sense, her death becomes meaningless since she is not an ingrate. But interpreted allegorically, her death becomes a divine sacrifice, messianic in scope. Either directly or indirectly, Cordelia's death is necessary to the play's four main allegorical cycles; without it evolution is minimal, at most, and nonexistent, at least.

The first allegorical cycle encompassing the Fall of Man, the Crucifixion of Christ, and mankind's subsequent redemption and at-onement through the sacrificial death of the Savior, is symbolized by Lear's denial of Nothing and Cordelia's hanging. Her sacrificial death expunges the "general curse" of his Original Sin, redeeming and elevating him. The second allegorical cycle suggests a similar motif with Lear the ingrate Prodigal Son, and Cordelia, the divine parent, to whose house or inner sanctum he eventually returns.

In its third allegorical garb, King Lear is attired as a heroic quest, its fuguelike intricacy implying that a mythic overlay has been superimposed on a simple allegorical structure transforming it into a complex analogue for initiation, purification, and transcendence. It has been demonstrated that this initiatory pattern is modeled on Anglican and Catholic concepts of Grace, the hero evolving in graduated stages toward enlightenment through a series of divine infusions.

Finally, King Lear is a collective allegory which, as Bradley pointed out long ago, conjures up images "of vast universal powers working in the world of individual fates and passions."⁶ As a collective rite, King Lear resembles Aeschylus' Oresteia; each depicts a transition from an older more repressive order to a higher stage of evolution. By regarding King Lear as a metaphor for collective evolution, we partially unravel the labyrinthine tapestry of the play that tends to overshadow the personal misfortunes of the sympathetic characters. In this light, retributive law is requisite to the evolutionary process. Serving as a leveling device, it eradicates all elements which thwart this process. These weeds must be rooted out before a new world order can blossom.

From here, we move on to the play's tropological sense where a general moral is applied to either the literal or allegorical meaning. Since the literal sense serves to didactically underscore the harsh workings of retributive law, applying a moral to it would be redundant. In this case, the tropological sense focuses on elucidating morals implied by the play's allegorical level.

On the allegorical level, there are three morals. The first allegorical moral demonstrates the power of Grace through the comparative juxtaposition of unconditional forgiveness, retributive law, and self-glorifying honor, all working on Lear, Gloucester, and Edmund. Witnessing the effects of all three systems demonstrates that only Grace has the power to transform, redeem, and reverse the degenerative process. Because of Grace, even the most irredeemable of sinners, the illegitimate ingrate, aspires to do some good despite his own nature.

The second allegorical moral illustrates the egalitarian nature of Grace through the transformations of Lear, Gloucester, and Edmund. Each affirms that infusion depends on God's will alone rather than noble blood, legitimate birth, individual merit, or good works. Though these three men do not deserve Grace, they receive it.

The third allegorical moral demonstrates the necessity for self-effort as an expression of gratitude to God and the means of attracting the possibility of future infusions. Lear's titanic effort prior to each initiation and subsequent expansion of consciousness following each new infusion suggest he has benefited from previous infusions, and been rewarded accordingly.

The fourth or anagogical sense expounds scripture "in any of the three foregoing senses," applying it further "so that it 'signifies again some portion of the supernal things of eternal glory.'" When applied to the play, the anagogical sense fortifies the power of infusion through its exaltation of the Word as the means to enlightenment. Lear's final vision of Cordelia's silently moving lips expounds the scriptural prescription advocated in Rom. 10:13: "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." And similarly, in John 31 and 32: "If ye continue in my word then are ye my disciples indeed"; and "ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free."

If the play is interpreted from only one level or reality, it will be seen as a nihilistic condemnation of Christian doctrine in general. Applying a multileveled approach to the play reveals that it does not condemn Christian doctrine in general, but rather repressive

aspects of it in particular. Seen in this light, the play is positive. Polysemous structuring which corresponds with my theory of double planed destinies has demonstrated that three of the play's four levels glorify the workings of Grace.

Although multileveled analysis probes deeper than a comparative approach because its scope is primarily didactic, this method only partially unearths the play's ambiguity. A more profound means is needed to experience its alchemy. By analogy, since the Word causes Lear's transformation, so too, must it cause ours, if we are to experience the same alchemical process. The leap from didactic to experiential awareness requires an esoteric approach aimed at deciphering the meaning and purpose of mantric invocation in relation to renaissance thought. Avenues of exploration might include the ecstatic experiences of saints and mystics, Rosicrucianism, alchemy, magic, Hermeticism, and most important Christian Kabbalah.

Like Lear, the first stage of our alchemical transformation involves self-inquiry and contemplation. But there is, as L. C. Knights points out, a deeper stage: "The play is not just a symbolic form in which modes of feeling are held before us for contemplation. It is a moving image of life. . . ." ⁷ "A moving image of life" is an energy pattern or vibration; and the source of this vibration is sound. Closer to a symphony than a play, we experience King Lear at its fullest when we resonate to its sound current or primal energy.

Eastern aesthetics maintains that the optimal response to a work of art arises by resonating, reverberating, or sounding to it. ⁸ Applying

this definition to King Lear, Knights recommends a fluid resonating in the heart as preferable to a "fixed and definite"⁹ response. Adapting the process of sounding to King Lear is alchemical, if we accept character and spectator as inseparable parts of an organic whole or all encompassing creation. By analogy, as God creates the universe through the Word, so too, the playwright creates the universe of the play through the Word. And since sound creates, by sounding to Lear, we create ourselves in his image from nonbeing into Nothing or Silence. Resonating to Lear's union with Silence will lead us to our own. Experiencing this Silence is the answer to the play's mystery.

If Lear merges with Silence, the Word has been the means of uniting him with it. The Word, as the play's central metaphor, unearths the mystery of Lear's enigmatic demise. Used as the sole means of infusion, Logos takes on diverse forms: a fused metaphor melding uttered Word, unuttered Mantra or formless Sound, the silently moving lips of the bestowed Kiss (another variation of this type), and formless, soundless Silence into a paradoxical union of opposites. This paradoxical unity infuses the play's structure with a multidimensional resonance derived from the interplay of different frequencies of sound. The interplay of these sound frequencies suggests a fluidity single in design despite its outer intricacy. Those who hold an Eastern philosophical view would see this fluid image of changing sound patterns as a paradigm for the creation, unfoldment, and dissolution of the universe.

Before creation was Silence or Nothing. Afterwards, in the beginning was the Word; likewise, in the beginning, Cordelia utters the Word

Nothing, and unknown to Lear, creates him from nonbeing. When he refuses to acknowledge the Logos, multiplicity quashes the Word, profaning it with a barrage of vacuous words and dissonant sounds. Lear resonates to the cacophonies of time and space, and the Fall ensues. But the invasion of multiplicity too must wane, and the Word gradually gains ascendancy again upon Lear's reunion with Cordelia. Finally, when there is complete attunement to the Sound, Lear dissolves into it, attaining a unitive state intimated by the image of Cordelia's soundlessly moving lips, where form and formless, sound and silence merge, yet move beyond their paradoxical unity.

This paradoxical unity of sound and silence implies that the Nothing into which Lear merges is anything but senseless, merciless, just, or even compassionate. It is as The Cloud of Unknowing relates:

. . . completely dark and hidden to those who have only just begun to look at it. Yet, to speak more accurately, it is overwhelming spiritual light that blinds the soul that is experiencing it, rather than actual darkness or the absence of physical light.¹⁰

The relationship of darkness to Nothing intimates two senses. First, it refers to the neophyte's state in relation to experiencing Nothing. To the uninitiated, it is the hidden or unknown blackness of either ignorance or inexperience. In a second subtler sense, darkness is Nothing. To those able to see it, the pitchblende blackness of this darkness is so intense that it becomes its opposite, "overwhelming spiritual light."

The author of The Cloud who probably also penned Dionysius' Mystical Teaching acknowledges the influence of sixth century mystic Dionysius

(also known as Pseudo-Dionysius) on his work. "St. Denis' Prayer," included in Dionysius' Mystical Teaching, intimates the same double sense of darkness, as the yet unknown unitive state, and as a paradoxical wedding of opposites.

Raise us, we pray, that we may totally respond to the supreme,
unknown, ultimate, and splendid height of your words, mysterious and inspired.

There all God's secret matters lie covered and hidden under
darkness both profound and brilliant, silent and wise.

You make what is ultimate and beyond brightness secretly
to shine in all that is most dark.¹¹

Godhead is "beyond brightness," containing all. The monistic concept of Godhead Dionysius describes as a "supreme and dazzling darkness"¹² corresponds to Eastern scripture. However, exoteric Christian theology would regard monism as anathema. Meister Eckhart, a German contemporary of the English author of The Cloud and perhaps the greatest of medieval mystics, was charged with heresy by the Catholic Church for apotheosizing this belief. In Shakespeare's time, it was not much different except now Puritans assumed the role of the Catholics.

As this exploration has shown, Shakespeare appeared to be aware of the repressive aspects of Puritan theology and sought to undermine them. Could it be that he intimates a monistic God ambiguously for fear of reprisal? Although esoteric, the belief in monism is the common thread binding together mystics of diverse traditions, religions, and periods.

St. John's toda y nada is almost the exact echo of The Cloud's "nothing which is the All" (Chapter 68). Indeed the similarity of doctrine between the two mystics, English and Spanish, separated as they are by two centuries, and with no apparent or explicable literary connexion, [sic]

is one of the minor mysteries of mysticism, and has often been commented on. Perhaps it is less mysterious than it seems, given two men of a similar cast of mind, capacity, and outlook . . . and the Holy Spirit. There is no reason why he [the author of The Cloud] should be self-contradictory.¹³

There is no reason for Shakespeare to be self-contradictory either.

Is it not plausible that a man of his creative genius might have experienced or envisioned a similar state of Godhead?

A monistic God elucidates and transcends an ambiguous cosmos; a dualistic God does not. The exoteric Christian belief in dualism maintains that God alone is light or good, while man is dark and light. This reasoning creates a difference between man and the God who created him in His own image, a difference suggesting that man is greater or more complete than God because he contains everything, while Absolute Consciousness is incomplete because it lacks something.

On the other hand, for the author of the esoteric Dionysius' Mystical Teaching Godhead "has no name . . . is neither darkness nor light, error nor truth."¹⁴ This belief implies that any difference between man and God is one of degree rather than kind, balance rather than essence. God too contains darkness but balances it, while man does not. This sense of balance, what the Chinese call the Yin and Yang, transforms each quality into its seeming opposite.

Prior to Cordelia's coming, the world of King Lear is neither just dark, nor just light, nor a synthesis of both, but rather an unbalanced, unintegrated confusion of each. In the end, the balance of all

its disparate parts restores completeness to this world. Is this completeness the sense of Absolute Godhead Shakespeare envisioned when he conceived the terrible, inexplicable, yet resplendent universe of King Lear? Is this the dazzling darkness that Lear enters, when in the silent movement of Cordelia's lips, he perceives the glorious unity of form and formless? Is Lear mad? Or is he, like the mystical bride, ravished by a monistic darkness, embracing sound and silence, signifying Nothing?

ENDNOTES

Introduction

¹Kenneth Muir, ed., "Introduction," to King Lear by William Shakespeare (London: Methuen, The Arden Shakespeare, 1972), xl.

²ibid.

³Ibid., xli.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Robert G. Hunter, Shakespeare and the Mystery of God's Judgments (Athens: The University of Georgia, 1976), 189.

⁷Ibid., 187.

⁸Ibid., 194.

⁹William Elton, King Lear and the Gods (San Marino, Calif.: The Huntington Library, 1968), 216.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid., 215.

¹³Grace is capitalized throughout to denote Godhead as the third aspect of the trinity, the Holy Spirit. The Doctrine of Grace is also capitalized in order to underscore its superiority to the concept of gratitude.

¹⁴H. L. Mencken, "Scientific Examination of a Popular Virtue," in Prejudices: Second Series (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1920), 172.

¹⁵Ibid., 174.

¹⁶Alan Hobson, Full Circle: Shakespeare and Moral Development (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1972), 21.

¹⁷Honor Matthews, Character and Symbol in Shakespeare's Plays (New York: Schocken Books, 1962), 144.

Chapter I

¹Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, 1970 ed., s.v. "Gratitude."

²Roland Mushat Frye, God, Man and Satan (Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat Press, n.d.), 44.

³Ibid.

⁴John Milton, "When I Consider," in The Meditative Poem, ed. Louis Martz (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1963), 270.

⁵Ibid., 270, n. 7.

⁶Frye, 28.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Edmund Spenser, "An Hymne of Heavenly Love," in Select Poetry Chiefly Devotional of the Reign of Queen Elizabeth, vol. 1, collected and edited by Edward Farr for the Parker Society, 2 vols. (Cambridge: The University Press, 1845), 8.

⁹Richard Hooker, Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity, eds. A. S. McGrade and Brian Vickers, abridged ed. (New York: St. Martins Press, 1975), 118.

¹⁰Ibid., 119.

¹¹Thomas Becon, "The Pathway Unto Prayer," in The Early Works of Thomas Becon, S.T.P., ed. Rev. John Ayre, M.A. for the Parker Society (Cambridge: The University Press, 1843), 184. Becon was Chaplain to Archbishop Crammer, Prebendary of Canterbury.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴John Milton, "Paradise Lost," in Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained, ed. Christopher Ricks (New York: A Signet Classic from New American Library, 1968), bk 3, lines 95-98.

¹⁵Ibid., line 94.

¹⁶Ibid., line 95.

¹⁷Ibid., line 204.

¹⁸Ibid., line 207.

¹⁹Ibid., line 190.

²⁰E. Catherine Dunn, The Concept of Ingratitude in Renaissance English Moral Philosophy, Ph.D. dissertation (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of American Press, 1946), pt. 2, chaps. 1 and 2.

²¹Ibid., pt. 1, chap. 1, 11-13.

²²Ibid., 18. According to Dunn, the most frequently cited classical fable exalting the qualities of the noble beast, was "Androcles and the Lion" (8).

²³Ibid., 18-20. Animal gratitude "formed material legends long before the days even of Greek and Roman literature" and according to "Wundt" was "a part of primitive folk psychology" (18).

²⁴Joseph Hall, "The Works of the Lord in Judgement and Mercy," Sermon XXXIII, in The Works of the Right Reverend Joseph Hall, D.D. vol. 5, ed. Rev. Philip Wynter (New York: Reprinted from Oxford 1963 edition by Ams Press, 1969), 522. Hall was Bishop of Exeter and afterwards of Norwich.

²⁵William Langland, Piers the Plowman, rev. ed., trans. with an introduction by J. F. Goodridge (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1966), 216.

²⁶Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. "Unkindness" and "Kindness."

²⁷Lodowick Bryskett, A Discourse of Civill Life, ed. Thomas E. Wright (Northridge, Calif.: San Fernando Valley State College, 1970), 163.

²⁸Ibid., 130.

²⁹Dunn, 12.

³⁰Ibid., 119.

³¹Ibid.

³²Ibid.

³³Ibid., pt. 1, chap. 1, 13-20.

³⁴Frye, 39.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Ibid., 38-39.

³⁷Ibid., 39.

³⁸"Anon," "Everyman," a modernized version, ed. John Gassner, in Medieval and Tudor Drama (New York: Bantam Books, a National General Company, Inc., 1971), line 23.

³⁹Ibid., line 30.

⁴⁰Ibid., line 51.

⁴¹Ibid., line 55.

⁴²Ibid., lines 49-50.

⁴³Ibid., line 77.

⁴⁴Ibid., line 74.

⁴⁵Edmund Spenser, The Fairie Queene, ed. Thomas P. Roche, with assistance of C. Patrick O'Donnell, Jr. (New York: Penguin Books, 1979), bk. 1, canto 1, stanza 22.

⁴⁶Ibid., stanza 26.

⁴⁷Dunn, 29.

⁴⁸Ibid., 26.

⁴⁹Ibid., 30. Also see Cicero, De Officiis 2.63.

⁵⁰B. L. Joseph, Shakespeare's Eden: The Commonwealth of England 1558-1629 (U.S.A.: Barnes & Noble, 1971), 166.

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴Robert Southwell, "The Nativitie of Christ," in The Meditative Poem, ed. Louis Martz (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1963), 41-42.

⁵⁵William Alabaster, "Sonnet 2," in The Meditative Poem, ed. Louis Martz (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1963), 54.

⁵⁶Joseph Hall, "Public Thanksgiving for the Wonderful Mitigation of the Late Mortality," Sermon XV, in The Works of the Right Reverend Joseph Hall, D.D., vol. 5, Rev. Philip Wynter, D.D. (New York: Reprinted from Oxford 1863 edition by Ams Press, 1969), 253.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*

⁵⁸St. Bernard of Clairvaux, On the Love of God, trans. Rev. Terence L. Connolly, S.J., Ph.D. (New York: Spiritual Book Associates, 1937), 23.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*

⁶⁰Alabaster, "Sonnet 2," 54.

⁶¹Alexander Nowell, "A Catechism," written in Latin together with the same Catechism translated into English by Thomas Norton, ed. for The Parker Society by C. E. Corrie, D.D. (Cambridge: The University Press, 1853), 176.

⁶²George Herbert, "The Thanksgiving," in The Temple (Menston, England: A Scholar Press Facsimile, The Scholar Press Limited, 1968), 27.

⁶³*Ibid.*

⁶⁴*Ibid.*, 28.

⁶⁵Dunn, 22.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, 21. See also Thomas Aquinas, "The Summa Theologica" of St. Aquinas, XII, literally translated by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province (London: Burnes & Washbourne, Ltd.; New York: Benizer Brothers, Inc., 1921-42), 54-55.

⁶⁷Anders Nygren, Agape and Eros, trans. Philip S. Watson (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1953), 91.

⁶⁸*Ibid.*, 78.

⁶⁹*Ibid.*

⁷⁰*Ibid.*, 78.

⁷¹*Ibid.*, 79.

- ⁷²Ibid., ix.
- ⁷³Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, s.v. "Gratitude."
- ⁷⁴Dictionary of the Bible, s.v. "Eucharist."
- ⁷⁵St. Bernard, 35.
- ⁷⁶Ibid.
- ⁷⁷Sacramentum Mundi: An Encyclopedia of Theology, 1969-70, s.v. "Grace."
- ⁷⁸Nygren, ix.
- ⁷⁹Ibid.
- ⁸⁰Ibid.
- ⁸¹Edmund Spenser, "An Hymne of Heavenly Love," in Select Poetry Chiefly Devotional of the Reigne of Queene Elizabeth, vol. 1, ed. for the Parker Society by Edward Farr, 2 vols. (Cambridge: The University Press, 1845), 12.
- ⁸²Ibid.
- ⁸³Ibid.
- ⁸⁴Ibid.
- ⁸⁵Ibid.
- ⁸⁶Ibid.
- ⁸⁷Ibid., 11.
- ⁸⁸Ibid., 12.
- ⁸⁹Becon, 155.
- ⁹⁰Henry Bullinger, "The Fifth Decade," in The Decades of Henry Bullinger, vol. V, trans. H.I. for the Parker Society by Rev. Thomas Harding, A.M. (Cambridge: The University Press, 1852), 206.
- ⁹¹Ibid.
- ⁹²Ibid., 221.

⁹³Thomas a Kempis, Of the Imitation of Christ (New Canaan, Conn.: Pivot Paperbacks, Keats Publishing, Inc., 1973), 68.

⁹⁴Joseph Hall, "The Fall of Pride," Sermon XX, in The Works of the Right Reverend Joseph Hall D.D., vol. 5, Rev. Philip Wynter (New York: Reprinted from Oxford 1863 edition by Ams Press, 1969), 320. See Luke 6:32-34.

⁹⁵Dunn, 3.

⁹⁶Ibid.

⁹⁷Ibid.

⁹⁸Ibid., 6.

⁹⁹Ibid., 6-7. See chap. 2, n. 14.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., 109.

¹⁰¹Ibid., 108.

¹⁰²Thomas Cooper, The Art of Giving Describing the True Nature and Right Use of Liberty (London: T. Pauier, Inc., 1615), chap. 20, 54 (text misnumbered as 45). This passage calls to mind Luke:32-34.

¹⁰³Dunn's observations on St. Bernard, 108-109.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., 109.

¹⁰⁵Langland, 212.

¹⁰⁶Ibid.

¹⁰⁷Joseph Hewitt, "Some Aspects of the Treatment of Ingratitude in Greek and English," Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association 45 (1917): 37.

¹⁰⁸Ibid.

¹⁰⁹Ibid.

¹¹⁰Ibid., 38.

¹¹¹Ibid.

¹¹²From this point on, the Deadly Sins will be abbreviated as D.S.

¹¹³Robert Heilman, This Great Stage: Image and Structure in King Lear (U.S.A.: University of Washington Press, 1967), 99.

¹¹⁴Becon, 137.

¹¹⁵_a Kempis, 66.

¹¹⁶Milton, Paradise Lost, bk. 4, line 44.

¹¹⁷*Ibid.*, line 45.

¹¹⁸*Ibid.*, lines 46-47.

¹¹⁹*Ibid.*, line 52.

¹²⁰*Ibid.*, line 53.

¹²¹*Ibid.*, line 40.

¹²²*Ibid.*, lines 55-57.

¹²³*Ibid.*, lines 48-49.

¹²⁴*Ibid.*, line 50.

¹²⁵*Ibid.*, lines 50-51.

¹²⁶"A Prayer Against Envy," in The Primer of 1559, in Private Prayers Put Forth by Authority During the Reign of Queen Elizabeth, ed. for the Parker Society by Rev. William Keatings Clay (Cambridge: The University Press, 1851), 105.

¹²⁷*Ibid.*

¹²⁸*Ibid.*

¹²⁹*Ibid.*

¹³⁰*Ibid.*

¹³¹*Ibid.*

¹³²*Ibid.*

¹³³Becon, 138.

¹³⁴See 14, fn. 44, and 53, fn. 44.

¹³⁵Milton, Paradise Lost, bk. 14, lines 502-503.

¹³⁶William Vaughan, The Golden-grove moralized in three Bookes: A Work very necessary for all such as would know how to gouerne themselves, their houses, or their country, printed at London by Simon Stafford, 1600 (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms, Inc), bk. 1, pt. 7, chap. 39.

¹³⁷Langland, 216.

¹³⁸*Ibid.*, 214.

¹³⁹Cooper, chap. 15, 46. The pages are misnumbered. There are two pages numbered 46. This quotation refers to the first.

¹⁴⁰S. Nagavajan, ed., Measure for Measure, by William Shakespeare (New York: A Signet Classic, New American Library, 1964), 36, n. 32.

¹⁴¹*Ibid.*, 36, n. 35-36.

¹⁴²*Ibid.*, 37, n. 40.

¹⁴³Lily Campbell, Shakespeare's Tragic Heroes: Slaves of Passion (New York: Barnes and Noble, Inc.), 186.

¹⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 181.

¹⁴⁵Dictionary of the Bible, s.v. "Adultery."

¹⁴⁶*Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷*Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸See Chapter III, 96-108, for a more detailed discussion of ingratitude and adultery.

¹⁴⁹Dictionary of the Bible, s.v. "Sin."

¹⁵⁰Ivor Morris, Shakespeare's God (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1972), 99.

¹⁵¹*Ibid.*

¹⁵²M. [yles] Coverdale, A Shorte Recapitulacion or abrigement of Erasus' Enchiridion briefly comprehendinge the Summe and Contentes thereof, Very profitable and necessary to be rede of all trew Christen men, Anno. 1545 (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms, Inc.), n.p.

¹⁵³Hewitt, 48.

¹⁵⁴Ibid., 46. According to Hewitt, although "the Greek thinks of" filial impiety "as . . . a sin against the god who watches over fathers and whose closeness overbalance all others, nevertheless its adverse influence affects fewer people because it is familial rather than social."

¹⁵⁵There was a lone exception. A child was not expected to obey its parents if it endangered its immortal soul.

¹⁵⁶Chapter II explores the way in which King Lear depicts the double standard in relation to traditional theology and ethics.

¹⁵⁷Dictionary of the Bible, s.v. "Grace."

¹⁵⁸Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, s.v. "Grace."

¹⁵⁹Dictionary of the Bible, s.v. "Grace."

¹⁶⁰Ibid.

¹⁶¹Landland, 213.

¹⁶²Ibid.

¹⁶³Ibid.

Chapter II

¹Joseph Hall, "The Fall of Pride," Sermon XX, The Works of the Right Reverend Joseph Hall, D.D., Vol. 5, Rev. Philip Wynter (Oxford, 1963; reprint ed., New York: AMS Press, 1969), 316.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴Cooper, chap. 22, 69.

⁵William Elton, King Lear and the Gods (San Marino, Calif.: The Huntington Library, 1968), 120.

⁶Joseph, Shakespeare's Eden, 164-165.

⁷Elton, 119.

⁸Rolf Soellner, Shakespeare's Patterns of Knowledge (U.S.A.: Ohio State University Press, 1972), 289. According to Soellner: "The use of paradox was widespread throughout the Renaissance because it

was believed that it best conveyed the idea that 'truth was a matter of perspective'" (p. 289). Another commonly used paradox, namely, that nothing is something, will be analyzed in Chapters III and IV. Through the use of this paradox Shakespeare intimates Cordelia's divinity.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰B. L. Joseph, ed., King Lear by William Shakespeare (London: University of London Press Ltd., 1966), 102, n. 285.

¹¹Ibid., 102, n. 286.

¹²Dunn, 28-29.

¹³Ibid., 29-30.

¹⁴In The Golden Grove, bk 1, pt. 9, chap. 60, Vaughan says, "The Persians knewe, that the man, which of benefits received proued vnthankfull, was not worthie to live."

¹⁵Heilman, 328, n. 4.

¹⁶Cooper, chap. 26, 97.

¹⁷John Danby, Shakespeare's Doctrine of Nature: A Study of Nature (London: Faber and Faber, 1949), 170.

¹⁸Ibid., 171.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid.

²³Joseph, Shakespeare's Eden, 105.

²⁴Ibid., 105-106.

²⁵Vaughan, bk. 2, pt. 2, chap. 12.

²⁶Lu Emily Pearson, Elizabethans at Home (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1967), 246. Pearson is referring to Bartholomew Batty, The Christian mans closet, trans. by W. Lowth (London, 1581).

²⁷George Gascoigne, "The Glasse of Government," in The Complete Works of George Gascoigne (in Two Vols.), vol. 2, ed. John W. Cunliffe (New York: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1969), 33. Despite this different order of priority, Gascoigne also stresses the need for filial reverence, citing the First Commandment, the sixth chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians and the third chapter of Colossians (32). Filial impiety is still regarded as theological ingratitude despite the different order of priority. In Lear's case, the order of priority is irrelevant since he is king and father. Lear's double role magnifies the gravity of his sin, making him guilty of ingratitude on two counts.

²⁸Pearson, 232-233.

²⁹*Ibid.*, 233.

³⁰*Ibid.*

³¹For more on Cleland see Curtis Brown Watson, Shakespeare and the Renaissance Concept of Honor (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1960), 139.

³²Pearson, 245.

³³*Ibid.*, 240.

³⁴Vaughan, bk. 2, pt. 2, chap. 12.

³⁵Gascoigne, 33.

³⁶Watson, 139.

³⁷Vaughan, bk. 2, pt. 2, chap. 12.

³⁸Watson, 139.

³⁹*Ibid.*

⁴⁰Dunn, 82-83.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, 89.

⁴²Nicholas Breton, "The Blessed Weeper," in The Works in Verse and Prose of Nicholas Breton, collected and edited by Rev. Alexander B. Grosart (New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1967, 1879), Vol. I, 10.

⁴³Pearson (226-227) cites some exceptional instances: Dorothy Leigh (The Mother's Blessing, 1618), Queen Catherine, the first wife of Henry VIII, and William Gouge. She further points out that William Perkins takes a most extreme position, considering the disobedient son neglectful "of his duties by word or deed . . . worthy of death" (226).

⁴⁴Muir, 86, n. 150.

⁴⁵Joseph, Shakespeare's Eden, 93.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Muir, 33, n. 21.

⁴⁸Chapters IV and V will explore Cordelia as a Christ figure.
See 268, n. 42.

⁴⁹Rosalie L. Colie, "'Reason and Need': King Lear and the 'Crisis' of the Aristocracy," in Some Facets of King Lear: Essays in Prismatic Criticism, ed. Rosalie L. Colie and F. T. Flahiff (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1974), 200.

⁵⁰Ibid., 199.

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵Ibid., 202.

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹Ibid., 200. See Heilman, 324, n. 11 for more on Goneril's and Regan's manipulation of the law.

⁶⁰Ibid., 202.

⁶¹Joseph, Shakespeare's Eden, 92.

⁶²Ibid., 94.

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Ibid..

⁶⁵Ibid., 93.

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷Colie, 204. Not all renaissance ethicists would find Gloucester's blinding shocking. Some Puritans would regard this vile act as a just consequence of his adulterous ingratitude. See Chapter III, 98-100.

⁶⁸Ibid., 4.3.45. Derogatory allusions to dogs appear elsewhere in the play (3.6.61-71). Lear imagines the household dogs are barking at him, to which Edgar, as Tom, responds by launching into a diatribe against these curs, promising to defend the king against them. Pertinent is Heilman's observation that in contrast to other bestial imagery which attacks the sisters' "ungrateful, treacherous, and ferocious" behavior, "the dog imagery" emphasizes "their commonplace selfishness, plus their fawning upon Lear in Act I." On a larger scale, "this imagery shows the domestic world in moral turmoil along with the political world" (Heilman, 95). For more on dog imagery, see Heilman, 94-95 and 113, n. 10. It should be added that Shakespeare deviates from the majority of renaissance ethicists in using the dog as a symbol of brutish ingratitude since canine devotion was exalted and anthropomorphized. See Chapter V, 195-196.

⁶⁹Muir, 45, n. 45.

⁷⁰Madness in Reason is the title of Heilman's chapter on Goneril, Regan and Edmund. See 225-253.

Edgar perceives Lear's "Reason in madness" (4.6.173) while witnessing his relentless attack on the hypocritical miscarriage of justice.

⁷¹Part of the paradox of Edmund is his ambivalence toward himself. On the one hand, he proclaims his villainy and pledges himself to the degenerate goddess of nature; on the other hand, he rationalizes his base birth, denying contemporary beliefs which equated illegitimacy with ingratitude. At the end of the play he retracts this position, confessing that "some good" he means "to do / Despite" his "own nature" (5.3.241). This admission reveals that Edmund's earlier position was based on self-delusion. He would like to believe that he is better than he is. Edmund practices his own brand of self-rationalization, self-justification, and self-righteousness.

⁷²Roland Mushat Frye, Shakespeare and Christian Doctrine (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1963), 229.

⁷³Elton, 118, n. 8.

⁷⁴Arthur O. Lovejoy, The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1936), 67.

⁷⁵Ibid., 68.

⁷⁶John Langland, Piers Plowman, trans. with an introduction by J. F. Goodridge (Middlesex, England; Baltimore, Md.; Victoria, Australia: Penguin Books, 1959), 113.

⁷⁷Muir, 66, n. 34.

⁷⁸Civil war is alluded to in 2.1.10 and 3.1.19-21.

⁷⁹Heilman, 235.

⁸⁰Paul A. Jorgensen, Lear's Self-Discovery (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1967), 84.

⁸¹Muir, 135, n. 76.

⁸²Cornwall owes allegiance to Lear because he and his wife, Regan, are the recipients of his lands; yet both betray him.

⁸³Muir, 135, n. 77.

⁸⁴The storm is a complex metaphor suggesting a number of interpretations. It can also be regarded as a malefic effect of Lear's ingratitude. Or it might be interpreted as Lear's reaction to Goneril's and Regan's ingratitude, a dark night descent into madness. And finally, it could emblemize divine wrath, mirroring in nature the rampant discord in the world of men.

⁸⁵Norman Council, When Honour's at the Stake (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1973), 17.

⁸⁶Joseph, ed., King Lear, 76, n. 228.

⁸⁷Ibid.

⁸⁸Dictionary of the Bible, s.v. "Adultery."

⁸⁹Muir, 144, n. 14.

⁹⁰Professor Albert Bermel of Lehman College, the Bronx, and City Graduate and University Center, New York, interprets Goneril's manipulations from this point of view.

⁹¹Eric Partridge, Shakespeare's Bawdy, a Literary & Psychological Essay and Comprehensive Glossary, rev. ed. s.v. "spirit."

⁹²Ibid., s.v. "conceive."

⁹³Muir, 144, n. 17.

⁹⁴Oxford English Dictionary, vol. 10, s.v. In the late fifteenth century, syphilis again reared its virulent head, spreading throughout the continent and England. A lax sexual standard made the nobility susceptible to contracting this disease.

Chapter III

¹Bridget Gallert Lyons, "The Subplot as Simplification," in Some Facets of King Lear: Essays in Prismatic Criticism, eds. Rosalie L. Colie and F. T. Flahiff (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), 25.

²Ibid., 26.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., 25-26.

⁵Henry Swinburne, A Brief Treatise of Testaments and Last Wills, Classics of English Legal History in the Modern Era, Facsimile Reproduction, Selected by David S. Berkowitz and Samuel E. Thorne (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., A Garland Series, 1978), pt. 5, 201.

⁶John L. McKenzie, Dictionary of the Bible, x.v. "Adultery."

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Alfred Harbage, Shakespeare and the Rival Traditions (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1952), 188.

¹⁰William Elton, King Lear and the Gods (San Marino, Calif.: The Huntington Library, 1968), 110.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Pearson, 265-266. Pearson's references to Henry Cornelius Agrippa are from The Commendation of Matrimony, translated into English by David Clapham in 1540.

¹³Ibid., 266. Pearson refers to Becon's 1581 work, The booke of Matrimony.

¹⁴Thomas Ridley, A view of the Civil and Ecclesiastical Law, wherein the practice of them is stritned, and relieued within this Land (London: Printed for the Company of Stationers, 1607; Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms), 200.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Swinburne, pt. 5, 201.

¹⁹Ridley, 200.

²⁰Pearson, 266. Recriminations were not as stringently enforced for the second generation. Swinburne mentions that: "... the adulterous grandfather may bequeath anie thing to the lawfull children of his own vnlawful sons or daughters, or make them executors, but not so cannot the incestuous grandfather" (201).

²¹Muir, 4, n. 15.

²²Ibid.

²³Ibid., n. 10.

²⁴Lyons, 26.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Lawrence Stone, The Crisis of Aristocracy 1558-1641 (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1965), 662.

²⁷Ibid., 664.

²⁸Colie, 218, n. 46.

²⁹Ibid., 218-219.

³⁰Swinburne, 200.

³¹Ibid.

³²Ibid.

³³See footnote 5, 98.

³⁴See Ridley, 201. Roman Catholic doctrine provided three means of legitimization: first, if the child's parents were both single at the time of conception and they decided to marry; second, by last will and testament or public witness declaring a bastard natural and legal provided there were no other living natural or lawful offspring; and finally, by a royal decree usually contingent on service to the prince by either father or son.

³⁵Swinburne, 201.

³⁶A royal bastard of this type, portrayed sympathetically, is Falconbridge in Shakespeare's King John.

³⁷Colie, 205.

³⁸*Ibid.*

³⁹*Ibid.*

⁴⁰Edmund's willingness to play pseudo-knight is an extension of his participation in the rite of honorable combat. See 113-119 for the implications of Edmund's role as a travesty of aristocratic ethics.

⁴¹While Cordelia literally dies the death meant for Edmund, his noble death is not quite as literally transposed. As a woman, Cordelia would never be engaged in knightly combat. Nevertheless, this transposition abides by the spirit if not the letter of the law. She is noble, and Edmund dies a noble death; even if it is not an exact replication of the way in which she would have died. Most important is the transposition of Edmund's death to Cordelia. This transposition is the ultimate demonstration of the corrosive effect of Edmund's ingratitude on the order of the Chain of Being. His malefic influence reaches up to heaven emblemized by the sacrificial death of the Christed Cordelia, and descends down to infect the commonwealth.

We shall later see that this transposition is a cause of the play's ambiguity. In a different and contradictory framework, Cordelia's death is not meaningless but imbued with sacrificial implications.

⁴²For more on Cordelia's affinity to the Christ see Chapters IV, 137-143, 155-163, and V, 209-218.

⁴³Cordelia's death by hanging also has other positive, sacrificial implications which contradicts the above analysis. These two opposed interpretations of her death add to Edmund's ambiguous projection and destiny. See 124-127, 218-236.

⁴⁴The renaissance adaptation of magnanimity was also influenced by a Roman version of this virtue which was somewhat less egocentric than its Aristotelian counterpart. Cicero's magnanimous man used this virtue to advance public and private interests, whereas Aristotle's magnanimous man was more concerned with private rather than public issues. The Aristotelian would be more subject to reproach since he is the more selfish of the two. It is the Aristotelian type which Edmund travesties since he is not and never was concerned with the public welfare.

In addition to Roman influence, feudal values also played a large part in molding aristocratic ethics.

⁴⁵Aristotle, The Nichomachean Ethics, 4.3.1123a-b13. All subsequent entries refer to Aristotle, The Ethics of Aristotle: The Nichomachean Ethics, rev. ed. (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1976).

⁴⁶Ibid., 4.3.1124a23-b14.

⁴⁷Ibid., 4.1.1120b1-24.

⁴⁸Bryskett, 171.

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰Aristotle 4.3.112a23-b14.

⁵¹Bryskett, 171.

⁵²Vaughan, bk. 1, pt. 1, chap. 25.

⁵³Aristotle 4.3.1124b14-1125a4.

⁵⁴Ibid., 1125a4-1125a5-27.

⁵⁵See Chapter V, 205-218, for a more detailed discussion of the relationship of Grace to evolutionary change.

⁵⁶Jorgensen, 86.

⁵⁷Heilman, 234.

⁵⁸Roy Battenhouse, Shakespearean Tragedy, Its Art and Its Christian Premises (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1969), 274.

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²Ibid.

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵Ibid.

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷Honor Matthews, Character and Symbol in Shakespeare's Plays (New York: Schocken Books, 1962), 157.

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Ibid.

⁷⁰There were three kinds of magnanimity: an Aristotelian type, a Roman type popularized by Cicero and Seneca, and a Christian type. For more on the three types of magnanimity see: Maurice B. McNamee, Honor and the Epic Hero (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1960). In contrast to the classical virtue, Christian magnanimity associated greatness of heart with charity.

⁷¹See Chapter V, 200-201, for more about Edgar as Tom O'Bedlam.

⁷²Battenhouse, 274.

⁷³See Chapter V, 218-222, for a parallel use of these two doctrines in relation to Lear's development and destiny.

⁷⁴Richard Noble, Shakespeare's Biblical Knowledge and Use of Book of Common Prayer as Exemplified in the Plays of the First Folio (London and New York: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge and the Macmillan Company, 1935), 231. Noble points "to the penalty prescribed for adultery in Lev. xx.10 and John viii.5" (231).

⁷⁵Elton, 111.

⁷⁶Ibid., 112.

⁷⁷Ibid.

⁷⁸Ibid., 110.

⁷⁹Ibid., 112.

⁸⁰Ibid.

Chapter IV

¹Ivor Morris, Shakespeare's God: The Role of Religion in the Tragedies (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1972), 38. Morris refers to P. N. Siegel's analogical approach to Shakespearean criticism. The term analogical suggests an allegorical approach but with a broader framework more suitable to this study. Within this framework, Cordelia is imaged as a Christed being rather than literal representation of Jesus the Christ.

²Peter Milward, Shakespeare's Religious Background (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973), 233.

³Even if examined from a realistic point of view, Lear's behavior toward Cordelia would be regarded as unnatural. Her banishment attests that he has chosen to ignore his parental obligation to her.

Lear's ingratitude also reveals itself in the secular world of chivalric ethics in his betrayal of Kent, most loyal of vassals. According to this elitist code of honor, only the nobility had the capacity for gratitude. Ingratitude on the part of a noble was regarded as a base or churlish act, degrading him to the level of a commoner or coerl. Lear's betrayal of Kent is another form of regression which follows from, and underscores, his theological degeneration all the more.

⁴Danby, 124-125. Danby's source for this interpretation is based on a medieval multileveled approach to art. He not only applies this approach to Cordelia but also to the play's intricate baroque-like structure. See Conclusion, 240-245.

⁵Critics differ as to the meaning of the word "twain." It could refer either to Adam and Eve, as Danby suggests, or to Goneril and Regan, as Muir maintains. If one accepts Goneril and Regan as this "twain," the general curse might allude to the universal discord which follows in the wake of their ingratitude. But this argument is specious since Lear, rather than Goneril or Regan, initiates the first act of ingratitude upon banishing Cordelia. In any event, proof of Cordelia's redemptive function remains unaffected by differing interpretations of the word "twain." See Muir, 171.

⁶We shall see that Cordelia's laconic nature indicates a unitive state beyond word and form.

⁷A Dictionary of Symbols, J. E. Cirlot, s.v., "Hanged Man."

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰From this point on, whenever nothing is capitalized it denotes Godhead in any one of its trinitarian aspects. Most often it refers to the Holy Spirit. When silence is capitalized, it denotes the first aspect of Godhead. On occasion, aspects or functions of Godhead are also capitalized to underscore a point.

¹¹Elton, 181. See 179-190 for more extensive information on the creation of the universe from nothing and other insightful connotations of this word.

¹²Ibid., 182.

¹³Rolf Soellner, Shakespeare's Patterns of Knowledge (U.S.A.: Ohio State University Press, 1972), p. 90.

¹⁴Dictionary of the Bible, s.v., "Creation," where it is stated: "Whether the author represented God as creating from nothing is not easily answered. Creation from nothing is not denied by the author of Gn [sic]; but it is extremely improbable that he affirms it. Creation from nothing as it is taught in modern theology presupposes a philosophy of nature which the Hebrews did not have. They did not answer the questions because they were unable to raise it; but the metaphysical affirmation of creation from nothing rests upon an idea of the divine supremacy which is identical with the biblical idea."

¹⁵Jaroslav Pelikan, Jesus Through the Centuries: His Place in the History of Culture (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Perennial Library, 1987), 66.

The Prajnaparamita Sutras of Mahayana Buddhism take the paradox of creating something from nothing a step further than exoteric Christianity. According to this paradox, emptiness is form, and form is emptiness, not only implying that something can come from nothing, but also that nothing can come from something. Gary Zukav, The Dancing Wu Li Masters: An Overview of the New Physics (New York: Bantam Books, 1979), 240.

New age subatomic physics corroborates the Buddhist paradox through vacuum diagrams. These "diagrams are representations of remarkable transformations of 'something' into 'nothing' and 'nothing' into something." These transformations occur continuously in the subatomic realm . . ." (ibid., 241).

¹⁶Pelikan, 66.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Elton, 185-186.

¹⁹Pelikan, 61.

²⁰Regression was condemned by Eastern and Western churches alike, although each attributed a different cause to this degenerative process. Pelikan relates that the Eastern church believed the degenerative process to be "the consequence of transiency and impermanence" (67). According to this view, "not only human nature but the cosmos itself was subject" to "transiency and decay," "inasmuch as it is made out of what is not" (68). This belief implies that nonbeing was the result of an impersonal process of creation and dissolution, in contrast to the Western church, where regression or nonbeing was regarded to be more the result of Original Sin or man's personal affront to God. See Pelikan, 65-68.

²¹Sister Vandana Mataji, Nama Japa: The Prayer of the Name (Bombay: Bhuratiya Vidya Bhavan), 190.

²²In his explanation of the relationship of the Word to Christ consciousness, Paramahansa Yogananda defines God the Father as "the Absolute, unmanifested, existing beyond vibratory creation"; while "God the Son is the Christ consciousness existing within vibratory creation." See Paramahansa Yogananda, Autobiography of a Yogi, 10th ed. (Los Angeles: Self-realization Fellowship Publisher, 1969), 151 n.

²³Yogananda defines the Logos or third aspect of the trinity as "the outward manifestation of the omnipresent Christ consciousness" or its "witness" (Rev. 3:14) which "is Aum, the Word or Holy Ghost, invisible divine power, the only doer, the sole causative and activating force that upholds all creation through vibration." See Autobiography of a Yogi, 152 n.

²⁴Sister Vandana Mataji, Nama Japa: The Prayer of the Name (Bombay: Bhuratiya Vidya Bhavan, 1984), 92.

²⁵By at-one-ment I mean the oneness of the unitive state. Alan Watts uses this hyphenated word when referring to "the reconciliation or 'at-one-ment' of God and man achieved by the Sacrifice of Christ." Alan W. Watts, Myth and Ritual in Christianity (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968), 238.

²⁶Richard Rolle, The Fire of Love (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1972), 93-94.

²⁷Sister Vandana Mataji, 92.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹A parallel can be found in the Hindu Puranas when Hanuman proves "to his Lord Rama, that the name Rama is even more powerful than the person Rama" (see Sister Vandana Mataji, 81).

³²Sallie Nichols, Jung and the Tarot: An Archetypal Journey (York Beach, Me.: Samuel Weiser, Inc., 1984), 37. The medieval discovery that zero is something is enhanced by twentieth century discoveries in the realm of subatomic physics. Paralleling the "Buddhist view," quantum physics contends "that all particles exist potentially as different combinations of other particles" (Zukov, 238). From this point of view: "'Empty' and 'full' are 'false distinctions' that we have created, like the distinction between 'something' and 'nothing'" (ibid.,

240). See footnote 15, 272, and Zukav, 236-241, on transformations of nothing and something or empty and full.

³³Clifton Wolters, trans, "The Cloud of Unknowing," in The Cloud of Unknowing and Other Works (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1978), 142.

³⁴Further support for the view of Nothing as an intangible something can be found in Eastern scripture.

The parable of Uddalaka and his son, Sveteku, in The Chandogya Upanishad illumines this paradox. When Sveteku returns home after twelve years of study, Uddalaka asks his conceited son if he knows how to "hear the unhearable, . . . perceive the unperceivable," and "know the unknowable?" Sveteku's pride is quickly deflated when he realizes that he cannot answer this question.

Uddalaka then proceeds to prove that something is begotten from nothing. At his request, Sveteku brings him a fruit from the Nyagrodha tree, breaks it, and tells Uddalaka that he sees some extremely small seeds. Uddalaka then asks Sveteku to break one of the seeds and tell him what he sees; to which Sveteku replies, "Nothing, sir." Uddalaka explains that this apparent Nothing from which the Nyagrodha tree is created, is only a seeming Nothing since the universe was created from it. This seeming Nothing, he continues, is something since, in reality, it is composed of subtle essence. See "The Chandogya Upanishad," in The Upanishads: Breath of the Eternal, 2nd Indian ed., translated by Swami Prabhavananda and Frederick Manchester (Mylapore, Madras: The President of Sri Ramakrishna Math), 108-114.

³⁵"The Cloud of Unknowing," 142.

³⁶In yet another parable from the Chandogya Upanishad, Uddalaka proves that this obscure Nothing or subtle essence must be perceived by the higher intuitive faculties of the soul rather than the physical senses. He tells Sveteku to put salt in water, leave it overnight, and return the next morning. When Sveteku returns the following morning, Uddalaka asks him to bring the salt which was placed in the water the previous night. He cannot find the salt because it had dissolved in the water. Although it cannot be found, when Sveteku imbibes the water, he discovers that while the salt cannot be seen, it can be tasted. Uddalaka then applies this analogy to Pure Being which, while unperceived by ordinary means, nevertheless, exists in everything (Prabhavananda and Manchester, 112-113).

³⁷"The Cloud of Unknowing," 143.

³⁸Ibid., 142.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Ibid., 143.

⁴¹Brother David Steindl-Rast, Gratefulness, the Heart of Prayer: An Approach to Life in Fullness (New York: Paulist Press, 1984), 224.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³Rudolf Otto, The Idea of the Holy (London: Oxford University Press), 211.

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵Eastern scripture intimates that Nothing is the formless first aspect of Godhead or transcendent principle. According to Juan Mascaro, the Indian Mandukya Upanishad "explains the paradox that Brahman [the Absolute] is all, and Brahman is nothing or no-thing." Juan Mascaro, "Introduction," in The Bhagavad Gita (Middlesex, England, and New York: Penguin Books, 1962), 15.

⁴⁶John Ruskin, "Academy Notes: On Prout and Hunt and Other ART Criticisms," in The Works of John Ruskin, vol. 14 (London: George Allen, 1904), 16-17.

⁴⁷Peter Milward, Biblical Influences in Shakespeare's Great Tragedies (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1987), 160. Cordelia's silence and reticence to speak about her elevated state call to mind a parable about the Buddha who, when asked to give a discourse on Nirvana, "listened to this request and then after a little pause smiled, and thereafter . . . announced to the vast congregation that the discourse was over." See Rohit Mehta, The Fullness of the Void: The Yoga of Theosophy--The Transcendental [sic] Wisdom (Delhi: Motilal Banar Sidass, 1982), 149.

⁴⁸Mehta, 175.

⁴⁹Ibid., 151.

⁵⁰Ibid., 175.

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²The significance of I Am That I Am will be discussed further in Chapter V, 213-216.

⁵³Because Moses still feels unworthy, God finally agrees to also use his brother Aaron. Yet in Exod. 4:16, God makes an important distinction between Aaron and Moses. Aaron will serve as Moses' "spokesman unto the people: and he shall be, even he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God." Aaron shall be

a co-helper but he is not co-equal to Moses. Moses "shall be to" Aaron "instead of God" because he has achieved at-one-ment with the Father, and like the later Jesus, serves as a God-man or perfected vehicle for the dispensation of Grace.

⁵⁴Mehta, 175.

⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶Danby, 129.

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Evelyn Underhill, Practical Mysticism (New York: E. P. Dutton & Company, Inc., 1915), 115.

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹For more on the creative process of letters and words see: Swami Muktananda, Where Are You Going: A Guide to the Spiritual Journey (South Fallsburg, N.Y.: SYDA Foundation, 1981), 39-40.

⁶²Underhill, 115.

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Morris, 90.

⁶⁵A Dictionary of Symbols, s.v., "Multiplicity."

⁶⁶Ibid., s.v., "Sin."

⁶⁷Ibid., s.v., "Fool."

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Cooper, chap. 5, 8.

⁷⁰Ibid.

⁷¹Ibid.

⁷²In support of this interpretation, Professor Harry Carlson of Queens College, Queens, New York, and the Graduate and University Center, New York, points to the New American version of the Bible, Prov. 16:10, which refers to the lips of the king as an oracle.

⁷³A term used by Sri Aurobindo when referring to those who adhere to an inflexible code of justice. See Sri Aurobindo, The Future Evolution of Man: The Divine Life upon Earth (Pondicherry, India: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1963), 64.

⁷⁴Vaughan, bk. 1, pt. 9, chap. 60.

⁷⁵M. D. H. Parker, The Slave of Life: A Study of Shakespeare and the Idea of Justice (London: Chatto and Windus, 1955), 38-39.

Chapter V

¹Lawrence L. LeShan, How to Mediate: A Guide to Self-Discovery (Toronto: Bantam Books, 1975), 70.

²James Kirsch, Shakespeare's Royal Self (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1966), 194.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid., 71.

⁷Ibid., 70.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid., 71.

¹⁰Elton, 194.

¹¹Ibid. Commenting on "the evident influence on Shakespeare's plays of the sceptical mentality of Montaigne," Milward relates that even before John Florio, Italian tutor to the Earl of Southampton, published Montaigne's Essays in 1603:

"... Shakespeare had read them in manuscript form, to judge from the number of verbal echoes in Hamlet and Troilus and Cressida. Montaigne himself was, of course, no atheist: he was a professed Catholic, even if his general outlook was more secular than religious. Following in the footsteps of Erasmus and other humanists, he rejected the scholasticism of the Middle Ages with its calm confidence in the power of human reason to attain absolute certainty. Rather, with Luther, he stressed the corruption in human nature, by which man had been brought even lower than the beasts; and he insisted on the need of faith to know the existence of God."

Ironically, "such practical skepticism united though it was in Montaigne" who had "a deep Christian faith, often had the effect of weakening that faith in the minds of his readers." See Milward, Shakespeare's Religious Background, 210.

¹²Danby, 29.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Robert Hillis Goldsmith, Wise Fools in Shakespeare (East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1963), 6.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid., 7.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Kirsch, 228.

²¹Ibid.

²²Abandonment plays a major role in the mythic quest pattern of the hero on his way to becoming a God-man. Briefly, the quest pattern begins with the call to adventure; at this stage, the untested and restless hero initiates the quest for his as yet unknown divinity.

Many ordeals follow, ever increasing in difficulty; each must be surmounted before the final attainment. These trials vary according to the individual myth, but all use some of the following: journey to the underworld, god theft, the night sea journey or dark night of the soul, the dragon fight, madness, blindness, castration, dismemberment, and crucifixion. The Lear myth uses the following ordeals: blindness for Gloucester, and metaphorical deafness (a variation of the blindness motif), abandonment, madness and the Fool's metaphorical hanging or crucifixion for Lear. Joseph Campbell's The Hero with a Thousand Faces, 2nd ed. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1968) is the seminal work on the heroic quest or "monomyth." For more on Lear's abandonment see, 222-236

²³Muir, 163.

²⁴Frances A. Yates, The Occult Philosophy in the Elizabethan Age (London: Ark Paperbacks, 1983), 148.

²⁵Muir, 170, n. 189.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷See Chapter V, 222-236, for more on Lear's final ordeal.

²⁸See Muir, 205, n. 304 and Kirsch, 305, for references as to the different views regarding the meaning of Lear's "And my poor fool is hang'd!" (5.3.304).

²⁹Muir, 205, n. 304.

³⁰Kirsch, 305. See also Muir, 205, n. 304.

³¹Kirsch, 218.

³²Muir, 39, n. 110.

³³Ibid., 40, n. 110. See Chapter II, 264, n. 68, for more about Shakespeare's use of dog imagery in relation to ingratitude.

³⁴Kirsch, 218.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Alex Aronson, Psyche and Symbolism in Shakespeare (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1972), 96.

³⁸Kirsch, 246.

³⁹Ibid. To avoid confusion, all subsequent citations refer to the Arden Shakespeare rather than Kirsch's edition of the play.

⁴⁰Professor Albert Bermel pointed out this meaning to me.

⁴¹Muir, 163.

⁴²Milward, Biblical Influences in Shakespeare's Great Tragedies, 188.

⁴³Ibid., 189.

⁴⁴Muir, 163, n. 87.

⁴⁵Paul Kocher, Science and Religion in Elizabethan England (New York: Octagon Books, 1969), 311.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Kirsch, 281.

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Milward, Biblical Influences in Shakespeare's Great Tragedies, 195.

⁵⁰Muir, 178, n. 47.

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Ibid., n. 50.

⁵³Ibid., 179, n. 60.

⁵⁴By modern standards, lust is regarded solely as a sin of the flesh. But St. Augustine and other theologians expand upon the meaning of this sin, defining lust as any obsessive desire which diverts man's attention away from God. Lear is guilty of lust in an emotional rather than fleshly sense.

⁵⁵The Sanskrit equivalent for Abstract mantra is Nirguna mantra; Nirguna means without attributes.

⁵⁶The Sanskrit equivalent for Deity mantra is Saguna mantra; Saguna means with attributes.

⁵⁷Sister Vandana Mataji (194) anglicizes these terms, Abstract mantra and Deity mantra, respectively corresponding to Nirguna and Saguna Mantras.

⁵⁸In addition to these two types, the Eastern system also places importance on the Bija mantra which has no correspondence to the Western system.

⁵⁹Mataji, 89.

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Technically I AM THAT I AM should not be grouped with the I AM mantras because there is no Hebrew equivalent for the verb to be. But metaphorically if not structurally, Jehovah's declaration should be classified with the I Am group since it is a special type of Abstract mantra in which God directly affirms Himself as Primal Cause and transcendent Beingness. Direct affirmation as First Cause and all-pervasive Existence is uncharacteristic of other more impersonal abstract types like Om or Nothing. For this reason, Jehovah's declaration shares more of an affinity with the I Am group.

⁶²There is a probable correspondence between Om and the Western Amen. See C. W. Leadbeater, The Masters and the Path, An Abridgement (Adyar Madras, India: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1983), 112.

⁶³Milward, Biblical Influences in Shakespeare's Great Tragedies, 196-197.

⁶⁴Ruskin, 17. An interesting parallel is Edgar's "Nothing I am" (2.3.21) uttered during his dark night vigil. This utterance has three levels of meaning. The first is Edgar's recognition that he is a zero as a result of his confrontation with his dark side, Tom O'Bedlam. This discovery leads to his present state of nothingness as humility. And finally, to the abstract mantric phrase which will later align him to the Absolute Nothing, transforming him into an instrument of infusion.

⁶⁵Kirsch, 288.

⁶⁶Muir, 202, n. 262.

⁶⁷Ibid., n. 263.

⁶⁸Kirsch, 303.

⁶⁹Ibid.

⁷⁰See this chapter, 184-194.

⁷¹Cirlot, s.v., "Hanged Man."

⁷²This insightful observation was made by Reverend Alexander Murray in a lecture given in New York City in the winter of 1978.

⁷³Leadbeater, 161. Most interesting and pertinent to Lear's final agony is Leadbeater's description of Avichi which corresponds to the final divine abandonment or crucifixion.

"The state of Avichi is not, as has been popularly supposed, some kind of hell, but is a condition in which the man stands absolutely alone in space, and feels cut off from all life, even from that of the Logos; and it is without doubt the most ghastly experience that it is possible for any human being to have. It is said to last only for a moment, but to those who have felt its supreme horror it seems an eternity, for at that level time and space do not exist."

Leadbeater believes this "appalling trial has" "two" objectives: "first, that the candidate may be able fully to sympathize with those to whom Avichi comes as a result of their actions; and secondly, external, triumphant in his utter certainty that he is one with the Logos and that this overwhelming consternation, caused by the sensation of isolation from him, is nothing but an illusion and a temptation."

Because of the harrowing nature of this ordeal:

"Some have collapsed before this terrible test, and have had to go back and begin over again their climb towards the higher Initiation; but for the man who can stand firm through its awful nightmare it is indeed a wonderful experience, however formidable, so that while to the trial itself the interpretation 'Why hast thou forsaken me?' might be applicable, 'How thou dost glorify me!' would well express the feeling of the man who comes forth from it victorious.

"This Initiation differs from all the others in that it has this strange double aspect of suffering and victory."

⁷⁴On the other end of the spectrum, J. K. Walton's rather pessimistic interpretation of Lear's vision takes note of Cordelia's lips and voice. But I agree with Kirsch's observation that his findings prove inconclusive (see Kirsch, 108). Walton opines that "Cordelia's lips might, by a change in color, give a sign of death but hardly one of life; and it is appropriate that Lear's attention should be finally concentrated on her organ of speech. At the beginning of the play she says nothing, but this time Lear dies with the effort of realizing to the full the implications of her silence. That, and not merely despair, brings about his death." See J. K. Walton, "Lear's Last Speech," in Shakespeare Survey: An Annual Survey of Shakespearean Study and Production, 13 ed. Allardyce Nicoll (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), 17.

While Walton speaks of "the implications" of Cordelia's "silence" and its corresponding effect upon Lear, we never do learn from him either what this silence means, or what its effect has been upon Lear.

⁷⁵Kirsch, 314. In other points of his analysis, Kirsch's outlook is more Christian; his approach is eclectic, mixing Jungian psychology and Christian theology. He subtitles King Lear "a play of redemption." One example of a more Christian approach is his interpretation of Albany's tree, branch, and sap imagery as a metaphor for Goneril's and Regan's rejection of the Holy Ghost (263).

⁷⁶Ibid.

⁷⁷Although Honor Matthews takes no note of the implications of Cordelia's lips and voice, she does speak of the miraculous implications of Lear's vision. "On the words 'Look there, look there,' his eyes are not necessarily on her face. Perhaps it is outside her body that he sees her waiting for him--the Form of love, which can never be destroyed though every individual Cordelia must perish." See Matthews, 160.

⁷⁸Leo Schaya, The Universal Meaning of the Kabbalah (Baltimore: Penguin Books, Inc., 1973), 145. There was a Christian adaptation of the Kabbalah and Shakespeare could have known it.

⁷⁹Ibid.

⁸⁰Ibid.

⁸¹Ibid., 146.

⁸²Ibid., 147.

⁸³Ibid., 147-148.

⁸⁴Ibid., 148.

⁸⁵Ibid., 147.

⁸⁶Ibid.

⁸⁷Ibid.

⁸⁸L. C. Knights, Further Explorations: Essays in Criticism (Stanford University Press, 1965), 184.

Conclusion

¹Danby, 122-123.

²Ibid., 122.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

⁶A. C. Bradley, Shakespearean Tragedy (Greenwich, Conn.: A Fawcett Premier Book, 1968), 204.

⁷L. C. Knights, 185.

⁸Ibid.; and Ananda Coomaraswamy, The Nature and Transformation of Nature in Art (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1934), 198. Coomaraswamy draws parallels between the Chinese *yun* and the Indian *dhvani*.

"*Dhvani* is literally 'sound,' especially sound like that of thunder or a drum, hence 'resonance' or 'overtone' of meaning. A striking analogy can be found in the first canon of Hsieh Ho as written with the character *yun* (13843), that the essential in art is "the reverberation (*yun*) of the spirit in the forms of life," the idea of sounding rather than of

mere sound being present both in dhvani and in yun (13843). Significant synonyms of vyanjana, lit. 'revealing,' are dhvanana, 'echoing,' and gamana, 'motion.'"

⁹L. C. Knights, 185.

¹⁰"The Cloud of Unknowing," 143.

¹¹"Dionysius Mystical Teaching," in The Cloud of Unknowing and Other Works, "St. Denis Prayer," 206.

¹²"Dionysius' Mystical Teaching," in The Cloud of Unknowing and Other Works, "Timothy My Friend," 212.

¹³Wolters, "Introduction," in The Cloud of Unknowing and Other Works, 26-27.

¹⁴"Dionysius' Mystical Teaching," "Timothy My Friend," 217.

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