Chapter Four

Spatial Patterns in *The Brothers Karamazov*

As Ludmilla B. Turkevich tells us in her essay "Cervantes in Russia," Dostoevsky was deeply impressed by *Don Quixote.*

"A more profound and more powerful work than this one [Don Quixote] is not to be found," he says. "It is the finest and greatest utterance of the human mind. It is the bitterest irony that only man could express." It is the key to life showing "how man's purity, wisdom, simplicity, benignity, manliness, and finally his great mind go to waste, go without benefit to mankind and are even turned to ridicule only because these highly noble and lavish gifts lack but one final gift—namely the genius to manage and to guide all this power along the road of truth and not of fantasy and madness, along the path that is for the benefit of humanity.

Dostoevsky must have seen that his predecessor, Cervantes, unlike his character Don Quixote, did not lack the genius "to manage and to guide" his own powers of creation, nor did Dostoevsky himself fail to manage his. Despite the verdicts of nineteenth-century English criticism (Matthew Arnold, in particular) or of Henry James in America, Dostoevsky's novels are models of precise structure and craftsmanship. One noteworthy essay on the form of *The Brothers Karamazov* by Victor E. Amend suggests musical parallels such as theme, subordinate themes, counterpoint, and modulations to describe the careful development of this novel. In brief, the unifying theme, "man's search for God the Father," is extended, according to Amend, by three subordinate themes, each concerned with one of the brothers. These themes play against each other in contrapuntal fashion until the novel ends...
fortissimo with a restatement of the central theme in the "manner of the best romantic composers."³

Whereas the structure of Crime and Punishment reflects the psychological crisis in the life of Raskolnikov, the structure of Dostoevsky's later novel The Brothers Karamazov reflects instead the spiritual crisis in the lives of the brothers, Dmitri, Ivan, and Alyosha. As a result of their careful structuring, both books, from the Russian realistic movement, give evidence of an architecture that has rarely been surpassed in the history of the long novel.

According to Robert Louis Jackson, "A certain formal aptitude in the arts may have been indirectly stimulated through his studies in drawing and draughtsmanship in the Engineering School."⁴ Dostoevsky's almost geometric sense of order is also noted by Edward Wasiolek, who remarks on the "compartmentalized chaos" to be found in the notebooks. "One discovers," he writes, "almost a geometric symmetry in the disposition of the notes."⁵ An examination of the original pages of the notebooks shows this to be consistently true. In the same way, we observe in studying the architecture of The Brothers Karamazov that certain geometrical or spatial forms control its structure or become objective correlatives, serving to sharpen meaning in the entire development of the book. Wasiolek takes note of the "subtlety, psychological and ideational," that "often intervenes between notes and novel: ideas are refined, structural relationships are discovered, introduced, made more complex."⁶

Polar opposition is a concept in which not only distance between opposites but interaction of opposites are inherent. Thus the poles in a battery interact to produce electricity, or the north and south poles of a planet complement one another magnetically. Such a concept underlies the epigraph to The Brothers Karamazov: "except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12:24). The opposites, death and life, are thus united in the act of creation, in the falling of the seed and in its regeneration.

Another form of creative opposition is that of the triad or
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triangle (exemplified by Dostoevsky's troika) in which three points instead of two stand in relation to one another. Dostoevsky makes most obvious use of this form in the triad of the three brothers, representing body, mind, and spirit. It is reminiscent, of course, of the Christian trinity and the creative interaction of those three elements—father, son, and holy spirit. Any triangle is given definition by means of, and according to, the position of its three points. Thus an act by any one of the brothers changes or modifies the triadic structure. Smerdyakov, who stands apart from the triangle, a point in isolation, a half-brother, is unable to interact creatively because he lacks both peers and counterparts. As Robert Lord points out, "The interplay of these characters and their separate worlds is of a 'polyphonic' kind, more like an interweaving than a blend."

The third spatial form, that of the sphere, inherent in The Brothers Karamazov, embodies the solution toward which the entire book moves. In the sphere there is no opposition, only coherence. In it we find concentricity, layer upon layer, overlapping and underlapping, and all points on the surface of the sphere are equidistant from its center. It is represented by the onion of Grushenka, which acts as objective correlative. It will be shown that oppositions, either polar or triadic, in each book ultimately dissolve in favor of a spherical reality that is expressed in the message of the conclusion in the epilogue when "hand in hand" the boys shout in unison, "Hurrah for Karamazov!" In almost all the twelve books of The Brothers Karamazov, we find, then, a slowly developing concentricity, incomplete and sometimes indistinct in the earlier books but soon, by books six and seven, reaching a full expression through the subject matter and the imagery.

In this connection, a scholar of Russian literature, Marina Bergelson Raskin, of Purdue University, writes to me:

I think that the aesthetic sense of the sphere, the spheric, round shape, is inherent in the Russian culture. In old Russian paintings, for instance, the fluid, plastic, rounded line was
very important, reaching its peak of perfection in Andrei Rublev's "Trinity," which graphically represents an ideal sphere.

Original Russian architecture, which was highly developed before the Tartar invasion, then practically disappeared, and a few centuries later started to develop in a very different direction, was also spheric. Unlike Western church architecture (all the early cathedrals were built in the shape of the cross, when seen from above), the Russian churches of the 10th–12th centuries were round. Traditionally, it was important to design a Russian church in such a way that one could go through all the aisles and complete a circle.

Of course, the typical rounded dome of the Russian church, the 'bulb' (or, in Russian literally, 'onion') is another interesting example.

I am not a specialist but if I were an anthropologist I would probably want to explore the connection between the old Russian painting and architecture, on the one hand, and Russian folklore, on the other, where the narration is always circular, as compared to other national folklores (Icelandic, for instance) where it is linear.

It is perhaps appropriate to note here that Christianity came late to Russia, in the 9th century, and while the country was still pagan—which, of course, it always remained in many senses—people worshipped Yarilo, the Sun, and one can see its round shape in the cultural monuments of the time.

To introduce a very different theme, a Russian writer of the last century, Leskov, wrote in a lengthy passage on female beauty stating that the Russian idea of a nice-looking woman is very different from the European one. We Russians, he said, do not care very much for the features, for the face, as long as the nose is upturned and the face is full, but everything must be round, all the shapes, all the curves, because 'roundness brings merriness to the eye.'

To summarize, it is difficult to say whether Dostoevsky uses the spheric design in *The Brothers Karamazov* intentionally and consciously, as a creative device, or because it simply permeates the culture, and his taste and aesthetic sense as part of that culture, and thus finds its way into the novel.

Keeping Marina Raskin's important perspectives in mind, let us turn now to the close study of structural patterns in *The Brothers Karamazov*. Book one displays at once, in its opening and concluding chapters, one and five, the
polar opposition between Karamazov and the monastery, that is, between old Fyodor and Father Zossima. The temptation of Satanic pride is one to which old Fyodor has fallen prey whereas self-abnegation, self-conquest, and submission to God's will characterize the Elder. Two kinds of fatherhood are thereby contrasted, that of Karamazov, abject, vicious, and senseless, and that of Zossima, someone on earth who was "holy and exalted." Edward Wasiolek has remarked that "behind the opponents, circumstances, issues, and programs of history, Dostoevsky confronts something primal, universal, and personal: the Elder Zossima and Father Fyodor, the spiritual father and the earthly father, the beautiful, kind, unselfish, self-sacrificing father and the ugly, cruel, taunting, predatory father. Dostoevsky had been writing his 'fathers and children' at least since The Idiot."^8

In the same book, book one, the first meeting of the three brothers is effected, establishing the underlying triadic shape of the novel. The character of each brother is firmly set in separate chapters of book one—Dmitri, the sensualist; Ivan, the intellectual; and Alyosha, the spiritual force. At the end of book one, a gathering of the Karamazovs in the cell of Father Zossima is proposed, an early attempt (even though suggested in jest by old Fyodor) to achieve unity and coherence within the family. Thus book one, which is sometimes cited as a kind of overture in which all the central melodic themes may be found in embryo, moves as the work as a whole moves from oppositions (dual and triple) toward the sphere of human concord.

Book two likewise moves from discord toward an attempted gathering together of forces, but it is an "unfortunate" gathering, as the title of the book tells us. Oppositions abound as the old buffoon Fyodor sets foot in monastic surroundings. Complementing him is the female buffoon, Madame Hohlakov, who serves as a contrast to "the peasant women who have faith." Furthermore, in the triad of brothers, Dmitri, Ivan, and Alyosha, each one is by
himself involved in a contrariety: Dmitri, torn between Katerina and Grushenka—a young lady of good family and an enchantress; Ivan in his dialectic, torn between state and ecclesiastical control; and Alyosha drawn between monastic life and life in the outside world. Father Zossima, in bowing to Dmitri and saying, "Good-bye! Forgive me, all of you!" attempts to form a spherical whole of these conflicting forces; but the meaning of his gesture is lost on those present, and the scene is summed up in Miúsov's remark, "I can't answer for a madhouse and for madmen" (p. 85). In bowing to the sinner, Father Zossima suggests, as the Devil impishly later tells Ivan, that good and evil are interdependent, that "suffering is life" (p. 780). He who suffers, suffers for other men, taking upon himself the cross that someone must carry. And in asking their forgiveness, he implies that he like them is prey to human frailty and error. In other words, as Father Zossima has told Ivan, it is not the fact of suffering in itself that is important, but the way that one integrates that suffering into life. "Thank the Creator," he says, "who had given you a lofty heart capable of such suffering: of thinking and seeing higher things" (p. 80). But despite the Father's wisdom and compassion, dissension and malice intensify in the group, and culminate in the ironic "second coming" of old Fyodor, who returns unexpectedly to heap further calumny upon the holy fathers.

Books three, four, and five form a triad in themselves, each one developing more fully a single brother Karamazov and his particular conflict. At the same time, however, each of these three books presents significant polar oppositions that deepen and enrich the characterization of each brother. In book three, for example, "the sensualists," old Fyodor and Dmitri, are seen to be of different and opposing natures, different sorts of sinners. Fyodor, who has raped the half-wit Lizaveta in the gutter, is of a different stripe from his son Dmitri, who in quoting Schiller's "Hymn to Joy" is at least aware of the "vision of God's throne" even though consigning himself to the in-
sects. He is, therefore, redeemable; and in his three confessions to Alyosha, taking up three chapters of book three, lie the beginnings of his salvation.

Two other contrasting characters in book three are Grushenka and Katerina, who both play major roles in Dmitri's "confessions." Agafya is a woman of loose conduct who offers her services "freely without asking for payment" (p. 130); Katerina, on the contrary, is "a person of character, proud and really high-principled," a woman of "education and intellect" (p. 131). However, the opposition created by these two women becomes not productive but counterproductive because they are not true polar opposites, but share the same self-centeredness in different guise. In Katerina's forced bowing down to Dmitri, we find the opposite of Father Zossima's voluntary bowing down at the monastery. Perceptively Ernest Simmons points out that "she continually lacerates herself in welcoming Dmitri's insults, and that her submissiveness and self-abasement have their roots in her towering pride." Katerina's pride thus contrasts with the holy father's humility, and it is her pride that finds a parallel in Dmitri's egoism. Likewise Grushenka's coquetry and vanity find a parallel in Dmitri's sensuality. Self-centered in different ways, the two women despise one another, and both are using Dmitri with frivolous intentions. Both women want to save Dmitri from himself, but Katerina's offer to marry him is a self-inflicted punishment, like Father Ferapont's self-directed flagellations. On the other hand, Grushenka's later commitment to Dmitri is in the nature of understanding, reciprocity, and interdependency, coming after the scene of her redemption with Alyosha. Simmons takes note that "generosity, a wide soul, and a capacity to suffer seem to effect a synthesis in the contending forces of her nature." It is a synthesis that Katerina is not likely to achieve.

Dmitri, in lavishing on Grushenka money stolen from Katerina, exhibits not selfless giving but egoism and fear, fear that old Fyodor will prevail and win Grushenka as a
result of his ability to pay her. His continual shaming and humiliation of Katerina come from the same need to dominate and the same egoism. It is only when he hears Grushenka's selfless offer to go into exile with him, to expiate their mutual guilt, that the vicious circle of prideful acts is broken and his egoism is stripped from him. What Dostoevsky is showing us here in the mutual relations of these three characters is that sin begets sin, that Katerina's need for abasement encourages in Dmitri a cruel need to dominate, and at the same time Grushenka's coquetry whets Dmitri's towering passions. Furthermore, the self-centeredness of the two women, though different in nature, is mutually stimulating. It is only in the polar opposition of Alyosha as he listens to Mitya's confession, saying finally, "I believe that God will order things for the best" (p. 144), and later as he offers an "onion" to Grushenka that the redemption of the sensualists is achieved.

In book four, devoted to the Alyosha theme or the spiritual life, other polar opposites operate. Father Ferapont, imprisoned in his cell, is the exact opposite of Alyosha as he freely walks through town. Furthermore, the punishments and deprivations Father Ferapont inflicts upon himself contrast with the unsolicited "punishments" that Alyosha receives from the schoolboys when they stone him; from Katerina, who calls him "a little religious idiot" (p. 277); and from the Snegiryov family, whose cottage he visits. Dostoevsky is showing us that, in creating his own punishments, man arrogates the role of God and lives in Satanic pride. On the other hand, Alyosha's lacereations serve only to increase his humility. At the end of the book, he withstands the captain's prideful wrath at being offered money; although "inexpressibly grieved," he simply bends to pick up the two crumpled notes, to smooth them out, and to return them to Katerina. Caught between the prides of two proud people, he makes no move to retaliate, nor has he retaliated for any of the other insults shown him in book four. As Alyosha bends to pick up the notes, we find another symbolic bowing down to a sinner.
In culmination, in book five, Ivan's book, we find the famous polar opposition between pro and contra, Christ and the Grand Inquisitor, an opposition underlying the entire political history of our times. In his poem Ivan describes the reappearance of Christ in sixteenth-century Seville. In the "breathless" night, the Inquisitor is brought to Christ's cell, and the celebrated colloquy, or rather soliloquy, begins. Christ's silence is like His response to Pontius Pilate when He countered in Matthew 27, "Thou sayest." Rather than oppose the Inquisitor with words, Christ places on his "bloodless aged lips" a soft kiss. Passive and active resistance are also contrasted here, the essence of passive resistance lying in its silent insistence that the aggressor bear the full responsibility for his acts. By creating a vacuum that must be filled by the aggressor, the passive resister condemns or challenges his enemy to create a world that is at least livable for himself, and if, for himself, of course, for other men. He succeeds, then, in replacing original oppositions with others that are more creative.

In the conversation between Alyosha and Ivan that follows the poem, we find a good example of what Bakhtin calls "contrapuntal inner dialogue." "The speech of one character throws into relief the covert dialogue inherent in the speech of another." Alyosha's questioning of Ivan brings out clearly Ivan's hidden desire to do violence to his father. For instance: "And the old man?" (p. 312), queries Alyosha. (Which old man, the Inquisitor or Father Fyodor?) "The kiss glows in his heart, but the old man adheres to his idea" (p. 312), Ivan replies. (That is, to burn Christ tomorrow.) "And you with him, you too?" (p. 312), cries Alyosha. (Will you, too, commit murder?) And later on the same page Alyosha sums up Ivan's position: "'Everything is lawful,' you mean? Everything is lawful, is that it?" (That is, with sophistry you justify the killing of old Fyodor?) Such contrapuntal dialogue is mentioned simply in passing as another subtle stylistic use of the powerful tension created by the fact of opposition.

Triads, too, figure prominently in Ivan's poem. Christ's
three temptations in the wilderness are repeated in the three questions posed by the Inquisitor:

Dost Thou know that the ages will pass, and humanity will proclaim by the lips of their sages that there is no crime, and therefore no sin; there is only hunger? (P. 300)

Is the nature of men such, that they can reject miracle, and at the great moments of their life, the moments of their deepest, most agonising spiritual difficulties, cling only to the free verdict of the heart? (P. 303)

But Thou mightest have taken even then the sword of Caesar. Why didst Thou reject that last gift? (P. 305)

Bread, mystery, and authority provide for the believer a threefold security, a triangle of certainty, three points that act together to circumscribe and to stabilize his life. Given the means of sustenance, given safe conduct in the face of the inexplicable, and given arbitrary rules, the man of faith is prepared for every exigency. There are areas into which man may not for his own good venture.

However, Ivan's poem contains a basic inconsistency: the incompatibility of the position of the main speaker, the Inquisitor, with the fact that a poem that inherently questions this speaker exists at all. The very existence, then, of the poem speaks in justification of Christ.

II

Various oppositions discovered in book five and the two previous sections find a kind of tentative resolution in the next two books dealing with "the Russian Monk" and Alyosha. Books six and seven act as a pivot for the novel as a whole, proposing that a strength achieved through faith in God can answer the dilemmas of all three brothers. Whereas the first five books have presented problems to be solved, the last five show how these problems may or may not be worked out. In the two core books, six and seven, Brother Markel, Father Zossima, the mysterious visitor, and Alyosha all provide concentric experiences (that is,
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...forming a sphere) that enlarge on and foreshadow the solution. It is on this surface that the two halves of the novel may be implanted, like two hemispheres.

Brother Markel, after mocking the season of Lent and the Church, upon falling ill from consumption begins going to church and becomes "bright and joyous, in spite of his illness" (p. 343). The young Zossima, disappointed in an affair of the heart, challenges the husband of his beloved to a duel, and then in a fit of frustration and cruelty beats his orderly in the face. Unable to endure his own crime, he faces the first shot in the duel, then throws his pistol away. Soon after, he resigns his commission and enters a monastery. The third convert, Mihail, the mysterious visitor, also rejected by his beloved and unable to bear the thought of her marriage to another man, kills her. One of his serfs is accused and sentenced. Mihail, like Raskolnikov in Crime and Punishment, confesses publicly; but, unlike Raskolnikov, he is believed by no one and dies perhaps as a result of his unexpiated guilt. This triad of experiences in book six opens the route that all three brothers must pursue in his quest for salvation. Markel is perhaps a surrogate for Dmitri; Zossima for Alyosha; and Mihail (whose problem is not worked through) for Ivan. Dialectics and religious exhortations compose book six, chapter three, dealing with the unifying and cohesive force of prayer, love, and faith and giving concentricity to the stories of these three converts.

Book seven enlarges and focuses the experiences of the foregoing triad by describing the doubts and then the reaffirmation of faith of Alyosha. A polar opposition is early set up in book seven when the holy Father Zossima's body begins to decompose. Physical process is not to be expected from the corpse of a holy elder, and the entire monastery, as well as the community, is in an uproar. Appropriately, it is the onion, spoken of by Grushenka in chapter three, that is to resolve the problem of the rotten odor coming from Zossima's corpse. The onion symbolizes for Grushenka the tiniest gift possible, yet an authentic
gift. Furthermore, the onion is a root (that is, a source of life); it is spherical and it is concentric, consisting of layer upon layer (something like an egg, also a source of life). Like the elder's body, the onion stinks. All of these attributes cause the onion to become in this book the objective correlative for salvation, which may not be achieved in solitude and apart from the earthy stink of life. Father Zossima has continually urged his pupil to go out into the world, and the old woman in Grushenka's story ruins her chance for salvation when, as she is being pulled out of the burning lake of hell by means of an onion, she kicks others away and thus breaks the stalk. Like the corn of wheat of the epigraph, the onion must be buried in the earth of this world in order to take root. Within the earth it achieves its full spherical and concentric shape and its pearl-like consistency and color. Furthermore, the onion is hardy and grown the world over since primitive times, making it a suitable universal symbol for the concept of salvation.

It is through the onion spoken of by Grushenka (and the title of chapter three) that Alyosha's doubts about Zossima's death are resolved, and he discovers "a true sister, I have found a treasure—a loving heart" (p. 422), in other words, emotional concentricity. The unity embodied in the onion is dealt with in a different way in chapter four, "Cana of Galilee," in which Christ in effect marries soul and body by using his spiritual powers to turn water into wine. Symbolically the water associated with baptism is thus turned into the wine associated with communion, the communion of souls. Baptism is a ceremony of initiation whereas communion is a ceremony of shared participation among peers in the life of the Church. Thus by turning water into wine, Christ symbolically inspires not only communion between the wedded couple at Cana but communion in all ideal human relationships. Book seven moves then from the doubts inspired by Father Zossima's stinking corpse toward resolution in the spherical perfection of the ceremony of marriage and of Holy Communion. The wine of Holy Communion in essence represents
Christ's blood, the ultimate sacrifice in the achievement of salvation.

III

The final five books of The Brothers Karamazov move toward establishing among the characters the spherical unity embodied and foreshadowed in books six and seven. Dmitri moves to stage center in books eight and nine. His desperate search for money at the beginning of book eight culminates in his visit to Madame Hohlakov in the chapter called "Gold-mines." We find here a mocking use of the principle of polar opposition. If by burial and descent into the earth we ensure ourselves of new fruits, as the epigraph promises, Madame Hohlakov's suggestion to Dmitri that he should go to the gold mines to make his fortune (simply because she is too parsimonious to lend him money) is no less than sheer hypocrisy. She assures him that she has come to the conclusion, "That's a man who would find gold" (p. 467). Ironically enough Mitya is later sentenced to the mines (though not to gold mines). Also ironically he is destined to "find gold" in the sense of religious salvation, but Madame Hohlakov's mention of the gold mines to ensure monetary salvation for Mitya is foolish avarice. For the orthodox Christian, wealth is incidental in the search for the salvation of the soul.

Dostoevsky's grotesque sense of humor rests in itself on a polarity. Continually we find in his comic relief an element of incongruity. The intensity of such characters as Madame Hohlakov (or Katerina Ivanova in Crime and Punishment) contrasts sharply with the petty quality of their minds, a point made by Rakitin in his "hymn" to Madame Hohlakov's swollen foot (pp. 718-19). Both women are on the verge of imbecility, and yet Dostoevsky invests both with a self-importance that causes them to behave like termagants. Aware of this polarity, the reader at the same time must pause, for he finds himself in the position of the insensitive characters in Cervantes' book who laugh at Don Quixote, another half-mad misfit. Furthermore, these
two women are without a mission and thus in theory more pitiable but in practice more laughable than the Don. Such humor is grotesque because we ridicule and yet pity such characters in the same breath.

Polar oppositions turn, as books eight and nine develop, into a triad of ordeals that Dmitri must undergo, a progressive loss of pride during the preliminary investigation immediately after his arrest. During these ordeals Dmitri is to learn the meaning of false pride, a pride that consists of only his own angle of vision.

The first ordeal in chapter three of book nine concerns his relationship with Grushenka. For the first time, we see him humble, meek in his awareness of her love and sacrifice for him. "How can a clumsy, ugly brute like me, with my ugly face, deserve such love, that she is ready to go into exile with me?" (p. 564). This ordeal provides for Dmitri a recognition of Grushenka's point of view, as well as an acceptance of himself as worthy of another's love, as a human being like everyone else, corruptible but also capable of achieving salvation. Able to bear his dual nature for the first time, he says to the investigators: "Gentlemen, forgive me! But now I am comforted" (p. 564).

Dmitri's second ordeal concludes in further loss of false pride. As the questioning has continued, Dmitri has become sullen. When he talks of a possible penalty for breaking Grigory's head, he hopes for six months, but "without loss of rank" (p. 567). However, toward the end of the scene, a feeling of nausea overcomes him, and he tells his interrogators of a recurrent dream he has of someone hunting him in the dark. He now realizes that "I am a wolf and you're the hunters" (p. 572). Parallel to the first ordeal, where he had seen himself as a "clumsy, ugly brute," he now compares himself to a crafty and rapacious animal. It is a step in his loss of a rank that is counterfeit, and he advises himself, "Be patient, humble, hold thy peace" (p. 572).

The culminating ordeal, the third one, consists of further humiliation for Dmitri when he is asked at the end of the
investigation to take off his clothes so that he may be searched. To this, too, he must patiently submit. Such a triad of ordeals turns Mitya's thoughts from gratification of his immediate needs, which has motivated his behavior with Grushenka up until this time, toward a sense of other people's humanity and a sense of his own humanity, in that, like all of us, he shares traits in common with the brute and with the wolf. As Edward Wasiolek points out, "One cannot love what is ugly until one has recognized the ugliness within oneself. Dmitri's regeneration begins when he cries to all at the preliminary investigation: 'We're all cruel, we're all monsters, we all make men weep, and mothers and babes at breast, but of all, let it be settled here, now, of all I am the lowest reptile.'" As the Elder Zossima had prostrated himself before Dmitri in the opening scene, now Dmitri symbolically prostrates himself in order to "crush by humility the impulse to judge and consequently to crush the impulse to commit murder in one's heart." It is the sign of his redemption.

In chapter eight of book nine, Mitya's dream of the weeping babe and his response to this dream provide the concentricity, the spherical shape and the unity, that resolve the various oppositions depicted thus far. Mitya "wanted to do something for them all, so that the babe should weep no more" (p. 616). It is a sign of Mitya's concern for others, coming on the heels of Grushenka's real concern for him in her promise to share his exile. It signifies a mutuality and the beginning of a new life for them both: "He longed to live, to live, to go on and on, towards the new, beckoning light" (p. 616).

The same basic process is repeated in different guise as we trace Ivan's efforts to achieve salvation. Dostoevsky begins by setting up various polar oppositions between two of the boys, Kolya and Ilusha, younger surrogates for certain brothers Karamazov. Kolya "could beat the teacher at arithmetic and universal history" (p. 626), like Ivan, who "began very early, almost in his infancy to show a brilliant and unusual aptitude for
learning’’ (p. 13). Ilusha is, on the contrary, first characterized by his intense loyalty and devotion for his father, like Alyosha’s for Father Zossima, but unlike Alyosha he resorts to stabbing his opponents with a penknife when the latter taunt Captain Snegiryov. In his use of violence, he approaches Dmitri, despite the difference in motive. Shortly after his conflict with the other boys, Ilusha falls ill, but his devotion and concern for his father, the Captain, do not flag. Rather than being sorry for himself, he cries, ‘‘Father, father! How sorry I am for you!’’ (p. 680). Like Dmitri’s, Ilusha’s humility increases as his ordeal progresses: ‘‘Father don’t cry, and when I die get a good boy,’’ he exclaims (p. 680). The parallel between Kolya and Ivan is also only approximate, for as Ilusha’s health worsens, Kolya takes on characteristics of Alyosha in his care of, and love for, his sick friend, Still, in his precocity, which fosters both conceit and impiety, he remains an Ivan, so that Alyosha at one point says to him, ‘‘Kolya, you will be very unhappy in your life’’ (p. 677). The autonomous development of character in The Brothers Karamazov, as exemplified in Kolya and Ilusha, makes clear Bakhtin’s point about ‘‘the plurality of independent and unmerged voices’’ in Dostoevsky’s work.

Yet despite all the complicated parallels and oppositions operating in the depiction of the boys, Smerdyakov retains the same role in both the main plot and the subplot, as the perpetrator of violence designed to kill. Of Ilusha’s attack with the penknife Kolya has remarked that ‘‘the wound was a mere scratch’’ (p. 650). The bite on Alyosha’s finger and the bruises from the stones thrown by Ilusha are also relatively minor. Furthermore, these acts of violence are directed by a missionary zeal against opponents more powerful than Ilusha, persons who could easily crush him, like an insect, were they so minded. On the contrary, the violence unleashed by Smerdyakov is directed against helpless dogs that in their hunger will snatch at anything resembling meat. Their subsequent torment is out of all proportion to the motive that inspires Smerdyakov—per-
verted amusement. It is worth noting that the trick has been taught to Smerdyakov by the evil father, old Fyodor. On the other hand, the good father, Captain Snegiryov, has taught loyalty and compassion to Ilusha by the Great Stone where he wishes to be buried. Two kinds of violence are contrasted in this particular opposition: one that can be overcome and transcended and one that, like Ivan's god, "tortures children [and animals] as Fyodor has tortured his."\footnote{15}

Ivan's three interviews with Smerdyakov, paralleling Mitya's three ordeals at the preliminary investigation, act as the focal point of book eleven, in contrast to the various polar oppositions developed in book ten. Unlike Mitya's three ordeals, however, Ivan's three interviews, rather than freeing him from guilt, serve to involve him progressively in the murder of his father and in the evil world of Smerdyakov. At the end of the first interview, he and his half-brother make a pact, Ivan agreeing to say nothing of Smerdyakov's ability to sham a fit in return for Smerdyakov's silence about the conversation at the gate (book five, chapter six). This complicity deepens at the end of the second interview, when, finally convinced by Smerdyakov's argument that he tacitly had condoned the murder of old Fyodor, he exclaims, "I share his guilt for I put him up to it (p. 751).

The third and last interview is accompanied by interesting parallels with Dmitri's dream of the babe. At the opening of chapter eight, Ivan meets a drunken peasant whom he pushes down onto the ground and leaves to freeze, partly because the peasant is singing a song about going away to Petersburg, reminding Ivan of his departure for Moscow on the eve of his father's murder. After Smerdyakov's accusation, "'You are the real murderer, I was only your instrument'" (p. 758) and his confession, Ivan plans that they will appear together at the trial to give evidence against themselves. Partly to assuage his growing guilt, he returns and helps the freezing peasant, providing him with a doctor and some money. But Dmitri's concern
for the crying babe, his mark of salvation, has been *preceded* by public confession; Ivan's concern for the peasant is accompanied by his remark, "'Everything together tomorrow'" (p. 771), as he decides not to go to the prosecutor that night. In actuality, of course, Ivan's public confession never takes place, forestalled by Smerdyakov's suicide and his own dementia. Thus his concern for the peasant is only a step toward the salvation that Dmitri accomplishes, a step nullified by subsequent events. The three interviews with Smerdyakov have served to seal securely his doom.

And finally the spherical form, the unity or concentricity, with which Dostoevsky endows episodes that are worked through to completion, is not evident in the last scene of book eleven, describing (in contrast to Dmitri's dream of the babe) Ivan's nightmare of his conversation with the Devil. In fact, no real polarity is even set up, as in the Grand Inquisitor scene, for the two protagonists, Ivan and the Devil, seem to be carbon copies of one another, as Ivan himself realizes when he cries, "'You just say what I am thinking and are incapable of saying anything new!'" (p. 776). This sterile relation stands in sharp contrast to the fruitful opposition found, for example, in the conversation between Father Zossima and Ivan at the unfortunate gathering. Ivan questions the Devil and receives his own answers. Together they suggest the heresy that God's existence is dependent on the existence of the Devil: "'No, live, I am told, for there'd be nothing without you'" (p. 780). Together they predict the appearance of a man-god in a thousand years, joyous in extending his conquest of nature by his will and by science instead of in dreams of heaven. Frustrated by one who serves only to put into words the temptations of his own logic, Ivan flings a glass at the intruder. Rather than reciprocal concern and harmony, this relationship is a mockery of such states; Ivan's hatred of the Devil is his hatred of himself.

At the end of the nightmare, a loud knocking is heard; it is Alyosha, who brings news of Smerdyakov's suicide, thereby blocking the road to confession and redemption.
that Ivan had proposed to follow on the morrow. Instead of concentricity and unity, we find at the end of book eleven only self-hatred, disruption, and anguish. The God in whom he believes—that is, the Devil—and he are one.

In chapter three of book twelve, we find a spherical image that must open the discussion of this final book. One of the important but little-emphasized objective correlates in the novel is the pound of nuts given by Dr. Herzenstube to Mitya when he was a boy. These nuts (concentric like onions in that they consist of layers, that is, shell and kernel) are unexpectedly of use to Mitya in his defense. The fact that he has been grateful to the doctor (whose name means "room of the heart") and has remembered to thank him after twenty-three years have passed is a point in Mitya's favor. Nuts are seeds that, like the corn of wheat of the epigraph, must be planted in the earth in order to grow. By planting these seeds of compassion, Dr. Herzenstube has, then, symbolically assured Dmitri's salvation. It is the one act of love that Dmitri can remember in his childhood.

The prosecutor's speech, however, in chapter six assumes a triadic structure as Kirillovitch analyzes the character of each brother in turn: Ivan as a brilliant young intellectual "who has lost all faith in everything" (p. 847); Alyosha as an idealist, likely to degenerate into a gloomy mystic or a blind chauvinist (p. 848); and Mitya as one who combines good and evil, a lover of Schiller but a brawler in taverns. All of this finds its objective correlative in Gogol's troika, "galloping to an unknown goal" (p. 845). If drawn by Gogol's heroes, Kirillovitch argues, "it could reach no rational goal, whoever might be driving it" (p. 845). (It will be remembered that Dmitri's frenzied trip to Mokroe in search of Grushenka had been accomplished in a troika.) Kirillovitch, by means of this image, spells disaster for the Karamazov triad. It is a triad that as prosecutor he depicts as interacting destructively rather than creatively, no matter who might hold the reins, even Gogol.

However, the defense lawyer, Fetyukovitch, sets up a
polar opposition, that between the good father and the bad father, which serves to counteract the argument of the prosecution. It also brings to full circle the contrast between the two fathers effected in chapters one and five of book one. "'Such a father as old Karamazov cannot be called a father and does not deserve to be,'" he exclaims (p. 902). By contrast, he states that "'the father is not merely he who begets the child, but he who begets it and does his duty by it'" (p. 903). The basic opposition here is the same as that between Father Zossima and old Fyodor at the unfortunate gathering. The suggestion is that the prosecution is wrong and that it does matter who holds the reins in the driving of the troika. The driver may be one who neglects his responsibility or one who nurtures it. If a responsible driver is found, the goal of the troika will be a rational one, according to Fetyukovitch. It is the role of the father, not his children, to provide such guidance. The driver, not the horses, must determine the destination of any troika.

Dmitri's sentence of twenty years in the mines provides a final image of concentricity that rounds out book twelve. Like the corn of wheat, the onion, and the nut, Dmitri must be buried beneath the earth in order to be reborn. Within him he bears the seeds of his redemption. "'Go greet him on his way into the darkness,'" Alyosha admonishes Katerina (p. 921).

In the last chapter of the epilogue, it is, however Ilisha, Kolya, and Kartashov, the new generation, who become the "resurrected" ones and the focus of the conclusion. Because of their experiences with Alyosha, the Karamazov name will be reborn. "'And always so, all our lives hand in hand!'" (p. 940). The stinking root of the onion has produced its tiny crown of white flowers in this centering of common effort, this unity, created by the responsible fatherhood of Alyosha in directing the course of these admiring "sons."

"'Karamazov, we love you!' a voice probably Kartashov's cried impulsively" (p. 939).
3. Ibid., p. 252.
4. Robert Louis Jackson, Dostoevsky’s Quest for Form, p. 213.
8. Wasiolek, pp. 10–11.
11. Ibid., p. 341.
12. Lord, p. 205.
15. Wasiolek, p. 11.