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The Significance of Rebirth and Resurrection in A Tale of Two Cities      The

concept of rebirth and resurrection gives new light to the hopeless lives of the complex characters in A Tale of Two Cities. Individual characters are brought back to life from darkness, regret, and depression during a tumultuous time period in history. Doctor Manette, in prison for 18 years, and Sydney Carton, an intelligent but melancholy man, both need to be resurrected from the "dead." Charles Dickens, the author of this novel, creates complex characters that revive others from their forgotten existences. One of these influential characters, Lucie Manette, uses her loving soul to resurrect both men. In A Tale of Two Cities, Charles Dickens creates the resurrection of his characters to suggest his social belief that sacrifice is necessary for the rebirth of France during the French Revolution. Resurrection and rebirth first appear in the character Dr. Manette. This interesting character has completely regressed due to his traumatizing experience in prison for 18 years. The doctor does not even remember his name, but only the location of his prison cell, repeating "105 North Tower" (Dickens 45). Lucie, Dr. Manette's daughter, cannot bear to see her father in this state. When Lucie sees him, she uses her passionate, healing words and says, "your agony is over... I have come here to take you from it..." (Dickens 49). This message from Lucie begins the rebirth of Dr. Manette, and Dickens is letting the readers know that Lucie will sacrifice everything in her power to restore her father completely to his younger self. Later in the novel, when Dr. Manette returns to England for Darnay's trial, it is clear that he is slowly returning to life when he is finally able to have a normal conversation. In the chapter, A Knock at the Door, Charles Dickens shows readers Dr. Manette's incredible improvement, saying, "No garret, no shoemaking, no One

Hundred and Five, North Tower, now!" (Dickens 285). This description of Dr. Manette's current state of mind leads readers to see that he has rebirthed from a lost and confused shoemaker into a clear-headed, kind man. Lucie's love and devotion towards her father helps to resurrect the self-aware, intelligent man that was deep inside of him. Some opponents to Dr. Manette's rebirth may say that Dr. Manette does not undergo resurrection or rebirth because he does not physically die. The opponents do have a key point, but another definition of rebirth is, "the action of reappearing or starting to flourish or increase after a decline; revival" (encyclopedia. com). Therefore, Dr. Manette is "flourishing" from a time of darkness and despair into a stronger and more intelligent human being. He reappears from his 18-year-spell in jail and is recalled to life. Now that Dr. Manette is recalled to life, he can complete his journey by using his strength to impact the lives of others. Furthermore, Dr. Manette's rebirth does not need to include physical death, because he symbolically rose up from his demise in jail and began to transform into a self confident, loving man. True resurrection and sacrifice of life is also represented by the character Sydney Carton. Carton was a man of great potential who tossed life away due to poor decisions, such as his alcoholism. When Carton approaches Lucie with his love and sense of regret, she wants to help his soul. She acts as an inspiration and hope to him. In the same chapter, A Fellow of No Delicacy, Dickens uses foreshadowing when Carton says, "I would embrace any sacrifice for you and for those dear to you" (Dickens 152). Carton, keeping his sacrificial promise, switches places with Darnay in jail, a day before the guillotine sentence. Carton does this because he wants Lucie to be truly happy, but he also wants to be remembered and resurrected as the man he could never be in his former life.

According to the author of the article "Language, Love and Identity: A Tale of Two Cities", "The words of Jesus reverberate through Carton's mind as he proceeds to carry out his self-sacrifice, inspired by the belief instilled in him by Lucie" (Lloyd). Also, Jesus is again mentioned, "I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die" (Dickens 312). Dickens uses the word resurrection in order to tell readers that Carton wants to be remembered and honored as an spectacularly brave man, and he is. His namesake, Carton Jr., will carry the name of a man that made a brave and crucial sacrifice for someone he dearly loved. Readers are led to believe that this child will grow up to be the man that Sydney Carton only hoped he could always be. Dickens uses both Dr. Manette and Sydney Carton to represent his social belief of necessary sacrifice by resurrecting them. Dr. Manette's original sacrifice was made when he revealed the abuse of Madame Defarge's siblings to authorities. This act of braveness symbolizes France as it fought for equality during the Revolution. Carton's unending love for Lucie causes him to give up his life for her and her family. The significance of this is that Dickens compares Carton to Jesus. Like Jesus, Carton is resurrected from the "dead" into a new life because of his selfless sacrifice. Later on, Sydney Carton will be resurrected into Lucie's son, Carton Jr. This child will grow up to honor Carton's loyalty to Carton Jr.'s parents. Without these sacrifices from a brave nation and individual people during the French Revolution, the rebirth of France could have never been possible. In A Tale of Two Cities, Charles Dickens creates the resurrection of his characters to suggest his social belief that sacrifice is necessary for the rebirth of France during the French Revolution. Both resurrection and sacrifice impact the lives

of many in *A Tale of Two Cities*. Multiple characters in the novel are restored back to their true life, as France becomes restored into a new country after the Revolution. Dr. Manette can now live as the father and grandfather he always wanted to be. He is now reborn into the world as a loving human being who can love and be loved by others. Sydney Carton's sacrifice will always be remembered by the Darnay family, and his brave and unselfish ways will never be forgotten. His hope, life, and resurrection can now continue on through Carton Jr. Charles Dickens creates these characters to show his belief that nothing in life can be restored without sacrifice. In *A Tale of Two Cities*, Charles Dickens creates characters to represent resurrection, rebirth, and sacrifice of a nation during a rebellious and violent time period in history.