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THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

APOLLO'S LAUREL BOUGH: ESSAYS ON THE THEME OF DAMNATION IN CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE

A DISSERTATION

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BY

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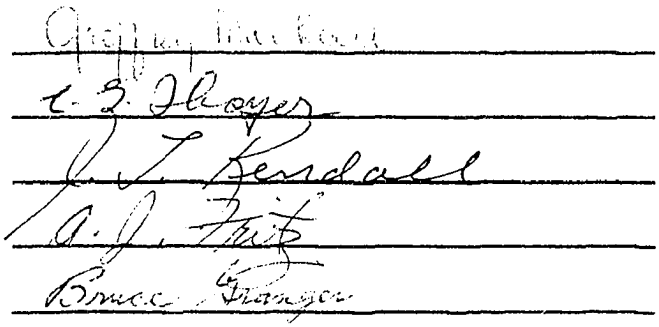
Norman, Oklahoma

1966

APOLLO'S LAUREL BOUGH: ESSAYS ON THE THEME OF DAMNATION IN CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE

APPROVED BY



DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

PREFACE

Christopher Marlowe, the shoemaker's son from Canterbury who went to London and revolutionized English drama, has mystified and tantalized critics for nearly four centuries. Today there exists wider disagreement about the meaning of his works than ever before. Perhaps no other English playwright has drawn such widely divergent opinions from his readers. It is only recently, moreover, that the salient facts of his life have been determined accurately. Recent biographical studies of special value, for example, include the two-volume John Bakeless book, The Tragicall History of Christopher Marlowe (1942); the revised edition of the volume by Frederick S. Boas, Christopher Marlowe: A Biographical and Critical Study (1953); Mark Eccles' Marlowe in London (1934); and John Leslie Hotson's The Death of Christopher Marlowe (1925). These establish for us beyond question the important facts of Marlowe's life.

Deciding upon the plays that comprise the canon and fixing their dates, identifying his collaborators, and establishing accurate texts have been important problems whose solutions have delayed a really mature evaluation of Marlowe until our time. The authoritative edition of the

Works of Christopher Marlowe by C. F. Tucker Brooke (1910), preserving the old spelling, and the critical edition of the Works and Life of Christopher Marlowe, under the general editorship of R. H. Case (1930-33), using modern spelling, provide our most reliable texts for the plays with the exception of Doctor Faustus. W. W. Greg's parallel-text edition of Marlowe's "Dr. Faustus": 1604-1616 (1950) and his conjectural reconstruction of Faustus (1950), based on the 1616 Quarto, yield the best text for this play. At present Fredson Bowers is at work on a critical old-spelling edition of The Massacre at Paris, using the "Collier Leaf" in the ~~in the~~ Folger Library, and should answer many questions concerning that text. Though the text of The Jew of Malta, taken from the 1633 Quarto, is questioned by many scholars, others judge that it may represent Marlowe's work fairly accurately. I agree with this opinion and feel that 20th-century scholarship has produced reasonably good texts for the five major plays in the Marlowe canon.

Marlowe criticism has traditionally been oriented toward biography. From the Romantic critics like Charles Lamb and A. C. Swinburne to the less colorful but more factually exact researchers of our day like John Bakeless, Frederick Boas, Leslie Hotson, and Mark Eccles there has been a preoccupation with Christopher Marlowe the man. A great many insights valuable to an understanding of his dramas have come through this tradition (for one cannot

hope to exclude biographical considerations in a study of Marlowe)--but concentrating on the plays primarily as dramas and not as projections of his fondest desires or direst fears is not common. Even the two best-known interpretive studies--Una M. Ellis-Fermor's Christopher Marlowe (1927) and Harry Levin's The Overreacher (1952)--extend the biography-oriented approach begun by the Romantics. Ellis-Fermor primarily sees Marlowe as a figure working out his personal agonies and triumphs in his plays. Harry Levin, however, brings in so much material from other literary artists and traditions, as well as establishing his own illuminating categories for discussing the plays, that a great deal of light is shed on the meaning of this most important precursor of Shakespeare. Paul Kocher's Christopher Marlowe: A Study of His Thought, Learning and Character (1946) concentrates on Marlowe the daring "atheist" and skeptic rather than on Marlowe the dramatist and sees him as a representative thinker of his age.

There have been attempts to counteract this tradition in Marlowe criticism, but they have not been quite so widely received as the others. The best-known among them is perhaps Roy W. Battenhouse's Marlowe's Tamburlaine: A Study in Renaissance Moral Philosophy (1941), an attempt to see the two parts of Tamburlaine as an orthodox morality play whose protagonist is stricken down by God's judgment. David M. Bevington's very good From Mankind to Marlowe: Growth of Structure in the Popular Drama of Tudor England

(1962) charts the growth of the morality-play structure before Marlowe and shows how this inheritance, as well as the acting and staging traditions of the time, limited Marlowe's effectiveness as a playwright seeking to shape new psychological insights for his age. The episodic morality structure of Tamburlaine, for example, is incongruous with Marlowe's attempt to glorify his hero because traditionally he would have been condemned. Valuable as this study is in many ways, it concludes that Marlowe's plays are basically ambiguous because of the discordant attempts to fuse morality structure and radically new ideas, and we are thus prevented from seeing deeper into his work. Douglas Cole, in Suffering and Evil in the Plays of Christopher Marlowe (1962), treats Marlowe as orthodox Christian investigating the problem of life's inevitable evils, but this study ignores much in Marlowe that is quite obviously un-Christian and anti-Christian. A very good monograph on the dramaturgy of the first part of Tamburlaine is Frank B. Fieler's Tamburlaine, Part I and its Audience (1961), in the University of Florida Monographs series. Fieler's study of the effects on Marlowe's audience of his dramatic techniques directly opposes the critics who see Tamburlaine as the projection of Marlowe himself.

Several articles since World War II have treated Marlowe in one way or another as representative spokesman

for his age. Some of these will be cited during the course of this study, but generally they have been helpful only in a limited way because they have been parts of a larger thesis or have studied marginal problems in one or two of the plays or have discussed background material. Yet they tend to support the critics who appreciate Marlowe as an orthodox Elizabethan thinker and dramatist. A notable exception in both quality and freshness of insight is E. M. Waith, whose book The Herculean Hero in Marlowe, Chapman, Shakespeare, and Dryden (1962) contains a chapter discussing the Herculean warrior-hero from the classical tradition in Marlowe's Tamburlaine. Waith feels that the heroic figure was for Marlowe and his contemporaries a legitimate tragic hero. His investigation of Marlowe's classical background is a welcome and valuable addition to our knowledge and should be extended to other plays and the poems.

It is now the task of critics to re-evaluate Marlowe in the light of modern scholarship. There have been full-length interpretive studies in the past few years, but to my mind only Harry Levin's The Overreacher attempts the work of reinterpretation for modern times with a broad enough critical perspective. And yet his excellent work must be extended before we can feel that we have anything like an adequate understanding or appreciation of this elusive playwright. In the present study, I

address the problem of the critical re-evaluation of Marlowe's dramas and focus my attention on the five main plays of the canon but also refer tangentially to Dido, Queen of Carthage, a work Marlowe probably did in his Cambridge days, and The Massacre at Paris, probably done between August, 1589, and January, 1593.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

To Professor Calvin Thayer, friend and teacher, I wish to express my deep thanks for advising me in this study and suggesting many helpful additions and corrections. In particular, I am grateful for his fine lectures on the Jacobean period and his brilliant book on Ben Jonson--which have helped me greatly to understand the drama of the Jacobean period--and for his remarks to me about Marlowe's satirical tragedy. I also want to thank my dear wife, Martha Claire, whose great patience and understanding have made the months of research and writing involved in this work so much more pleasant than they ever could have been without her.

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APOLLO'S LAUREL BOUGH: ESSAYS ON THE THEME OF DAMNATION IN CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

THE TRAGIC GLASS

Marlowe's plays show a preoccupation with limitation and corruption in human affairs. He locates at the center of human nature an ineradicable frustration and a debased idealism, which manifest themselves as political and moral corruption in the world of man's affairs. These are the ironic results of man's attempts to realize full selfhood or to aspire beyond the recognized limits of human nature or the conventional limits of conduct. For him, man is severely limited but possessed by a desire to overcome his limitations, in ways both acceptable and unacceptable to the conventional rules of behavior. The attempts to satisfy this desire or possess self-realization inevitably produce frustration and a tragic realization that the ideal once sought has been betrayed or perverted by the very means used to attain it. This realization, and the

circumstances that the aspiring protagonist has brought on himself through his efforts to succeed in his dream, constitute a self-inflicted punishment tantamount to damnation. It is the damnation of the knowledge of insufficiency and loss as much as the pains and torture that must be endured by the suffering hero. The forbidden fruit yields not fulfillment but deprivation, not transcendence of limitation but the burning thirst and hunger which remain when a more limited growth or salvation has been replaced by the wasteland of the quester's desire.

Naturally we are reminded, when we assume this point of view, of Marlowe's alleged homosexuality. Was he a homosexual whose frustration at not being able to go beyond the conventional moral boundaries was sublimated in his plays into tales suggesting the tragic myths of Icarus and Phaëthon? Was he an "atheist," as Baines and Kyd would have us believe, whose heterodoxy had to be veiled behind re-tellings of the story of the rebellious Titans? No doubt much autobiography finds its way into his plays. If we can believe the Bains libel,[1] he was a sacrilegious apostate and at least a latent homosexual. Homosexuality shines through his descriptions of Leander, it defines the relationship between Jove and Ganymede, and it locates Edward's source of corruption. But this is not to say that in art his personal feelings have not been translated into coherent, valid statements on the nature of man.

Though we cannot speculate blindly about Marlowe the man, we should accept the matter of his dramas (whatever its source) and judge these works on their own premises and merits.

That he is an intellectual rebel cannot be denied, and the pattern of rebellion (behind which stands ultimately the archetype of Satan) does cast light on the structure of his plays. Tamburlaine, Faustus, and Barabas are all rebels, perhaps at times glorious but ultimately encased within their own limitations and damned because they cannot escape them. Again, it is in recognizing their limitations that these figures define their damnation: Tamburlaine realizes he must die, and his insides feel as though they are on fire; Faustus sees that his search for knowledge and pleasure is frustrated, and he is damned to suffer hellfire; and Barabas, caught in the machinations of his own intrigue, falls into the boiling caldron. Need I mention that Edward, himself a sort of moral rebel, suffers death by the red-hot spit which suggests the nature of his perversion?[2] Images of fire and burning accompany the tragic demise of Marlowe's protagonists. Moreover, these images (like the hot spit) dramatize for us unambiguously the nature of their transgressions--their aspirations, if you will--and the nature of the damnation or downfall which appropriately accompanies them. Tamburlaine may have been created partly in the image of Hercules, for example, but

admiration for him fades when we see that the madness and misery of the death of the prototype better inform us about Tamburlaine's tragic downfall than the impression of heroism does. It would be no small task, and quite a valuable one, to pursue a study of the transformations of the mythic archetypes embodied in the tragic figures Marlowe shapes from characters in the histories or chronicles he read. The Renaissance notion that tragic figures should be drawn from history fuses in Marlowe's myth-making mind with classical and Christian mythology to produce tragic fables on the nature of man. As a standard to measure his originality this alone suggests his genius.

Marlowe is a humanist, but his humanism defies the ordinary assumptions accompanying that term. He concludes that man and not God is at the center of the universe and that man's will and character are his fate, yet his reason for doing so is not to celebrate the species but to point out the foul deeds and corrupt institutions of a fallen world. Like many other Elizabethan playwrights, he draws his tragic matter from histories and chronicles, but he does not see a large, meaningful pattern unfolding through events. Shakespeare's history plays posit a rational order in both the cosmos and men's affairs. Marlowe's testify to the anarchy and chaos at the heart of things. One of the reasons his plays have been so difficult to

understand lies in the fact that the underlying patterns for seeing order in man and nature (which are familiar furnishings in other dramatists of the time) are notably absent. The Renaissance worldview is gone, and God is either banished from the skies Marlowe peers at or represents a vague sort of dynamism or force which perpetrates chaos. Long before Wordsworth, Tennyson, Arnold, or T. S. Eliot, Marlowe notices the seas of faith and tradition recede, leaving the anguished creature man behind.

Marlowe is also a satirist. Trying to account for the particular blend of dramatic elements in his tragedies has presented critical difficulties because many critics have not recongized this stance of his. He has affinities with the work of the Wakefield Master, William Langland, John Skelton, and later John Marston, Ben Jonson, George Chapman, and even Shakespeare in such plays as Titus Andronicus and Troilus and Cressida. Whatever their central concerns may be, these men all share the injured moralist's or the deprived idealist's sense of wrong. They attempt to chastise by means of a withering satire the evils and foibles of their fellow men. The world they see is dark and corrupt, and their usual tone is scornful, in the tradition of Juvenal. Topics of current interest, domestic politics, religious struggles, and the nobility are favorite targets. Jonson, also the greatest English representative of the Old Comedy satire of Aristophanes, is perhaps the

most legitimate heir of the Cambridge divinity student who gave up his theology for the magic of art and the privilege of seeing into the tragic glass of the age. Marlowe, however, does not leave us with dramas whose aims are social correction or a sense of order after the pariah has been laughed into submission or conformity. He rails at the fallen creature, but he does not feel that redemption is a possibility for him. The man with the self-imposed cross to bear limps toward damnation. In his preoccupation with the fallen side of human nature Marlowe aligns himself with the Calvinists. Like Faustus of Wittenberg, he would gladly be saved, it seems; but he cannot believe in the grace that leads to salvation.

Yet Marlowe's apocalyptic vision of man's inevitable end is qualified in two important ways. In the first place, the damnation he reserves for man is secular and existential rather than post-mortal. Damnation names the state of one's presently suffering consciousness; it does not wait for eternity. Hell is the here and now, as the wistful theologian Mephistophilis tells Faustus; it is not a place but a condition. Marlowe thus anticipates Sartre, and 20th-century existentialist theology, just as he foreshadows Nietzsche in his portraits of the power-driven superman. History is the working out of man's affairs, themselves determined by his passions, his "humours," his given nature. To the extent that his tragic protagonists are

driven by their passions to reach after a false ideal, Marlowe's view is deterministic. Faustus and Edward seem hopelessly compelled by their appetites to pursue illusory pleasures and obsessions, and in this they are followed by the other protagonists, including Dido and the Guise. Their lives are not from the first fully determined--as the life of Coriolanus is, for example--because they are free to choose an alternative course of action to the one which brings tragedy and damnation. Once the choice to be a magician or the conqueror of the world or a Machiavel is made, however, their fates are inevitable. Their personal limitations, which they fail to recognize as they aspire toward infinite pleasure, glory, or satisfaction, and the accompanying passions which tend increasingly to possess them, constitute a very narrow context in which choice must operate. In other words, Barabas, Faustus, Tamburlaine, and Edward do not consider that the illusions they are following will destroy them until their souls are no longer their own. Their personalities become rigid, resembling those of the "humours" characters of Jonsonian comedy, because they concentrate only on the satisfaction of their grandiose, impossible desires. But the freedom of Marlowe's protagonists is severely limited so that their dramas can implement his vision of tragedy as the fate of the aspiring, willful, passionate individual whose grasping for unlimited power or pleasure ironically constricts and suffocates

his soul and eventually cancels freedom of choice altogether. Even Dido fits this pattern. Although Venus and Cupid are the agents who make her fall in love with Aeneas, these figures are simply the objectifications of her passions for the Trojan which assume control of her whole personality. The point Marlowe is making is that one's will is his fate, and will, once it overpowers reason, can be inflexibly deterministic. Only in Hero and Leander does the fate which brings the tragedy of the young Leander as he swims the Hellespont proceed from a source over which he has no control at all.

But are the heroes of Sophocles and Aeschylus not ruled by the Fates? And is Othello not overruled by his jealousy? O'Neill overpowers us with characters seen wriggling under the lamp of Freudian psychology. It is all the stuff of tragedy: man is in chains, and his only freedom comes in acknowledging his chains. The fates of Marlowe's protagonists are inevitable, but no more so than those of other tragic characters. The only difference--the significant difference--is that there seems to be no reason for their fates except their ungoverned passions. Society is not cleansed, the audience feels no relief, and the heavens do not justify the suffering. Marlowe's characters peer into the window of the absurd universe and recoil at what they see. On the set next to Marlowe's Elizabethan stage stand the inhabitants of the theater of

the absurd, waiting only for Hamlet's puzzlement over the lost dispensation to make their fumbling entrance under crumbling skies.

The second ingredient which qualifies Marlowe's vision follows from the first. Secular man, laboring to define his condition through his own actions, finds himself at the end of his tether when he realizes the narrowness of his limitations. With no God to help him, the final product of humanism sees the irony of his attempts to gain freedom by leaving tradition behind. The vaunted freedom has not come, but the fetters remain. It is the condition we now call "modern"; it is humanism with a vengeance. The transition from optimism to pessimism comes as quickly as we can turn the pages from Tamburlaine's first speech on controlling Fortune to Faustus' desire for obliteration. Marlowe is thus the first "modern" English dramatist. His heroes share this modern predicament: they either have no traditions to guide their actions, like Tamburlaine, or they seek to leave them behind, as Edward and Faustus do. They choose to act in ways not sanctioned by the wisdom of the ages, try to enjoy themselves in forbidden ways, or seek to create new contexts for self-expression. His heroes lose sight of their real identities offered by the medieval and Renaissance cultural heritage and set sail for an ideal, improvised, but illusory self. Tamburlaine strips off his shepherd's weeds and

seeks to be co-equal with the gods. Edward abdicates his responsibility as King and looks for self-completion in pleasure and perversion. Faustus at first believes the powers of magic will liberate him from his studies and tells Mephistophilis that hell is a fable--and later realizes that he has never transcended the teachings of Wittenberg. As Harry Levin says, Marlowe's protagonists are all overreachers. They are voyagers who have cast off from the Old World and only after it is too late agree that they are lost.

The sense of loss accompanies Faustus, the Calvinist prototype who has left the saving grace along with the strictures of the medieval Church; and he has no alternative but to admit his damnation. Loss distracts the dumbfounded Tamburlaine when Zenocrate dies, and he attempts to redeem what she represents by encasing her in a gold coffin. The coffin is an image of constriction, symbolizing his isolated, encased soul. Edward loses his crown literally long after he has refused to live as a king. His imprisonment is the dramatic metaphor for his isolation and spiritual death. And Barabas is driven to become the Vice when the gold he confuses with his soul's salvation is taken from him by the Maltese. The symbol for his shrunken self is the little room into which he would crowd his infinite riches. And Abigail's confinement in the nunnery is the emblem of his spiritual isolation. Faustus realizes that his tragedy

has been his appetites, his gluttonous longing to possess all knowledge and pleasure within himself. The self that provides his hell, and which he wants at the end to destroy so that Lucifer cannot claim his due, is both the symbol for and the reality of his isolation and limitation. On his last night he is left alone in a room, the rest of humanity denied access. And the Guise in The Massacre at Paris is led into a room to be murdered. The various images of confinement and constriction are one of Marlowe's ways of telling us that his tragic characters suffocate their souls when they attempt to wall out the rest of humanity through an exaggerated sense of individuality.

Their personalities become fragmented and tend to disintegrate;[3] they are corrupted because something which represents freedom and salvation to them--though the tragic error in judgment is their mistaken notion of what constitutes happiness, salvation, or integrity--is self-denying in its very fulfillment. These are the inhabitants of the world we know: Barabas, the rising capitalist; Faustus, the arch-Protestant; Tamburlaine, whose Machiavellian policies announce the era of power politics and the rampant nationalism of the super-state; and Edward, the dilettante and sensualist, whose children we see in the fops of the Restoration and later in the portrait of Oscar Wilde and his contemporaries. And they are all objects of Marlowe's scorn and satire. These are characters obsessed

with gaining power, and they are all powerless to save themselves. They journey for a star and die for lack of air. Gawain and the Red Crosse Knight ride forth, fight their battles, or kill a monster, and find self-knowledge. We call their text the romance. Marlowe's men journey deep into the self, find the monstrous within their souls, go beyond self-knowledge to witness irony and absurdity, and find the void. Theirs is the book of the inverted or ironic romance. Romance, tragedy, satire--even the comic scenes we find in Faustus, The Jew of Malta, as well as those Richard Jones, printer of the 1590 edition of Tamburlaine, tells us once made up a part of that play--converge into a bleak but complete worldview of Marlowe's own making. He sits at the opposite pole from St. John the Divine and writes a demonic Book of Revelation. He sees heaven and hell come together in a violent marriage. The infinite riches of tradition are constricted in the little room of the isolated modern self, growing smaller every minute as it leaves the nourishing cradle of civilization. The Flying Dutchman is cursed to sail on forever, Lord Jim's white shirt grows dimmer to Marlow as the narrator pulls away from the harbor and Jim is engulfed by the jungle darkness. We lie, like Poe's deracinated hero, nameless, waiting for the walls to squeeze us into the dark pit of the unconscious.

NOTES

[1]It does appear to me that the Baines Note does not misrepresent Marlowe in any important way. Paul Kocher, one of many recent scholars who agree, places great weight on this document in his Christopher Marlowe: A Study of His Thought, Learning and Character (Chapel Hill, 1946). See also his article, "Marlowe's Atheist Lecture," JEGP, XXXIX (Jan, 1940), 98-106.

[2]Even the deaths of Dido, the Guise, and Leander in Hero and Leander are direct results of their desires--appropriate retributions, one might say, for their own particular longings, passions, and, in the case of the Guise, crimes too. The Guise, moreover, early in the play describes his passionate ambitions in terms of flames that only blood can quench. And Jupiter in Dido feels consumed by a burning passion for Ganymede. Dido herself possesses a burning passion for Aeneas; when she cannot have his love, she builds a sacrificial fire with the equipment he has left behind and immolates herself in it.

[3]One of the most common criticisms of The Jew of Malta is that the last three acts are a falling off from

the tragic dignity of the first two. The reason that we are so aware of Barabas' diminished stature is that his character is disintegrating, becoming evil and ludicrous, as the play progresses, under the perversions of human intercourse money has caused him to pursue. Doctor Faustus too is not so much a falling off in the central scenes as is usually assumed, and for a similar reason. We must remember that evil, in the form Marlowe received it from the medieval stage, was traditionally represented as both comic or ludicrous and evil at the same time. As these characters are metamorphosed into evil figures quite different from their former selves, they assume this dual character.

CHAPTER II

AND RIDE IN TRIUMPH THROUGH PERSEPOLIS: TAMBURLAINE AND THE RHETORIC OF ILLUSION

PART I

The first part of Marlowe's Tamburlaine, produced probably in 1587, portrays the ambitious spirit of the Scythian shepherd Tamburlaine as he rises toward domination of the world. Since the play centers on one man's character and fate and the boundless excitement of his inner experience as a conquering hero, we can call the drama a conqueror play with romantic characteristics. Yet it must be realized that Marlowe's use of the conqueror and romance patterns is ironic because Tamburlaine's exploits become increasingly bloody and senseless, and his journeys do not make him heroic in our eyes but monstrous and hateful. Other generic classifications can also be used to illuminate this interesting play. It is a history or chronicle play[1] interpreting the important events in the life of Timur the Lame, who conquered the Turks at Ankara in 1402 and was regarded in the Christian West as a hero who through

divine Providence had saved the Christians from their foes. The "Scourge of God" title by which Tamburlaine refers to himself applies, then, because he was seen by many as an avenging agent of God sent to help them. But insofar as he is more terrible than any enemy in the play he conquers, the label is meant ironically. In taking his subject from history, Marlowe follows the convention of Renaissance historiographers which uses history to illustrate a moral or political truth. Tamburlaine also has elements of the heroic play; it glorifies, in the first few scenes at least, a figure of heroic dimensions, who is seen against a panoramic background in an episodic series of mighty events; and it dramatizes those mythical qualities of Timur the Lame which were well known to the Elizabethans. These same qualities also inform the work as an epic poem. And the very nature of the action claims it as a drama of ambition.[2]

Another, and a very profitable, way of seeing the play is as an ironic or satiric pastoral. Tamburlaine, the Scythian shepherd who becomes a ruthless conqueror, turns upside-down the idea of a shepherd who keeps his flock from the wolf. He himself assumes the qualities of a ravenous beast after his symbolic act of stripping off his shepherd's garments and turning to war. His use of rhetoric to glorify Zenocrate, the image of his soul and the ideal who represents for him the beauty of his ambitions,

points out another departure from the traditional pastoral mode. Though he does utter his love for her, his expression is neither the standard shepherd's lament for the coldness of his mistress and his disappointment in love nor the standard shepherd's praising of the nymphs of the fields. He possesses his lady because he forcibly captures her, and he is interested in her only as a part of the trappings of a victorious warrior. Moreover, the background of Tamburlaine is anything but Arcadian; the battles and fires, the slain virgins, and the distracted monarch and his queen play parts in a pastoral nightmare. Marlowe achieves his satiric stance by an inversion of form: he uses the pastoral device as a metaphor for his ironic and bitter vision of life. Like Spenser, who taught him in The Shepheardes Calender that the pastoral form can be used as a mirror to reflect the artist's vision of contemporary events, Marlowe realizes the ironic and satiric value in the inverted pastoral.

Tamburlaine must be understood through the meaning of the protagonist's actions and personality, but in Part I two important themes figure in our estimate of Marlowe's intent when he created Tamburlaine. The play as a whole is a refutation of the medieval philosophy of tragedy expressed in the tradition of Boccaccio's De Casibus Virorum Illustrium and continued in England in Lydgate's Fall of Princes and in The Mirror for Magistrates. Briefly,

the notion of tragedy implied in this tradition is that Fortune, acting as God's instrument, brings to grief anyone who aspires to earthly power and pleasure. The blind goddess Fortune thus teaches men the uncertainty of worldly things. The "tragic" characters are moral exempla illustrating the vanity of human wishes and exhorting others to avoid the error of seeking earthly glory. Implicit in Marlowe's refutation of this inherited tragic apparatus is a radically different tragic conception, based on the effects caused by men's deeds, not the meting out of God's strict law by the unconcerned goddess, and a revolutionary philosophy of history, also seen as the conflicts of human wills and not the deterministic plan of Providence.

The second important theme has to do with Marlowe's use of rhetoric. Tamburlaine is the anti-type of the singing shepherd. He rhapsodizes about Zenocrate, sings eloquently about his exploits, and is therefore a kind of poet. But he is also a master of invective, a sort of railing satirist, in the chastizing which accompanies his imagined role as the "Scourge of God." In the powerful and sometimes amusing exchanges with Bajazeth, in addition, he and the Turkish Emperor invert the singing match from the pastoral tradition. Their epithets and tauntings recall, however, the medieval satiric device called the flyting, in which two figures heap abuse on each other.

Finally, Tamburlaine's rhetoric partakes of the Braggart Warrior's bombast--though to be sure he carries out his threats and is no coward. The inversions practiced by Marlowe reveal the strongly satiric and ironic qualities which must be included in any definition of Marlovian tragedy.

Each of Marlowe's tragic protagonists is a self-deluded seeker after a false ideal or goal, intended to bring personal fulfillment but ironically the cause of frustration and downfall. This ideal is usually expressed in moving poetry or convincing argument, which hypnotizes the protagonist into believing in and following it because it is so beautiful in its verbal form. The ideal thus represents a misuse of language and a tragic misconception on the part of the hero. Only when the tragic fall is inevitable and we see the connection between the fall and the misleading ideal do we realize that the fine-spoken rhetoric has produced illusion. Often enough the poetry or rhetoric of the protagonist also convinces the audience, forcing them to sympathize with the hero and sharing in his delusions. The protagonist usually employs rhetoric to mask his true motives--either to delude his enemies so they can more easily be overcome, as Tamburlaine and Barabas do--or he inadvertently blinds himself to the tragic implications of what he has accepted, as is the case with Faustus and Edward. The audience, who

are manipulated into a sympathetic position by the powerful device of rhetoric, are in the course of the play shocked into recognizing that their original identification with the protagonist proves their brotherhood with him and their susceptibility to be motivated by his values.[3] As he degenerates into a power-crazy tyrant, an opportunist, or a despairing sinner, he may carry his audience far enough with him to illustrate the universality of the evil he has become.

The brilliant young man who began Tamburlaine while he was studying at Cambridge knew the power of words, and much is made of speaking, eloquence, poetry, persuasion, and invective in the play. In Part I Tamburlaine is a poet who enchants Zenocrate, an orator who moves his allies to fight bravely for him and his enemies to cringe, and an effective employer of invective. The theme of the uses of rhetoric continues in Part II in a somewhat altered form, but the main point of it all is that any kind of behavior or motivation can be disguised by the proper choice of words. Like beautiful poetry, the inflated rhetoric of a politician or a militarist can charm and attract and make converts. In the "Scourge of God" label which Tamburlaine applies to himself and in his attempts to convince others that the heavens have chosen him as their darling, Marlowe trains his sights directly on the Tudors and their apologists, who claimed that the monarch

was God's representative on earth who must be obeyed. The playwright shows that any manner of political action can be perpetrated in the name of "divine right." And he may also be drawing a parallel between Tamburlaine and the Calvinists, who claimed to be God's elect and felt that their successful personal undertakings proved the assertion. If the romance of the age held up as an ideal the powerful unifying prince, its illusions were at least not shared by Marlowe, who in Tamburlaine, for example, reduces the conqueror's Machiavellianism to its basic ingredient--the lust for unlimited power.

The harsh satire on Tamburlaine's bloodthirsty militarism or the Jew's "policy" and avarice is a two-edged sword which wounds both what the hero on stage represents and those in the audience who accept him. Marlowe attacks basic impulses of Elizabethan society as he reveals the brutality of the divine-right theory in Tamburlaine's assumption of divine prerogative and as he prefigures in Faustus the futility of the scientist's claim to take all knowledge for his province. Marlowe shapes a sort of ritual drama, digging for his subject matter down into the subconscious layers of the cultural personality, where the uncomfortable sources of group motivation lie covered by institutional rationalization. His dramas re-enact the grotesque dance of death clothed anew in the kingly desire for sovereignty, in the impulses of nationalism, and in the

temptation to indulge in forbidden pleasures or to control nature through mysterious knowledge. Barabas' mean career searches out the dark truth covered by the practices of the rising class of capitalistic merchants, and shows at the bottom of the hunger for commercial wealth a selfish, anarchic force that subverts all values in the name of gold. Marlowe parodies what convention holds up as the glories of the age and shows death and damnation leering behind them.

Marlowe wants to show that Fortune does not control men and that events are but the products of men's wills and acts, but he does not wish to prove that the powerful Tamburlaine has no restrictions or that he actually controls the Goddess Fortune. To make him the chief of the goddess would be to put his power over men's fates on a supernatural level. It is Fortune conceived of as the physical working out of the events men themselves set in motion that Tamburlaine controls. It is only through reiteration--by Tamburlaine and others as well--that the characters in the drama and the audience come to believe that the warrior holds sway over Fortune. But this belief is essential to the measure of military success which he enjoys, for it frightens his enemies and gains him allies. The Fortune-motif merely illustrates the practical effects possible in the Machiavellian's handling of rhetoric as a political tool to disguise his aims through verbal

illusion. As we investigate the complicated theme of the rhetoric of illusion, we arrive at the heart of the play's meaning.

In the powerful Prologue to Tamburlaine, Part I, Marlowe exuberantly announces that his play departs from the inferior poetry of the standard dramatic fare to present the conqueror Tamburlaine, "Threatning the world with high astounding tearms/and scourging kingdoms with his conquering sword." Since he knows that his treatment of the warrior's deeds will cause admiration in the members of the audience who do not accept the monstrosity of his acts, he invites them to "View but his picture in this tragicke glasse,/and then applaud his fortunes as you please." The deliberate ambiguity is another bold step in the development of Elizabethan tragedy. The Prologue and the title ("Two Tragicall Discourses") prepare us for Marlowe's attention to the uses of rhetoric in the play.

The Prologue reveals a courageous Renaissance youth interested in temporal events and the way in which tragedy is determined by a passionate individual more than in the somber medieval idea that man's world is contemptible and that he is the plaything of fickle Fortune. Yet Marlowe's humanism is leavened with skepticism. The Old World philosophy is rejected, but admiration for the qualities celebrated in the brave new world must be seen

through a tragic glass. As the play develops, we see an ironic glorification of what the ascetic De Casibus idea condemns:[4] worldly pomp and power, an arrogant individuality, and a disregard of Fortune--qualities which characterize Tamburlaine. Though Tamburlaine is not an admirable figure, his fate nevertheless does not describe the De Contemptu[5] thesis that man should despise worldly life in favor of spiritual endeavors or the De Casibus notion that blind Fortune stands ready to precipitate the proud to tragic depths.

In Act I, scene i, the weak and cowardly King of Persia, Mycetes, is presented as a dramatic contrast to Tamburlaine. His weakness is revealed in his speech:

> Brother Cosroe, I find my selfe agreeu'd,
> Yet insufficient to expresse the same:
> For it requires a great and thundring
> speech . . . .
> (9-11)[6]

Moving words are as mighty as actions; they are equivalent to action, are a dramatic mode of action, and persuade the hearers as effectively as concrete events do. The man who does not direct the power of words is feeble indeed. The student of theology at Cambridge learned well the heavily emphasized lessons in rhetoric and argument taught there and here pays tribute to the well-shaped phrase.

Cosroe, expressing the notion that the stars have

determined Mycetes' personality, criticizes the failings of his brother and soon reveals that he is conspiring with the Persian nobles to wrest his crown from him because they cannot abide his cowardly rule. Cosroe receives the crown after Menaphon says,

> . . . Fortune gives you opportunity
> To gaine the tytle of a Conquerour . . . .
>
> (I,i,132-33)

This character is also to be compared disadvantageously to Tamburlaine, who repudiates Fortune and takes whatever he wants by force. His excuse to "willingly receive th'mperiall crowne" is patriotic, but his words conceal a Machiavellian intrigue to gain power and seize it as a strong ruler. When Ortigius presents him with the crown on behalf of the other Persian lords as well as himself, we have the first of a series of highly charged symbolic scenes on stage which denote by means of the crown the passing of power and rule from one man to another. Many crowns are either taken or surrendered, and usually Tamburlaine enjoys what they represent. The scenes involving crowns are a part of the cumulative symbolic content whose meaning runs counter to the attractive lyricism and rhetoric Tamburlaine and others use to disguise the true nature of their deeds. Later we shall discuss at more length the tension produced by the logic of symbolism and spectacle on the one hand and the meaning of words on the other.

The second scene introduces Tamburlaine and is designed as a showcase for his attributes. He dwarfs the figures of Mycetes and Cosroe. Zenocrate addresses him as "Shepheard," and his confidence and egoism are excitingly blended as he tells her that he intends to become emperor of Asia and "terrour to the world." During this same speech (230-247) he throws off his shepherd's clothes and reveals his warrior's armor beneath them. This significant gesture indicates something important about his real nature: born a Scythian shepherd, he has become a thief, and now aspires toward domination of the world. His setting the pastoral garments aside reminds the viewers that the values of the traditional shepherd's world are also put aside. Tamburlaine's obsession throughout to become supreme on earth corresponds to the hubris of the classical tragic figure, and Marlowe intends to reward his proud flight with a special, self-inflicted retribution later--much closer to the Greek concept of anangke, or necessity, than the medieval belief in punishment for sin. In his first brave scenes Tamburlaine does command respect and admiration to a degree, and Marlowe intends that the critical viewer share these feelings to the extent that he can be excited by the popular Elizabethan opinion of this powerful historical figure and still later disagree on the values he represents. But as the play develops, Marlowe's condemnation of the evils

of Tamburlaine's militarism is more and more evident, and we must share in the tragic recognition of the barbarism of his career.

Marlowe's lyrical gift infuses Tamburlaine's famous speech eulogizing Zenocrate (I,ii,278-301), which recalls "The Passionate Shepherd to his Love." The common denominator in both the speech and the poem is the art of persuasion employed by a shepherd to win his love. Tamburlaine, however, is the self-charmed poet as much interested in his own words and visions of grandeur as he is in Zenocrate. She is a part of his heady dream of power and beauty and represents dramatically the fair image in his mind which he substitutes for an accurate representation of the results of warfare. Zenocrate can be seen as the symbol of Tamburlaine's soul, compared to the Jungian concept of the anima, and, even more usefully, likened to the ideal lady of the Elizabethan sonneteers, who wrote in the tradition of Petrarch's sonnets to Laura. The poems of Petrach, and the Elizabethan sonnet sequences (which would flower in the years immediately after Tamburlaine) take as their subject an ideal lady and use her as the occasion to express their fondest longings and aspirations in a highly stylized and conventionalized manner. Tamburlaine, likewise, chooses Zenocrate as the immediate cause and occasion for expressing his lyrical, self-centered vision in some of Marlowe's best poetry. That she does not correspond to the reality of Tamburlaine's

bloody career is a bitter way of attacking his political and military perversion of transcendent values.

Behind the Elizabethan sonneteers, Spenser's treatment of Una in The Faerie Queene , his Four Hymns, Shakespeare's maidens, and Marlowe's Zenocrate stands the Platonic ideal of Love and Beauty as it was developed in Castiglione and the Renaissance Neoplatonists. During Marlowe's stay at Cambridge the Platonic revival was at its highest, and in the Neoplatonic system the image of heavenly Beauty is produced in the lover or courtier by the sight of his beloved. In Marsilio Ficino, the most important of the Florentine Neoplatonists, the heavenly ideal is synonymous finally with God and is the end of a religious quest as well. The questing or love-inspired soul ascends gradually from the sensual to the ideal form of Beauty through the process of idealization. The soul has been made aware of its divine properties, which it has for a time "forgotten" because it has been "imprisoned" in a fleshly body; but now it wishes to ascend the "Platonic ladder" and achieve oneness with the divine ideal in God. In modern psychological jargon this process is called individuation and produces the effect called integration. For Spenser, Sidney, and Marlowe, the idealizing of a lady has to be related to this current of Renaissance philosophical thought. The attempts to express psychological wholeness or completion by means of idealizing a lady can be seen

not only in the sonnet sequences of the 1590's but also in Donne's Anniversaries and in the allegorical meaning of Shakespeare's ladies in his romantic comedies. Tamburlaine idealizes Zenocrate, and she symbolizes both his soul and the image of his soul's aspiration; but Marlowe adds the further, ironic dimension to his use of this tradition in making this image the verbal illusion for something in reality disgusting and destructive.

In Marlowe's time, belief in the Neoplatonic ascent of the soul toward the unchanging ideal had the effect of releasing man from his designated place in the great chain of being and holding out to him the possibilities of infinite refinement and perfection. It is this evolution of Plato's thought, given to the Renaissance in the Symposium and Phaedrus, which forms the metaphysical current inspiring the expressions of aspiration of the age. We know that in each age there is a certain cast or mold in which ideas are formed and which are held in common by the people of the whole culture. Whether we locate this commonly shared predisposition of thought in the collective unconscious or call it, as A. O. Lovejoy does, by the name of "metaphysical pathos," we cannot deny that each era produces unconscious assumptions or directions in the mind which shape the thinking of representative people. These assumptions or predispositions are transformed in art into recognizable conventions which

brand one age "Rennaisance" and another "Neoclassical." In the 16th century the Platonic revival, though its primary impulse in people like Ficino or Pico della Mirandola was to synthesize Platonic mysticism and Christian doctrine, suggested to sensitive minds that man can aspire through love to the highest realm of Truth and Beauty. Though union with God was the orthodox aim of the Neoplatonic ascent, the quasi-religious content could be changed, and the impulse for aspiration could yet remain. And something like this happened: Neoplatonism "caught on," was in fact the strongest current of Renaissance metaphysics, and pervaded all intellectual and artistic endeavor. In areas other than religion it remained as an impulse to thrust outward or upward, to go beyond recognized limits. I go to some length to illustrate my point because these ideas in the criticism of Marlowe have largely been ignored. Since Cambridge was a center for Neoplatonism in the third quarter of the 16th century, it is impossible that Marlowe should have gone uninfluenced by it. Furthermore, we should not be surprised that, given this thought as the fabric of their mind, Elizabethans looked toward unlimited knowledge and power.[7] Nor is it difficult to see why this age is noted for its adventurers like Drake and Ralegh, its scientific renovators like Bacon, and its rising nation-states. The spirit of aspiration charged the air Marlowe breathed.

What Tamburlaine, Barabas, and Faustus do strikes a note consonant with the metaphysical predispositions of the age of Elizabeth. Tamburlaine is in the essentials of his military and political philosophy and his methods of justifying them no different from Philip of Spain or Elizabeth Tudor, though he is more effective and less limited by competition than they. Barabas can stand as the archetype of the new economic man with no restrictions to his avarice. And of course Faustus contains in his composition elements of the stern Calvinist, preoccupied with damnation and sin; the mysterious creators of the New Science; the curious adventurers whose gaze was fixed on imagined treasures in the New World; and the artist who hoped to immortalize himself in his work. They are all voyagers seeking an imagined personal perfection somewhere away from the Old World confines, and they are propelled by the Neoplatonic spirit of aspiration, which was diffused throughout European thinking in the 16th century in the form of the quest for power.

When Tamburlaine hears soon after the address to Zenocrate that the Persian army under Theridamas is at hand to challenge him, he displays the first cunning use of rhetoric as a political or military tool. He asks whether it would be wiser to "fight couragiously" or whether he "should play the Orator" and dissuade the Persians from fighting. And when Theridamas enters his presence,

Tamburlaine--having opened the trunks containing his opulent booty in order to impress the Persian--first flatters him, then amazes him, and finally persuades him to join the conqueror's army. Tamburlaine's remarks claiming special dispensation from the vicissitudes of Fate and Fortune, as well as divine protection from Jove, are especially important:

> I hold the Fates bound fast in yron chaines,
> And with my hand turne Fortunes wheel about,
> And sooner shall the Sun fall from his Spheare,
> Than Tamburlaine be slaine or ouercome.
> Draw foorth thy sword, thou mighty man at Armes,
> Intending but to rase my charmed skin:
> And Ioue himselfe will stretch his hand from heauen,
> To ward the blow, and shield me safe from harme.
> (I,ii, 369-376)

An Elizabethan audience, used to the De Casibus concept of tragedy, would have expected Fortune to carry Tamburlaine to a noble height only to strike him from his high place later for this blasphemy. But besides amazing his viewers by avoiding divine retribution altogether in his play, Marlowe is here intent on showing Tamburlaine's clever propaganda as an effective weapon for avoiding conflict with a much larger army, manipulating its commander to treason, and gaining the Persian power for himself. It

all sounds so noble and fine on stage, but it is nothing more than the Machiavellianism which Elizabethans were supposed to hate. Theridamas utters what might have been their reaction and what has been the opinion of many critics since:

> Not Hermes Prolocutor to the Gods,
> Could vse perswasions more patheticall.
> . . . . . .
> Won with thy words, & conquered with thy looks,
> I yeeld my selfe, my men & horse to thee:
> To be partaker of thy good or ill
> As long as life maintaines Theridamas.
>
> (I,ii, 405-406, 423-426)

Loyalty can be bought for the price of a few well-chosen words. The Big Lie wins converts faster than arms can conquer them.

In Act II, scene i, the De Casibus philosophy is again countered, when Cosroe, deciding to join Tamburlaine's forces so that he can more easily become emperor of Asia, states Marlowe's thesis that Tamburlaine's will can overcome Fate and control Fortune:

> And well his merits show him to be made
> His Fortunes maister, and the king of men . . . .
>
> (489-490)

The audience is step by step led to expect Tamburlaine's eventual fall according to the medieval theory of tragedy, and this expectation constitutes the main source of

dramatic tension throughout Tamburlaine, Part I. When the tragedy fails to occur, the spectators are shocked into re-evaluating the pattern unfolded before them. They realize that the view of man controlling the Fates negates any providential philosophy of history, and that, further, Tamburlaine's claims to be God's chosen who carries out His commands have never been proven, but have been fabrications intended to delude, undermine, and destroy an enemy and enhance his own position. Tamburlaine's claims have been reiterated often enough, however, to seduce others and finally Tamburlaine himself into believing them. And if the spectators have believed them too, they share either the moral blindness which considers them admirable or the resentment of those who have been victimized by their use as a cover for Tamburlaine's personal will to power. Absolute authority derived from God (the divine-right idea) becomes absolute authority invested in the self. Though the idea of will over Fortune derives ultimately from the classical idea that human action and will can govern the fickle Goddess Fortune,[8] Marlowe denies the optimistic components of this philosophy and shows the exercise of man's will to be a diabolical force more apt to enslave than liberate those it touches.

The next two scenes (II,ii and iii) compare the "woorking woordes" of the opposing leaders Tamburlaine and Mycetes, about to engage in combat. Mycetes cannot

inspire his soldiers to grand designs, though his officer Meander feels that Fortune favors them. But Tamburlaine's words are "oracles of heauen," convincing his followers that they are on a par with the ancient heroes and gods. There is a brief battle, which goes badly for Mycetes. He slips from the field in terror; Tamburlaine confronts him and is handed the king's crown for examination. The action symbolizes the kingship that Tamburlaine will later usurp and allows time for Tamburlaine to taunt the despicable little monarch.

Cosroe becomes King of Persia in scene v and wears Mycetes' crown, attained by the hand of Tamburlaine, who is shown handing two diadems to him. Tamburlaine himself is made "Regent of Persea" by the new king, but he will soon wear Cosroe's crown also. For Cosroe makes the mistake of enchanting Tamburlaine by the words he uses to describe the glory of kingship. He paints a picture of martial pomp and dignity as he plans to "ride in triumph through Persepolis." Tamburlaine, intoxicated by these words, seeing himself in a misty ideal of victory and splendor, says:

> And ride in triumph through Persepolis?
> Is it not braue to be a King, Techelles?
> Vsumcasane and Theridamas,
> Is it not passing braue to be a King,
> And ride in triumph through Persepolis?
>
> (II,v, 755-59)

The power of poetry to move men to action works in the Scythian. Hypnotized by Cosroe's words and his own eloquent speech into reaching for the ultimate earthly power, he challenges and defeats Cosroe in scene vi and takes the crown from him just before Cosroe dies cursing him. Impassioned rhetoric has kindled his ambition.

Dramatic tension mounts when Tamburlaine becomes fiercely arrogant after defeating Cosroe. Using the Titan image to describe his rebellion, he compares himself to Jove (II,vi, 863-68), who wrenched the control of heaven from his father Saturn. But since rebellion was officially considered a cardinal sin by the Elizabethans, who dreaded the idea of a nation in upheaval, Marlowe begins to undermine Tamburlaine's position. Tamburlaine's theory of the nature of man as an unruly, aspiring creature in a chaotic universe also would have served to alienate him from his 16th-century audience, because they had been taught that man has a designated place in an ordered cosmos and should for no reason disrupt Nature by attempting to go beyond his station in life:

> Nature that fram'd vs of foure Elements,
> Warring within our breasts for regiment,
> Doth Teach vs all to haue aspyring minds:
> Our soules, whose faculties can comprehend
> The wondrous Architecture of the world:
> And measure euery wandring plannets course,

Still climing after knowledge infinite,
And alwaies moouing as the restles Spheares,
Wils vs to weare out selues and neuer rest,
Vntill we reach the ripest fruit of all,
That perfect blisse and soie felicitie,
The sweet fruition of an earthly crowne.

(II,vi, 869-880)

If the spectators would have agreed with Tamburlaine's philosophy, however, they would have had to admit that the Tudor homilists, who inveighed against rebellion and preached submission, were solidifying the political power of Elizabeth at the expense of keeping them as subjects.

The logic of the play is daringly subversive. Tamburlaine's Machiavellian methods of getting and holding power are morally indefensible, and yet they have been stated in terms not dissimilar to the divine-right theory. Moreover, Tamburlaine is exposed as a prototype of the political rebel the English so feared and hated. Yet if he is correct about man's nature, they could have justified becoming rebels too, especially since they had been hoodwinked into accepting submission. Either way Marlowe's historiography contradicts that which the Tudors dispensed. It would not be unreasonable for us to suggest that Marlowe's murder in Deptford was ordered by those who felt it a political necessity.

Tamburlaine's pride grows; his arrogance leads him to brag that even Mars and all the earthly monarchs cannot take his crown from him (II,vi,909-14). Arrogance brands him as the typical Marlovian protagonist; he embodies the archetypal action of Lucifer, who could not stand to have anyone ruling him. After this insolent speech an Elizabethan audience must have expected the rebel's fall to be imminent. Surely Marlowe could have made his excessive pride the tragic flaw which refused to recognize Fortune, God's mundane means of serving retribution to anyone who aspired too high. But Marlowe is not interested in the pat formula of the doleful De Casibus philosophy. Man himself must be the cause of his misery, as he invariably seeks to rise above his limitations.

A part of Tamburlaine's egoism is reflected in his inability to love. In the first act he uses poetry supposedly to convey his love to Zenocrate, but actually he expresses and enjoys his emotions more than he loves her personal qualities. He does, however, appreciate her beauty. Zenocrate, moreover, falls in love with him: his powerful words and actions have won her too. When Agydas tries to woo her away from Tamburlaine, his words fail him and she expresses her love for the conqueror (III,ii,1032-1040). At this point we do no violence to the meaning of the play if we again see Zenocrate as the extension of

Tamburlaine's personality, or the symbol of his soul, which expresses very beautifully his aspirations but conceals the actual nature of the deeds accompanying them. Tamburlaine overhears the conversation between Zenocrate and Agydas, takes the lady away, and gives Agydas a wrathful look--enough to drive him to plunge the dagger which Techelles gives him into his own breast. The symbolism of the action indicates that any connection with Tamburlaine's ideal--his love--brings death. And the theme of death becomes more and more important: everyone in Tamburlaine's way experiences death, until in Part II the carnage and the images of death and destruction are so pervasive that they dramatize a veritable hell on earth.

Act III concerns the meeting and overcoming of Bajazeth, the Turkish emperor. Marlowe saves this most important of the historical Timur's battles for the central portion of his play. Tamburlaine brags to the Turkish Bashaw sent as an emissary from Bajazeth that as God's Scourge he will conquer the Turk and set free the Christians he holds captive (III,iii,1142-45). This gains the sympathy of the audience, but there is no indication in the play that it is God's will to set the Christians free or Tamburlaine's love for them that makes him claim that he will do so. His words are merely a part of his arsenal--and powerful weapons when he speaks poetically. He creates the illusion of having oracular powers, and of being

God's Scourge, because his cunning and strength have overcome all his enemies:

> I speake it, and my words are oracles.
>
> (III,iii,1200)

Fine dramatic spectacle is created when Bajazeth and his train come on stage to exchange challenges and insults with the Scythian. This exchange is an inversion of the singing duel of the pastorals but resembles the flyting of medieval satire. It sets two braggart warriors at each other, each swearing and shouting that he will triumph. When they go off stage to do battle, Zenocrate and Zabina, Bajazeth's queen, hold the crowns of their monarchs, await the outcome of the fray, and "manage words" against one another. They hold a "singing duel" of their own, insult each other, and pray to the gods for victory. It is an exciting dramatic situation, and the familiar habit of people in wartime praying to God for help to slay their enemies is reduced to absurdity. Marlowe intends us to see that praying to God for victory, or using God's name to justify military exploits, is a harmful, deluding superstition. This point is made clearer when we realize that Tamburlaine in both parts of the drama inflates his rhetoric indiscriminately with the names of Jove or "Mahomet," Fortune or his stars, using them all to prove his divine right and mission to conquer and slaughter. The others do likewise, each

calling on a deity peculiar to his nation for help to overcome the far superior political rhetorician Tamburlaine. The effect undermines the belief in all deities and in all justifications for war, especially later, when both Zabina and Bajazeth curse "Mahomet" for permitting their defeat.

In Act IV Tamburlaine has already overcome the Persians under Mycetes, has humbled Cosroe, and has defeated the Turks. Only Egypt and Arabia stand as adversaries. Zenocrate's father, the Sultan of Egypt, threatens revenge on Tamburlaine for stealing his daughter and becoming a threat to his own power. The familiar rehearsal of Tamburlaine's determination and might follows, along with the familiar epithets of "villaine," "Pesant," and "slaue" for the conqueror. Cursing the enemy, calling on God for help in war--it all seems to be a ritual that warriors and princes go through before setting out on an otherwise obviously barbaric course.

In Act IV, scene ii, Bajazeth is brought on stage in a cage and released only to be used by Tamburlaine as a "foot-stoole" to ascend to his throne. This brilliant dramatic piece allows the audience to see, first, that Tamburlaine is indeed a villain who despicably reduces kingship to the level of a beast and, second, that he has successfully overthrown a monarch and suffered no retribution. A king or a prince is merely one who can grasp and hold

power, not someone divinely appointed to rule his neighbors. Marlowe may even be alluding to Elizabeth when Tamburlaine says,

> Smile Stars that raign'd at my natiuity:
> And dim the brightnesse of their neighbor Lamps,
> Disdaine to borrow light of Cynthia,
> For I the chiefest Lamp of all the earth,
> First rising in the East with milde aspect,
> But fixed now in the Meridian line,
> Will send vp fire to your turning Spheares,
> And cause the Sun to borrowe light of you.
>
> (IV,ii,1477-84)

It is only conjecture, but since references to Elizabeth as Cynthia were frequent in her time, Marlowe may be hinting that the ruler who wields the most power is therefore considered the best monarch. He thus would be revealing that kingship is based merely on power, regardless of the rationalization that supports it.

Bajazeth says,

> Great Tamburlaine, great in my ouerthrow,
> Ambitious pride shall make thee fall as low,
> For treading on the back of Baiazeth,
> That should be horsed on fower mightie kings.
>
> (IV,ii,1519-22)

And we think again of the De Casibus thesis that pride precedes a tragic fall. The Greek tragedians' hubris--

the overweening pride that causes the "tragic flaw" and subsequent downfall--also comes to mind. But Tamburlaine follows with a gesture of insuperable disdain: he forces Bajazeth's wife to feed him scraps from the table, taunts the Turk by his braggadoccio, and even refuses Zenocrate's plea to save her native Damascus, to which Tamburlaine's army is laying siege. By now it is evident that Tamburlaine is a monomaniacal egoist, the almost inhuman embodiment of irresistible, monolithic force. He continues to utter noble sentiments:

> Techelles, and my louing followers,
> Now may we see Damascus lofty towers,
> Like to the shadowes of Pyramides,
> That with their beauties grac'd the Memphion fields:
> The golden stature of their feathered bird
> That spreads her wings vpon the citie wals,
> Shall not defend it from our battering shot.
> The townes-men maske in silke and cloath of gold,
> And euery house is as a treasurie.
> The men, the treasure, and the towne is ours.
>
> (IV,ii,1545-54)

But his goal is world domination, and his means are total destruction and waste. Anything which opposes his will must must be annihiliated, like the virgins who earlier came to beg for Damascus.

Tamburlaine is so often cursed, so often called "slaue," "thiefe," and "beast," that the cumulative effect is to convince us that he is what his enemies call him. Though they are rarely any better--and never any braver or more confident--their words bring out the truth about him. The Sultan of Egypt calls him "presumptuous Beast," and the word presumptuous makes us think of Faustus, whose sin is also identified by that adjective. Tamburlaine has been called that at least three times when the Sultan voices his hate, and we must conclude that it is meant to describe Tamburlaine accurately.

He reveals his bestial nature by his treatment of Bajazeth, who is treated not like a defeated king but a caged animal (IV,iv). Bajazeth has been led about in a cage, used as a footstool, and now at the banquet is thrown bits of food or given a morsel from Tamburlaine's sword's point. Bajazeth's fate is a dramatic metaphor illustrating unambiguously both Tamburlaine's nature and the nature of kingship based on the will to power. In this scene also occur the bitterest curses of Bajazeth and the most humiliating gestures and taunts of Tamburlaine. He insults both the Turk and his queen and makes of it "a goodly showe at a banquet." Zenocrate then repeats her request that Tamburlaine spare Damascus, and he again refuses but adds that her father will be spared.

Though this gesture might be said to prove Tamburlaine's

mercy and his tenderness for Zenocrate, we must not forget that he razes the city and leaves no one else within it alive--though the Governor of Damascus sends out the virgins to offer humble submission and surrender (V,i). The First Virgin blames the governor for putting them all under threat of annihilation by not surrendering before Tamburlaine's deadline (V,i,1805-14), after which he has promised to kill them all. But this attitude on her part ironically reflects the complete mercilessness of Tamburlaine in establishing such terms in the first place. Tamburlaine too blames the Governor and his people for bringing death on themselves by ignoring his "custome" (V,ii,1845-54): he has become an egomaniac, a madman whose will is excuse enough for any crime. He is at this time dressed in black, the color of death and evil. The color symbolism is another visual device which points out his nature, like the treatment of Bajazeth in the cage when Tamburlaine is dressed in red. He resembles the Vice of the medieval stage or, later, Iago or Aaron the Moor; and his black costume denotes his evil intent and the death he brings with him. The words of the virgins fail to move Tamburlaine. Rhetoric is a tool of power, useful in gaining power and dispensing propaganda but not effective in conveying human need--not at least to Tamburlaine. The virgins cannot persuade him because they accompany their words with no force.

The identity of Tamburlaine must be seen in his actions and in the symbolism on stage, not in his words, which reveal only an exciting conqueror, a poet who rhapsodizes about his deeds. He orders the virgins slaughtered by his cavalry and their bodies hoisted up on Damascus' walls, after a grotesque jest by which he taunts and tortures them. The following section of the dialogue shows how he delights in death and sadistic cruelty, which he earlier has displayed to Bajazeth:

Tam. Virgins, in vaine ye labour to preuent
That which mine honor sweares shal be perform'd:
Behold my sword, what see you at the point?
Virg. Nothing but feare and fatall steel my Lord.
Tam. Your fearfull minds are thicke and mistie then,
For there sits Death, there sits imperious Death,
Keeping his circuit by the slicing edge.
But I am pleasde you shall not see him there,
He now is seated on my horsmens speares;
And on their points his fleshlesse bodie feedes.
Techelles, straight goe charge a few of them
To chardge these Dames, and shew my seruant death,

Sitting in scarlet on their armed speares.

Omnes. O pitie vs.

Tam. Away with them I say and shew them death.

(V,ii,1887-1901)

Cruelty and slaughter drive him to the height of ecstasy. When he hears of the virgins' deaths and orders the rest of the inhabitants of the city murdered, he immediately utters his long, impassioned speech on Zenocrate's beauty (V,ii,1916-72). Following as it does his most barbarous act, we perceive that Marlowe must have meant it ironically. He poetizes when the blood of his victims veritably drips from his jaws. But his poetry is only an affectation, a pose, something a warrior must have to grace his carriage. For he admits that

. . . euery warriour that is rapt with loue,
Of fame, of valour, and of victory
Must needs haue beauty beat on his conceites, ...

(V,ii,1961-63)

and adds,

That Vertue solely is the sum of glorie,
And fashions men with true nobility.

(1970-71)

He is in love with fame, valor, and victory--not Zenocrate. She merely represents the way he sees his role. Although he begins the speech with a confession of pity for Zenocrate's tears, he damns himself because he has denied

pity earlier to the virgins and to Damascus. He is carried away by his own eloquence and a yearning to express his feelings about the idea of Beauty. The whole piece is a romantic lyric on an abstract or ideal Beauty and reflects no very deep love for Zenocrate. In fact, he becomes a little ludicrous when he realizes that his transport is out of character:

> But how vnseemly is it for my Sex
> My discipline of armes and Chiualrie,
> My nature and the terrour of my name,
> To harbour thoughts effeminate and faint?
>
> (V,ii,1955-58)

In showing the ironic incongruity of Tamburlaine's speech on Zenocrate's beauty immediately after he has slain the four virgins and sacked Damascus, Marlowe implicitly condemns the Elizabethan ideal of the poetizing soldier-courtier (who is also a lover) represented by such people as Sir Philip Sidney and Marlowe's fellow-member of the "School of Night," Sir Walter Ralegh. Venus and Mars cannot live together; and a soldier, whose business it is to fight and kill, cannot almost simultaneously be moved by love to pursue the ideal of Beauty within his soul and flatter his lady with poetry. For the lover is at the time of his inspiration a sort of pilgrim or holy man and has a different set of emotions than those the warrior must necessarily have. Since Tamburlaine is a

murderer, fully committed to earthly glory, the speech is an inversion of the Neoplatonic attitude which we see in Castiglione's The Courtier or the sonnet sequences of the 1690's. He does not have any intention of ascending to the divine realm of Beauty or casting off his earthly concerns for more spiritual ones. By this close juxtaposition of the virgin-episode and the lyric utterance Marlowe means to shock us into recognizing the hypocrisy of Tamburlaine, who poses as both soldier and lover. Marlowe's bitter satire brings to mind rather obviously the artificial style of behaviour and the flattering which were so fashionable for young men at Queen Elizabeth's court in his day and which she did much to encourage. Tamburlaine's speech is not that of a lover, then, but he is affecting a pose. His glory comes from "Vertue," or virtù, his strength of will and purpose and his effectiveness as a professional soldier. His words are to delude enemies or create a favorable appearance: Tamburlaine is a Machiavellian.[10] Yet when all this is said, we have one of the most beautiful passages Marlowe ever wrote, especially these lines:

> What is beauty saith my suffering then?
> If all the pens that euer poets held,
> Had fed the feeling of their maisters thoughts,
> And euery sweetnes that inspir'd their harts,
> Their minds, and muses on admyred theames:

If all the heauenly Quintessence they still
From their immortall flowers of Poesy,
Wherein as in a myrrour we perceiue
The highest reaches of a humaine wit
If these had made one Poems period
And all combin'd in Beauties worthinesse,
Yet should ther houer in their restlesse heads,
One thought, one grace, one woonder at the least,
Which into words no vertue can digest . . . .

(V,ii,1941-54)

Their beauty is all the more reason for us to regard with horror his shedding of blood. We should have no trouble in our century imagining a tyrant who uses words so effectively that he sways the multitudes before him into believing he is an inspired prophet and a good man who will either recapture their former glory for them or lead them to a perfect state. Hidden by Hitler's rhetoric were Dachau and Buchenwald, and Stalin used Marx's voice to lull the people while he conducted his purges. Marlowe, who probably worked as a spy, knew well the uses of political rhetoric to hide the grim power-struggle masked by the trappings of the courtly style.

Bajazeth and Zabina, goaded and maddened by Tamburlaine's continued insults and unending military success, turn to self-loathing and lose faith in their god "Mahomet," who has not answered the words of their

prayers. Bajazeth lies to his queen to get her out of his sight and then brains himself against his cage. When she finds him, she goes out of her mind and murders herself in the same way. This no doubt popular spectacle for the Elizabethans underlines the violence which accompanies Tamburlaine's rise. Zenocrate laments all the bloodshed she has seen but then prays to "Iove" and "Mahomet" to pardon her love and herself for their lack of pity. Anippe answers her, and we have the final blow delivered at De Casibus philosophy and tragedy and the providential view of history:

> Madam content your self and be resolu'd,
> Your Loue hath fortune so at his command,
> That she shall stay and turne her wheele no more,
> As long as life maintaines his mighty arme,
> That fights for honor to adorne your head.
>
> (V,ii,2154-58)

Marlowe wishes us to see that there is no Fortune, except as it is created through exercise of the will, no plan in history but the struggles of powerful men to rule their fellows.

The brief battle between Tamburlaine and Zenocrate's father, the Sultan of Egypt, brings the expected victory to the warrior. The King of Arabia, Zenocrate's former suitor and her father's ally, dies; the Sultan is happily reconciled to Tamburlaine because he "hast with honor

vsed Zenocrate"; and a marriage is planned between her and the hero. The ending is structurally comic and romantic: the hero and heroine are united in marriage after he has overcome his foes and brought peace to the land. But here again we detect another inversion of form; peace has been gained at the price of slaughter, and Tamburlaine has not undergone a spiritual change or matured but instead has degenerated into a base tyrant. The "happy ending" is marred by the cumulative effect of Tamburlaine's evils, and the point of view we are left with is ironic and satiric.

The effect of Marlowe's refutation of the medieval logic inherent in the De Casibus tradition is to prepare English drama to render its tragedies in terms of man's will and the circumstances he creates for himself. The De Casibus tragedies are fatalistic and show men and women at the mercy of a fate so inexorable in its workings and yet so irrelevant to them as creatures with rational capacities that no meaning can finally be drawn from their sufferings. No meaningful life is possible when submission and fear are the only alternatives available. Though Marlowe's hero is despicable, his drama implies that will is a great force and that earthly events do have significance. By denying the providential view of history and focusing on man-made events, Marlowe avoids the dramatically stagnant deterministic universe and shows

instead that a character's inner imperatives--especially the lust for power--are his determining forces. Tragedy can now center on individual responsibility in a world of moral ambiguity, and thus playwrights are prepared to structure meaning into the suffering and evil of experience.

The primary difficulty encountered in criticizing this play has been in the contradictory logic implied by apparent admiration for Tamburlaine on the one hand and the necessity of recognizing his sadistic and evil deeds on the other. The fine poetry he uses is radically countered by limitless cruelty and bloodshed. Marlowe is using a technique ultimately derived from the medieval stage in building, in episode after episode, a cumulative effect of symbol and action to undermine the meaning of Tamburlaine's claims to control Fortune, to be God's Scourge, and to be justified in his heinous course. The playwright relies on visual effect, or dramatic symbol and metaphor, to convey his meaning. The logic implied by the scenes in which crowns are surrendered to Tamburlaine, or those involving Bajazeth's madness and despair, or the slaying of the maidens, all provide overwhelmingly clear symbolic meanings to denigrate the character of Tamburlaine. Critics have complained that the repetitive nature of Tamburlaine's conquests makes the play dull, but they who hold this view fail to

understand the principle of repetition Marlowe uses. He repeats an idea several times on stage, in a variety of ways, in several scenes for the powerful, cumulative effect he intends. Almost every scene in the apparently sprawling structure of the episodic drama becomes a metaphor pointing to the single underlying theme of Tamburlaine's bestiality or Marlowe's philosophy of history or tragedy. So there is a definite principle giving the play its structure: episodic scenes, loaded with symbolic intent, pile meaning on meaning and, taken all together, have a tremendous emotional impact. Like the moralities, which employ the same dramatic structure and the same method of symbolism, Tamburlaine dramatizes ideas the poet wishes to communicate and is not primarily a drama of character--in which "realism" might be expected. Yet through his replacement of the De Casibus idea of tragedy with the notion of tragedy based on man's will, English drama is now prepared for drama of character.

Nor is Tamburlaine a drama in which plot or arrangement of events has any great importance. Spectacle and action, costume and symbol are central. Marlowe is working in the tradition which Sidney's Defense of Poesie (1583) mentions, in which the arts of poetry and painting are compared. Following the Renaissance theorists, Sidney says that poetry is a "speaking picture," an imitation, in the Aristotelian sense. It is this ultimately

Aristotelian doctrine, then, the "picture-poesy" theory (ut pictura poesis), which describes what Marlowe is doing by using the symbolic structure he inherited from the medieval English stage and combining it with his own preference for visual and spectacular drama.[11] Poetry, whether it is dramatic or lyrical, must present an image just as a picture does, and its intent is to convey ideas useful to the viewer. Visual effects were more powerful and compelling than verbal pointers for conveying essential meaning to the Elizabethans, who could still recall having seen morality plays. Against a basically visual pattern Marlowe cleverly balances the words spoken by the characters and produces a dramatic tension which conveys his ironic vision of tragedy. Any comparison of Tamburlaine's words, say, with his actions forces us to see how hateful he is and how effectively he uses rhetoric for military and political exploits. Marlowe has hinted at his design in The Prologue. He says that Tamburlaine will be "Threatning the world with high astounding tearms," but that the audience must "View but his picture in this tragicke glasse/And then applaud his fortunes as you please."

NOTES

[1]Marlowe's sources for the first Tamburlaine play included the Magni Tamerlanis Scythiarum Imperatoris Vita (1553) of Perondinus; Pedro Mexia's Silva da Varia Lection (1542), translated from Spanish into English by Thomas Fortescue and called The Forest, or Collection of Histories (1571); and, perhaps most important, George Whetstone's The English Mirror (1586). In addition, other versions of the Scythian's story were available to him in Italian and Latin. Most of the material in the second part of Tamburlaine is Marlowe's own creation, but he drew the Olympia episode from Ariosto's Orlando Furioso. Sigismund's treachery, which actually contributed to the causes of the battle of Varna in 1444, probably was taken from Bonfinius' Rerum Ungaricarum decades quator (1543) and the Chronicorum Turcicorum tomi duo (1578) of Lonicerus. In addition, he apparently used Paul Ive's The Practice of Fortification (1589), which was available in manuscript form, for accurate military details. In both parts of Tamburlaine are evidences that his geographic details were drawn from Abraham Ortelius' new atlas of the world, Theatrum Orbis Terrarum (Antwerp, 1570). This

information on Marlowe's sources is available in any number of books, but I have here used Irving Ribner's edition of The Complete Plays of Christopher Marlowe (New York, 1963), pp. xxi-xxii.

[2]Though Marlowe does not observe the unities of time and place--the scenes are strung out in episodic fashion--the play is unified in the presentation and revelation of the character of the warrior Tamburlaine and in the theme of ambition. Other dramatists were soon to construct their plays on the pattern of a dynamic central character--most notably, Shakespeare, who shows the influence of the single Marlovian protagonist early, in Richard III, and continues Marlowe's idea that a man's character becomes his fate.

[3]In Edward's case the pattern is altered somewhat, and we feel more sympathy for him at the end than we do in the beginning because he grows into a profound understanding of what he has willfully lost and therefore suffers more deeply as a tragic character. But we still have fallen into the trap of aligning ourselves with a man whose love of opulence, ease, and perversion has led him to misery. In Edward we have proof of Marlowe's rapidly developing genius as a dramatist. The weak king is revealed psychologically much more completely than Tamburlaine, say, whose psyche is protected by the

hard surface of his rhetoric and who therefore must be understood through his actions and the results of his "heroic" aspirations.

[4]Willard Farnham, The Medieval Heritage of Elizabethan Tragedy (Berkeley, 1936), p. 373, believes that Marlowe's aim is to outrage his audience by honestly glorifying what they were taught to hate.

[5]The most famous disquisitions on the vileness of the world and the corruption of the flesh are the works known as De Contemptu Mundi, the first written by Bernard of Morlaix early in the 12th century and the second by Innocent III late in the same century. The themes of these works--"contempt of the world" and attention to the afterlife--are part of the same temper informing Boccaccio's work in the mid-14th century. Farnham, Chaps. II-IV, pp. 30-172, discusses the development of these ideas, which he calls the "medieval tragic narrative" from early Christian times through Chaucer and Lydgate.

[6]All references to the plays, except Doctor Faustus, are to C. F. Tucker Brooke's edition of The Works of Christopher Marlowe (Oxford, 1910). Mr. Brooke numbers the lines of his plays consecutively throughout each play, and my references to the lines quoted follow his system. References to Doctor Faustus are to W. W. Greg's

edition of The Tragical History of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus by Christopher Marlowe (Oxford, 1950).

[7]I am much indebted to C. S. Lewis, whose introductory chapter in English Literature in the Sixteenth Century Excluding Drama (Oxford, 1954), pp, 1-65, provides an excellent background for the subject of the new power-oriented philosophy of science and the new view of man in general. He calls the belief in the perfection of man's soul according to the Neoplatonic doctrines a belief in "magic." This new philosophy, antithetical to the limitations outlined in the medieval view of man's given place in the universe, was like the New Science in offering man the chance to recapture that power which he once exercised over all nature but lost when his soul chose to accept the limitations of inhabiting a body. This "magical" desire to escape physical limitations and control all nature of course relates to Doctor Faustus and will be again mentioned in the chapter discussing that play.

[8]See Irving Ribner, "The Idea of History in Marlowe's Tamburlaine," ELH, XX (Dec., 1953), 251-66, and The English History Play in the Age of Shakespeare (Princeton, New Jersey, 1957), pp. 63-66. Besides outlining the classical and Renaissance antecedents of Marlowe's philosophy of history, Mr. Ribner discusses

in detail what that philosophy was. I do not agree, however, with his interpretation of Marlowe's application of that philosophy in the Tamburlaine plays.

[9]It is instructive here to compare Barabas' soliloquy in the first scene of The Jew of Malta, which expresses a similar philosophy of strife and individual achievement. The following lines are especially relevant:

> And thus me thinkes should men of iudgement frame
> Their meanes of traffique from the vulgar trade,
> And as their wealth increaseth, so inclose
> Infinite riches in a little roome.
>
> (I,69-72)

[10]Cf. Ribner, "Marlowe and Machiavelli," CL, VI (Fall, 1954), 348-56.

[11]See in this connection David M. Bevington, From Mankind to Marlowe: Growth of Structure in the Popular Drama of Tudor England (Cambridge, Mass., 1962), who analyzes the inherited morality structure Marlowe works with. Although our conclusions about the meaning of Tamburlaine do not coincide, I find his book a very thorough study of the availability and limitations of dramatic technique and tradition on the Tudor stage. See also Jocelyn Powell, "Marlowe's Spectacle," Tulane Drama Review, VIII (Summer, 1964), 195-210, who makes substantially the same point that I do about the great

importance of understanding the logic of Marlowe's dramatic symbolism before the plays can be adequately understood.

CHAPTER III

PART II

The second part of Christopher Marlowe's ironical and satirical tragedy of Tamburlaine, probably produced some time during 1588, followed quickly upon the great success of the first part on the Elizabethan stage. Like its predecessor, the second part is an inversion of the heroic, romantic, pastoral, and mythical conventions it employs. Most of the harsh satire, by this time overtly pessimistic as well, is again directed against Tamburlaine and what he represents. The themes of the debasement of language for military or political purposes and the use of rhetoric to disguise one's personal motives are also continued. Tamburlaine continues to be the braggart warrior in his speech and the master of invective, but in this play the illusions he has spun are punctured by the reality of death, which reduces his aspirations to a recognition that he too has a limitation he cannot overcome.

Part II continues the implicit rejection of the De Casibus fatalism and develops the drama in terms of man's will in the naturalistic, existential, cause-and-

effect world. Tragedy as a dramatic form thus matures, and character development becomes important because man is assumed to have free will. Any attempt to see the Tamburlaine plays as the celebration of free will or Renaissance aspiration, however, has to be severely qualified in light of the strong criticism of the unrestrained power drive so important to Renaissance political philosophy. The artistic problem in the second play is not to present brilliantly the principles of power and political ambition as they are embodied in Tamburlaine but to set limits to his exploits and illustrate the absurdity of his untrammeled ambition. Marlowe here concerns himself more deeply and realistically with his probing of man's nature with reference to the philosophy of history established in Part I, which denies the role of Providence in human affairs, interprets history as a series of events created through mundane struggles, and understands Fortune not as an instrument of divine retribution but as a force which obeys the will of man. Since it is a naturalistic world which Marlowe projects, his hero's fate must conform to natural law. It is the fate and character of Tamburlaine as they unfold through naturalistic means and the artistic techniques relevant to such a design that lead us to Marlowe's meaning.

Tamburlaine's fate approaches a tragic dimension insofar as it is caused by himself and grows out of his

strongest quality, his all-conquering will. His tragedy becomes the blindness in him which refuses to comprehend limits to his abilities as a conqueror. Typical of all the Marlowe protagonists, he tries to overreach human finiteness and in so doing becomes inhuman and degenerates into a devil. As his references to the Greek pantheon and the figures of Christ and Mohammed indicate, Tamburlaine finally believes that he will extend his ruling hand even to the heavens. In his self-delusion he calls himself the Scourge of God; he is lulled into a brutal complacency by his unprecedented conquests and makes the ludicrous assumption that he need not expect death. Ironically, this fault in his vision proceeds from Tamburlaine's virtù.[1] He has been the epitome of the Renaissance prince, symbolizing the ideal power of will, virtù; yet just this power renders him unfit to receive his own death and creates an earthly hell for all who oppose him. The political ideal he represents thus withers under Marlowe's unflinching investigation of its consequences. The dramatic tension in Part II arises from the disparity between the fact of Tamburlaine's inevitable, impending death and the illusion he harbors about continuing indefinitely his astounding course. The play presents, therefore, another example of the illusion-reality conflict.

That Tamburlaine must accept his fate is brought home to us clearly in the overriding image-patterns

of darkness, universal dissolution, and death. Death-imagery is central to the construction and meaning of Part II, and the most important theme is death. Tamburlaine himself, we realize, has come to personify death. In Part I, dressed in all black when he slays the virgins and lays waste the city of Damascus, he recalls on stage the Vice and the devil from the medieval drama. In his concern to murder whoever opposes him and in his grim jokes about his power to inflict death he reinforces this imagery. In Act III, scene v, the meeting between the forces of Tamburlaine and Callapine just before they do battle produces this exchange between Usumcasane and Tamburlaine:

> Vsu. My Lord, your presence makes them pale
> and wan.
> Poore soules they looke as if their deaths
> were neere.
> Tamb. Why, so he is Casane, I am here . . . .
> (3562-64)

Tamburlaine is slowly educated to accept mortality through the deaths of people near to him, Zenocrate and Calyphas, the son he murders. The only possible growth in Tamburlaine as a tragic character comes in Act V, scene iii, when, after asking rhetorically, "And shal I die, and this vnconquered?" two times, he admits that he must die. His growth is severely limited, however,

by his belief that he will live immortal in his sons.

> My flesh deuided in your precious shapes,
> Shal still retaine my spirit, though I die,
> And liue in all your seedes immortally . . . .
>
> (V,iii,4565-67)

This belief inhibits maturity because it retards his recognition of limits to himself. His "fiery spirit" must continue in his sons Amyras and Celebinus. Through his son Amyras he hopes to continue as the Scourge of God:

> So, raigne my sonne, scourge and controlle
> those slaues
> Guiding thy chariot with thy Fathers hand.
>
> (V,iii,4621-22)

He tells Amyras to take his lesson from Phaëthon, who ironically could not take over in his father's stead, and learn to control forcibly the "proud rebelling Iades" under him and guard against their attempts to overthrow him. This is the advice of the Machiavellian politician--to exercise power and cunning in keeping his neighbors in submission. Tamburlaine has not changed essentially, and he leaves his son with advice that can only perpetuate the chaotic world he has created. In the sense that the play's logic is directed toward teaching Tamburlaine--and the audience--that he is a finite creature and must expect death, Tamburlaine, Part II, is a re-working

of the medieval memento mori theme, though there is no indication that Marlowe intends his meaning in any religious sense. In this matter we have one further example of his ability to reinterpret his medieval and Renaissance heritage and produce a startlingly new vision.

The playwright's thematic design is shown on the title-page of the 1606 edition and repeated immediately before The Prologue in the text of the play. We are told that three main events confront Tamburlaine: " . . . his impassionate fury, for the death of his Lady and loue, faire Zenocrate: his fourme of exhortation and discipline to his three sons, and the maner of his own death." Death forms the matter of each event, and death is multiplied through each event. When Zenocrate dies, Tamburlaine's fury blinds him. He wants to "wound the earth, that it may cleaue in twaine," to descend into hell that he may wreak destruction on the "fatall Sisters," who caused Zenocrate's death, and to destroy the heavens for taking his queen. He promises suffering and death for others now that she is dead and begins to carry out his threat by setting fire to the city where she dies. The Prologue has informed us that sacrifice follows Zenocrate's death, and the passionate shepherd turns devil and makes of the earth around him a holocaust. From the time Zenocrate dies, the imagery of Tamburlaine's speeches and actions changes generally from patterns of celestial and heavenly

import to patterns indicating the hell-like state he has created within and without himself. References to heaven and the gods now tend to indicate his maddened desire to conquer them in revenge for what he has suffered. It is Marlowe's symbolic way of telling us that, like his closest prototype Satan, Tamburlaine falls into a hell brought on himself by pridefully aspiring too high. In my introduction I have mentioned that each protagonist in the five main plays dies a death the nature of which is appropriate to the crimes or sins he has committed and which is accompanied by images of fire and burning. The fiery context in each case symbolizes the hell which the protagonist has shaped for his own torture and death from the very materials of his consciousness that were previously used to envision the god-like state he would claim for his own. Mephistophilis tells Faustus that

> Hell hath no limits, nor is circumscribed
> In one self place, but where we are is hell . . .
>
> (II,i,119-20)

and we know that the dramatically external events are a representation of the psychomachia which rends his soul. Likewise, Tamburlaine, Barabas, and Edward do not have to die to experience the isolation and pain of the damned. The heat of hell rebounds to them in the form of the means they use to reach their ideal. They burn in the fire of their all-consuming, blind passions. Tamburlaine's glory

as a conqueror now takes the perverted form of a burning town, and when he dies he feels that his insides are on fire. Barabas' "policy" ironically precipitates him into the caldron. Edward's homosexuality is consummated with a vengeance by Lightborn (whose name means Lucifer, or the devil) by means of the red-hot phallic spit. And Faustus' shrunken soul is consumed in terms of the traditional hellfire. These are fables of man's self-wrought damnation, dramas of the diabolical yearnings which Marlowe sees as irresistible forces destroying the individual who uses his talent in an effort to go beyond his assigned limits as a finite being.

The pattern is similar to the tragedy in De Casibus writings: man's pride makes him aspire toward worldly fame or power, but falling from a high place is the retribution for such presumption. In Marlowe, however, the determinism of Fortune becomes the determinism of character. No outside agency reduces his men to their fallen states. Their own ungoverned passions corrupt their souls.[2] Hell exists inside the human breast. His preoccupation with the existential equivalent of traditional damnation aligns Marlowe with the Calvinists of his time, who were also obsessed with ineradicable evil or limitation in human nature. But while they posited an elect group who were saved by God's mercy, this playwright concentrates only on the half of the equation

which describes sin. The picture of man's nature which he paints is black and pessimistic. It is a world where transcendence is impossible, though it is man's contradictory nature that makes him attempt to transcend his puniness. We have an inverted apocalypse, wherein Satan plays the role of representative man. Not the resurrection but the descent into hell is man's most characteristic tale. When Tamburlaine's Zenocrate--symbol of his transcendent ideal--dies, he wants to "discend into th'infernall vaults" and avenge his loss. His remark implies a difference between his own condition and another, less desirable environment; but in a world in which the ideal is destroyed or not recognized hell is everywhere. Tamburlaine does not descend into the vaults of the earth, but hell comes nevertheless.

The characteristic images used to describe the Marlovian protagonist, aside from the Satan archetype which we see stands behind them all, are the mythical figures of the Titans, Icarus, and Phaëthon. These figures are inserted for their ironic effect, for they are all overreachers who fail in an important way. Jove, who rebelled against his father successfully, still is at the mercy of the Fates; Icarus flew too close to the sun, melted his wings, and plunged to his death; and Phaethon could not control his father's chariot of the sun and was stricken by a lightning bolt for his presumption.

These characters are rebels, they resist the limitations their fathers would impose on them, and they must suffer therefore. Marlowe's use of these mythic prototypes probably derives from his own rebellious nature, his struggles to free himself from tradition, and the pain he had to endure as an iconoclast, an "atheist," a free-thinker. The Baines Note and Kyd's statement seem to corroborate this conjecture; yet it must remain a conjecture, whose value in being pointed out detects the consistency of the vision informing Marlowe's dramas. Another pattern we should mention concerns the burning-tower image. Tamburlaine fires the towers of a city, and Helen suggests to Faustus the burning "topless towers of Ilium." The tower, indicating spatial penetration and a reaching upward, and the fire, frustrating and destroying its design, represent the same sort of frustration and despair of purpose that the rebels symbolize to us. For though man would fly, he is earthbound; Faustus' blood congeals on his arm to read "Homo fuge!" after he signs the fatal bond, but he cannot reach up toward the heavens for salvation.

Marlowe constructs this drama around the events signalized in the title and The Prologue and thus allows the work to receive its basic unifying power through its main theme, death. Unity of theme is important to Marlowe's method of writing plays, as we have seen, because he tends

toward the rambling, episodic drama characteristic of the morality play. In him Elizabethan drama focuses more clearly than ever before on significant ideas and issues. In addition, he develops the meanings and consequences of such ideas by embodying them in a dramatic character whose magnetic presence transcends ordinary types and labels.

Tamburlaine's rage results not from love for the dead queen (though he is stricken by the loss which her death represents) but from an ego thwarted and insulted by a natural event. Marlowe reveals that the man obsessed by his own ego and spurred on only by a monomaniacal dream for self-glorification is incapable of loving another. Tamburlaine is isolated and helpless before simple nature, a ludicrous parody of the unmitigated struggle for power. It is the simple limitations of nature that the Marlowe hero fails to recognize which, for all his apparent superiority, isolate him from humanity and prove his undoing.

The "fourme of exhortation and discipline" that Tamburlaine gives his sons is that of the model Elizabethan power politician, and he again uses language to further his military designs in his sons. We have already seen the advice he gives Amyras and Celebinus as he is dying in Act V, scene iii. Here, in Act III, scene ii, he begins teaching all three of his sons to rule and conquer

ruthlessly and expediently, as he himself has done. Desiring that they adopt bravery and courage as their attitudes, he purposely cuts his arm to prove that wounds are easily endured. That he hates cowardice and extends death to anyone whose qualities challenge his own is savagely shown to us when, in Act IV, scene i, he murders the despicable Calyphas, who refuses to join his father and brothers in battle. Calyphas does not capture our sympathies, but he is the only one of Tamburlaine's three sons whose qualities resemble those of his mother, the comparatively gentle queen; the other sons are images of their father. Tamburlaine, killing again because there has been opposition to his will, becomes an object of revulsion and hate. The ideal of power politics in which the Elizabethans were becoming increasingly interested is given a frighteningly unnatural dimension. Death cannot be separated from ambition, Marlowe amply demonstrates.

The meaning of the third event announced in the title-page poses no mystery after we understand the first two. The Prologue hints that Tamburlaine's death will not be admirable. In saying that "death cuts off the progres of his pomp . . . ," Marlowe indicates that the most certain, most natural event in man's experience measures even those who claim kinship with the gods. Tamburlaine's desire to attempt war on heaven when Zenocrate dies appears ludicrously feeble when he must accept the same fate. His

false estimation of himself, his pride, has brought grief to everyone he has opposed; and now the falsity of his attitude is evident and contradicts all his psychopathic illusions. The dense texture of images denoting divinity (classical-mythological, Mohammedan, and Christian) which Marlowe has woven into Part II illustrates the grandiose mistake Tamburlaine makes. By assuming that he too can become divine, immortal, and can conquer the god's realm by the same means he has used to subdue a great part of the earth, the Scourge of God has become the Fool of Fate. His mistake has been not recognizing the limits of mere force and human will. He has been seduced into believing that will alone can create the future which his fondest dreams have imagined. If Marlowe shows in Part I that the medieval notion of a deterministic universe implicitly denies man's dignity, he illustrates in Part II that even man's will, controlling great potential for overcoming circumstance and transforming chance into opportunity, has to recognize natural limitations. By pointing out another ingredient in man's constitution--the will to power, success, and personal fulfillment--Marlowe does not intend that man ignore his finiteness.

Since Tamburlaine embodies the Renaissance ideal of virtù, and is thus drawn as the strong-willed prince who forces Fortune to obey him and subdues everyone who opposes him, he assumes an importance outside the imperatives of

the drama itself. He becomes Marlowe's contribution to the history of ideas. In him Marlowe describes the practical results of secular, humanistic, and naturalistic Renaissance philosophy applied to political thought. Though he subscribes to a more existential, problematical philosophy of history and politics than medieval theorists or even Tudor apologists do, he comes increasingly to realize, and to illustrate, that moderation, limitation, and discipline must temper the new directions in thought. He is a dramatist of ideas as well as a genius of dramatic spectacle.

Marlowe replaces the pessimistic De Casibus interpretation of history with the potentially optimistic notion that man's will provides the potency for shaping events, but he arrives at a pessimistic view of the application of the ungoverned self. At least he implies dramatically that if man no longer fears the evil of such an outside agency as Fortune he may create a different sort of evil within himself. Fortune as a providential agent no longer applies to his philosophy, but Fortune as contingent circumstance and individual limitation does. Speaking in terms of the Elizabethan stage tradition and the emergence of historical drama and tragedy, we realize how much of a change Marlowe must have been to his time. Not only will historical drama now tend to be seen through individual men, but also tragedy will tend increasingly to investigate

relevant moral and ethical problems according to the individual's responsibility and his contingency with other people. Marlowe is striking at the center of Renaissance philosophic content, particularly Machiavellian political ethics.

In order to demonstrate that the drive for power, unmitigated by any saving graces, changes men into hateful monsters Marlowe sets up a pattern of incidents reflecting the treachery, treason, and murder men are capable of when they seek total power. A series of oaths is made by important characters, only to be broken, all showing the perversion of trust and language between men when ambition nullifies their agreements. The value of the Word is prostituted when language becomes a tool of political expediency. Like Tamburlaine's highly rhetorical speeches, the spoken word no longer conveys one man's message to another but only reflects the self in its quest for power or glory and the loneliness and isolation which are the results of an individual's appropriating such power to himself.

In Act I, scene ii, Sigismund, King of Hungary, swears an oath with Orcanes, King of Natolia, to aid him in the fight against Tamburlaine. Sigismund, the Christian, and Orcanes, the Mohammedan, both swear by their gods that they are allies against the furious Scythian. In Act II, scene i, however, Sigismund revokes his promise to Orcanes when

Frederick, his European ally, reminds him that Orcanes has murdered many Christians and, moreover, that his campaign against Tamburlaine is going badly. In practical terms Frederick is shrewdly advising Sigismund to let Orcanes suffer defeat, and his excuse is that God sends this opportunity to Sigismund to avenge the deaths of so many Christians at the hands of the Turks. Baldwin, Lord of Bohemia, agrees with Frederick and says,

> . . . for with such Infidels,
> In whom no faith nor true religion rests,
> We are not bound to those accomplishments,
> The holy lawes of Christendome inioine . . . .
>
> (II,i,2827 - 30)

and Frederick adds,

> Assure your Grace tis superstition
> To stand so strictly on dispensiue faith:
> And should we lose the opportunity
> That God hath giuen to venge our Christians death
> And scourge their foule blasphemous
> Paganisme . . . .
>
> (II,i,2843-47)

Religion, then, is also only a tool in the event of political necessity; it is only a rationalization for any brutal, barbaric, or treasonable action which serves its agents. The Christians here are reduced to the same level of barbarity as the enemy they so hate. Morally they stand no

higher than the blaspheming shepherd, and in fact their cowardly dishonesty makes us despise them even more. We realize that the logic involved in these speeches, especially Baldwin's, directs its attack against the righteous excuse made by Christians that God directs their campaigns against infidels and that they are excused from their obligations if their conduct furthers what they presume to be God's design. Marlowe was familiar with this attitude in Tudor England, and he could not have forgotten that Catholics had been excused by the Pope from their loyalty to the English monarch since the days of Henry VIII.

In Act I, scene iii, Almeda frees Callapine, the son of Bajazeth, who lies imprisoned by Tamburlaine, because Callapine promises him a crown. The lust for a crown motivates most of the important characters in these two plays, and even a lowly jail keeper is not exempt from its seductive glow. The two swear allegiance to each other. Later, in Act I, scene vi, Tamburlaine, Techelles, and Usumcasane talk about destroying their enemies and unpeopling the earth to gain support for their campaigns. They sanctify their thirst for blood by their oaths to support one another--oaths taken in the name of the gods. Their enemies, the Kings of Trebisond, Soria, Natolia, and Jerusalem, vow to join Tamburlaine's enemy Callapine, thus forming an unholy alliance of schemers whose common ground is the mutual hatred of Tamburlaine. The irony of their all

using the bond of language, whose purpose is communion among men, as an instrument of perpetrating slaughter, compounded by their loathsome and barbaric prayers to their gods to help them murder, mocks the dignity of man and finds Christians and pagans alike guilty. These parallel scenes reduce factional allegiances and competition to hollow cant and bloodthirsty jealousy. Common to them all are the crowns which Tamburlaine's allies and his enemies as well exchange on stage to express loyalty to their leaders but which ironically reveal the nature of the prize they all strive for. To complete the oath-making pattern Marlowe originates circumstances which tempt Tamburlaine's enemies to break or somehow defile their oaths during the progress of the action. The breaking of oaths reinforces the examples of treachery and betrayal throughout. The Scythian himself, of course, is the most proficient propagandist and user of cant and merely stands out as the monarch they would all like to be. Sigismund's broken oath to Orcanes; Callapine's persuasive speech to Almeda, who sets him free; Calyphas' preference for peace and his mother's company; and all the other examples of dishonest relationships or agreements broken for political and military expediency constitute the betrayal and madness of a world devoted to political, social, and military rivalry.

But though Marlowe fills his pages with perpetrators of the Hollow Word, no one masters the rhetoric of deceit

and abuse as Tamburlaine does. His moral blindness shows in nearly every speech. In the course of the drama he calls on Christ, Mohammed, and Jove, either to help him conquer or to be witness that he is numbered among the elect. His invoking their aid or addressing them is meaningless insofar as accurate communication is concerned. His rhetoric looms as the supreme artifice of the politician whose only value is power. Marlowe is the first to use speeches and language as a part of character development.[3] The meaningless, hollow rhetoric which characterizes Tamburlaine reveals, in Act II, scene iii, as he sits by the dying Zenocrate, a man fascinated by his own language. One of the best examples in the play for showing Tamburlaine's illusions about himself and his pretended relationship to the divine powers, the speech reveals that his self-love causes him to equate himself with the gods and assume the same for Zenocrate because she is his queen. He has failed to understand her as a human being and fashioned in his mind instead an ideal of pure Beauty which he calls Zenocrate and which he envisions as his proper goal as a conqueror. He has debased love, then, and sought self-completion not in human affection but in seeking a will-o'-the-wisp which, he thinks, justifies any cruelty needed to reach it.

In the course of the speech the repeated phrase ending "diuine Zenocrate" becomes an ironic refrain

attesting to his blindness about her mortality, though the word "blacke" and images of darkness remind us, as does Tamburlaine's black costume in Part I, that death is near. The last line is almost pathetic in his helplessness before death. The man who has boasted that he controls Fortune, other people's fates, and death itself now is seen in the tragic irony of his willful miscalculation. Somehow, he has assumed that Zenocrate would be translated to heaven and entertained by the heavenly host--but not that she would actually die.

> Blacke is the beauty of the brightest day,
> The golden balle of heauens eternal fire,
> That danc'd with glorie on the siluer waues:
> Now wants the fewell that enflamde his beames
> And all with faintnesse and for foule disgrace,
> He bindes his temples with a frowning cloude,
> Ready to darken earth with endlesse night:
> Zenocrate that gaue him light and life,
> Whose eies shot fire from their Iuory bowers,
> And tempered euery soule with liuely heat,
> Now by the malice of the angry Skies,
> Whose iealousie admits no second Mate,
> Drawes in the comfort of her latest breath
> All dasled with the hellish mists of death.
> Now walk the angels on the walles of heauen,
> As Centinels to warne th' immortall soules,

To entertaine diuine Zenocrate.
Apollo, Cynthia, and the ceaslesse lamps
That gently look'd vpon this loathsome earth,
Shine downwards now no more, but deck the
heauens
To entertaine diuine Zenocrate.
The christall springs whose taste illuminates
Refined eies with an eternall sight,
Like tried siluer runs through Paradice
To entertaine diuine Zenocrate.
The Cherubins and holy Seraphins
That sing and play before the king of kings,
Vse all their voices and their instruments
To entertaine diuine Zenocrate.
And in this sweet and currious harmony,
The God that tunes this musicke to our soules:
Holds out his hand in highest maiesty
To entertaine diuine Zenocrate.
Then let some holy trance conuay my thoughts,
Vp to the pallace of th'imperiall heauen:
That this my life may be as short to me
As are the daies of sweet Zenocrate:
Phisitions, wil no phisicke do her good?
(II,iii,2969-3006)

In all its stultifying artificiality it proves a man more taken with the egotism of making song than with his dying

queen, and it reveals his preoccupation with the ultimate in kingship--divinity. Her dying is not so much the loss of a loved one as it is the passing of what represents his highest aspirations. The highly-wrought structure of the speech and Tamburlaine's self-conscious artistry take it infinitely far away from the spontaneity of felt emotion. Tamburlaine can be called a romantic in the pejorative sense: he is a self-encased, immature, and highly emotional word-monger. He feels that a prayer to heaven will save Zenocrate, even as his words earlier have made him the most feared man on earth. But he has adopted a completely secular, naturalistic philosophy of life, which bears no real connection with the divine powers. Since he has depended solely on physical principles to live, he must rely on physical powers also when death comes. His mistake is that he does not recognize this terrible isolation. He is an earth-bound creature, unable to reach upward toward divinity. He cannot see his wretchedness partly because his speech no longer connects him with other men by communication but darkens his eyes with the rhetoric of illusion. The images of darkness throughout reinforce this interpretation of isolation and moral blindness, as they do the theme of death.

Zenocrate's death-scene is paralleled in Act IV, scene ii, in the episode where Olympia dies. In Act III, scene iv, her husband, the Captain of Balsera, is slain by

the forces of Tamburlaine; and she kills her son rather than see him the dishonored slave of the Scythian. She uses this same rationalization again when she tries to kill herself, but Theridamas prevents her. Though she has been taught that suicide is a sin, she feels that Mohammed will forgive her if she justifies this passionate act with the argument that she is preserving her honor. Theridamas complicates her situation by admitting his sudden love for her and trying to persuade her to live and be his love. But she is not impressed by his boasting that Tamburlaine is greater than the gods, and she is indifferent to his love.

As the episode continues in Act IV, we find her still the mourning wife. The love she has expressed for her husband and son is the strongest in the play, and she is the only example of unselfish loyalty in the play. She is loyal, moreover, not to a crown or to a leader but to the family she has loved. Her choosing death instead of life under Tamburlaine is a harsh judgment of what people under a tyrant have to endure. The only way she can uphold the human values we see are so antithetical to Tamburlaine is through suicide. Theridamas again becomes the passionate shepherd to his love, but his rhetoric does not persuade her to live with him. He does not have the power of words that his master does, and in fact Olympia makes use of the flimsiest sort of argument to trick him into killing her. He believes her when she says that she has an ointment that

will protect its user from all weapons. And he is fool enough to stab her in the throat after she has applied the ointment there. The whole episode underlines the use of rhetoric for purposes of deceit and rationalization. Whether the design of her deceit is honorable or not, the result is still death. Again, language has not communicated or helped people but has served the passion for death and led to tragedy. Everyone connected with Tamburlaine seems to be diseased with his violence, and the paths of his glory are lined with the futile graves of his victims.

As the drama progresses, Marlowe increases his use of the images of death, darkness, hell, blood, fire, and destruction. Tamburlaine wishes to descend to hell, when Zenocrate dies, and "wound the earth, that it may cleaue in twaine." Then he would destroy the heavens. The speech when he fires the unfortunate town in which his queen has died epitomizes Marlowe's effective use of figures to reinforce his themes:

> So, burne the turrets of this cursed towne,
> Flame to the highest region of the aire:
> And kindle heaps of exhalations,
> That being fiery meteors, may presage,
> Death and destruction to th'inhabitants.
> Ouer my Zenith hang a blazing star,
> That may endure till heauen be dissolu'd,
> Fed with the fresh supply of earthly dregs,

Threatning a death and famine to this land,
Flieng Dragons, lightning, fearfull thunderclaps,
Sindge these fair plaines, and make them seeme as
black
As is the Island where the Furies maske
Compast with Lethe, Styx and Phlegeton,
Because my deare Zenocrate is dead.
(III,ii,3191-3204)

It is the wasteland of his soul which he describes, the parched being of a man who lacks communion with his fellows and his god and lives in the hell of a world without transcendent values. Zenocrate's dying banishes all idealism from his life, even as he perverted what she might have inspired in him through her love.

Marlowe's pattern of images of death predicts Tamburlaine's inevitable death, and the images of darkness relate to the theme of death and also support the theme of the rhetoric of illusion, or the lack of communication and the isolation among characters. The images of hell (fire, blood, fiends, suffering) carve out in the consciousness of the auditors or readers the horrifying, fascinating realization that though Tamburlaine's fate is not played out as tragic retribution (in classical terms) or divine punishment for sins (in Christian terms), the manner of his death fulfills the requirements for both retribution and punishment. Strictly through natural

means is Tamburlaine justly rewarded. The pain he feels in Act V, scene iii, begins immediately after his barbarous murder of the Governor of Babylon, his drowning of the inhabitants of that city, and his burning the copies of the Koran in defiance of Mohammed. The inability to stand, his complaining of the parched heat he feels within, and his great pain point to the conclusion that his system is distempered or apoplectic.

In terms of Renaissance medical theory, which Marlowe knew and followed carefully, Tamburlaine's predominance of the choleric "humours" explains his symptoms.[4] But though he is a character drawn according to the "humours" theory of physiology and psychology, Tamburlaine's malady is best seen as a metaphor for the damnation he experiences as the result of his furious passion for power and sovereignty. Like Faustus, he has become a devil in his thirst to aspire beyond the natural limitations of humanity. He is isolated from man, God, and now even the illusion of immortality that Zenocrate stood for; and his soul recoils upon itself, withers and consumes itself because there is no love or communion to sustain its life. Marlowe's training as a divinity student would predispose him to see life in religious terms, especially if he was an "atheist" or free-thinker who spent much time in refuting religious dogma. And his preoccupation with the condition of damnation, with evil and corruption, and his growing disillusionment with human endeavor support this

thesis. All his important protagonists become devils, enter the state of the damned, degenerate into parodies of their impossible illusions, and burn in the flame of their passions, which ironically do not carry them to ultimate fulfillment but deprive them of humanity altogether. This is the state which Marlowe, who perhaps knew it well himself, dramatizes in Tamburlaine's sickness. Calling it a stroke, "high blood pressure," or a permanent chemical imbalance in the blood does not indicate Marlowe's most important message: hell is an inner state, and Tamburlaine damns himself through passion and pride. In his suffering men Marlowe retells the theological story of Satan's fall and damnation, but the context is not the cosmos but the fallen world of political and military rivalry, commercial greed, the perversion of love, and the superstition attending the New Science. And the main character in these dramas is not the Biblical Satan but the devil that lurks in the human breast. Tamburlaine's natural evil within him is his punishment.

Thus Marlowe builds the equivalent of divine interference in man's life into natural, cause-and-effect events and circumstances. This dramatic strategy parallels his secular philosophy of history, and in Tamburlaine's fate he has made an important philosophical point. Within the framework of man's will, a secular ethic, and a humanistic set of values the playwright contradicts the prevailing optimism of the new thought of his time and

forcefully shows that man's humanity and dignity can be destroyed if the new ideas are practiced to their full extent. The principle of subjecting all values to the power-principle, in science, commerce, or politics, is a fearful kind of moral chaos. Marlowe implies that limits to the spirit of Renaissance aspiration must be recognized and followed, or the potential individual freedom which resides in such a conception will prove fatal.

He is especially pessimistic about the philosophy of power politics, which transfers the idea of man's boundless will to the dream of the super-state or imperialistic nation. When Tamburlaine forces the Turkish kings in Act IV, scene iii, to pull his chariot as though they are beasts--a repetition of his treatment of Bajazeth in Part I--he not only brutalizes the ideal of kingship but also becomes brute-like himself. With his talent for invective he addresses them, "ye pampered Iades of Asia," and compares himself favorably to Phoebus, the mythological figure who was said to drive the chariot of the sun across the heavens. The allusion is ironic, for he is not like the sun god at all but like his son Phaëthon, who could not control the horses his pride told him he could manage and who is killed by Zeus for his presumption. The point that Tamburlaine's tragic presumption is a part of his success as a monarch and yet suggests Phaëthon's failure would not have been lost by perceptive Elizabethans. They were used

to Ovid's Metamorphoses and aware of Machiavelli's The Prince, or at least the ideas in it. They were also used to the Tudor homilies which emphasized the ideas that kings are invested with divine blessing, assistance, and power and that subjects should therefore submit unquestioningly to their monarchs. When Tamburlaine degrades the ideal of monarchy by his bloody conquests and suffers no retribution when he overthrows king after king, he deals a serious blow at the whole Tudor system. His success is shown to be the result not of God's will but of his own skill in manipulating his subjects with propaganda and his limitless power to slaughter and subdue. And any monarch who advocates the methods which Tamburlaine exercises so absolutely partakes of his despicable nature and deserves no love or allegiance.

In two short dramas Marlowe has changed the course of English drama, first by rejecting the fatalistic and impersonal De Casibus philosophy of tragedy and history and, second, by placing the emphasis of tragic presentation on the character of individual men and not on an abstract notion of Providence. Rendering his conflict in terms of human will and a secular, humanistic, existential ethic, he no doubt recognizes great potential in Renaissance ideals of personal and national striving but becomes disillusioned when he considers the manifestations in human nature of the practice of this philosophy to the

exclusion of restraining policies. He attacks the foundation of Renaissance political philosophy and shows it to be a cover for the drive for absolute power. He is a philosopher of history and a dramatist of ideas, whose conclusions about man's nature and condition directly contradict the "success story" of the strong Renaissance prince by showing it to be absolutely immoral and destructive, regardless of the attraction it can at times have in such an exemplar as Tamburlaine. And though he uses some stage techniques reminiscent of the morality plays, he develops toward the drama of character and makes the spoken word on stage a vehicle of dramatic action as revelatory of individual psychology as the visual imitation of action itself. In his dramatization of the conflict love and war produce in the heroic figure he hints at the classical themes of love and honor in the heroic play which later preoccupy such a Restoration dramatist as Dryden, whose Almanzor in The Conquest of Granada is the honorably transformed and humanized heir of the evil Tamburlaine. In his dramatization of a Titan who destroys men because he cannot control his passions Marlowe prefigures the Restoration fanaticism with keeping Reason over Passion. If the rival claims of Venus and Mars are decided in favor of the God of War in Tamburlaine, they are not forgotten by English dramatists; and Shakespeare's Antony and Cleopatra and, later, Dryden's Antony and Cleopatra must interpret the problem posed by Marlowe for their own times.

NOTES

[1]Ribner, in The English History Play, p. 64, and in "Marlowe and Machiavelli," p. 351, identifies Tamburlaine's most important characteristic as virtù but feels that Marlowe glorifies this quality.

[2]The references to astrology in both plays indicate that there is a force determining the actions of the characters, but the characters understand this force only in terms of astrology or Fortune--an outside agency interfering in the affairs of men. Marlowe's interpretation of human passions or "humours" as the determining factor in human life parallels the determinism of the astrologists but alters its source. Cf. Johnstone Parr, Tamburlaine's Malady and Other Essays on Astrology in Elizabethan Drama (University, Alabama, 1953), pp. 3-23. Mr. Parr's thesis is that Tamburlaine's stars, which are responsible for his passions, ultimately determine the manner of his death in Part II.

[3]Wolfgang Clemen, English Tragedy Before Shakespeare: The Development of Dramatic Speech, trans. T. S. Dorsch (London, 1961), p. 114.

[4]See, for example, Carroll Camden, Jr., "Marlowe and Elizabethan Psychology," PQ, VII,iv (1929), 69-78 and "Tamburlaine: The Choleric Man," MLN, XLIV (Nov., 1929), 430-35. Roy W. Battenhouse, Marlowe's Tamburlaine: A Study in Renaissance Moral Philosophy (Nashville, Tennessee, 1941), p. 257, sees Tamburlaine's fits of madness as explainable in psychological terms but feels that Marlowe is using this strategy to indicate God's punishment for the warrior's uncontrolled passions and crimes.

CHAPTER IV

INFINITE RICHES IN A LITTLE ROOM: THE METAMORPHOSIS OF BARABAS

In The Jew of Malta, written about 1590, Marlowe continues his study of the psychology of aspiration which he began in the Tamburlaine plays. Tamburlaine, though a character of heroic magnitude, brings about his own tragedy because in his obsession with absolute military power he refuses to recognize his human limitations and his contingency with other people. The Jew, Barabas, is not heroic, but he is another harshly satirized caricature of conventional beliefs and attitudes. In addition, he is the best Elizabethan example of the stage "Machiavel" (who later appears often on the Jacobean stage) and a stereotyped anti-Semitic portrait as well. Barabas is the rising economic man of the 16th century, whose yearning for power is expressed in terms of economic control and is based on an unscrupulous ethic, which is branded "Machiavellian" in the play.

Marlowe's "Machiavellian" Barabas, however, is not a true representation of the Italian's philosophy but, instead,

the popular stage villain known as the "Machiavel" to Elizabethans. His character is a mixture of the Vice-figure from the morality tradition, the devil of miracle plays, the Senecan "Villain-hero," and what was popularly thought of as the Machiavellian man.[1] In addition, he is a Jew, a member of the despised "race" who killed the Christian God and therefore can be hated by the orthodox audience. The name Barabas identifies him as a thief and recalls the man who was said to be pardoned by Pilate so that Christ might be crucified instead. There are many reasons why Marlowe's audience would have hated Barabas. That the play satirizes not the Jews, however, but prevailing attitudes of Tudor England only proves the subtle irony ~~of~~ Marlowe's design.

Barabas, like the other Marlovian men, stresses the playwright's concern with the subject of damnation. His obsession with economic power isolates him from the other characters, alienates him from our sympathies through the vengeful atrocities it inspires in him, and finally insures his tragic collapse. He undergoes a process of metamorphosis from a wronged Jewish merchant to an insane devil intent upon evil, which he accepts as his sole identity as the play progresses. On stage he is gaudily dressed and equipped with a large red nose and reminds us of the Vice-figure, who is both ludicrous and evil at the same time; his appearance provides the visual symbol by which we can correctly interpret his character. Although Barabas is

an obviously thoroughgoing villain who delights in bringing others pain and grief, his grotesquely stereotyped stage appearance softens the impact of his evil nature on the audience. He is much like a modern melodramatic character in that he clearly represents values both the playwright and the audience deplore but is not taken so seriously that he cannot be laughed at. One of the sources of the merriment he provides is his falling victim to his own scheming in the last act, the ironic butt of a diabolical jest he has prepared for his enemies. Because of the degeneration of his personality into a laughable devil whose antics destroy others as well as himself, the tone of the play changes from the serious intent of the first two acts to an almost ridiculous--and sometimes farcical--recounting of petty but brutal crimes in the last three. Critics have claimed that this change represents a serious error on the part of the playwright and may be proof that a collaborator is the actual author of much of the last three acts. But the dramatic technique merely parallels the progressively evil career of Barabas; a sustained seriousness would be incongruous with the metamorphosis he undergoes and, hence, with the whole design of the play.

Though the events of the plot are his own invention, Marlowe probably had the account of the Portugese Jew, Juan Miques, or Michesius, in mind when he outlined the events in Barabas' life. During the last half of the

16th century until about 1590 Miques, a Machiavellian plotter and a favorite of the Turkish Sultan Selim II, advised the Sultan to break his promise to the Venetian Republic in 1569 and seize the island of Cyprus. Barabas' actual personality, on the other hand, possibly reflects the character of the notorious Jew of Constantinople, David Passi, who aided the Turkish plots against Malta, was known for manipulating both Turks and Christians to advance his own ignoble career, and was closely connected with England's diplomacy in the Mediterranean.[2] Marlowe's use of a historical figure again puts him in the tradition of the English history plays: he dramatizes through the interpretation of an actual event and character some lesson or idea which he feels they demonstrate.

In this play and in the ones following Marlowe continues to see tragedy in a secular framework and interprets events as the results of man's willful self-assertion. The Renaissance spirit of individual achievement in all areas of human endeavor provides the perfect theme, therefore, for his conception of tragedy. The attitude which favors unlimited personal aspiration invariably involves the individual in situations where ethical and moral insights conflict with his seeking power. The "Machiavellian" political, social, and economic practices which the drama investigates are merely an extension to the national level of this attitude toward individual achievement, but Marlowe

emphasizes particularly the sordid implications they carry for human relationships. Whether an individual or a state strives for economic superiority, the avarice which is inspired by the worship of Mammon leads to the dangerous and inhuman struggle for power in which Barabas, Ferneze, and the others engage.

The "Machiavellian" themes of deceit and power politics are introduced in the Prologue by "Macheuil," who represents for the audience all the odious political practices they were taught to hate. He claims that his philosophy is the most successful in achieving political eminence. Strong men follow his teachings, he says, and fall only when they reject or ignore them. Because he does not respect other men, he does not consider their words important. Barabas and the others who pervert language in order to gain political power and satisfy their revenge follow his terrifying advice. Macheuil declares "Religion but a childish Toy"; and we see that his disciples on stage--Christians and Jews alike--employ religion as they do any other tool in the art of self-aggrandizement. In fact, we see that the characters discount formal religion, and they substitute for God the principles of avarice and revenge and live solely by them. This perversion of religious values is especially manifested in Barabas. In addition, the idea that Christians condemn themselves and their faith when they engage in unethical politics is one

that Marlowe wants to follow implicitly from their actions and be obvious to an audience living in a time of expanding English commercialism and imperialism, guided by the able statecraft of Elizabeth herself and her advisers.

The next point that Macheuil makes is that "might makes right": the title to a crown means less than the power to take it and keep it, he says. (The last four letters of his name, "-euil," suggest also by means of a pun that might makes evil.) What follows from this, of course, are a foreign and a domestic policy built on the accumulation of military strength and the abandonment of negotiations and treaties, which depend on the untrustworthy words of men. Finally, Macheuil states his relation to the Jew: he will tell Barabas' tragedy because Barabas has used his tactics to obtain wealth. Marlowe makes clear that, from the beginning, Barabas is to be considered evil. But he does draw some measure of sympathy in the early scenes when Ferneze victimizes him, and he thus forces the audience into assuming part of his evil identity and sharing in his crimes to a degree. Later, he is detested for being a Jew, a Machiavel, and a devil too; and the audience takes the side of the Christian Ferneze. Ironically, however, there is no difference in their political or ethical standards, and the audience and Ferneze both become objects of Marlowe's satire.

In the first scene of the play we see an extraordinarily

wealthy merchant, who has made his fortune in world-wide commerce on the sea. Since Barabas is the stage descendant of the medieval devils and Vice-figures and also the popular Machiavel who represents political fraud and evil in general, we are prepared for his avaricious opening soliloquy. It is dazzling in its suggestion of opulence and Oriental splendor:

> This is the ware wherein consists my wealth:
> And thus me thinkes should men of iudgement frame
> Their meanes of traffique from the vulgar trade,
> And as their wealth increaseth, so inclose
> Infinite riches in a little roome.
>
> (I,68-72)[3]

The "little roome," an image of constriction or enclosure, becomes an important metaphor in the play: Barabas enjoys only the world's riches that he can possess, grasp, or control. His own personality and physical limits are the measure of his ability to relate to the world, and he has faith only in what he can see; therefore, it is fitting that his tragedy describes the shrinking and degeneration of his soul. Since he forces others to conform to the imperatives of his selfish motives, he unwittingly disengages himself from any communion with his fellows and as a consequence must depend on his own ingenuity and chicanery for survival. The result is that he destroys his soul. Human identity is not possible when the individual

cannot see himself reflected in others, and Barabas keeps open only those lines of communication which aid him in amassing wealth or, later, which serve his revenge. He chooses to limit himself in terms of these base passions and his propensity for evil and finally becomes the very embodiment of them. In the background of his condition stands the pride, the presumption, which demands that he possess and control the infinite riches of the world.

In the second soliloquy Barabas jars us when he speaks of his wealth as a reward from Heaven to the Jews, in terms suggesting the Calvinistic argument that the elect will prosper on earth:

> These are the Blessings promis'd to the Iewes,
> And herein was old Abrams happinesse:
> What more may Heaven doe for earthly man
> Then thus to powre out plenty in their laps,
> Ripping the bowels of the earth for them,
> Making the Sea their seruant, and the winds
> To driue their substance with successefull blasts:
>
> (I,143-149)

As he continues, he criticizes the Christians for their "malice, falshood, and excessiue pride, / Which me thinkes fits not their profession" (155-56). Since the world honors only wealth, Barabas has chosen to become rich; but he is not like the hypocritical Christians, "That thirst so much for Principality" (173). We are made aware that the

Christians, who in Marlowe's century in England turned from their "professions" of seeking heavenly riches to form a large and comparatively prosperous, acquisitive middle class, honor the same financial success Barabas does and are engaged in the same activities by which he flourishes. Though they voice different sentiments toward the accumulation of wealth, their practices are as mean as his. Many of the middle-class merchants of the 16th and 17th centuries were Calvinists, and the bizarre, costumed stereotype of the greedy Jewish merchant ironically reflects their views on God's grace and prosperity. Marlowe uncovers the selfish motives that lie beneath the Calvinistic assumption that earthly prosperity is to be sought and considered a sign of God's grace. The militant Calvinism and the hypocrisy which underlies the predatory behavior in the market-place and predicates a world subdued by God's chosen for the establishment of a New Jerusalem are examples of the same "policy" which the Machiavel Barabas employs so well. Buying and selling on a world-wide scale was the means to prosperity for many English Christians during the Renaissance and later and was intimately connected with the rise of England as a world economic and military power. In questioning the economic basis of the rise of a powerful English state, Marlowe attacks one of the sacred rationalizations for seeking individual power and national prestige.

The second scene is again embarrassing to the Christians. The Maltese must raise the ten years' tribute they owe the Turkish King. Ferneze, the Governor of Malta, decides to extract it from the Jews, saying that the Jews' presence in Malta has caused their financial troubles. He justifies his severe tax on them because they are "infidels," using his religious profession to produce a scapegoat and rationalize at the same time his anti-Semitism. When the Governor decides to appropriate all of Barabas' money instead of half, his Knight echoes an old anti-Semitic attitude:

> If your first curse fall heauy on thy head,
> And make thee poore and scornd of all the world,
> 'Tis not our fault, but thy inherent sinne.
>
> (I,340-42)

These lines underline the hyprocisy of the Christians and also remind us that the Calvinists could say of a poor man that his shortcomings in the eyes of God as well as his own sloth explain his condition. This excuse could be useful for anyone who wanted to justify his unscrupulous attainment of wealth. The difference between the Christian and the Machiavel is negligible when, for all their words, they pursue the same way of life.

Marlowe indicts the Christians for their "Machiavellian" methods by linking the two key words, "policie" and "simplicity," together in the same context. The Governor's

Knight advises that they hurry to pay the Turkish tribute on time,

> For if we breake our day, we breake the league,
> And that will proue but simple policie.
>
> (I,391-92)

"Simple" recalls an important concept of the Puritans when they revolted against the established Church of England and, earlier, the whole attitude of the Protestant Reformation in relation to the complex ritual and dogma of the Roman Church. In both movements "simplicity" in worship was to bring man closer to God by removing the institutional barriers dividing them and by placing on the individual Christian the responsibility and justification for his actions. "Policy" of course was used to suggest the shrewd and unscrupulous attitude of the Machiavel. Barabas understands which of the words better describes the Christians of Malta:

> I, policie? that's their profession,
> And not simplicity, as they suggest.
> The plagues of Egypt, and the curse of heauen,
> Earths barrennesse, and all mens hatred
> Inflict vpon them, thou great Primus Motor.
> And here vpon my knees, striking the earth,
> I banne their soules to everlasting paines
> And extreme tortures of the fiery deepe,
> That thus haue dealt with me in my distresse.
>
> (I,393-401)

As he curses the Christians, Barabas' diabolic identity is made clear; and he begins his metamorphosis, the process of damnation during which he becomes more and more evil and estranges himself from any humanity that he once possessed. Instead of referring to God according to the ancient and medieval notion of the Primum mobile, he invokes "thou great Primus Motor," a deity of power and dynamism not unlike the picture of the chaotic driving force in man and nature which Tamburlaine accepts for a cosmology. Barabas links himself with the pervading spirit of Renaissance aspiration. He worships the principle of power. In him, Marlowe dramatizes the idea that obedience to the principle of individual dynamism not only propels a man to high achievement but also alienates and destroys him.

When his money is taken from him, Barabas compares his loss to Job's condition, but he comes off badly in the comparison. Job submits to his tribulations, wins God's favor, and attains personal salvation in a world of evil and changing fortunes. Barabas has none of Job's inner peace and seeks revenge against his enemies. He does not have God as a guiding force but is the slave of the abstractions of power and riches. What he accepts as an ethical guide is the will to power. He has the presumption to believe himself better than other men (I,448-54) and plans to bring "these base slaues" to grief.

Immediately after his malediction he turns to his daughter Abigail, the only one whom he seems to love. His quick change in manner reminds us of Tamburlaine's speech on Zenocrate just after he slays the virgins, and again Marlowe uses the figure of a woman to symbolize the dual quality of the protagonist's soul. Abigail, like Zenocrate, is first of all not loved for herself, and so she cannot exert any positive influence over her father. Secondly, she is soon replaced in Barabas' mind by the lust for gold and revenge which destroys them both. All of Marlowe's central tragic figures--Tamburlaine, Barabas, Edward, and Faustus--fail to gain and be influenced by the love of a woman. The human warmth of wife, daughter, or lover is what they disregard in favor of their own aspirations; and their separation from the woman-figure denotes the death that their individual souls experience and the loss of fulfillment or self-completion which tortures them. They lose their souls because they choose not to give themselves to that otherness which love demands. Abigail and the other heroines in Marlowe's five great tragedies represent the souls which the protagonists blindly murder as they pursue their passionate aspirations or their will to power instead of the true divinity inherent in their human nature.

Typical of his cunning, Barabas has hidden away a large treasure in his house in case he should be forced to

give up the rest of his riches. But Abigail tells him that he cannot recover the hidden wealth because his house has been confiscated along with his money and made into a nunnery. Though he is distressed, he finds a solution: Abigail will pretend that she wants to become a Christian and enter the nunnery, so that she can obtain Barabas' cache. The Christians have taught him religious hypocrisy, and he feels that he is justified in using the same attitude to satisfy his greed and revenge:

> As good dissemble that thou neuer mean'st
> As first meane truth, and then dissemble it,
> A counterfet profession is better
> Then vnseene hypocrisie.
>
> (I,529-32)

As he forces Abigail, the symbol of his soul, to become dishonest and compromise her integrity, he furthers his career as villain, Vice, and devil. And step by step his desire for gold and his evil passions will replace what values she holds for him, until at last he must murder her to continue his course. His deeds fully damn the "policy" which he and the others employ in their "Machiavellian" political struggles, and the play becomes the tragedy of a morally disordered world as much as the satirical tragedy of Barabas' damnation.

Barabas' opening soliloquy in Act II ends with a prayer that his money will be delivered back to him. If

Abigail cannot succeed, he prays to God to

. . . let the day
Turne to eternall darkenesse after this . . . .

(II,654-55)

It is the same darkness which prefigures Tamburlaine's tragic fall and death, the appropriate image to signify the soul cut off from its source of light. When he receives his bags of money from Abigail, he becomes ecstatic but ridiculous, for he makes a fool of himself as he perverts both human love and divine worship into the worship of gold:

Oh my girle,
My gold, my fortune, my felicity;
Strength to my soule, death to mine enemy;
Welcome the first beginner of my blisse:
Oh Abigal, Abigal, that I had thee here too,
Then my desires were fully satisfied,
But I will practise thy enlargement thence:
Oh girle, oh gold, oh beauty, oh my blisse!

(II,688-95)

Again we have an image of constriction (Abigail's virtual imprisonment in the nunnery) to convey the limitation, the self-encasement, and the isolation of Barabas' condition. He cannot have the salvation which Abigail's freedom would represent and adore his gold too. The strangulation of his soul proceeds from his avarice: the God of love and Mammon cannot both be followed, and the worship of one god

denies the other. His speech shows that Barabas prefers his gold, but he is partly aware of the loss which Abigail's confinement represents to him. As the last line shows, his preference for gold over the saving grace which the innocent Abigail has meant to him plunges him into a hopeless moral confusion. In their preoccupation with power the other Marlovian protagonists also lose what is truly valuable to them, and their loss becomes the metaphor for the lost or impoverished soul, willfully cut off from the love or traditional values which nourish it. Hence, Edward's tragic condition is dramatized in the loss of his kingship and his Queen Isabella, who is a part of the traditional rank and system of moral values he rejects. Faustus' damnation is the loss of supernatural grace which his acceptance of magic and, before that, his preoccupation with sin imply. His pain is compounded when he cannot possess the pleasure of pagan mythology and its world of art which Helen represents. And of course Tamburlaine abrogates his Arcadian heritage and creates a hell on earth characterized by the loss of transcendent values associated with Zenocrate, whom rampant militarism destroys.

Barabas' conniving "policy" is paralleled by Ferneze's breaking faith with the Turks and allowing Martin del Bosco, Vice-Admiral in the Spanish navy and a Catholic, to sell his captured slaves in Malta, in exchange for his

military aid against Selim Calymath. Del Bosco convinces Ferneze that violating the agreement with the Turks and waging war against them with the money collected from the Jews is not wrong because the Turks seized the island of Rhodes from the Christians, an act which ought to be repaid with treachery. Ferneze accepts the logic of revenge and hypocrisy and feels that he is acting honorably by betraying "these barbarous mis-beleeuing Turkes."

Religious prejudice also motivates Barabas. He hates the Christians, we are informed, because they do not happen to be Jews. And his hatred of them helps him to rationalize his plan of revenge against Ferneze, which includes the murder of his son Lodowick, who is in love with Abigail. Barabas' metamorphosis into a devil is again revealed as he plans to entrap the innocent Lodowick:

> Now will I shew my selfe to haue more of the
>
> Serpent
>
> Then the Doue; that is, more knaue than foole.
>
> (II,797-98)

Like Satan before him, the Jew assumes the qualities of the snake to bring other beings to grief. In his ludicrous and evil degeneration into an inferior species he also resembles Milton's Satan, whose heroic stature diminishes throughout Paradise Lost. Echoing the perverted religious justification Governor Ferneze has used for his treachery, Barabas claims to Lodowick that "vnto vs the Promise doth

belong" and goes about his evil scheme. We learn that in order to revenge himself against Ferneze Barabas also must involve Mathias, who loves Abigail too. That she loves Mathias seems to make no difference to the villain. Yet Barabas' evil is not different in kind from the rest of the world he faces; Mathias' mother Katherine, for example, instructs her son not to speak with the Jew because "he is cast off from heauen." It is only in their intensity that the hatred and foul crimes Barabas perpetrates stand out from the others. In fact, he is the finest representative of the whole evil world we see on stage.

At the slave market Barabas buys the ingeniously evil Turk Ithamore, who is best understood perhaps as the Jew's alter-ego. As he gives up his identity as a man when he chooses the gold over his daughter Abigail, Barabas now takes on a new identity: Ithamore is the diabolical, evil-loving, lustful, and ridiculous projection of Barabas' self. He is the incarnate vengeful and avaricious soul of Barabas now that his fair "Diamond" Abigail has no meaning for him. Barabas is self-estranged, having suppressed the soul which Abigail represents and taken on inhuman characteristics; ironically enough, he becomes the slave of those very passions and motives Ithamore symbolizes. Together the two form a pair of Vices or devils as corrupt and chilling in their intents as any on the medieval stage, and they indicate that moral decay extends to every level

in society--from the Governor, to the rich merchant, down to the slave. The "Machiavellianism" which Marlowe satirizes is apparently a mere name for the petty and cruel political and economic struggles with which he was acquainted.

Ithamore is the willing tool of Barabas. His "profession" will be whatever Barabas wills, and so Barabas recounts his extraordinary past for the slave's instruction:

> As for my selfe, I walke abroad a nights
> And kill sicke people groaning under walls:
> Sometimes I goe about and poyson wells;
> And now and then, to cherish Christian theeves,
> I am content to lose some of my Crownes;
> That I may, walking in my Gallery,
> See 'em goe pinion'd along by my doore.
> Being young, I studied Physicke, and began
> To practise first vpon the Italian;
> There I enrich'd the Priests with burials,
> And alwayes kept the Sexton's armes in vre
> With digging graues and ringing dead mens knels:
> And after that was I an Engineere,
> And in the warres 'twixt France and Germanie,
> Vnder pretence of helping Charles the fifth,
> Slew friend and enemy with my stratagems.
> Then after that was I an Vsurer,
> And with extorting, cozening, forfeiting,
> And tricks belonging vnto Brokery,

I fill'd the Iailes with Bankrouts in a yeare,
And with young Orphans planted Hospitals,
And euery Moone made some or other mad,
And now and then one hang himselfe for griefe,
Pinning vpon his breast a long great Scrowle
How I with interest tormented him.
But marke how I am blest for plaguing them,
I haue as much coyne as will buy the Towne.

(II,939-65)

Ithamore's past is no holier, and they form a partnership in crime which will end only in their deaths.

Barabas forces Abigail to feign love to both Mathias and Lodowick so that he can arrange a quarrel and promote a duel between them. Though we pity the two young men, we must realize that the cruel stratagem could not succeed if both were not susceptible of quick and profound hate, jealousy, and distrust toward one another. In the world Marlowe unveils before us revenge, avarice, and lust are natural to the human constitution. No one is innocent except perhaps Abigail, and we have seen that she is malleable in Barabas' hands. Like Zenocrate, she symbolizes the debased transcendent values of a world given over to sin. As much as anything else, the subject of Marlowe's play is the evil in human nature and the morally disfigured world which it produces. It is the same world we see in Jonson's Volpone or The Alchemist, the world of inverted

values which comes at the end of an era. The end of the Middle Ages and the destruction of the religious world-order which it fostered is the setting for Marlowe's dark dramas; this apocalyptic view of the dying Old Order is the heritage he wills to the Jacobeans, whose stage characters are a melancholy chorus preoccupied with the death of a coherent sense of life. What fills in the void left by this loss, Marlowe feels, is the anarchic and inhumane will to assert the superiority of one's self or one's group, which is masked as religious righteousness or political necessity. But the inevitable result is fragmentation: individual nation-states rise up and challenge one another's sovereignty; men compete for riches and crowns and possess only what they can hold by force; and the will to power replaces the acceptance of one's station, role, or identity within a stable, if very limited social context.

The third and fourth acts of The Jew of Malta dramatize the typical actions of the terrible world to which Marlowe has introduced us. The Maltese society is corrupt on all levels and has no saving features. Lodowick and Mathias fight and kill each other, the victims of the same "policy" and prejudice on the part of Barabas which Ferneze has earlier used to divest the Jews of their possessions. As Barabas in Act II has told Abigail,

It's no sinne to deceiue a Christian;

For they themselues hold it a principle,
Faith is not to be held with Heretickes;
But all are Hereticks that are not Iewes;
This followes well, and therefore daughter
feare not.--
(II,1074-78)

In the matter of religious prejudice Ferneze's and Barabas' lives are reflections of each other.

Abigail reacts to the double murder by becoming a genuine convert and entering the nunnery, though she vows not to expose her father. Wishing to punish her and at the same time desiring to guarantee her silence, Barabas concocts a poisoned rice porridge, which Ithamore delivers to the nunnery of St. Jacques. The identification of Barabas with Ithamore is no longer in doubt as they prepare to carry out their crime. Barabas says,

Oh Ithimore come neere;
Come neere, my loue, come neere thy masters life,
My trusty seruant, nay, my second self . . . .
(III,1315-17)

Ithamore personifies the Jew's evil nature; he is almost a mere extension of his personality and may be called, in Freudian terms, Barabas' totally asocial, aggressive, lustful id. Barabas adopts Ithamore for his "onely heire"; and as the Jew stirs the pot of poisoned rice, his slave continues the revelation of his hellish nature:

> . . . the prouerb saies, he that eats with the deuil had need of a long spoone. I haue brought you a Ladle.
>
> (III,1360-62)

Barabas reminds us of the witches in Macbeth as he curses his daughter and calls on the spirits of the underworld to aid him:

> As fatall be it to her as the draught
> Of which great Alexander drunke, and dyed:
> And with her let it worke like Borgias wine,
> Whereof his sire, the Pope, was poyson'd.
> In few, the blood of Hydra, Lerna's bane;
> The iouyce of Hebon, and Cocitus breath,
> And all the poysons of the Stygian poole
> Breake from the fiery kingdome; and in this
> Vomit your venome, and inuenome her
> That like a fiend hath left her father thus.
>
> (III,1399-1408)

As the act continues, the Turk Calymath and Ferneze, with his new ally Martin del Bosco, prepare for war against each other. Abigail and the nuns die of poisoning, but not before she can confess her sins to Friar Bernardine. The lascivious confessor laments that she dies a virgin and plans to violate his religious vows even further by using what she told him to extort money from Barabas. Meanwhile, the courtesan Bellamira and her pimp Pilia-Borza

have prepared their own devices for extorting the Jew's money, and Barabas reveals that he will betray Ithamore when occasion arises. All the people in this world are set against one another. There is no trust, no community, but only the constant warfare of individuals striving to satisfy their desire for revenge, their lust, or their greed. Greed for Barabas' gold has been the motive behind much of the religious hypocrisy of Ferneze and his allies, Barabas' hypocrisy and viciousness, and now the attempts at extortion by the friars and the whore and her man. The world is fallen because it worships the gilded image of a false god. All the religious satire in the play--aimed at both Catholic and Protestant--serves the irony of pointing out that there is no true religion in the world which Malta represents apart from serving one's greedy passions.

When Friar Bernardine and his cohort Friar Jacomo approach Barabas in Act IV and try to frighten him into paying for their silence, he reverses their stratagem by feigning remorse for his life and announcing that he will become a Christian and enter one of their orders. His quick thinking creates a jealous, but hilarious, quarrel between them, for each sees the advantage of persuading the rich Jew to become a member of his own order. Barabas uses this situation as the context for the murder of the friars. Friar Bernardine is strangled by Ithamore

and his master, and Friar Jacomo is made to think he is the killer. The two plotters then lead him to the legal authorities to pay the penalty for his "crime," and Barabas speaks of justice in a way which must have been in Shakespeare's mind when he created Shylock:

> The Law shall touch you, we'll but lead you, we:
> 'Las, I could weepe at your calamity.
> Take in the staffe too, for that must be showne:
> Law wils that each particular be knowne.
>
> (IV,1712-15)

Like Lodowick and Mathias, the Friars fall victim to the Jew not just because he is evil and clever but primarily because their selfishness, greed, and personal animosity urge them toward his kinds of activities. His victims are no different from him in essence, and they all hate him for being what they really want to be.

Barabas himself is drawn deeper and deeper into crime and commits one atrocity after another, motivated by the fear that his deeds will be revealed to the Governor; his hate and revenge, moreover, cannot allow any personal threat or offense by his enemies to go unpunished. Though he does not realize it, he is caught in an ever-tightening web of intrigue which can lead but to disaster. Since he is a Machiavel, it is necessary "policy" that Barabas murder again and again to retain his wealth and safeguard his position. His actions are despicable but perfectly

consistent with the theory that position and power must be retained by any means. His character continues to degenerate, and he engages in not only cruel but also petty, churlish activities--all indicative of the base, corrosive nature of a philosophy built on a monomaniacal drive toward limitless satisfaction of the primitive impulse to power.

In Act IV Marlowe provides the darkly comic and farcical scenes involving the plotting of Bellamira, Pilia-Borza, and Ithamore. These scenes, like the comic episode involving the two Friars and the scene in which Barabas hugs the bags of gold Abigail secretly returns to him, help to reveal the nature of Marlowe's experiment in The Jew of Malta with a "mixed" dramatic genre. Though the play describes the tragedy of Barabas, the prevailing tone is darkly satiric. And the comic scenes serve the design of the satire by extending the criticism of religious hypocrisy, greed, and political conniving from the main plot to the sub-plot. Marlowe's attempt to write a kind of tragical satire (as he has done in the two parts of Tamburlaine) is thus supported by the effects of his comedy. He is apparently searching in this play for a dramatic form which will accommodate his artistic vision, and his employment of comic scenes to help in that purpose refutes the charge that Marlowe has no humor. We can appeal to the language and intent of these scenes and the inherently funny situations in some of them to prove that though

Marlowe's is a grisly humor it is a real humor nevertheless.[4]

Ithamore's misadventures with the whore and her man demonstrate that the consuming, anarchic character of lust is finally very little different from Barabas' "Machiavellian" power-ethic, because both drives regard people merely as objects to be manipulated for self-satisfaction. In these three characters the themes of greed and lust, which run throughout the play, are shown to be intimately related in the human breast, both growing out of the pride in self which must possess someone or something to satisfy its endless appetite for power and superiority. Ithamore is easily seduced into blackmailing the Jew because the courtesan flatters him and holds out to him the promise of her favors. Pilia-Borza is the go-between who delivers Ithamore's demands to Barabas for the money he needs to enjoy the whore. As he woos his prize, Ithamore adopts the rhetoric of persuasion in an attempt to become the passionate shepherd to his love but only reveals the morally inverted world he inhabits:

> Content, but we will leaue this paltry land,
> And saile from hence to Greece, to louely Greece,
> I'le be thy Iason, thou my golden Fleece;
> Where painted carpets o're the meads are hurl'd,
> And Bacchus vineyards ore-spread the world:
> Where Woods and Forrests goe in goodly greene,

I'le be Adonis, thou shalt be Loues Queene.
The Meads, the Orchards, and the Primrose lanes,
Instead of Sedge and Reed, beare Sugar Canes:
Thou in those Groues, by Dis aboue,
Shalt liue with me and be my loue.

(IV,1806-16)

He and she are the exact opposite of Adonis and Venus, for their relationship is not a love leading to universal fertility but a lust productive of sterility. Their world is not Arcadian; it is infernal. And God does not reign in the heavens above, but Dis, the god of Hades, inspires their lives. Barabas' deterioration is re-enacted by Ithamore and Bellamira and all the others: his process of damnation stands as the prototypical role which the other characters play as well.

Barabas decides that the threat posed by this unholy trio must be met like all the others. He will murder the principals and so rid himself of the danger they represent. His identity undergoes another mutation: he disguises himself as a French musician in order to enter the courtesan's house, and he offers the three a poisoned flower to smell. Having earlier estranged himself from Abigail and adopted Ithamore for his "heire," he now is estranged even from the minimal human connection implied in the bond of evil between him and his slave. His miniscule humanity is now totally destroyed, and he exists only as an instrument

of the "policy" which characterizes the inhabitants of the sick world of Malta. His total self-alienation through a commitment to the wiles of "policy" is the damnation of the Machiavel and fittingly brings about his destruction in the last act. When he poisons Ithamore and his two partners, he says with great satisfaction, "So, now I am reueng'd vpon 'em all" (IV,1962). It is interesting that Bellamira and Pilia-Borza feel it "fit" that they inform on Barabas to the Governor, but only after they have worked him for all the gold possible! They reflect the same hypocritical attitude toward justice that characterizes Barabas in the scene when he and his slave arrest Friar Jacomo, proving that the skillful Machiavels in this world appreciate law in their own way too. In the closing line of the act Ithamore voices the familiar sentiment which stems ultimately from Ferneze and his Christian Knight. It is the hypocritical perversion of religious belief that can be made to excuse any crime: "To vndoe a Iew is charity, and not sinne" (IV,2001). Everyone in the play except the Turks is guilty of religious hypocrisy. Since the same theme is important in Tamburlaine, and receives some of Marlowe's most vicious satirical attacks, it must have been one of the social evils he hated most.

The fifth act shows the triumph of the "Machiavellian" ethic; revenge, hate, hypocrisy, and a reliance on cunning and "policy" destroy the entire social order. The hell

on earth which Tamburlaine's kind of militarism precipitates is duplicated by the pervasive deceit and treachery in Barabas' drama. There is no ethical difference between the knaves and the fools: they are all hypocrites, moral degenerates, and avaricious power-seekers. The reason that so many people are victimized by Barabas and the others is that they are all motivated by the same destructive impulses that finally destroy him and employ the same debased tactics to reach their goals. The characters in The Jew of Malta are reduced to running their lives on the uncivilized principles of the power drive, betrayal, and vengeance to illustrate that "policy" completely unravels the social fabric. A philosophy which encourages men to seek and hold power through manipulating others will produce a lusting Ithamore, a greedy and vengeful Barabas, or a hypocritical Ferneze; and society will become a collection of isolated, vicious, mutually destructive outlaws. The philosophy of the Machiavel is the ultimate degradation of the social contract, for no man can depend on or trust anyone else but himself; he is driven to hate his fellows and rely solely on his frantic cleverness to stay alive. He becomes a hyper-rational madman, serving his fears and passions with his analytical intellect but lacking the human identity which proceeds from the sense of community and the experience of psychic integrity. Each man, thus, is totally alienated from his world and

his own soul, full of dread, selfish of necessity, and steadily devolving into a beast, as the layers of civilized manner and custom are stripped away at each encounter with another man. This situation is the existential hell which, according to Sartre, is "other people." It is the secular parallel to the orthodox Christian conception of hell. Marlowe's dramas open the way for a mature tragic conception of man when he makes man's fate the result of a social and psychological condition he himself defines. In his brutal attack on a condition that denies all dignity to man and reduces him to a diabolical beast, Marlowe's satire becomes bitter and qualifies his tragedy even further; for he is intent upon first attacking brutal social practices and only secondly dramatizing a tragic fall.

As Act V opens, Bellamira, Pilia-Borza, and Ithamore are still alive; and they inform on Barabas. They then die, and Barabas, demanding justice, is condemned by Ferneze. He feigns a suicide at this point, is taken for dead, and his body is thrown outside the city walls by the Governor's men, as a gesture of hatred for the Jew and disdain for his heritage. When the drug wears off which has made him appear dead, Barabas allies himself with Selim Calymath, the betrayed Turk who is now laying seige to the city. Through Barabas' knowledge of a secret entrance to the city, Calymath's soldiers surprise the defenders and force the Governor to surrender. Barabas,

taking the advantage for the time being, becomes the new governor; and Ferneze vows that "Heauen will be reueng'd on thee" (V,2126). The Jew realizes how precarious his position is and reasons that now only an alliance with Ferneze against the unsuspecting Turk will keep him safe, since in Malta he is surrounded with enemies. He will maintain power with the further practice of "policy." As the powerful head of a state who must constantly employ his every means to remain in power, Barabas now bears some little resemblance to the Prince of Machiavelli. But this is the only occasion in the play in which any resemblance to the Italian's ideal figure actually exists. Moreover, he is not interested in preserving the integrity of the state and maintaining peace; he is wholly fixed on personal power and selfish ends. He is a Machiavel--a stage villain of great proportions--but not a true Machiavellian. His position is made clear in the soliloquy immediately following his and Calymath's victory:

> Thus has thou gotten, by thy policie,
> No simple place, no small authority,
> I now am Gouernour of Malta; true,
> But Malta hates me, and in hating me
> My life's in danger, and what boots it thee
> Poore Barabas, to be the Gouernour,
> When as thy life shall be at their command?

No, Barabas, this must be look'd into;
And since by wrong thou got'st Authority,
Maintaine it brauely by firme policy,
At least vnprofitably lose it not:
For he that liueth in Authority,
And neither gets him friends, nor fils his
bags,
Liues like the Asse that AEsope speaketh of,
That labours with a load of bread and wine,
And leaues it off to snap on Thistle tops:
But Barabas will be more circumspect.
Begin betimes, Occasion's bald behind,
Slip not thine oportunity, for feare too late
Thou seek'st for much, but canst not compasse it.
(V, 2128-47)

He calls Ferneze in, explains his plan to deceive the Turks, and promises Ferneze his governorship again. In return, Barabas will receive back from Ferneze "great summes of mony for thy recompence" (V,2189). Yesterday's enemies are today's allies when ethics are bent to serve power politics and the selfish individual's ends. Now Barabas speaks as the stereotyped, hated Jew, as well as the Machiavel, though he implicates the Christians along with himself:

And thus farre roundly goes the businesse:
Thus louing neither, will I liue with both,

Making a profit of my policie;
And he from whom my most aduantage comes,
Shall be my friend.
This is the life we Iewes are vs'd to lead;
And reason too, for Christians doe the like.

(V,2212-18)

Calymath and his soldiers are invited to banquet with Barabas, and the scene is to be a trap for the Turkish forces. Barabas explains to Ferneze that the soldiers will be killed by explosives and Calymath and his train by their fall into a pit, which Ferneze does not know contains a boiling caldron. Barabas' speech just before Calymath enters, on the glory of successful "policy," reminds us of Tamburlaine's florid speech in Part I, when he asks, "Is it not braue to be a King, Techelles?" (II,v,756). Barabas, thinking to himself and also addressing the audience, asks,

. . . why, is not this
A kingly kinde of trade to purchase Townes
By treachery, and sell 'em by deceit?
Now tell me, worldlings, vnderneath the sunne,
If greater falshood euer has bin done.

(V,2329-2333)

He takes great pride in the evil he does, since evil is now his sole identifying characteristic and his dearest love.

At the given signal the monastery where the Turk's soldiers are seated is blown up, but Ferneze proves his

own skill at making "policy" and betrays his temporary alliance with Barabas, who is made to fall into the boiling caldron which was planned for Selim Calymath. He thus avenges himself on the surprised Jew and takes the Ottoman Turk as a prisoner, to be held as a hostage until his father pays for the damage done to Malta. The play ends with the most successful Machiavel in control of the state. Marlowe has anatomized contemporary society and found that the spirit of Machiavel does indeed pervade it. Unlike Shakespeare, Lyly, Sidney, or Spenser, whose works generally reflect a belief in the Christian humanist world-order, Marlowe sees a wasteland, a social rubble heap, before him. The sterile landscape of his world is radically different from the friendly, mythological cosmos of the rest of the Elizabethans precisely because Marlowe investigates the implications of those post-medieval thrusts in thought which were in his time beginning to characterize Western thinking. He is preoccupied with man's nature in the new contexts being created by Renaissance modifications of and departures from medieval ideas. Instead of seeing a united Christendom, Marlowe understands that rulers in the 16th century are intent on establishing sovereign nation-states, each a law to itself. In place of the feudal nobility's control of wealth, the middle class is born, rises in power and prestige, and works to amass wealth and property. And replacing the Roman Catholic

Church are the several versions of Protestantism, which give individual man the lonely responsibility of saving his soul without the machinery of a Church which has loomed over him like a protective mother for fifteen hundred years. In the "new" world Marlowe senses, men are different--not because their essential natures have changed but because altered physical and psychological circumstances allow them to develop in ways not before possible. And so the new types are the Machiavellian Prince, like Tamburlaine; the rich merchant, like Barabas, new not merely in possessing greater wealth than might earlier have been imagined, but new in being one of a whole class of money-men who now ransack the corners of the globe for profit; and the Protestant, like Faustus, who might surely work his own salvation but just as likely will despair when his own sense of guilt drives him to deeper and deeper introspection.

Barabas dies cursing but proudly admits his crimes and conspiracies. He falls into the caldron intended for Selim Calymath and burns to death in the hell of his own design, just as throughout the play his nature has fallen lower and lower into the subhuman rank of diabolism. But his death and punishment are ironic because he is survived by creatures no better than he. In fact, the evils which he has embodied are now generalized throughout the culture which Malta represents. The last lines of the last speech, Ferneze's, show that the religious hypocrisy that

characterizes nearly every character's thinking from Machiavel's remarks in the Prologue onward, continues as strongly as ever:

> Content thee, Calymath, here thou must stay,
> And liue in Malta prisoner; for come all the world
> To rescue thee, so will we guard vs now,
> As sooner shall they drinke the Ocean dry,
> Then conquer Malta, or endanger vs.
> So march away, and let due praise be giuen
> Neither to Fate nor Fortune, but to Heauen.
>
> (V,2404-10)

If any reader or spectator of the play has sided with Ferneze against Barabas in the power struggle, or has fallen into the trap of anti-Semitism and hated Barabas because he is a Jew, then he fails to understand Marlowe's criticism of the entire society of the play and participates in the same religious hypocrisy that is blind to the very evils which it loathes in someone of a different persuasion. There is no redeeming figure in the play and no social norm by which to judge the offenders, no learning or moral development in the characters, and, hence, no hope that their world will improve. Responsibility for the standards of judgment and the lessons implied by the playwright's slashing satire is directed to the critical readers and members of the audience.

In Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida and the plays

of Ben Jonson, especially Volpone, we find again satire whose redeeming features must be felt and inferred by the audience because they are totally absent in the world on stage. But this strategy on the part of Marlowe is unique in the drama of his time. No different from his other major dramas in this respect, with the exception of Doctor Faustus, The Jew of Malta is difficult to interpret because the familiar social, philosophical, and moral norms implying judgment are missing; and the critical intelligence must understand that the very lack of such norms is evidence of a world which has destroyed all familiar systems of value. It is a place of moral inversion and tragedy, and Ferneze's emergence into power again is not a tribute to his statecraft, nor still less to his Christianity, but a condemnation of his "policy," which has been furthered and excused by his typical falsification of Christianity.

NOTES

[1]See Ribner, "Marlowe and Machiavelli," pp. 349-50.

[2]Frederick S. Boas, Christopher Marlowe: A Biographical and Critical Study, rev. ed. (Oxford, 1953), pp. 131-32. Boas cites Marlowe's sources on these pages: he could have read the story of the Jew in the Chronicorum Turcicorum tomi duo of Lonicerus, also a source for Tamburlaine, Part II; or he could have found his information in Belleforest's Cosmographie Universelle.

[3]In Brooke's edition of Marlowe's Works there are no scene-divisions in the five acts of The Jew of Malta; my references to the play, therefore, indicate only the act and the quoted lines.

[4]Cf. T. S. Eliot's famous remark in the essay "Marlowe" in Selected Essays (New York, 1950), p. 105, about Marlowe's humor in The Jew of Malta. He calls it a "farce": " . . . it is the farce of the old English humour, the terribly serious even savage comic humour, the humour which spent its last breath in the decadent genius of Dickens."

CHAPTER V

ONE LIKE ACTAEON: EDWARD AND THE CORRUPTION OF MYTHOLOGY

Edward II, written in 1591 or 1592, is Marlowe's interesting attempt to combine elements of Ovidian mythology, the history play, and tragedy into another drama of corruption and damnation. He used Holinshed's Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland (1587) as his primary source for the story of Edward II, and it is not unlikely that he read in the 1578 edition of A Mirror for Magistrates the account of "The Two Mortimers" by Thomas Churchyard.[1] He compressed the period in English history from the accession of Edward II in 1307 to the execution of Roger Mortimer in 1330 into a series of events which seem to represent only about a year. Though Edward II is primarily a history play, it is also helpful to see it as an ironic re-playing of the Actaeon-Diana myth, which Marlowe knew from Golding's translation of Ovid's Metamorphoses. Actaeon is the hunter who is transformed into a stag by Diana, because he has gazed on the goddess of Chastity while she bathed, and is later pursued and killed by his own hounds.

This story serves as an apt but ironic contrast to that of Edward, who is deposed as a king, chased and killed by the very nobles who should have been his finest strength, and thus is veritably metamorphosed from king to a hunted animal. Yet he undergoes a tragic change not because he looks with love upon a naked woman; the myth of metamorphosis symbolizes the condition of his soul as he is corrupted by his homosexual love for Gaveston. Marlowe's preoccupation with corruption in human affairs here centers on the perversion of sexual love, the very crime imputed to him by the Baines Note and so often the subject of speculation today. Moreover, corruption is the central theme of the drama and is shown to extend throughout the entire English realm. Edward's homosexuality seems to radiate outward and poison the whole of England, so that potentially good characters like Isabella and Mortimer become infected with the evil and add their sins to those Edward has committed.

The idea of metamorphosis which Marlowe investigates in The Jew of Malta and Edward II is appropriate for the process of damnation which the protagonists experience. Their particular sins and passions so alter the state of their souls that they take on the characteristics of the Arch-fiend himself and become their own tormentors. Just as Barabas' avarice is personified in Ithamore, Edward's sin with Gaveston comes alive in his diabolic murderer,

whose name means Lucifer--the one born of light. People familiar with Holinshed knew that Edward's real murderer did away with him by the unspeakable means of sticking a burning spit up his intestines in a way that could not be detected from the outside but which would kill him most painfully. Marlowe's brilliant but grotesque stroke of having the devil commit this well-known murder and so suggest symbolically Edward's sexual deviation surely stands as one of the most lurid stage spectacles in Elizabethan drama. Few characters in drama suffer for their errors as much as Edward does for his homosexuality. In trying to overreach the limits of conventional sexual behavior, he creates a hell no less terrifying than the most skillful fire-and-brimstone preacher could imagine.

Once again, the state of damnation, the hell, which the protagonist enters is not the familiar one pictured by the orthodox Christians. Edward's fiery punishment is existential: he creates it himself as he willfully perverts moral and natural law, and he suffers not in an afterlife but in the physical world of the present. It is this staggering conclusion about the meaning of damnation that unites Marlowe with the 20th century and makes him a transitional figure from medieval times to our own. Marlowe does, however, use the medieval De Casibus theme to describe the rise and fall of Mortimer. Mortimer, who falls when Fortune goes against him, is the only figure

in Marlowe's plays whose fate conforms to the older tragic concept. He is a part of the poison in the realm which spreads after Edward's corrupt passion with Gaveston alienates the nobility. Mortimer's pride leads him to usurp Edward's throne, a comparatively simple and evil crime which is easily contained in the De Casibus framework. But Edward's profoundly dark and complex psychological state requires that a new tragic conception be evolved to illuminate its nature. His psychic disintegration and isolation must be pictured not in terms of an abstract formula but as the results of freely chosen actions by which he hopes to experience forbidden pleasures. He tries to become more than man by entering a moral realm of his own choosing and succeeds only in destroying his identity as a man altogether.

The play opens with the opportunist Gaveston reading a letter from Edward, who has just become King. Although Gaveston was banished to his native home in Gascony by Edward I, the new King invites him back because this childhood friend is his favorite. Immediately we learn that Gaveston plans to use Edward for personal advancement, and he will be a willing accomplice in the King's pleasures to satisfy his ambitions. His speech revealing the methods he will use to ply the King not only hints at the tragic fate of his monarch, but it also indicates the corruption of the mythological tale of Actaeon and Diana which Edward's

career symbolizes. We see that Edward's weakness is an inordinately pleasure-loving nature; he is especially fond of poetry, dramatic art, and the mythological world. Marlowe connects the pleasures of art with Edward's pleasures of the flesh to suggest that anything having to do with the senses can be corrupted. The potential beauty and goodness of art are employed by Gaveston to corrupt his monarch, and thus art too partakes of the sickness of the world. Gaveston has already hinted at the relationship he and Edward share by comparing himself to Leander, who swam the Hellespont to be with his love Hero; by calling himself "the fauorit of a king"; and by punning on the word "come": "Sweete prince I come" (6).[2] Now he hints further at Edward's homosexuality by referring to the mythical Diana as a boy dressed to play the part for Edward's pleasure in a sort of drama or masque of Gaveston's own creation. Gaveston's speech testifies to the corruption of the Golden Age of mythology and the arrival of a fallen, Leaden Age of weak and sinful men:

> I must haue wanton Poets, pleasant wits,
> Musitians, that with touching of a string
> May draw the pliant king which way I please:
> Musicke and poetrie is his delight,
> Therefore ile haue Italian maskes by night,
> Sweete speeches, comedies, and pleasing showes,

And in the day when he shall walke abroad,
Like Syluan Nimphes my pages shall be clad,
My men like Satyres grazing on the lawnes,
Shall with their Goate feete daunce an antick hay.
Sometime a louelie boye in Dians shape,
With haire that gilds the water as it glides,
Crownets of pearle about his naked armes,
And in his sportfull hands an Oliue tree,
To hide those parts which men delight to see,
Shall bathe him in a spring, and there hard by,
One like Actaeon peeping through the groue,
Shall by the angrie goddesse be transformde,
And running in the likenes of an Hart,
By yelping hounds puld downe, and seeme to die,
Such things as these best please his maiestie,
My lord.

(51-72)

The tragedy of Edward is prefigured as an ironic inversion and debasement of the myth involving the Goddess of Chastity. The allusions to nymphs and satyrs suggests the promiscuousness of these wooded creatures, but actual sexual perversion is not present until Gaveston casts both Actaeon and Diana as boys in this imaginary masque. The idea of the corruption of art parallels Spenser's use of the theme in the Bower of Bliss. There, art and artifice imitate nature, but are a debased copy of it, and fertility

and love are replaced by sterile desire and longing. Just as the Actaeon in Gaveston's version of the myth gazes on "a louelie boye in Dians shape," Sir Guyon stares at the two naked and wanton girls in the Bower of Bliss; but he can never be satisfied or have a natural desire in this place. At the center of the Bower, moreover, is a fountain with naked boys carved on it. Marlowe probably read Books I-III of The Faerie Queene in manuscript,[3] and he may have been influenced by the important passage describing the Bower of Bliss (II,xii).

Marlowe's translation of Ovid's Amores (Ouids Elegies) in his Cambridge days introduced him to one of the most important influences in his life, and the concept of metamorphosis which he borrowed from the Roman is perfectly adapted by the ironic playwright to illuminate the lower state of being to which Edward's soul devolves. Since he does relate mythology and art to Edward's sickness and shows them to be susceptible of corruption through misuse by people like Edward and Gaveston, Marlowe satirically indicts still other favorite Elizabethan preoccupations. He holds another area of human experience--the world of art--up to criticism and censure and points out that it too can serve man's follies. Like the ambition which motivates Mortimer, art can express a dangerous desire to overindulge in fancy or illusion and may lead one to a destructive course of action in an attempt to realize the

illusion. Because it is subject to the frailties of human nature, art too can be damning.

The pride of both Edward and Mortimer comes out early in the play, when Mortimer and other nobles speak their disgust for the returned Gaveston and try to persuade the King against him. Edward will not give up his minion, and Mortimer will not abate his hatred for him. Mortimer calls Edward "the brainsick king"; and the weak monarch, reminiscent of Mycetes in Tamburlaine and King Henry III in The Massacre at Paris, pledges to resist the pressure from the nobles who oppose him and "liue with Gaueston." The minion Gaveston stands in the same relationship to Edward as Ithamore does to Barabas: he is his alter-ego, an extension and embodiment of his anarchic, subrational passions. When the King embraces the favorite, he calls himself "Thy friend, thy selfe, another Gaueston," (143), proving their inseparability. Together they dramatize the wounded psyche and its obsessive lust which constitute Edward's personality. But Gaveston, the cynical manipulator of Edward, is that force in the personality which destroys one's integrity if allowed expression. Gaveston tells Edward,

> And since I went from hence, no soule in hell
> Hath felt more torment then poore Gaueston.
>
> (146-47)

It is hell to be denied the satisfaction of one's burning

passions, and the forbidden passions create a fixation in the individual which consumes him doubly fast. The terrible irony of Edward and Gaveston's attempting to live out their passionate longings, however, is that satisfying them produces another kind of hell.

Edward shows his preference for Gaveston by making him Lord Chamberlain, Chief Secretary of State, Earl of Cornwall, and Lord of the Isle of Man. The first act of the minion is to avenge himself on the Bishop of Coventry, the cause of his past exile, by disrobing him, confining him to the Tower, and confiscating his estates. King Edward is the willing accomplice to the disgrace, which widens the split between crown and nobility. The imprisonment of the Bishop prepares us for those scenes later when Edward is imprisoned by Mortimer's men, and it provides us with another image of constriction or limitation which Marlowe uses so often to symbolize the frustration of personal happiness or ambition.

Gaveston's given name is Piers, or Pierce, a fitting name which does not allow us to forget that his harmful presence is to Edward like a sword which can pierce his breast and kill him. There is much talk of swords and stabbing the breast of the King or his minion, and the Freudian critic would not miss the sexual implications of the imagery. The sword is not only a phallic symbol indicating the lust shared by the King with his favorite, but it also hints at

the masochism in Edward's personality which is a part of his soft, usually submissive nature in the company of his favorite. Mortimer says when he and the other nobles leave the King in anger that the two factions must "henceforth parle with our naked swords" (126), and later, after the Bishop's imprisonment, referring to Gaveston, "Vnlesse his brest be sword proofe he shall die" (215). We learn more of Gaveston's relationship to Edward as Mortimer continues:

> Were all the Earles and Barons of my minde,
> We'de hale him from the bosome of the king,
> And at the court gate hang the pessant vp,
> Who swolne with venome of ambitious pride,
> Will be the ruine of the realme and vs.
>
> (235-39)

Gaveston is pictured as a poisonous snake, puffed up with ambition, and the snake in the bosom, an ancient and medieval literary emblem reserved for close friends who betray their favorites. Gaveston is the serpent in the garden of England.

He symbolizes Edward's encounter with evil in the form of homosexuality, but he opens our eyes to the evil of ambition of which Mortimer and others are guilty too. All along, the nobles' opposition to Gaveston has seemed out of proportion to the nature of his and Edward's sin. Theirs is a private offense--at least until Mortimer and his friends oppose them on political grounds. The nobles'

excuse for braving an anointed king with such vehemence as they show is that they are loyal Englismen working for the good of their country. But their "loyalty" is merely a mask for political ambition and hurt pride at being passed over by King Edward when he chose his favorite. So if Gaveston takes shape as the archetypal viper Satan, the nobles--and the Church too in the person of the Archbishop of Canterbury--re-enact the ancient rebellion of Lucifer against God. Lucifer's pride could not accept God's choice of His Son as the favorite, and the Angel of Light stirred up a great host to rebel with him. Mortimer's pride causes him to lead the rebellion against his anointed monarch. Gaveston's presence brings out Mortimer's evil as easily as it evokes Edward's. The parallel between the sinners in Edward II and the angels who support Lucifer's first sin holds, but there is no parallel to God in the play. This is a fallen world, like Barabas' Malta, and only evil has its sway. No saving graces balance the pride in Edward or Mortimer and his allies. It is a world of lost and suffering souls; and after Marlowe's death it becomes the heritage of Shakespeare, Webster, Tourneur, Chapman, Jonson, and others in the Jacobean period.

The nobles, aided by Canterbury's power as the spokesman for the Church, band together and force Edward to renew Gaveston's banishment. Saddened by his powerlessness to save his minion, Edward answers Gaveston's "Is all my

hope turnd to this hell of greefe[?]" (412) with these words:

> Rend not my hart with thy too piercing words,
> Thou from this land, I from my selfe am banisht.
>
> (413-14)

The first line of his reply suggests his relationship with the hart into which the mythical Actaeon is metamorphosed and chased by his hounds, and the second shows Edward's metamorphosis into a hunted beast continue through self-estrangement. He is cut off from that pleasure with Gaveston which has replaced healthy personal relationships, and now he faces an empty anxiety because he is so fixed on having Gaveston. His deprivation and frustration are reflected in his wife Isabella, from whom he has earlier been estranged. He projects his guilt on to her, calling her "French strumpet" and later accusing her of infidelity with Mortimer and treason as well. Though she does finally commit adultery with Mortimer and help him to usurp the crown, he utters his frantic suspicions before her honor is ever compromised or her affections are altered.

The metamorphosis Marlowe has in mind in showing the degradation of Edward, Mortimer, and Isabella is that disfigurement of the personality which grows from frustration: thwarted lust, ambition, and love turn the creative energies of the individual into destructive, self-consuming impulses which ultimately maim his

personality so that he is unrecognizable to his former self. After Edward and Mortimer have become infected by Gaveston's withering presence, it is Isabella's turn to become a moral grotesque. When she comes before Edward and the court and chastises Gaveston for alienating her from Edward's affections, her anger has been excited not only by her husband's paranoiac suspicions but also by Gaveston's unfounded allusions to her infidelity. The following exchange shows how unfairly she is treated and how quickly she is drawn into the evil net of the two:

Qu. Whether goes my lord?
Edw. Fawne not on me French strumpet, get thee gone.
Qu. On whom but on my husband should I fawne?
Gau. On Mortimer, with whom vngentle Queene--
I say no more, iudge you the rest my lord.
Qu. In saying this, thou wrongst me Gaueston,
Ist not enough, that thou corrupts my lord,
And art a bawd to his affections,
But thou must call mine honor thus in question?
Gau. I meane not so, your grace must pardon me.
Edw. Thou art too familiar with that Mortimer,
And by thy meanes is Gaueston exilde . . . .
(440-51)

She is innocent of Gaveston's innuendoes and Edward's charges,

but the evil in her nature is ignited by the "serpent" Gaveston. And the metamorphosis of her own personality begins, as she wishes that

> Would when I left sweet France and was imbarkt,
> That charming Circes walking on the waues,
> Had chaungd my shape, or at the mariage day
> The cup of Hymen had beene full of poyson . . . .
>
> (467-70)

Her reference to Circe, the enchantress who changed the lustful sailors of Ulysses into swine, calls up the best-known myth of metamorphosis caused by lust and comments ironically on the twisted passion her husband and Gaveston share. She also unwittingly prefigures her own transformation as a result of frustrated married love with Edward. Since she wants Edward's love, she decides to become an accomplice to his sin with Gaveston in an effort to regain the King's affections:

> I must entreat him, I must speake him faire,
> And be a meanes to call home Gaueston:
> And yet heele euer dote on Gaueston,
> And so am I for euer miserable.
>
> (479-82)

The last two lines indicate the paradoxical, inextricable situation she will create when she tries to bring Gaveston home for her King.

As a means of recalling Gaveston she implores Mortimer

to convince the others that for the King's sake and her own the minion must be recalled. She prevails with him, and Mortimer argues with the other nobles that Gaveston be brought back on the condition that if he does not "vaile the topflag of his pride" they can more justifiably oppose the King with arms. He admits that their actions have been treasonable but inveighs against the upstart for being held in such high esteem by their monarch. In speaking of Gaveston's "pride," he reveals his own jealous pride in being passed over as a favorite by the King, who prefers this "night growne mushrump." Mortimer does not realize it, but he too has been drawn deeper into the complex passions which are engulfing them all. Isabella acknowledges her debt to him when he wins the others to their side and inaugurates a dependence on him which will ultimately bring them together in an unholy partnership against Edward.

Edward becomes ecstatic when he is told that Gaveston will return. He has been mourning for his loss and has provoked from Lancaster the remark, "Diablo, what passions call you these?" (616)--revealing both the hellish nature and source of the King's ailment. But there is a temporary reconciliation for Edward, Isabella, and the nobles; and for a time peace and harmony seem possible. Edward plans a banquet and a "generall tilt and turnament" in celebration and announces that he has betrothed Gaveston to his niece, daughter of the Earl of Gloucester. The knights pledge

their loyalty to him, and Mortimer Senior accepts a mission against the Scots for him. As he is leaving for Scotland, he tells his nephew that great kings have always had their favorites and that King Edward will probably outgrow his infatuation with Gaveston. The nephew admits that it is not the King's unconventional amour that bothers him, but his preference for a low-born friend is an insult to their class:

> Vnckle, his wanton humor greeues not me,
> But this I scorne, that one so baselie borne
> Should by his soueraignes fauour grow so pert,
> And riote it with the treasure of the realme.
> While souldiers mutinie for want of paie,
> He weares a lords reuenewe on his back,
> And Midas like he iets it in the court,
> With base outlandish cullions at his heeles,
> Whose proud fantastick liueries make such show,
> As if that Proteus god of shapes appearde.
> I haue not seene a dapper iack so briske,
> He weares a short Italian hooded cloake,
> Larded with pearle, and in his Tuskan cap
> A iewell of more value then the crowne:
> Whiles other walke below, the king and he
> From out a window laugh at such as we . . . .
>
> (699-714)

Real shortcomings in the King are pointed out, but Mortimer's motivation is, unmistakably, a hurt pride, which is not

totally unjustified. His error is in letting it control him and justify later crimes against the King and the realm. The Italian garment Gaveston wears calls to mind the costumes worn by the Machiavels on the Elizabethan stage, and the allusion to Proteus lends added support to the view that behind Marlowe's play stands the Ovidian notion of metamorphosis, which is combined with the Christian concept of damnation. Satan too, it must be remembered, is a master at changing shapes.

Gaveston returns from exile in Ireland, but dissension at court has begun again because the King cannot talk of anyone else. Mortimer and Lancaster insult Edward, each by devising a satirical impresa which comments on the unhealthy relationship between Edward and his minion. Mortimer invokes the mythical emblem of the snake twined about the tree, using it as the central metaphor of his fable:

> A loftie Cedar tree faire flourishing,
> On whose top-branches Kinglie Eagles pearch,
> And by the barke a canker creepes me vp,
> And gets vnto the highest bough of all.
> The motto: AEque tandem.
>
> (818-22)

The canker-worm, a destructive caterpillar with green stripes, calls back the snake-in-the-garden motif and ironically points to the inverted sexual nature of the

King. Edward then hears Lancaster's invention:

> Plinie reports, there is a flying Fish,
> Which all the other fishes deadly hate,
> And therefore, being pursued, it takes the aire:
> No sooner is it vp, but thers a foule,
> That seaseth it: this fish, my lord, I beare,
> The motto this: Undique mors est.
>
> (825-30)

Lancaster thus states his continuing enmity for Gaveston. His motto, "Death is on all sides," and Mortimer's "Equally at last," suggest the tragic end Edward courts by allowing himself to be brought to the level of the canker, Gaveston. The image of the snake about the tree hints too at the strangulation of Edward's being by the sickness his favorite represents. Though the King is angered by these devices and threatens the two nobles, he welcomes Gaveston in words painting another picture whose import resembles the symbolic strangulation in the previous image. He says to his love,

> Thy absence made me droope, and pine away,
> For as the louers of faire Danae,
> When she was lockt vp in a brasen tower,
> Desirde her more, and waxt outragious,
> So did it sure with me . . . .
>
> (854-58)

Danaë, the Greek heroine who is locked up in a tower by

her father and visited by Zeus in the form of a golden shower, is imprisoned, as Edward will be; and though she is isolated like him, her love is consummated with a male deity. Edward continues to damn himself in this reference to an idealized but heterosexual passion and in the revelation of the great ardor he possesses for Gaveston.

At his return Gaveston is greeted with insults. Edward shouts, "Treason, treason," at Lancaster, who draws his sword when Gaveston returns an insult to him; then, Mortimer is taunted and wounds Edward's darling with his sword. The attempt on Gaveston's life renews the bitter struggle between Edward and the nobility; and when the King refuses to pay the ransom for Mortimer Senior, who has been captured by the Scots, open rebellion follows. Because he is so determined not to relinquish his Gaveston, Edward himself is willing to war against the mutinous peerage. But Mortimer gives us this picture of the King's only appearance on the battlefield:

> When wert thou in the field with banner spred?
> But once, and then thy souldiers marcht like players,
> With garish robes, not armor, and thy selfe
> Bedaubd with golde, rode laughing at the rest,
> Nodding and shaking of thy spangled crest,
> Where womens fauors hung like labels downe.
>
> (984-89)

We can have little sympathy for a king who persists in his

obsession with Gaveston to the point of plunging his country into war. His conduct in battle, moreover, is too repulsive and undignified to command respect, for he sees the soldiers on the field as players on a stage. His weak, pleasure-loving nature, more that of an esthete or dilletantish artist than a monarch, corrupts both him and his kingdom. His artistic and esthetic leanings might not do harm if he could confine them to his private life; but since he provides no public character for his actions as a king, his personal tastes lead to irreparable damage. Tamburlaine's world is corrupted by Machiavellian politics, Barabas' by ungoverned economic practices and religious hypocrisy; and Edward's world falls into disorder because he replaces his responsibility as the head of a state with attention to his pleasures and the arts. He sees himself in the role of master of revels in a mythological kingdom devoted to dalliance. As Gaveston has said, "Musicke and poetrie is his delight" (54). The pragmatic concerns of reigning over a recalcitrant nobility and a nation in competition with other European powers do not interest him. He prefers to enter a world of illusion, not realizing the tragic implications his egocentric attitude carries for himself and the whole of England. Marlowe is saying, through the drama of an effete king, that the creative imagination, the myth-making power in man, can ignite passions as destructive as the lust for money or political

power. Common to all the overreaching protagonists in Marlowe's tragedies is the preoccupation with escaping mere humanity and being omnipotent in some particular way: Faustus would have unlimited knowledge and peer into the secrets of nature; Tamburlaine would rule the world; and Edward would tear down all barriers preventing limitless indulgence in the pleasures of the flesh and the imagination. The striking irony of their situations is, however, that, though they wish to encompass their grandiose imaginings within their individual capacities for experience, they are only finite beings who cannot expand their selves beyond certain, recognized limits. They wish to become God, but they are only men. Their terrible failure to recognize their fantastic illusions is their tragedy.

When the nobles leave the court and begin preparations for war, Edward expresses his anger vehemently but feels that he can overcome them easily. He remarks,

> Yet shall the crowing of these cockerels
> Affright a Lion? Edward, vnfolde thy pawes,
> And let their liues bloud slake thy furies hunger:
> If I be cruell, and growe tyrannous,
> Now let them thanke themselues, and rue too late.
>
> (1005-09)

He fails to see the irony of comparing himself to the king of beasts, the regal symbol of English monarchs; he is

anything but a "cruell" and "tyrannous" person and has no taste for blood. But he cannot recognize his true identity because he has tried to re-create himself as lover to Gaveston, an attempt that has first isolated him from himself and then estranged him from his family and followers. When his brother Kent expresses his dislike for Gaveston, Edward banishes him and virtually completes his isolation. He can only think pityingly of

> . . . . Poore Gaueston, that hast no friend but me,
> Do what they can, weele liue in Tinmoth here,
> And so I walke with him about the walles,
> What care I though the Earles begirt vs round?
>
> (1021-24)

The image is one of his and Gaveston's isolation, surrounded by the rebellious nobles. What the King does not fathom is that Gaveston, the "snake" in Mortimer's satirical tale which encircles the royal tree, is only a base and cynical opportunist and in no way bears him any love. In fact, Gaveston is the very image of Edward's separation from the rest of humanity, the illusion the King projects that he needs only to satisfy his whims and pleasures to be happy.

Edward feels that even his Queen is against him but that she is not necessary to happiness if he retains his lover. The only reason that he receives her at all is that his satanic adviser whispers in his ear, 'My lord, dissemble

with her, speake her faire" (1030). Gaveston, his evil angel, now in effect rules both the King and the country, since Edward has violently dismissed Kent, Isabella, and the others who have counseled against his lover. In the distance, behind this pattern of good and evil counselors, stands the morality device of the good and evil angels who war for the protagonist's soul. The important difference is that Edward's psychomachia is not cast in abstract terms reflecting Church dogma but is acted out in a concrete political and moral context to reflect Marlowe's secular and existential orientation toward the nature of men and events. Edward's loss of Isabella through his mistreatment of her spells the loss of his soul. He not only gives up her love, but he also loses the values which the woman-figure symbolizes in Marlovian drama. Possession of her would mean that creative personal development, as well as a love that transcends the isolated self, could belong to Edward. Instead, he will shrink into the dark recesses of his ingrown passions and squeeze the life out of himself. When their estrangement is complete, Isabella laments,

> From my imbracements thus he breakes away,
> O that mine armes could close this Ile about,
> That I might pull him to me where I would,
> Or that these teares that drissell from mine eyes,
> Had power to mollifie his stonie hart,

That when I had him we might neuer part.

(1113-18)

She too images a constricted, surrounded Edward and claims our sympathy for a moment. But when the nobles pursue Gaveston, who has flown from Tynemouth Castle to avoid capture, she reveals in a soliloquy that she is almost as involved with Mortimer as her accusers have claimed. He has taken her side and has been concerned for her welfare during the siege of Tynemouth Castle, and her gratitude has turned to love for him--though she still professes love for Edward:

> So well hast thou deseru'de sweete Mortimer,
> As Isabell could liue with thee for euer.
> In vaine I looke for loue at Edwards hand,
> Whose eyes are fixt on none but Gaueston:
> Yet once more ile importune him with praiers.
>
> (1157-61)

She determines once more to try to win back her King, and, if she is unsuccessful, to go with her son and complain to her brother, the King of France.

The outraged nobles capture the fleeing favorite and plan to kill him. But through the influence of the Earl of Pembroke, who takes responsibility for him, they decide to honor Edward's request to let them meet once more before Gaveston is executed. The Earl of Warwick, however, whose will has been set against the meeting, steals the

prisoner away during the night and murders him. Edward is furious and vows revenge against the rebel forces, but the foolish King refuses to slake his thirst for a minion and adopts Spencer Junior as his new favorite. Spencer is an opportunist hardly less hateful than Gaveston, and his adoption calls forth a renewed pledge of rebellion from the nobles. They promise to call off their fight only if the King will give up his newest friend. A messenger from the nobles describes Spencer much as Mortimer has represented Gaveston and offers the King this advice:

> That from your princely person you remooue
> This Spencer, as a putrifying branche,
> That deads the royall vine, whose golden leaues
> Empale your princelie head, your diadem,
> Whose brightnes such pernitious vpstarts dim,
> Say they, and louinglie aduise your grace,
> To cherish vertue and nobilitie,
> And haue old seruitors in high esteeme,
> And shake off smooth dissembling flatterers:
> This graunted, they, their honors, and their liues,
> Are to your highnesse vowd and consecrate.
>
> (1470-80)

But Edward refuses to relinquish his latest evil counselor, leads his troops into battle against the nobles, and with the aid of Spencer Senior's army, defeats them on the field. Lancaster and Warwick are executed, and Mortimer

is imprisoned in the Tower. The King's brother Kent, also taken prisoner, is banished for the second time. Though the rebels have felt that Edward's love for Gaveston would be the ruin of England, the King does not consider that he is responsible for the evil times. He thinks, rather, that it is the stiff-necked nobility, whose pride will not accept Edward's favorites, who bring disorder to the realm:

> I traitors all, rather then thus be braude,
> Make Englands ciuill townes huge heapes of stones,
> And plowes to go about our pallace gates.
>
> (1522-24)

At this point Edward is at the peak of his power, and Mortimer's fortunes are at low ebb. But Mortimer's pride, and his humiliation at being thrown in the Tower, kindle a new resolve in him. Seeing himself as a virtuous, wronged noble, he asks,

> What Mortimer? can ragged stonie walles
> Immure thy vertue that aspires to heauen?
> No Edward, Englands scourge, it may not be,
> Mortimers hope surmounts his fortune farre.
>
> (1565-68)

The keynote of the presumptuous Marlovian overreacher is sounded: though he is limited by "stonie walles," he will "aspire to heauen," oppose King Edward, and justify his traitorous course with "vertue." The walls of his prison

represent the limitations in himself he refuses to consider as he sets out to conquer Edward's forces and assume control of the country. "Fortune" hints that his tragedy will be worked out according to the De Casibus formula; and though he becomes the only Marlovian figure whose tragic fall proceeds from the orthodox medieval tragic pattern, he comes to resemble Marlowe's other aspiring characters by seeking total power.

Mortimer easily escapes from the Tower and flees to France, where he meets Isabella, who has been sent by Edward as an emissary of peace to the French King. By this time her remaining affections for Edward have been completely transferred to the rebel. Her mission to France is unsuccessful because Spencer has bribed the French lords to deny aid to the Queen, excusing his action on the assumption that she is planning to raise a force against Edward. But he is not so interested in Edward's welfare as he is in creating a secure place for himself through the manipulation of the King's affairs. Though a minor character, Spencer is important because his interference with Isabella's purpose in France ironically guarantees Edward's fall, for the Queen and Mortimer are through his machinations thrown together as allies against a common foe. Once more, Edward's stubborn refusal to do without his minion is the cause of his troubles. It is his "tragic flaw" which requires him to have favorites who

are so corrupt and cynical that they bring him inevitably to grief. When Edward hears that Isabella and Mortimer are traveling in the same company, he naturally assumes that they are preparing for war, and he begins to marshall his troops. His previous suspicions of Isabella's love and her conduct with Mortimer, fed by the poisonous counsel of Gaveston and abetted by the situation Spencer's bribe has created, have prepared him to think the worst of her. But if he was blind to her love and loyalty earlier, he is correct about her treason with Mortimer now--though the irony is that he bears a great part of the blame for her treason and infidelity.

Queen Isabella, Mortimer, King Edward, Gaveston and all the rest are citizens in a corrupt, fallen world which has few saving features. Perhaps only Kent and the Prince of Wales, later King Edward III, have the moral integrity to stand apart from the other characters. And Kent is a member of the rebel force for a time and makes the fatal mistake of aiding Mortimer in his escape. The reason for the general chaos and immorality is the unnaturalness of motive and behavior which most of the characters exhibit. The word "vnnaturall" describes Edward's relationship with Gaveston, the revolt against the King, Edward's execution of Lancaster and Warwick; and it applies to Isabella's love for Mortimer, Mortimer's rise to power and his obsession with Edward's favorites, and Kent's opposition

to the King and his banishment. Beginning with Edward's adoption of Gaveston as his favorite, unnatural behavior becomes a way of life and pervades the kingdom. Yet we can easily understand Mortimer's ire and Isabella's desperate jealousy, Kent's frustration with his brother and Edward's anger and agony.

In these characters Marlowe has taken basic human passions and shown how they can dominate an individual's personality, drive him to actions he would otherwise consider unreasonable, and frustrate every hope he has for peace and happiness. Edward from the first is frustrated in his love for Gaveston, Kent's hopes for his brother and the kingdom are dashed, and Isabella's fervent desire to possess her husband's love is frustrated and twisted into hate and revenge. Acting from frustrated passions of one kind or another, these characters set out on self-defeating courses and ironically lose sight of their original purposes. In the process of giving rein to their most heated urges, they are metamorphosed into mutually destructive, irrational creatures. They relive the myth of Actaeon: they lust after something they cannot or should not have and are tormented to death by the desire, which balloons out of size and exists as an entity almost apart from them. They wrench apart their original identities by becoming so fixed on their ungovernable passions that they have no personal identity apart from them. Their humanity shrinks

until they are mere embodiments of destructive impulse. To say that they are "humours" characters like Tamburlaine is only half correct, for they do change; but it is a devolution, a moving downward in the scale of things from man to beast to devil. Since they aspire after a goal which lies beyond their powers, their degeneration is ironic; and a further irony is that they see the evil in others but not in themselves. Isabella's explanation for a kingdom plunged into war is typical:

> Misgouerned kings are cause of all this wrack,
> And Edward thou art one among them all,
> Whose loosnes hath betrayed thy land to spoyle,
> And made the channels ouerflow with blood.
> Of thine own people patron shouldst thou be,
> But thou--
>
> (1756-61)

She takes a half-truth, applies it to her husband, and forces it to become the whole truth in her mind. Using this sort of "reasoning," she distorts the complex reality of emotion and fact behind the rebellion and her part in it and steps into an illusion. When she can no longer avoid the truth, she finds that she has tragically misbehaved. And she will pay for the error with her life.

Edward's army is defeated near Bristol by the army under Mortimer, and Edward takes refuge in the Abbey of Neath, accompanied by the two toadies Spencer and his

friend Baldock. Kent, seeing that Isabella and Mortimer are hypocritical traitors and adulterers who aim at his life, seeks to help his brother Edward. But the King is discouraged and exhausted, and in the scene at the Abbey he tries to escape from his woe through the comfort the Abbot offers. He tries to be stoically indifferent but only succeeds in lamenting his fortune. Unconsciously playing the role of Actaeon in a gruesome drama which began with Gaveston's plan to manipulate the King through the pleasures of "musicke and poetrie," Edward ironically outlines his fate as the hunted one. He says to the Abbot,

> Father, thy face should harbor no deceit,
> O hadst thou euer beene a king, thy hart
> Pierced deeply with sence of my distresse,
> Could not but take compassion of my state.
> . . . . . .
> Father, this life contemplatiue is heauen,
> O that I might this life in quiet lead,
> But we alas are chaste . . . .
>
> (1875-78, 1887-89)

Marlowe puns on "hart" and "pierced," for Edward is the pursued hart, or stag; and Pierce is the first name of the male lover whose unnatural relationship with him is the ultimate source of his distress. "Pierce" also connotes the sexual embrace of the two and reminds us once more that Gaveston has been likened to the snake in the bosom

whose bite is fatal. "Chaste," moreover, is an ironic pun directed at Edward's perversion--though it reinforces the idea of Edward as a chased beast. As he continues his confession-like colloquy with the Abbot, the King admits,

> O might I neuer open these eyes againe,
> Neuer againe lift vp this drooping head,
> O neuer more lift vp this dying hart!
>
> (1908-10)

His exhaustion of body and spirit causes him to wish for the ease of death, and he repeats the double-meaning "hart" again. His mind is disintegrating because the energy he could have used to support an attitude of bravery has been dissipated through his minions. Even with the abominable Spencer at his side he cannot resist the pressures that terror and submerged guilt create, because Spencer has never returned the King's affection and thereby has denied him spiritual nutrition. At every point in Edward's tragedy Marlowe takes care to provide a psychological parallel to the physical action. Edward's exhaustion and drowsiness symbolize the exhaustion and near-death of his soul.

The Earl of Leicester surprises and captures the weary trio in the Abbey because the gloomy Mower has seen them entering the place. He may possibly represent the ravages of time or the figure of Father Time, if he carries a scythe on stage, and in any case he destroys Edward's

hope to escape. Edward is sent to Killingworth, a symbolically apt spelling for Kenilworth Castle. But before he goes, he casts off the disguise he used when he came to the Abbey--a gesture which symbolizes a further change of identity or metamorphosis for the poor King. From this action onward he does not degenerate further; instead, he gains back a large measure of his lost humanity through the terrible suffering he endures. It is this development in him which claims our sympathy, though any fellow-feeling for Edward proves Marlowe's point that our humanity shares in the condition of damnation being imitated on stage. This feeling for the suffering of his protagonists is something new with Marlowe and will be developed in Doctor Faustus. Even in The Jew of Malta our first feelings for Barabas when he is robbed of his money are very slight and last only a moment. And in Tamburlaine the slight admiration possible in the early scenes is an obvious device which serves to deepen our outrage against him later.

At Kenilworth Edward utters the long lament on his deposition, which shows that he still sees himself not as the pursued "hart," or deer, but as a kingly lion who has been betrayed:

> The greefes of priuate men are soone allayde,
> But not of kings, the forrest Deare being strucke
> Runnes to an herbe that closeth vp the wounds,
> But when the imperiall Lions flesh is gorde,

He rends and teares it with his wrathfull pawe,
And highly scorning, that the lowly earth
Should drinke his bloud, mounts vp into the ayre:
And so it fares with me . . . .

(1994-2001)

But though he wishes he could revenge himself, he recognizes his powerlessness to do so:

But when I call to minde I am a king,
Me thinkes I should reuenge me of the wronges,
That Mortimer and Isabell haue done.
But what are kings, when regiment is gone,
But perfect shadowes in a sun-shine day?
My nobles rule, I beare the name of king,
I weare the crowne, but am contrould by them,
By Mortimer, and my vnconstant Queene,
Who spots my nuptiall bed with infamie,
Whilst I am lodgd within this caue of care,
Where sorrow at my elbow still attends,
To companie my hart with sad laments,
That bleedes within me for this strange exchange.

(2009-21)

His bleeding "hart" is the psychological equivalent of Actaeon's mythical travail, except that Edward has been guilty of a perverted form of love and has corrupted the mythic archetype. In Kenilworth Castle the King also surrenders his crown, but not before he has succeeded in

arranging our sympathies against Mortimer. As his humanity grows through suffering, he comes to understand the nature of the kingship which he earlier treated so lightly; but his increased wisdom only makes his sense of loss more poignant.

Spencer and Baldock are hanged by Mortimer, and Edward is to be transferred to another prison, Berkeley Castle, in the care of the mild Sir Thomas Berkeley. But Mortimer, fearing a rescue by Kent, gives the prisoner's charge to the cruel Gurney and Matrevis; and Isabella compounds the evil done to the King by concurring with whatever Mortimer decides. Mortimer reveals that his humanity has been lost in his struggle for power and replaced by a brutal sadism and ambition. He brags that he controls Fortune and orders the pair to torture their prisoner:

> As thou intendest to rise by Mortimer,
> Who now makes Fortunes wheele turne as he please,
> Seeke all the meanes thou canst to make him droope,
> And neither giue him kinde word, nor good looke.
>
> (2196-99)

Isabella looks on and then hypocritically gives Gurney and Matrevis a ring for Edward, with this message:

> Commend me humblie to his Maiestie,
> And tell him, that I labour all in vaine,
> To ease his greefe, and worke his libertie:

And beare him this, as witnesse of my loue.

(2213-16)

Edward is taken by the henchmen to a dungeon, a symbol not only of the constriction of his spirit and the isolation he experiences, but also of the subrational, dark side of his personality which spawned his lust for Gaveston and now assails him with dread and chaos. He asks of Mortimer,

> When will the furie of his mind asswage?
> When will his hart be satisfied with bloud?
> If mine will serue, vnbowell straight this brest,
> And giue my heart to Isabell and him,
> It is the chiefest marke they leuell at.
>
> (2273-77)

The continual reference to his "hart" deepens the irony of his unconscious role as the hunted stag, and "vnbowell" is an unwitting hint of the manner of his murder. His masochism and submissive nature are emphasized too and continue to be important as he accepts and endures his torment.

Matrevis and Gurney allow no sleep or rest to the haggard King. They cynically offer him sewer water to drink; when he refuses it, they bathe and shave him with it. His tormentors are the diabolically clever fiends who preside over the hell he has created for himself from his first transgression with Gaveston. Like the hells of Barabas and Faustus, Edward's damnation is dramatized as

a descent into a lower place: Barabas falls into his boiling witches' brew, Faustus is consigned to a lower part of the stage called "Hell," and Edward is chained in a filthy dungeon. These images of descent objectify the psychic struggle, or psychomachia, of the protagonists and show their hell to be an immersion into the unconscious mind, where the fears and impulses that are usually controlled by the consciousness take command of it. The conscious minds of the protagonists are lacerated by an awareness of the dark underside of their psyches. In theological terms, they are souls experiencing damnation, the pain of despair which follows an awareness of one's sinful nature and the subsequent loss of grace.

But if Gurney and Matrevis play the role of tormentors, they are still only minor devils in the play. The Arch-fiend himself, Lucifer, whose name is brilliantly translated as Lightborn by the former Cambridge student of theology, is conjured up by Mortimer in a way reminiscent of Faustus' calling on Mephistophilis. Having decided that "the king must die" if he is to remain safe, Mortimer chants in Latin the riddling message which, he plans, will insure Edward's death but not implicate himself. After this incantation, a sort of Black Mass in little, he conjures:

> Lightborn,
> Come forth . . . .
>
> (2353-54)

Mortimer has been metamorphosed into a devil, and Lightborn may be understood as the projection of his evil soul, his alter-ego, similar to the way Ithamore relates to Barabas. Edward's hell is now complete, for the Devil has been loosed upon him. Lightborn appears on stage in garb similar to what Gaveston wears--an Italian costume, symbolizing the Machiavel. He slickly says,

> Tis not the first time I haue killed a man,
> I learnde in Naples how to poison flowers,
> To strangle with a lawne thrust through the throte,
> To pierce the wind-pipe with a needles point,
> Or whilst one is a sleepe, to take a quill
> And blowe a little powder in his eares,
> Or open his mouth, and powre quick siluer downe,
> But yet I haue a brauer way then these.
>
> (2362-69)

The predominance of hissing sounds, plosives, and tense guttural sounds underlines Lightborn's identity as the Serpent and relates him once again to Gaveston. Both characters implement the damnation which Edward has brought on himself, though one is the embodiment of Edward's evil passion and the other is the living emblem of Mortimer's aspiration.

Mortimer plans to make the Prince of Wales his charge. He and Isabella will be virtual rulers, since he is made the Lord Protector when the young Prince is crowned King

Edward III. But the title is ironic because, like Gaveston and Spencer, he is only an evil counselor to young Edward. He himself now takes on the identity of the serpent in the garden, the poison in the realm, and must be destroyed. His first act as Lord Protector is to condemn Kent to be beheaded for trying to help his brother Edward to escape. Though he must overrule young Edward to sentence Kent, Isabella--fully given over to evil herself--upholds the decision.

Edward has shown a surprising capacity for suffering under Gurney and Matrevis, but when Lightborn goes to do his job for Mortimer, he must face an even greater torture. As Lightborn prepares to murder Edward, he tells the two jailers,

> I know what I must do, get you away,
> Yet be not farre off, I shall need your helpe.
> See that in the next roome I haue a fier,
> And get me a spit, and let it be red hote.
>
> (2476-79)

Edward's hell-fire is readied within the limited confines of a room, which symbolizes the stifling and isolation of his suffering, perverted soul, just as Barabas' little room stands for his soul's smallness. The obscene punishment which Lightborn conceives for him with the red-hot spit is a grotesque version of the homosexual contact he had with Gaveston. Lightborn calls also for a table and a

feather-bed, the one to lay the King on while he is pressed to death with the other. The feather-bed reminds us of Edward's soft, pleasure-loving nature, and the table which presses him reflects his docile, masochistic nature and his submissive role as Gaveston's lover. He has the life squeezed out of him on a bed of pleasure by Gurney and Matrevis, while the fiend inserts the fiery, disemboweling, phallic spit. When Lightborn goes down into the dungeon to do his work, he symbolically descends into hell, the foul dungeon where Edward has been maltreated. He tries to convince the King that he is sent by the Queen to comfort him, but Edward fears he is about to die. He gives the fiend a jewel, symbol of the soul he has earlier surrendered to evil, and says,

> O if thou harborst murther in thy hart,
> Let this gift change thy minde, and saue thy soule,
> Know that I am a king, oh at that name,
> I feel a hell of greefe: where is my crowne?
> Gone, gone, and doe I remaine aliue?
>
> (2535-39)

The bitter irony of his asking a devil to save his soul is increased by the pain of loss he feels for his crown and his original state of happiness. He tries to sleep but cannot. We think of Milton's Satan, whispering in Eve's ear as she sleeps, when Edward says,

Something still busseth in mine eares,
And tels me, if I sleepe I neuer wake . . . .
(2551-52)

Lightborn commits his horrible murder, aided by the other two; then, Gurney stabs him according to Mortimer's directions in the puzzling message.

It is not long before King Edward III learns of Mortimer and his mother's complicity in the recent crimes, and he moves to punish the evil-doers. Before he goes to be quartered and beheaded, Mortimer laments,

Base fortune, now I see, that in thy wheele
There is a point, to which when men aspire,
They tumble hedlong downe: that point I touchte,
And seeing there was no place to mount vp higher,
Why should I greeue at my declining fall?
(2627-31)

Stoically resigned to his fate, he goes to his death; the Queen goes to the Tower to await trial, and young Edward inherits the disordered realm. Little hope survives at the end of the play, except perhaps the knowledge that the historical Edward III was one of England's greatest rulers. The corruption that has infected the moral and political atmosphere of the kingdom remains as the strongest impression of the play.

In Edward II Marlowe has probed more deeply into the personalities of his characters than ever before. Events

are more clearly the results of the complex and contradictory passions by which Edward and the others are propelled. Having virtually created the history play in Tamburlaine, Marlowe now adds the dimensions of character-drama to the English stage, and Shakespeare for one is soon to prove that this latter contribution underlies England's greatest tragedies.

NOTES

[1]Besides these two obvious sources Marlowe might have consulted Robert Fabyan's New Chronicles of England and France and John Stow's Summary of English Chronicles, according to Ribner, in The Complete Plays of Christopher Marlowe, p. xxiii.

[2]Since there are no divisions into act and scene in the Brooke edition of Edward II, I refer only to the lines I quote from the play, which are numbered consecutively.

[3]Cf. Boas, Christopher Marlowe, pp. 72-73.

CHAPTER VI

A DEVILISH EXERCISE: FAUSTUS AND THE FAILURE OF RENAISSANCE MAN

Marlowe's finest creation, though it shows the work of at least one collaborator and survives only through imperfect texts, is the tragedy of Doctor Faustus. It is now widely thought to be his last play and probably was composed late in 1592 or early in 1593. The ultimate source for the play is the German Historia von D. Johann Fausten, published in 1587; but Marlowe rather certainly used an English translation, The Historie of the damnable life and death of Doctor Iohn Faustus, printed in 1592 by one "P. F. Gent."[1]

Out of the ancient Faust-myth Marlowe has fashioned in the drama of the magician who sells his soul to the devil for occult powers a veritable fable of Renaissance man--his dreams and aspirations and, more particularly, his failures and illusions. For in Faustus the man we find the elements most suggestive of the Renaissance innovations in Western thought. He is partly an artist, who wishes to glorify not God, as his medieval predecessors did, but man; he is

partly scientist and philosopher, whose hope is to make man more god-like and not to justify his miserable state on earth; and he is a Protestant, actually a Calvinist in his theology, who has attempted through the Reformation to free man from the weighty ritual and dogma of the Roman Church but has convinced himself only of man's terrible guilt and isolation from God. His aloneness causes him to feel his human limitations all the more, and he indulges in magic in an attempt to forget them. His whole condition is characterized by the desire to lose the past--because the past pictures man as a finite, suffering creature--and to improvise a new, omnipotent self which will not be subject to mortality. Faustus' concerns with pagan culture, his flying, and his tricks are all designed to leave the past farther and farther behind so that he will not have to recongize what it represents. His plan is to nullify his old identity as an imperfect being by originating a new context in which he can devise an ideal self. He yearns for a life of power and pleasure and is convinced that he can reach his goal merely because he can imagine it. He embodies the Renaissance notion that man can infinitely improve and develop himself.[2] He is an ironic figure, of course, since his attempts to be more than man and go beyond his medieval past limit him to a view of himself which is damning: his humanistic concern with man alone does not make room for God's mercy, and he perishes in his isolation.

Marlowe uses the form of a morality play in Doctor Faustus, but he does not arrive at an orthodox Christian conclusion about his protagonist's fate. The play does not dramatize the damnation of the Christian sinner who disobeys God; it investigates the post-medieval condition of Western man as he tries to re-fashion or disregard his cultural heritage in order to realize his most radical dreams. Marlowe concludes that the individual who disengages himself from his intellectual, social, and spiritual patrimony faces not only a painful personal isolation from the communion of his race but also encounters the problems of anxiety, dread, and meaninglessness. Since he has chosen to aspire toward godliness, Faustus has no one to blame but himself for his shortcomings; and the guilt for his failure to become more than man therefore rests on his shoulders alone. Without God to give life meaning, the freedom which was to accompany Faustus' emancipation from his limited self and the past dissolves--and in its place is left the void. What meaning, then, can Faustus make of life? He turns to science, to art, and to magic as a substitute for the freedom--limited but guaranteed--which he has rejected. He has accepted man's temporal and secular being as all, and now he faces the hopeless task of satisfying his spirit by earthly means.

He believes easily enough in the Devil, because his theological training at Wittenberg has taught him that man

is a sinful creature deserving of damnation. And he knows that the mercy of God is not his to earn, since God gives His grace only to those He chooses as His elect. Faustus is a man committed to this world and the secular activities of man, and God is infinitely far away. Since he is man, then, and has no ready access to God, and since man is guilty and doomed, Faustus loses hope and despairs. His soul starves because the source of its sustenance is missing. And all his magic and power over nature cannot feed his perishing spirit. His damnation is the existential plight of isolated man, trying desperately to create meaning in his life through imposing his puny individuality on the world. The Good Angel and the Bad Angel dramatize his conflict of soul and show that his conviction of personal evil outweighs his belief in God's grace and the efficacy of prayer to help him. He is a man typical of the Renaissance and modern periods because his downfall is the tragedy of knowledge, and knowledge destroys faith. Like his predecessors in the dim, Edenic past, he is fated to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; and in doing so he becomes the Devil's disciple and loses his resemblance to God. Sad Mephistophilis is that nostalgic but proudly resistant side of his nature which persists in its own lonely course though damnation is sure to follow. He is the instinct which the puritanical conscience tortures and represses until hell is created within the human breast.

In the Prologue the Chorus explains, in terms of the Icarus myth, that it is pride--the rebellious spirit of self-glorification--that leads Faustus to throw over his theology and proceed to black magic. A short summary of his life is given, showing that his background and training have formed within him a Reformation Protestant conscience, which, however, does not prevent him from becoming evil:

> Now is he born, of parents base of stock,
> In Germany, within a town called Rhode;
> At riper years to Wittenberg he went,
> Whereas his kinsmen chiefly brought him up.
> So much he profits in divinity,
> The fruitful plot of scholarism graced,
> That shortly he was graced with doctor's name,
> Excelling all whose sweet delight disputes
> In th' heavenly matters of theology;
> Till, swollen with cunning of a self-conceit,
> His waxen wings did mount above his reach,
> And melting, heavens conspired his overthrow.
> For, falling to a devilish exercise,
> And glutted now with learning's golden gifts,
> He surfeits upon cursèd necromancy;
> Nothing so sweet as magic is to him,
> Which he prefers before his chiefest bliss.
>
> (11-27)[3]

It is precisely this strict religious conscience which,

though he relives the role of Satan in an attempt to do so, Faustus can never obliterate. His theological training has convinced him of his damnation, we learn in the first scene. But he cannot escape from its teachings because they are the very forms of consciousness with which he views the human condition.

His knowledge and studies have not brought him contentment because they have only reminded him of human limitation. He therefore desires something more than the knowledge of philosophy or medicine: he might "heap up gold, / And be eternized for some wondrous cure" (I,i,14-15); but even that does not appeal to him. His discontent cannot be relieved, for what really upsets him is being human, possessing only finite attributes:

> Yet art thou still but Faustus, and a man.
> Couldst thou make men to live eternally
> Or being dead raise them to life again,
> Then this profession [i.e., medicine] were to be esteemed.
> (I,i,23-26)

Faustus' mistake, from the theological point of view which the form of the play suggests, is the humanistic error of seeking in man's limited sciences, arts, and philosophies the answers to religious questions, which have meaning only with reference to God. But the irony of this assumption is that Faustus' religion itself is oriented toward man:

the Reformation Protestantism of Wittenberg, where Faustus was trained, has concentrated on individual man--his guilt, his sinful nature, and his great distance from God. Faustus the Calvinist knows that good works do not bring salvation; only faith in God's mercy lifts up man to God. But here too Faustus is stopped: he can have no faith because he does not believe himself one of the elect; that is, he is convinced so strongly of his sin that hope for him is impossible. Faustus is put in the paradoxical predicament of being damned by his theology:

> Stipendium peccati mors est. Ha! Stipendium . . . The reward of sin is death: that's hard. Si peccasse negamus, fallimur, et nulla est in nobis ueritas. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and there's no truth in us. Why, then belike, we must sin, and so consequently die.
> Ay, we must die an everlasting death.
> What doctrine call you this? Che serà, serà:
> What will be, shall be! Divinity, adieu!
>
> (I,i,39 -46)

Through a false syllogism he arrives at a deterministic conclusion about man's fate. He is so intent on the first part of the passage from Romans vi.23 that he fails to notice what follows: "but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." In fact, he sounds more Manichean than Christian, since he can see no good

coming from his present state. In the second passage he reads (I John i.8) he again deceives himself, for its message is tempered with these words from the following verse: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John i.9). Faustus sees only that half of revealed truth that, as a Calvinist convinced of the evil of man's nature, he is disposed to see. Like Tamburlaine, he is fooled by his rhetoric into imagining a false fate for himself. It is this illusion about inevitable damnation that so terrifies him that he turns to magic as an escape. But magic, too, is illusory; and Faustus damns himself by confining his consciousness to a world of fantasy. He chooses twenty-four years of entertainment and the illusion of power to keep his mind from brooding over his "everlasting death." But he knows full well that he cannot surpass his status as a creature and that he must accept the end to which all men are subject. His inability to accept death, and his fanatical obsession with death, form the stifling barriers to creative or practical thought which seal him off from communion with other men and destroy his soul.

Since he can do nothing to relieve his fate as a man, he will commune with spirits and attempt to become a god. It is a mad course that he chooses--and ridiculous from the beginning. Just as he is about to receive the magicians

Cornelius and Valdes, who will teach him their lore, his psychomachia is dramatized by the Good Angel and the Bad Angel. The former counsels him to read scripture; but his evil counterpart urges Faustus to try magic, in terms suggesting the myth-making powers of the artist:

> Go forward Faustus, in that famous art
> Wherein all nature's treasury is contained:
> Be thou on earth as Jove is in the sky,
> Lord and commander of these elements.
>
> (I,i,72-75)

And Faustus answers,

> How am I glutted with conceit of this!
> Shall I make spirits fetch me what I please,
> Resolve me of all ambiguities,
> Perform what desperate enterprise I will?
> I'll have them fly to India for gold,
> Ransack the ocean for orient pearl,
> And search all corners of the new-found world
> For pleasant fruits and princely delicates.
>
> (I,i,76-83)

But if this speech suggests the imaginative soaring of the artistic spirit, Faustus' welcome to the two magicians makes it doubly clear that he thinks of himself as a sort of artist. He compares himself with Musaeus, the semi-mythical Greek poet to whom a poem about Hero and Leander was attributed. And in the reference to the

descent into hell he recalls, along with Musaeus' trip to hell, the mythical visit to the underworld by the poet-musician Orpheus.

> Know that your words have won me at the last
> To practise magic and concealed arts;
> Yet not your words only, but mine own fantasy,
> That will receive no object, for my head
> But ruminates on necromantic skill.
> Philosophy is odious and obscure,
> Both law and physic are for petty wits,
> Divinity is basest of the three,
> Unpleasant, harsh, contemptible, and vild;
> 'Tis magic, magic, that hath ravished me.
> And I, that have with concise syllogisms
> Gravelled the pastors of the German church,
> And made the flowering pride of Wittenberg
> Swarm to my problems as the infernal spirits
> On sweet Musaeus when he came to hell,
> Will be as cunning as Agrippa was,
> Whose shadows made all Europe honour him.
>
> (I,i,99-116)

Art is a kind of magic which transforms the world, and the close relationship between art and the realm of the occult is hinted in the reference to Cornelius Agrippa, the 16th-century physician and student of magic, whose namesake teaches the forbidden knowledge to Faustus in

the play. Agrippa's name follows that of Musaeus so closely that a comparison of the two men is implicit: both control non-material spirits and therefore apparently transcend the boundaries of ordinary mortals. The artist and the magician, too, can live as God in fantasies of their creation, in which for a time the limitations of mortality are forgotten. No doubt Marlowe's picture of Faustus is, at least here, autobiographical. The author of England's best-known erotic poem in the 16th century, Hero and Leander, and a former student of theology at Cambridge, Marlowe also knew the pain that attends the loss of religious faith and the temptation to indulge in the imaginative reconstruction of the world. And so it is with Faustus, who has decided to abandon a deterministic theology in favor of the freedom he thinks magic offers. He will become a god, as he has pointed out in his opening soliloquy:

> A sound magician is a demi-god;
> Here tire my braines to get a deity!
>
> (I,i,60-61)

This usurpation of the powers of God is, of course, a mortal sin--and a fearsome irony; for in trying to avoid damnation altogether, Faustus merely insures his damnation by re-enacting Lucifer's archetypal sin. Though he at first seems willing to pay the price of his soul for accepting the black art, he later sees his mistake and falls into the worse sin of despair.

The short second scene is designed as a comic reflection of the disputation of Faustus by which he justifies his turning to magic. His servant Wagner discourses meaninglessly when the two scholars ask him where Faustus is and informs them that Faustus has taken up with Cornelius and Valdes. The scene does not advance the action, but it serves to put the first scene into perspective. Faustus is no more precise a logician than Wagner is; both substitute a hollow rhetoric for exact discourse.

The very powerful scene in which Faustus blasphemes the trinity and conjures comes next. His Latin incantations are no less than a Black Mass, an inverted form of ritualistic worship. Mephistophilis appears in such an ugly form, however, that the magician charges him to "Go, and return an old Franciscan friar," (I,iii,25)--a command which reminds us of Ithamore's statement to Barabas, "Look, look, Mr. here come two religious Caterpillers" (IV,1529), at the approach of Friar Bernardine and Friar Jacomo. Faustus feels that his power as a conjurer has raised the diabolical spirit, but Mephistophilis tells him that the devils come to tempt a soul whenever they hear the Trinity blasphemed. Yet Faustus is not convinced of his powerlessness to command the supernatural realm. He brags,

> There is no chief but only Beelzebub,
> To whom Faustus doth dedicate himself.
> This word 'damnation' terrifies not me,
> For I confound hell in Elysium:
> My ghost be with the old philosophers!
>
> (I,iii,56-60)

He rejects the Christian view of experience for the dwelling place of the blessed shades which the classical world offers. Faustus again partakes of the spirit of the artist, and particularly resembles the Renaissance artist, who joined the humanist scholars in joyously rediscovering Greece and Rome. It is only speculation, but surely here all of Marlowe's sympathies are engaged, as he looks back longingly with Faustus to the freshness of pagan antiquity, when the great Gothic Church did not stand between man and the pure, sensuous enjoyment of his earth. The nostalgic tone which suffuses the whole play, and which is again especially evident in the scene with Helen, corresponds with Faustus' (and Marlowe's) sense of the loss of some earlier, original experience of wholeness in both man and nature. The ideally beautiful past, which never can be recaptured but seems to hold the secret of happiness, is a minor theme running throughout Marlowe's dramas; and it indicates a playwright aware of the end of an epoch. As the medieval synthesis of philosophy, science, and religion crumbles and Marlowe

senses the beginning of the brave new world of the Renaissance, he gazes wistfully back into the distant past for the innocence and newness which are missing from his age of intellectual upheaval. Caught between one world dead and another yet unborn, he feels the emptiness and lack of faith which attend the loss of a worldview. Tamburlaine was once a shepherd; Barabas had his Abigail and his wealth; Edward was King of England; Dido was happy with her lover Aeneas; and Faustus was the great Doctor of Divinity who astounded the scholars at Wittenberg. But now these joys are past, and the protagonists who have lost them become aware of the severe limitations their deprivation imposes upon them. Sadly enough, their misled attempts to reach beyond these limits prove fatal and describe their tragedies. In the sense that they all set out on individual journeys from the center of an older, more ordered world to find personal meaning or fulfillment, they are protestors--Protestants, if you will--discontented characters who throw over the Old Order and try to discover a new one. And Faustus is the arch-Protestant, in whose eccentric course is the summing up of the experience of the others. What he and they discover is not a newer, braver kind of salvation in their own designs but the lack of coherence to which Donne's elegy testifies. They are lonely figures who find that the center cannot hold when they obey their anarchic impulses in a furious drive to redeem their losses.

Scene iv is another comic reflector of the main action. Wagner conjures up two devils, showing that what Faustus does can be duplicated by anyone who wishes to engage in evil, in order to frighten the Clown Robin into waiting on him--as Mephistophilis is charged to do for Faustus. The reason that Wagner can tyrannize Robin is that the latter is starving and will do anything to eat:

> Alas poor slave; see how poverty jests in his nakedness. The villain's out of service, and so hungry
> that I know
> he would give his soul to the devil for a shoulder
> of mutton,
> though it were blood-raw.
>
> (I,iv,7-10)

Faustus too is hungry; his soul is starving for the communion with man and God which he has denounced in his turning from theology to magic. And though he may be a more intense and commanding figure, he is as much a fool as the Clown for wanting to sell his soul to satisfy his hunger. Moreover, he is more blameworthy for his conduct than Robin because he has a superior mentality and education. Wagner threatens Robin by saying that he will have the Clown's lice tear him in pieces if he does not become his servant. The device is funny here, but it points to a scene later in the play when Mephistophilis threatens to tear Faustus' flesh into pieces if he tries to repent (V,i).

The symbolism of rent flesh and flowing blood is designed throughout the play to remind us that Faustus has willfully turned away from the Holy Communion which Christ instituted with His flesh and blood on the night of the Last Supper. This pattern of symbols reaches a moving climax at the end, when Faustus cries helplessly for a drop of Christ's blood to save him. It is supported by another, related set of symbols which also suggests that Faustus' damnation is not only his lack of communion with other men but also what the sacrament of Holy Communion itself represents. What I refer to is the imagery of eating, of gluttony, and of devouring which runs as a leitmotiv throughout the play.[4] Faustus' desire to be godlike is stated in terms of gluttony: "Swollen with cunning of a self-conceit" (Prologue, 20); he admits that "The god thou servest is thine own appetite" (II,i,10); he snatches meat and wine from the Pope (III,ii); hell "gapes" in V,ii, to receive Faustus; Helen "sucks forth" his soul (V,i); on the night before he is taken away by the devils he is driven by his spiritual emptiness to "banquet and carouse and swill" (V,i,6) and even Robin and Dick in III,iii, steal a wine cup from the vinter's. Faustus' need to eat and his gluttony are an ironic reflection of his loss of spiritual sustenance and his foredoomed attempts to satisfy this loss through physical means. The entire pattern of the images of eating,

devouring, and gluttony underline that what his hunger for knowledge and power has led him to is spiritual starvation. Turning to magic and usurping the prerogative of God is a refusal to take part in the community of obedient creatures who find fulfillment in following God's will and becoming His church. The symbolism of blood and torn flesh supports this interpretation by pointing, first of all, to the sacrament of Holy Communion and, secondly, to the psychic disintegration which Faustus undergoes as he loses his soul. The devils rend his limbs from his body at the end and merely enact physically what he has already experienced spiritually. Faustus turns to evil in his desire to become more than man, degenerates into a devil instead, and loses his humanity altogether: trying to ignore his human condition, he loses the human recourse to God's mercy through Christ's Communion. He cannot endure the ambiguities which attend man's duality of spirit and flesh, but he errs tragically when he thinks that he can transcend ambiguity through magic. He succeeds only in surrendering his soul for the illusions of pleasure.

Seen this way, the play takes on implications far beyond the damnation of Faustus. It is a sort of universal drama of Western man in the Renaissance and modern periods, a warning that since he has discarded the medieval past and its severely repressive forces in the hope of progress

through the scientific control of nature, he nevertheless runs the risk of destroying himself and others in his obsessive concern with power. As he does away with the sense of community by an exaggerated application of individuality, he gambles with isolation and psychic fragmentation. And as his Faustian cult of personality replaces cultural coherence, he may surrender his identity and become the slave of the fashions, whims, and fads of the famous few celebrities of his age.

Faustus dedicates himself to Lucifer's kingdom and signs with his blood the contract which releases his soul to the Prince of Darkness in exchange for magical power and insight. But his blood has congealed on the first attempt, and Mephistophilis has had to bring in a chafer of fire to make it flow again. This action symbolizes the fiery damnation Faustus faces when he ignores what the blood of Christ's sacrifice represents to him. When the bill is signed, he repeats Christ's last words on the cross, "Consummatum est" (II,i,72), another gesture suggesting the diabolic religious inversion which leads him away from salvation and toward damnation. On his arm appears the injunction, "Homo fuge!"--a warning against his present course which looks ahead to his flying about the world with Mephistophilis on the back of a dragon, an ironic mode of transportation that fails to remind him that he should instead fly from Mephistophilis for his own good.

The first item about which Faustus questions the evil spirit after Mephistophilis has been bound to him for twenty-four years is hell. Though he has abandoned theology, he is still obsessed with its lessons. He asks his charge where hell is, and the sad fallen angel answers,

> Hell hath no limits, nor is circumscribed
> In one self place, but where we are is hell,
> And where hell is, there must we ever be:
> And to be short, when all the world dissolves
> And every creature shall be purified
> All places shall be hell that is not heaven.
>
> (II,i,119-24)

Faustus, unprepared to admit that his present condition since he bartered away his soul is the beginning of his damnation, answers, "I think hell's a fable" (125). But Mephistophilis sardonically assures him, "Ay, think so still, till experience change thy mind" (126). Faustus stubbornly refuses to believe the "old wives' tales" of his companion and calls for a wife to satisfy his "wanton and lascivious" nature. Whenever Faustus approaches the recognition of his miserable state, pleasure is used to divert him. Here, he calls for a wife; and though Mephistophilis cannot provide him with a mate and justify their union through the sacrament of marriage, he promises him a courtesan. In order to "delight his mind" when he signs the bond, Mephistophilis has a company of devils

entertain him and dance before him. When he is near to repenting in the next scene (II,ii), Lucifer himself arises and lulls his mind by providing him with the parade of the Seven Deadly Sins. And when the Old Man tries to save him in V,i, he tries to forget his fear of being torn apart by Mephistophilis by requesting Helen for his "paramour." The gratification of his soul's hunger is denied in each instance, and in its place futile pleasure is substituted. Marlowe's understanding of the psychology of loss and damnation is unerring. Faustus is the picture of the frantic hell-raiser, to use a pun, who desperately tries to conceal the lack of substance and meaning in his life through an indulgence in fun and games. Pleasure for Faustus is an anodyne, a narcotic, dulling his memory of the irrecoverable past and his awareness of the inevitable future. Faustus outlines the torments he feels, which are produced by the tension between the distractions of pleasure and the knowledge of damnation. Though he might not admit it, he is a soul suffering in the hell he has brought about by his blaspheming and his presumptuous aspiration to know all the secrets of nature:

> My heart is hardened, I cannot repent.
> Scarce can I name salvation, faith, or heaven,
> But fearful echoes thunder in mine ears
> 'Faustus, thou art damned!' Then guns and knives,
> Swords, poison, halters, and envenomed steel

Are laid before me to dispatch myself;
And long ere this I should have done the deed
Had not sweet pleasure conquered deep despair.
Have not I made blind Homer sing to me
Of Alexander's love and Oenon's death?
And hath not he, that built the walls of Thebes
With ravishing sound of his melodious harp,
Made music with my Mephostophilis?
Why should I die then, or basely despair?

(II,ii,17-30)

The pleasures of music and poetry have been especially effective as a source of solace for Faustus. The world of pagan art, of Homer and the mythical Amphion, transport him away from his miseries; but they cannot replace the loss of heavenly grace for which he longs. His discontent is increased when he discovers that the knowledge that Mephistophilis possesses, instead of teaching him the ultimate secrets of nature, is at times rudimentary and less advanced than his own. The reason that Mephistophilis cannot answer the fundamental questions of the universe is that they have meaning only with reference to God, and the kingdom of fallen angels has no access to God and is forbidden to know Him and His mysteries.

It is at this point that Faustus reconsiders his bargain and acknowledges his error: "O Christ, my saviour, my saviour! help to save distressed Faustus' soul" (II,ii,84-85).

But Lucifer brings on the Seven Deadly Sins to parade before the magician, knowing that if his curiosity is momentarily satisfied he can be controlled. The device of the parading sins recalls not only the medieval stage but also brings to mind Spenser's Faerie Queene, I,iv, in which the Redcrosse Knight at the House of Pride has a vision of Lucifera drawn in a chariot by Idleness, Gluttony, Lechery, Avarice, Envy, and Wrath. One of the most important things to notice about the sins who go before Faustus is that they either have no parents, or have been illegitimate children, or are the spawn of non-human creatures or inorganic objects. They are all like Faustus in being "disinherited"; that is, they are unrelated to any figure of authority or fatherhood. Like Faustus, who has tried to re-create himself through magic and has refused the identity his heavenly patrimony or inheritance has offered, they are self-generated creatures or bastards whose only identifying characteristics are the sins which give them their names. Pride says, "I disdain to have any parents" (II,ii,115); Covetousness was "begotten of an old churl in a leather bag" (125-26); Envy was "begotten of a chimney-sweeper and an oyster-wife" (130-31); wrath "had neither father nor mother" (137); Gluttony's "parents are all dead" (144); Sloth "was begotten on a sunny bank" (157-58); and Lechery, who does not refer to her parentage, nevertheless is characterized by her love of cooked and

raw flesh.[5] Faustus is guilty in some measure of all the sins in Lucifer's show, especially Pride and Gluttony: he is "swollen with cunning of a self-conceit" and serves the god of his own appetite, to paraphrase his own words. In fact, the Seven Deadly Sins can be seen as the projections of his inner state. In being guilty of pride when he aspires "to get a deity," he is--like Lucifer before him--guilty of all the other sins as well.

Marlowe interprets the nature of sin to be that rebellious instinct which aims at destroying one's heritage or past, the egocentric preoccupation with selfish impulses which denies the values transmitted by culture, and the willfulness which is at bottom only a desire for sensual gratification or personal aggrandizement. All sins are contained in the sin of Lucifer; and Marlowe, aware of an age of scientific awakening, religious upheaval, and political innovation in which the past is systematically being destroyed through the growth of individualistic and nationalistic impulses, again and again returns to the pattern of rebellion to shape his tragic vision. He himself, probably an "atheist" or free-thinker and possibly a homosexual as well, knew the tragic feelings of loss which afflict an outsider, a disinherited child, an outlaw. And in his plays the primal sin is re-enacted by characters who destroy or disregard their heritage and seek through power to be omnipotent or omniscient. Tamburlaine,

Barabas, Edward, and Faustus wilfully disinherit themselves and try instead to become monarchs of realms that do not belong to them. They are jealous of the light, but in trying to usurp the glory of the sun they burn their wings and fall to their deaths.

The third scene of Act II, like all the other comic scenes, comments again on the ludicrous, futile spectacle of Faustus' conjuring and his pact with the powers of darkness. Robin plans to dabble in magic as Faustus has done and feels that it is all a very serious business. He brags that he can transform his master by growing a pair of horns on his head, but Dick punctures his mood by joking, "Thou needst not do that, for my mistress hath done it" (19)--a remark which shows that even the most mundane character can identify the nature of evil. What Faustus engages in is not so mysterious as it is ridiculous; moreover, his acceptance of a devil's identity is no more occult a transformation than that which the most ordinary sinner undergoes.

The austere Chorus introduces Act III and describes the flying trips Faustus has been taking with Mephistophilis. A reference to Holy Communion, which Faustus is denied, comes when the Chorus says that he is on his way to Rome to "take some part of holy Peter's feast" (24). And Mephistophilis says, after he has told that Faustus has seen the wonders of the world, "I know you'd see the

Pope / And take some part of holy Peter's feast" (III,i, 53-54). The delights of the earth have not satisfied the necromancer, and he instinctively returns to a source of the spiritual sustenance he has blindly ignored. But the Pope is shown to be in a power struggle with "Saxon Bruno," who has tried to usurp the papal power without the requisite election by the College of Cardinals. This conflict is designed to recall the attempt by Lucifer to wrest the throne of heaven away from God, and it also reflects Faustus' proud usurpation of supernatural powers in an effort to become godlike. The Pope, however, is as proud and haughty as the German churchman he denounces and uses his authority as a political tool to crush the heads of state who oppose him. He is hypocritical, cowardly, and superstitious; and he commits the very sin Faustus does in surrendering to the lust for power. He is another typical example of a morally disordered world. Faustus' spiritual emptiness is symbolized when he has Mephistophilis make him invisible so that he can snatch meat and wine from the Pope and box the Pontiff's ears. He cannot partake of the true Feast of Peter, and he turns to childish antics as he unconsciously shows what he wants. The friars, under orders from the Pope, formally curse him as an evil spirit; and we realize that Faustus has indeed become a devil, suffering as the fallen angels do because he has lost God's grace and love.

In the comic scene which follows (III,iii) Dick and Robin have stolen a wine cup from a vintner, and Robin tries to disguise the theft by conjuring up Mephistophilis. But the two clowns are frightened into giving back the goblet, and for their knavery the devil transforms Dick into an ape and Robin into a dog. Their metamorphoses into beasts parallels Faustus' transformation into a devil, and the cup they steal is the comic counterpart of the wine goblet Faustus snatches from the Pope. The symbolism of both scenes denotes the lack of communion which underlies Faustus' suffering and dramatizes the sacramental inversion which his kind of evil constitutes.

The next scene (IV,i), involving Martino, Frederick, and Benvolio, informs the audience that Faustus' fame has spread throughout Germany. It identifies both Faustus and the Pope with the powers of evil and serves to announce that Faustus will raise up the spirits of Alexander the Great and his paramour for the German court of Charles V. The actual summoning up of these spirits from the pagan world (in IV,ii) is accomplished by Faustus in a way that suggests a miniature drama. Alexander, Darius whom he defeated, and the paramour mime the actions which identify them for the Emperor Charles; and Faustus stands as a sort of dramatist or acting director. Again, he is the Renaissance artist who finds his most exciting subject matter in pagan history and mythology. After the show he

causes a set of horns to grow out of Benvolio's head because the latter has been skeptical of the Doctor's conjuring powers. Before he saw Faustus' demonstration he said,

> . . . . And thou bring Alexander and his paramour before the Emperor, I'll be Actaeon and turn myself to a stag.
>
> (IV,ii,51-53)

And now Faustus threatens to "raise a kennel of hounds" to pursue and destroy the distraught young man after the horns appear, but the Emperor prevails on the magician to change him back to his former appearance. The reference to the Actaeon myth not only hints comically at the spiritual metamorphosis Faustus is himself undergoing, but it also reminds us of the devils who tear him into pieces in the fifth act. And if Benvolio is shown to be cowardly when Faustus torments him, the Doctor is no less so when he is the victim of Mephistophilis.

The five comic scenes, beginning with the one in which Benvolio is transformed and fears to be torn apart by the spirits which Faustus is able to raise, prefigure Faustus' dismemberment at the hands of the devils and continue the symbolism of metamorphosis, which refers finally to the evil transformation of Faustus. In IV,iii, Benvolio, insulted by Faustus' prank, ambushes the magician with the

aid of his friends. They strike him down and apparently decapitate him, but it is only a false head he is carrying which they attack and attempt to disfigure. When Faustus arises from the ground, as though from the dead, Benvolio says, "Zounds, the devil's alive again!" (67). Faustus decides to punish them severely; and though they beg for his mercy, he orders Mephistophilis to carry out his wish. The retribution for his unmerciful attitude is the similarly implacable attitudes the devils display when Faustus begs for his life at the end of the twenty-four years. Frederick utters what amounts to an ironic prophecy for Faustus, as Mephistophilis is taking him away to carry out Faustus' sentence: "He must needs go that the devil drives" (95). The scene ends as the soldiers who are also lying in ambush to help Benvolio and his friends are defeated by the devils Faustus raises for that purpose. Scene iv shows Benvolio, Frederick, and Martino with horns on their heads--creatures transformed by their contact with evil. They decide to live alone in the woods until their symbols of disgrace disappear.

Scene v of Act IV is the Horse-courser scene, in which the horse which Faustus sells that man dissolves into a pile of straw as he tries to ride the beast through the water. (In Scene vi we meet the Carter whom Faustus has cheated in order to obtain the hay[6] from which he has made the horse.) The Horse-courser returns to Faustus to

complain, tugs him by the leg to awaken him, and accidentally pulls the leg off. But no physical damage is done, for "Faustus hath his leg again" (39-40); and the frightened man runs away. The insubstantiality and illusory nature of Faustus' magic is pointed out in these two scenes. The horse he sells is an illusion, and so is the leg which the Horse-courser pulls off. Faustus has bargained away a very real soul for magical powers that fail to accommodate human needs. It is an illusion for him to think that he can transcend his limits as a man by seeking the magical powers of a god. That he is aware of his predicament is shown in his increasing sense of despair:

> What art thou, Faustus, but a man condemned to die?
> Thy fatal time draws to a final end;
> Despair doth drive distrust into my thoughts.
>
> (IV,v,21-23)[7]

The episode in which Faustus obtains the grapes for the pregnant Duchess of Vanholt (IV,vii) repeats the symbolism of eating and reinforces the theme of Faustus' spiritual starvation. While he can satisfy others occasionally by building an "enchanted castle in the air" (3), as the Duke of Vanholt attests, he cannot fill the void within him caused by his rejection of God and the theological wisdom of the ages which taught him that he has a soul. In the same scene he charms the characters dumb who interrupt his interview with the Duke and

Duchess. The Carter and Horse-courser--who pester him about the horse and the hay--and Dick, Robin, and the Hostess who is serving drinks are all transformed into silent creatures and made to leave, to the great delight of Faustus' hosts. Here again he plays the part of a stage-manager or a dramatist, directing a play for the entertainment of his clientele. Faustus is an entertainer. His tragedy comes in believing that his ability as a showman to create pleasant fantasies can replace the reality of suffering in his consciousness.

The three scenes of the fifth act, along with those of Act I, are the most powerful in the play. They undoubtedly come from the pen of Marlowe, and they dramatize the brave beginnings of Faustus' career and the dismal, terrifying end to which he is driven. Faustus' gluttony and lechery increase in Act V, as he foolishly tries to nourish his dying soul with the pleasures of the flesh. He banquets with his students, though his death is near; he calls up the ghost of Helen at their request and later desires the "paragon of excellence" for his paramour. When the scholars leave, the Old Man enters, the symbol of the patronymic heritage of the old, medieval church which has been denied to Faustus even when he studied theology at Wittenberg. His message that Faustus can repent and save his soul through prayer differs significantly from the strict Reformation theology which

has taught the Doctor in Act I that man's sinful nature dooms him to "everlasting death." The deterministic assumption that only God's elect are saved is countered by the Old Man, who preaches that only when man despairs is he lost. He is the mild, loving father-figure who represents the past of the Old Order, from which Faustus has been "disinherited" from the first by his training. He can be understood in terms of Jungian psychology as the Old Man or the Wise Old Man, a figure who brings with him the values of the past, is sometimes identified as a magician, but at other times is given the characteristics of God. Faustus can no more believe in God's mercy now than he could when he accepted black magic, and the Old Man's message goes unheeded. Faustus despairs. His total, abject despair is dramatized in Mephistophilis, who hands him a dagger and urges him to do away with himself. Reminiscent of the character Despair in Spenser's Faerie Queene, I,ix, who hands the Redcrosse Knight a dagger to kill himself when he is deep in sin, Mephistophilis warns Faustus that if he tries to repent he will be ripped to pieces. And Faustus, though he strives to believe that the grace of God will allow him mercy if only he repents, is frightened into renewing his pledge to Lucifer:

> I do repent I e'er offended him.
> Sweet Mephostophilis, entreat thy lord

To pardon my unjust presumption,
And with my blood again I will confirm
The former vow I made to Lucifer.

(V,i,76-80)

He ironically uses the word "presumption" to repent to Lucifer instead of God--and then begs Mephistophilis to

Torment, sweet friend, that base and aged man
That durst dissuade me from thy Lucifer,
With greatest torments that our hell affords.

(V,i,83-85).

Like Winston Smith in 1984, he is tortured into wishing punishment for one who truly loves him: he is at the point of admitting or doing anything to avoid further pain. His soul is now in complete control of Mephistophilis. Crying out as a starving man would for food, Faustus entreats the devil to give him Helen "To glut the longing of my heart's desire" (V,i,90). The psychological pattern which has led him to damnation is so rigid a part of his personality that he persists in thinking of immediate pleasures as the means to assuage the spiritual pain attending the loss of grace. He hopes that Helen, who symbolizes the pagan, mythological past to which this Renaissance Everyman looks as a way to escape his Gothic conscience, will make him "immortal with a kiss." But he says, unconsciously parodying the Platonic ascent of the soul,

> Her lips suck forth my soul: see where it flies!
> Come Helen, come, give me my soul again.
>
> (V,i,101-02)

Pagan mythology only consumes the soul of the man who thinks it can replace the inherited teachings which make up the fabric of his conscience. It is as though the world of mythology were in control of the Devil himself, since it leads Faustus away from the religious means he should employ to save his soul.

Faustus goes into a room, the typically Marlovian symbol of the soul's constriction and isolation, to await his doom. The scholars plead with him to "look up to heaven and remember God's mercy is infinite" (V,ii,39-40). But Faustus, mistaken in his theology again, answers:

> But Faustus' offence can ne'er be pardoned: the serpent that tempted Eve may be saved, but not Faustus.
>
> (V,ii,41-2)

As the scholars retire to another room to await the events of the night, Faustus expresses his despair again and blames Mephistophilis for his plight. And the devil admits that it was he who directed Faustus to read the passages from the Bible which led him to disbelief and misery. Here, Mephistophilis represents the strict Wittenberg theology which in Faustus' opinion stresses the fallen side of human nature so heavily that it virtually excludes the possibility of salvation for a sinner. He represents

the theological predilections of Faustus' mind which have caused his obsession with sin and damnation and made his despair inevitable.

Faustus' psychomachia is objectified one more time in the Good and Bad Angles, but now there is actually no real struggle for the magician's soul because the evil side has won. The Good Angel laments,

> Oh, thou hast lost celestial happiness,
> Pleasures unspeakable, bliss without end.
>
> (V,ii,104-05)

And as the Angel speaks, Faustus has a vision of a heavenly throne descending; but unlike the god-in-the-machine of the ancient Greek theater, this stage device serves only to remind Faustus of his irreparable loss. What waits for Faustus is the "ever-burning chair" he sees in the vision of hell which accompanies the Bad Angel's speech on the gruesome details of his damnation. He chastens Faustus with the remark, "He that loves pleasure must for pleasure fall" (V,ii,128), reminding us again that besides the pride which has made him desire infinite knowledge of and power over nature, the other sin which characterizes Faustus has been gluttony. We never are left in doubt that the sin of gluttony is for him a function of the spiritual starvation which he experiences and which he ironically tries to alleviate through pleasures. Marlowe thus continues to embellish the theme that Faustus'

uncontrollable lusts--his desire to be godlike and his weakness for pleasures of the flesh--have been responsible for his damnation. Mephistophilis could not have assumed control of his soul if he would have, as the Good Angel says, "affected sweet divinity."

What prompts Faustus to see in his Wittenberg theology only a promise of damnation is his dissatisfaction with the human condition. As we have seen, the argument in Act I by which he justifies his turning to magic is specious. He has been looking for a rationalization to abandon a gloomy theology and indulge his gigantic appetites. It is not enough to be a man, because man must struggle each day to understand the ambiguities produced by his dual nature of spirit and flesh and can achieve progress only through the paradoxical means of recognizing his limitations. For Faustus, this condition is intolerable; he hungers to be a god. No matter how much we sympathize with him--and Marlowe means for us to identify with him emotionally--we still have to admit that his miscalculation, his error in judgment, makes him ludicrous and fully culpable. He is his own judge and tormentor; Mephistophilis is the evil within his breast. If, as Mephistophilis points out, hell is the existential experience of spiritual pain, loss, and despair, then it follows that Mephistophilis is that weak or "fallen" part of man which causes him to damn himself.

As the last hour approaches, Faustus longs for the blood of Christ which would save him; and we think of the blasphemous bond signed with his own blood and his interjection, Consummatum est, which followed it. He is too distracted to pray, and he wishes that he could hide:

> Mountains and hills, come, come and fall on me
> And hide me from the heavy wrath of God!
> No, no:
> Then will I headlong run into the earth.
> Earth gape! O no, it will not harbour me.
> You stars that reigned at my nativity,
> Whose influence hath allotted death and hell,
> Now draw up Faustus like a foggy mist
> Into the entrails of yon labouring clouds,
> That when they vomit forth into the air,
> My limbs may issue from their smoky mouths,
> So that my soul may but ascend to heaven.
>
> (V,ii,150-161)

It is significant that he continues to use the imagery of eating and devouring when he expresses his wish to escape from his part of the bargain. And it is ironic that the man whose tragedy is his overweening concern for the satisfaction of his ego now desires that his identity be obliterated altogether:

> . . . .Now body, turn to air,
> Or Lucifer will bear thee quick to hell!

O soul, be changed to little water-drops
And fall into the ocean, ne'er be found.

(V,ii,181-84)

But he cannot avoid his fate, and the devils come at midnight to claim their victim. In the morning the scholars find the dismembered remains of Faustus; and one remarks, unwittingly referring to the passions which have disintegrated Faustus' soul, as well as to the literal stage devils, "The devils whom Faustus served have torn him thus" (V,iii,8)

When the scholars leave the stage, the Chorus comes forth to lament the death of the famous Doctor Faustus. In the reference to Apollo the Chorus in the Epilogue indicates the tragic tendency of man to pervert his talents for civilizing himself and the world by using his arts and sciences not to alleviate suffering and inequality but to satisfy his vanity or that of his tribe:

Cut is the branch that might have grown full straight,
And burnèd is Apollo's laurel bough
That sometime grew within this learnèd man.

(1-3)

Apollo, patron of the arts of civilization, has been defeated by the will to power, the Lucifer-instinct, which works against the slow, orderly process of accumulating and applying human wisdom for the benefit of man in

society. Faustus is the archetype of the man, increasingly common as the Renaissance period grew into the modern era, who is so transfixed by the miracle of possessing knowledge and power enough to determine his future that he succumbs to the temptation to hoard power for its own sake. In the end, the optimistic dream that is supposed to be born of power turns into a hell of dread, because instead of controlling power to build his utopia he has become the slave of a force which he either fears to use or which is too extensive to control. The damnation of Faustus is the great-grandfather of the modern mentality which has created the hydrogen bomb but prays that nuclear fusion will not annihilate the whole human race; of the scholarly or scientific mind which so specializes in one narrow discipline that it is abstracted from human emotions and feelings; and of the artistic attitude whose hatred for the complacent sickness of a society closes all avenues of expression except the one leading to the limbo of aestheticism and decadence. Faustus is the first modern man, and his tragedy is the potential destruction latent in all post-Renaissance civilization in the West.

And yet Marlowe's drama of the Wittenberg theologian is not an abstract morality formula warning the new age against seeking power. Though Doctor Faustus employs the morality-play devices of the good and bad angels who represent the protagonist's psychomachia, the devils,

the cumulative symbolic structure, and a theological framework of ideas, the play is the concrete representation of a single individual who loses his soul through his presumptuous desire to usurp the powers of God. It is a drama so psychologically oriented and so accurate in its analysis of human motives that one marvels that the creator of Tamburlaine's monolithic, one-dimensional character could have been the same person. But in a very few short years Marlowe has developed his dramatic talents enormously. After having introduced his secular philosophy of history and tragedy in Tamburlaine, he has gradually embodied it in ever more real and believable characters: first, in the experimental Barabas, who is a comic, satiric, and tragic mélange; then, in the strange study of the neurotic Edward, whose humanity increases as the play progresses; and, finally, in the fully tragic and compelling Faustus, who is so unerringly human that we never fail to see ourselves in him. It was almost inevitable that Marlowe's profound concern with the suffering individual who ironically precipitates himself into tragic circumstances should have forced him to probe deeply into the human psyche and represent what he found in increasingly realistic and concrete terms on stage. Though the theme of damnation which he found in his studies at Cambridge serves in all his plays to symbolize the self-wrought tragedy of his protagonists, Marlowe's

dramaturgic development is never stagnant. His plays give evidence of a playwright seeking to include the forms of comedy, tragedy, and irony into a single vision of the world; and the characters within them show his great concern for rendering precisely the intricacies of human experience in a fully coherent study of personality.

NOTES

[1]Ribner, The Complete Plays of Christopher Marlowe, p. xxiv.

[2]It is here that C. S. Lewis' discussion of magic, in English Literature in the Sixteenth Century, pp. 9-13, becomes relevant again. He states that the revived interest in Platonism in the 16th century consisted of "a system of daemonology," because it opened up to man a commerce with the unseen creatures who were supposed to inhabit the region in the heavens between the earth and the moon. The possibility of trafficking with spirits created a psychological readiness to accept magic--or what Lewis calls "magia." Moreover, by dealing with spirits through magic man thought to escape his bodily limitations, recognize his own spiritual powers, and eventually recover the original control he had over the universe. He was no longer consigned to a place in the great chain of being but could ascend as high as he wanted in the hierarchy of all creation and fashion himself according to his most radical dreams. It is this attitude which we find in Faustus, who deals with

spirits in an attempt to arrive at a perfect state of selfhood, and who is obsessed with destroying the old cultural contexts which identify him as a creature with certain permanent limitations.

[3]All references to the lines in this play are taken from The Tragical History of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus by Christopher Marlowe: A Conjectural Reconstruction by W. W. Greg (Oxford, 1950). I have followed Greg because in my opinion his edition gives us the most accurate reading of Doctor Faustus. It is based on the B-text (1616), which, along with F. S. Boas, Leo Kirschbaum, Irving Ribner, and Greg himself, I think is more authoritative than the A-text (1604), the other of the two versions that have come down to us. Greg has arrived at his reading of the play only after a brilliant and thorough analysis of the parallel texts of 1604 and 1616, published as Marlowe's "Doctor Faustus": 1604-1616 (Oxford, 1950), in which his long-held theory of the superiority of the B-text is amply justified. He also demonstrates the validity of the comic and magical scenes which the 1604 Quarto does not have but, in the cases of certain important short passages, such as the final soliloquy of Faustus, also persuades convincingly that departures from the 1616 Quarto must be followed. His edition of Doctor Faustus, since it is the product of his exhaustive study of the 1604 and 1616 Quartos, should stand as the finest version of the play

that we have. Fredson Bowers, one among many textual scholars who applaud the work Greg has done on the two texts and in his eclectic reconstruction, says, in "The Text of Marlowe's Faustus," MP, XLIX (Feb., 1952), p. 204, "With confidence we may say that the play in its major features is a problem no longer." And on the same page he adds that Greg's edition is "certainly the most trustworthy version of the play that we have."

Greg holds, as do most other authorities on the Faustus textual problem as well, that the 1604 text is a debased version of the 1616 text and that the famous "adicyones" of Birde and Rowley, for which Philip Henslowe paid four pounds, are actually present in the A-text and are not, as used to be thought, the added comic scenes in the B-text. He also argues that the A-text is a memorial reconstruction of the original version of the play but that the B-text must have been prepared from actual drafts belonging to Marlowe. I find his argument convincing, since, first, the 1616 version represents Marlowe's source, the English Faustbook, closely by incorporating the comedy scenes which are missing from the 1604 text, a fact that suggests Marlowe's habit of remaining close to his sources; and, second, as I hope my interpretation makes clear, these scenes greatly illuminate Marlowe's intention by supporting the logic and symbolism of the unquestionably Marlovian tragic scenes. Greg, in "The

Damnation of Faustus," MLR, XLI (April, 1946), pp. 99-100, has said about the central comic scenes to which critics often object, "And while it is true that the middle portion, to which objection is mostly taken, shows little trace of Marlowe's hand, I see no reason to doubt that it was he who planned the whole, or that his collaborator or collaborators, whoever he or they may have been, carried out his plan substantially according to his instructions." He believes also that, although not all the play as we know it is Marlowe's, the original version could not have been in any of the important features different from what can be reconstructed from a comparison of the 1604 and 1616 texts. Aside from the proof offered by Greg's excellent textual scholarship, then, the thematic and symbolic consistency implied by the comic scenes ought to convince us that the B-text must be insisted upon as the basis for any version of the play which hopes to represent Marlowe's work correctly.

There is another point to make about the validity of accepting the comic scenes as part of Marlowe's general design. Like the last three acts of The Jew of Malta, the middle scenes in Doctor Faustus have been seen as a falling off from the original dignity, power, and poetic purity of the rest of the play. But since they are the record of Faustus' sometimes ridiculous degeneration into a devil, they cannot be expected to maintain the austere

tragic tone that Acts I and V do, which dramatize the terribly tragic implications of his pact with Lucifer. Naturally we must recognize that the hand of at least one collaborator is responsible for some of the change in tone and poetic quality in these scenes. Yet Faustus, like Tamburlaine and Barabas, is pictured in the medieval tradition of making vice both evil and laughable simultaneously; so besides paralleling the descent of Faustus' soul into evil, the comic scenes are justified on the grounds of the medieval stage tradition in which Marlowe was working. David M. Bevington, in From Mankind to Marlowe: Growth of Structure in the Popular Drama of Tudor England (Cambridge, Mass., 1962), p. 252, says the following about the comic scenes in Faustus: "To ask that the play be written as a 'pure' tragedy, building up the force of its terror without digressive interruption, is to ask for that which Elizabethan popular audiences had never imagined or desired. The history of the morality points above all else to the fact that the Psychomachia was composed of a mixture of the serious and the grotesque. It would be far more surprising to find Faustus free of comedy than to find it as it is." He then adds that the presence of such traditional comedy in Doctor Faustus helps to prove Greg's argument that the 1604 and 1616 texts together are "reasonably true to the original performance."

[4]C. L. Barber, "'The form of Faustus' fortunes good or bad,'" Tulane Drama Review, VIII (Summer, 1964), 92-119, points out the prevalence of these images in Doctor Faustus and considerably influences my remarks concerning them.

[5]Marlowe's obsession with sin and damnation might be indicated by the close resemblance his tragic protagonists have to the descriptions the Seven Deadly Sins offer of themselves. The correspondences are not exact, but there is a parallel between the description of Pride and the character of Tamburlaine in Part I, between Envy and the Guise, between Wrath and Tamburlaine in Part II, and between Gluttony and Faustus, Sloth and Edward, and Lechery and Dido.

[6]Marlowe uses "hay" and "straw" indiscriminately.

[7]These lines, because their serious tone contrasts so markedly with the burlesque context of the scene, have caused many scholars to believe that they are an interpolation. But there is no textual evidence to substantiate this theory. The very slight variations between the A and B versions point to the conclusion that the lines in B are genuine and the lines in A are a report of them. See Greg, Marlowe's "Doctor Faustus," p. 372.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

DEPRIVED OF THE JOYS OF HEAVEN: MARLOWE'S LEGACY TO THE JACOBEANS

When Marlowe died in 1593, he left the English stage the history play and a mature sense of tragedy based on the conflict of men's wills and a profound understanding of the suffering human soul. Although Shakespeare surpassed him before long in the dramatic forms of the tragedy and the history play, the Stratford poet was the first great student of the Cambridge scholar who had accomplished so much in twenty-nine years. The mark of the single central character who dominates a drama, an innovation Marlowe introduces in Tamburlaine, is first used by Shakespeare in his tragedy of Richard III and becomes a characteristic of his plays. The effective blank-verse poetry and the powerful speeches of Marlowe's characters, which constitute a mode of action and reflect the psychological state of the characters as well, are also adopted by Shakespeare and made to be an integral part of the most thoroughly realized stage personalities

of all time. And the dramatic treatment of a central issue or set of ideas, embodied in the action of representative characters and thereby relating a work to its time, is pioneered in Marlowe and passed on to the greatest philosophical poet in English. But the most important element of Marlowe's heritage to other English dramatists is not the new dramatic techniques he explores: it is his attitude toward life. In his ironic and fatalistic view of human experience we find the seeds of the disenchantment, the spiritual malaise, and the anxiety of the Jacobean drama. And from Marlowe's disillusionment with Renaissance aspiration emerges the whole canon of Jacobean satire on contemporary life--both tragic and comic. His themes of the disintegration of personality, the corruption of values, and the terrible sense of the limitations of man's abilities pervade the theater in the age of James I. In addition, his corrosive treatment of the will to power and the Machiavellian ethic in the two parts of Tamburlaine establishes the pattern of dramatizing in a variety of cases the cynically pragmatic code that many Jacobean protagonists adopt for their self-aggrandizement.

Even before the death of Queen Elizabeth in 1603 the whole world that she represents seemed to be passing away. When she died, it was as though an official act proclaimed the death of an entire culture. The New Science and the

new politics challenged the Christian humanist view of an ordered universe with man at the center and a benevolent God directing events for the ultimate good of all creation. In place of this view was left the skepticism and fear which attend any period of cultural transition. Coming to grips with the loss that they felt is perhaps the most striking problem we encounter in the playwrights about a decade after Marlowe. It is not surprising that they locate in him the beginnings of a solution to the problem, because he has earlier sensed the tragic implications of the new Renaissance attitudes in science, art, politics, and ethics. He is ahead of his time in seeing the politics of power, the nationalistic rage to explore and colonize, world-wide commercial enterprise, and the empirical attitude of the New Science bring down religious idealism and end the intimate relationship between man and nature. Marlowe stands as a transitional figure between an age of faith and an age of doubt.

The Machiavellian system of ethics and politics which Marlowe investigates in Tamburlaine continues to obsess the minds of Jonson, the Jacobean Shakespeare, Chapman, Tourneur, Webster, and James Shirley, who falls in the Caroline period. Almost without exception the figures who represent the Machiavellian code in their dramas are moral outlaws and vicious power-seekers. Shakespeare's most notable Machiavels--Claudius in Hamlet, Iago in

Othello, and Edmund, Goneril, and Regan in King Lear--symbolize the evil and destructive forces which stand against social order, personal integrity, and religious truth. Although Jonson's Sejanus is a true Machiavel, his Cicero in Catiline is a worthy citizen whose "policy" is justified because he is truly interested in the state. But Flamineo in Webster's The White Devil and Bosola in The Duchess of Malfi engage in murder, deception, or pandering as ways to climb to political power. Webster, moreover, shares Marlowe's Calvinistic view of sinful, fallen man and extends it to a conviction of an evil-controlled, Manichean universe in his work. Bussy D'Ambois, a character directly influenced by Marlowe's Tamburlaine, is a perfect example of the ambitious cynic. In the Bussy plays and in the two comedies, All Fools and The Widow's Tears, Marlowe's friend Chapman continues the darkly satiric tone which we find especially in the Tamburlaine plays and in The Jew of Malta. In fact, gloomy, biting satire as an important part of another dramatic form, comedy or tragedy, flows from Marlowe's experiments with combining genres into the plays of most of the major Jacobeans, including Shakespeare's Coriolanus and Troilus and Cressida, to emerge as the famous "impure" plays of the early 17th century. But dark satire often shades into a mordant irony in the Jacobeans, as it does in Marlowe, for they extend his view of a crumbling world to their own

age. Having learned from Marlowe that idealism is impossible and that aspiration signifies moral corruption, they see in their time a whole society headed for destruction. Marlowe is the first explorer of tragic thought in the Elizabethan drama, which boasts perhaps only two plays that are accepted universally as tragedies--Romeo and Juliet and Doctor Faustus. Though Edward II might be another, it is clear that English tragedy does not really begin until the end of the 16th century, when Marlowe's pessimism is adopted once again. His tragic genius points out to his descendants the break between the ideal world and the pragmatic world, and they investigate the introversion which follows the dislocation of the old, unified cosmological view.

The Jacobeans are more psychologically oriented than the Elizabethans, and they see the sickness of society in the diseased individual soul. Having accepted the psychological probing which we find in Edward II and Doctor Faustus as a valid dramatic concern, they further it through a more sophisticated understanding of individual aberration. Shakespeare's Hamlet; Beaumont and Fletcher's Philaster and their Aspatia and Evadne in The Maid's Tragedy; John Ford's characters, especially Orgilus and Penthea in The Broken Heart; Middleton and Rowley's Beatrice Joanna from The Changeling; Marston's Malevole in The Malcontent; and Jonson's Volpone, Subtle, and Morose

all testify to the psychological aberrations of the early 17th century. As a whole, they reflect that other monumental work so concerned with finding the sources of psychological illness, Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy. Hamlet experiences madness when the stable values of his father are murdered by Claudius. Philaster, whose name is an anagram for Astrophel and ironically reflects the crumbling Platonic ideals which disturb him, is driven to sexual fantasies. Aspatia and Evadne explore the possibilities of masochism and sadism, respectively, as ways of destroying the sin they find in themselves and others and of expressing the pain that they feel. Orgilus and Penthea are Ford's instruments for probing the abnormal psychology of tragic love, in an age when all noble sentiments are dying. Beatrice Joanna and her evil love DeFlores corrupt the ideals of courtly love. Malevole's discontent is caused by witnessing the vanities in his dukedom, and he turns to satire as a method of correction. And Jonson's brilliant cast of characters are each a satiric embodiment of the ills he finds in the world: greed, ambition, stupidity, and an inversion of the idealistic and religious values of the past.

The debasement of past values and the loss of an earlier optimism and faith in both God and man is reflected on the Jacobean stage in the related themes of the lost birthright or inheritance on the one hand and the theme

of disordered love on the other. Here again Marlowe is the starting place for these playwrights. His sense of a lost, beautiful, or innocent past figures in all of his five main plays and is typified by Faustus' rejection of the religious means to save his soul. In a few years it is Hamlet, the disinherited prince, whose melancholy proves that all his father stood for is gone and who suspects that Ophelia's chastity has been violated. In Shakespeare's three late comedies, Cymbeline, The Winter's Tale, and The Tempest, the problem of the lost birthright creates the stories of Imogen, Perdita, and Prospero, the deposed Duke of Milan. Philaster, like Hamlet, is the son of a deposed ruler. Orgilus is not allowed to marry Penthea, who was betrothed to him through the agreement between their fathers. Malevole, whose real name is Altofronto, was once the Duke of Genoa and is now bitter and misanthropic because his city is given over to debauchery. Amintor is prevented from marrying his promised love Aspatia by the King, who forces him to take Evadne as wife so that the illicit love she shares with the monarch can exist under a cover of respectability. The preoccupation with a lost inheritance maddens King Lear, who has foolishly lost his kingdom and set in motion the events which murder Cordelia, his daughter and a symbol of the spiritual values which were destroyed along with the past.

Like the disguised maidens in Shakespeare's comedies, the young Jacobean women represent the spiritual values which the heroes try to attain. But in the other Jacobeans, as is the case with Shakespeare's sluttish Cressida and pitiful Cordelia, the tragic heroines symbolize a love that has gone awry, an ideal set of values that has been prostituted to another's lust or ambition, or a beauty and grace that ~~has~~ have died with the past. Othello is tempted away from his soul's salvation in Desdemona by the evil Iago. Vindici in Tourneur's The Revenger's Tragedy is prompted to live a life of sin after his mistress, Gloriana, is murdered by the lecherous Duke who wanted her for a concubine. D'Amville, the atheist in Tourneur's The Atheist's Tragedy, substitutes the love of gold for human affection and is powerless to stop the disintegration of his family line, though he plans to beget his own child through the seduction of his daughter-in-law. Volpone's twisted form of love is manifested in his blasphemous worship of gold instead of God. His opening soliloquy, or course, is strongly influenced by the opening soliloquy of Barabas, Marlowe's contribution to the satire of greed.

The idea of the loss or misuse of a woman's love and the subsequent destruction of the values she embodies is part of Marlowe's legacy to the Jacobeans. We have seen that when Tamburlaine loses Zenocrate, or when Edward

refuses to love Isabella, or when Barabas compromises the integrity of Abigail, the protagonist loses the grace necessary to save his soul. The transcendent values which the women might possibly bring the heroes through love go unrealized because the males love only power. And the situation with the Jacobeans is similar: disordered love is the metaphor for a morally disordered world. Unhealthy relationships in love indicate the perversion of all human commerce; and these dramatists express their disgust, disillusionment, and despair in the story of disappointed lovers. Troilus is shocked and becomes fatalistic when he hears of Cressida's promiscuity; his is a world in which all the values and assumptions connected with Platonic idealism and the great chain of being are systematically destroyed. The neurotic self-questioning and inhibition which result from the idealist's broken vision of purity is demonstrated in Philaster, who questions Arethusa's integrity and love in a world influenced by the easy virtue of such as Megra, the lascivious lady at court. Hamlet is obsessed not only with Ophelia's "honesty" but meaning in the universe also because he has received an inner wound from his mother's incestuous marriage with his father's murderer. Evadne, in The Maid's Tragedy, refuses to share the marriage bed with Amintor; and Aspatia, whose love for him is frustrated, seeks final relief in the wish for death. The "honor" and the love

for Alsemero which Beatrice Joanna ironically tries to preserve by coupling with the grotesque DeFlores is the grossest of deceits played upon the trust that love implies.

By the early ~~1730's~~ 1630's, when Ford's 'Tis Pity She's A Whore was produced, the perversion of love is felt as a melancholy which pervades the protagonist's mind and turns his attention inward to focus on his neurosis. Giovanni's desire for his sister Annabella leads him jealously to kill her after she marries Soranzo; and his father Florio's heart breaks at the spectacle. Incest is an important theme in The Duchess of Malfi; it motivates Ferdinand, who loathes the thought of his sister's marrying again but cannot understand why. The Cardinal, another brother, is also affected by the same unhealthy lust. And the pandering that Flamineo does for his sister Vittoria in The White Devil adds disgust to the hatred we feel for his Machiavellianism. In The Broken Heart Ford makes the connection between love and death. Calantha dies when her heart can no longer support the misery she sees; Orgilus, whose melancholy attends the forced marriage of his Penthea to Bassanes, chooses to open a vein and bleed to death; and even Ithocles, Penthea's brother, welcomes death.

The Jacobean stage is populated with characters who bear witness to the passing Old Order, the stability of

church and state, and a time of innocent love between man and woman. In one sense they are the children of Faustus, trying to make meaning out of their lives when religious faith is being evaporated by the glaring eye of science and skepticism; they are creatures facing the extreme situations of meaninglessness and personal damnation. In comparison to the friendly mythological cosmos of the Elizabethans the suffering earth of the Jacobeans is almost a hell. Not only are the old values now splintered, but also the conflict between empirical knowledge and faith forces them to erect a new system of epistemology. The shift from a deductive and theological to an inductive and empirical frame of mind--brought about by the investigations of men like Galileo, Kepler, Harvey, and Copernicus and the travels of such men as Ralegh--caused the tension which is evident in the plays of these years. For most of the dramatists of the Jacobean era the great reconstruction of the world in rational and discursive terms means, for one thing, the destruction of the old loyalties and assumptions which earlier gave life meaning. Shakespeare's Lear personifies the death of the older way of life in England, and Hamlet's anxieties are those of a world whose present basis of knowledge challenges the past certainties. Because the old cosmology could not accommodate the discoveries of the physical sciences, traditional epistemology and ontology became suspect in

the early 17th century. The day of the microscope, the telescope, and the test tube was dawning. The religious grounds of knowledge, increasingly suspect since the Reformation, partially dissolved--as did all absolutes--into transient and measurable secular and material values.

One of the clearest manifestations of the new attitude toward knowledge is seen in the drama of the age as a preoccupation with "wit" and intellectual superiority and certainty. The concept of wit, also a part of the revolutionary metaphysical poetry of Donne, is usually important on the stage as a rational attempt of a talented or clever individual who seeks to control or manipulate others for his own selfish designs. The large number of Jacobean manipulators is announced in Marlowe, the first English dramatist who consciously studies the implications of specific ideas and issues in his plays. Barabas and Ithamore, Mortimer and Isabella, and Tamburlaine and Sigismund all use political and moral expediency to increase their chances for gaining power over others. Marlowe's dramas of ideas evolve into the "problem plays" of the later age, attempts by their authors to put in a rationally and emotionally coherent framework their views of the physical and moral nature of man in relation to his world. Their plays are overwhelmingly serious in intent, even if, as in Jonson, extremely funny characters and situations grace the stage.

In the Jacobean comedies the manipulators occasionally use their wit for good results as well as a tool for personal gain--and they almost always produce laughter. Rinaldo in Chapman's All Fools is a transplanted intriguing slave from Roman comedy, and he engages in outwitting the senex so that two couples can marry. Tharsalio in The Widow's Tears, however, is a cynic as well as a witty manipulator. It is he who creates Lysander's monomania about testing his wife's fidelity, a plan which confuses the nature of appearance and reality for Lysander and points up the conflict of the age between accepting truth through faith or arriving at it through empirical means. In both of these dark comedies of Chapman the comic resolution is wittily arranged but really only a parody of human order--especially in the latter, where the order implied by marriage is merely a mask for cuckoldry.

Ben Jonson's Every Man In His Humor and Every Man Out of His Humor inaugurate his "comedy of humours," the portrayal of character through the comic exaggeration of an individual trait. He learned much about the dramatic strategy of drawing character from a limited psychological view from Marlowe, whose habit is to represent his characters through their dominant passions or "humours," and whose Tamburlaine, for example, can be regarded as a "tragedy of humours." This concept of

characterization leads to the classification of social types necessary to Jonson's kind of comedy. Asper in Every Man Out is the first character to assume the satiric Jonsonian mask which in the middle comedies represents the controlling point of view as well as the Truewit or artist-figure who manipulates the action. Mosca in Volpone and Face in The Alchemist, and to a lesser extent their masters Volpone and Subtle, are the artists-manqué, the flawed artist-figures whose wit enables them to gull their neighbors and prey upon the universal vices of greed and lust. Truewit and Clerimont in Epicoene arrange their scenes to expose the social follies of Morose's egoism, the confusion of the sexual roles, the debasement of language, and the fatuities of Jack Daw and Sir Amorous LaFoole, whose prime characteristic is the lack of wit or understanding. The same "witless" quality is the sin of the Poetaster Crispinus (a satiric portrayal of John Marston)--which must be expelled in a comic purgation by the poets of true wit, Horace (Jonson himself) and Virgil. Throughout Jonson's comedies it is not the wit, or rational understanding, which perverts character but the misuse of it. In addition, the rationalized destruction of language, love, and money destroys character and the social contract in Bartholomew Fair and The Staple of News. Little-wit in Bartholomew Fair helps to effect the comic representation of society

in his puppet show in Act V, and the game of "vapours" in the same play characterizes those who misuse wit or understanding through a conscious violation of speech. The news-mongers, the gossips, and the "jeerers" also debase wit through the abuse of language, which ought to be respected as the social tool of understanding. It will be remembered that in The Alchemist the comic representation of manners occurs in the house of Love-wit, and in The New Inn the inn called The Light Heart is a metaphor for the comic stage, upon which Jonson's own wit, operating through the Host, can point out the true identity of love and the nature of satirical comedy. The witty manipulator is also found in Middleton's Witgood, who appears in A Trick to Catch The Old One; in Massinger's Wellborn, from A New Way to Pay Old Debts; and in Brome's LeToi, the comic showman in The Antipodes. Besides extending the Jonsonian tradition of the reasoning, comic wit, these men also dramatize the same upside-down Jacobean sense of existence which he so carefully dissects in his comedies.

The world of greed and folly Jonson satirizes is not essentially different from the one Marlowe envisions in his tragedies, though each starts from a different artistic premise. Both Marlowe and Jonson are aware of crumbling religious sentiments, the preoccupation with becoming rich and powerful, and the breakdown of a coherent

social scheme. The Venice of Volpone and the Malta of Barabas share the same evils; it takes Jonson's lighter satiric touch to distinguish between them. Most of Jonson's comedies take place in the same fallen, potentially tragic world which excites Marlowe's sad laments. But Jonson chooses to laugh society back to sanity, as Aristophanes before him did and as Etherege, Wycherley, and Congreve after him would do in their comedies of wit. He is more interested in man as a social creature than as a suffering individual distinct from his species. Chapman's comedies, however--as well as his tragedies and those of most of the other Jacobeans--are much closer to the pessimistic and skeptical mood of Marlovian tragical satire, especially as it is seen in Tamburlaine and The Jew of Malta. Satire as the dominant ingredient of tragedy appears in Marston's The Malcontent, whose Malevole is another witty manipulator--and a cutting satirist. Satire fuels the bitter tragedies of Webster and Tourneur. And in Chapman's Bussy D'Ambois and his Byron plays the satirical Marlovian attack on diseased Renaissance aspiration is continued. Bussy and Byron are both strong central characters; but they are no more admirable than Tamburlaine, the prototype of them both, and for the same reason: they represent a world in decay. Marlowe's view of corruption at the heart of man forms a quarry to which the later playwrights return again and again to mine their subject matter.

If wit becomes one of the important matters of comedy in these dramatists, it also forms an important tragic theme. In fact, some quite significant tragedies are studies of wit-as-empirical-thinking. In Othello the protagonist's psychomachia is the contest for his soul between what Desdemona represents (spiritual faith) and what Iago symbolizes (empiricism, the knowledge gained through visual investigation). Beatrice Joanna in The Changeling prides herself on her practical, scientific way of "seeing" her situation; but, as in the case of Othello, this mode of knowledge leads her away from self-knowledge to an acceptance of the ways of damnation. D'Amville in The Atheist's Tragedy rejects the religious forms of knowing and commits himself to the naturalistic world of incest and murder. His empirical "wisdom" is based on a false epistemology and ontology, and his mistaken notions lead to his grotesque death. Epistemology and ontology are necessarily basic concerns in the plays dealing with wit because they all depend on someone's being mistaken about what he thinks he knows concerning man and the nature of reality, and therefore having to suffer unpleasant consequences. The comic artist-figures and manipulators must be able to gull their victims by fooling them about what is real or disguising illegal activities. The comedies of manners are built around complex, confusing situations and the inability by

certain abnormal characters to see through illusion. And in the tragedies the protagonists suffer pain and death for not being able to know the implications of the deeds which accompany their false beliefs.

Another important attitude of the Jacobeans which is derived ultimately from Marlowe's skepticism is shown in the figure of the Malcontent. Just as the metaphor of debased love mirrors a dying, disordered age, the disaffected Malcontent voices his alienation from and discontent with the evils of his time. In Hamlet, the most philosophical dramatic reaction to the post-Elizabethan worldview, the Malcontent-protagonist not only has the problem of what to believe; but he also wrestles with the idea that death may be better than life, with the question of relativism versus absolutism, and with the integrity of self in the destructive world of Claudius' treachery and the Ghost's desire for revenge. Bussy D'Ambois is a Malcontent who adopts the evil which produces his condition and in doing so becomes a Machiavel and is precipitated to destruction. Malevole, however, disturbed by being deposed and by seeing the degeneracy of his dukedom, nevertheless retains his spiritual wholeness by not participating in the disintegrating process of evil which he has recognized. He merely waits until it destroys itself. Others--like Hamlet, Vindici, Melantius in The Maid's Tragedy, and Bosola,

who is also a Machiavel--adopt revenge as the means to correct the wrongs of the world. The two alternatives most likely to be taken by the Malcontents are revenge or an acceptance of the degenerate, self-destructive attitudes which disturb them. The latter choice usually produces a Machiavel, like D'Amville or Flamineo; the former, of course, produces a Revenger, like Hamlet or Vindici. Personal destruction and damnation often constitute the fate of the Malcontent, but Hamlet's moral salvation and Malevole's reinstatement as duke are notable exceptions. Practically universal symptoms of the Malcontent are jealousy, involvement with a debased form of love, sexual fantasies, or an obsession with chastity: all a part of the syndrome which attests to the failure of Renaissance aspiration and the loss of the Elizabethan ideals of Platonic and courtly love. Hamlet, Orgilus in The Broken Heart, and Philaster are idealists whose personalities are maimed by a fixation on the problems of love or sex. DeFlores in The Changeling is the personification of the ugly aspects of the carnal love he shares with Beatrice Joanna. Aspatia in The Maid's Tragedy is masochistically driven to seek death at the hands of her beloved; and Evadne in the same play expresses the sins she has committed in love by sadistically stabbing to death her king and lover. The Duchess of Malfi has to express genuine love through an unlawful coupling with Antonio, and

Vittoria in The White Devil is a whore. Not until the 20th century do we again find a comparable reflection in literature of a historical period convinced of its impending annihilation. There are few characters in the drama of the time who represent healthy attitudes or stable philosophies of life. Perhaps the only exceptions are the growing attachment to Stoicism we find in Chapman's plays, especially in Caesar and Pompey; in the perverse sort of Stoicism implied by Flamineo's and Vittoria's maintaining an evil integrity; and in the heroic commitment of Beaumont and Fletcher's Melantius, a forerunner of the protagonist in the Restoration heroic play.

When Marlowe banished the De Casibus philosophy of history from the drama of England, it was never to appear again as a serious artistic statement of man's relationship to the world. Though his plays and those of the Jacobeans are really the final flowering of the brilliant medieval dramatic tradition, the ideas and themes in them point to the modern age. The order, if any, which they posit is the chain of events hammered together by men's wills. Only in Webster is man controlled by a fate other than that forged through his will or passions. But instead of the optimism which we assume ought to accompany a belief in the primacy of will over fate, Marlowe and the Jacobean playwrights feel skepticism and pessimism in the face of such overwhelming responsibility. The humanistic

escape from the Middle Ages is for them not a condition of freedom and cultural stability but the awareness of man's inescapable limitations when he considers himself the final arbiter of life's values and goals. Without the objective scheme implied by the great chain of being, which they sense is rapidly decaying, Marlowe and the Jacobeans foresee the erosion of all values and fear the nihilism that awaits the end of this process. Though they do not yet use the vocabulary of the existentialists, they dramatize accurately the dread, chaos, meaninglessness, and nothingness which we in the 20th century sometimes think are our characteristic plights. Since they have ushered in the post-Renaissance moods, they are the first modernists--and perhaps the most sensitive: for they still feel the pain of the loss of the religious construction of life to which we are often numb. Marlowe himself could not forget that the damnation of man is theologically predicted in terms of fire and burning. The fiery deaths of his irreligious protagonists hold up this fate for us to consider. And lest it be ignored, it has slouched toward Bethlehem in our time to be reborn in Eliot's arid Wasteland, in Hemingway's and Fitzgerald's burnt landscapes, in the gas furnaces of the German concentration camps, and in the incendiary holocaust of the fearsome hydrogen bomb. The death by fire that Faustus' scientific magic insures for him joins hands with the desiccated souls of the hollow men in the Age of Technology.

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