

MARLOWE AND THE MORALITY TRADITION

CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE
AND HIS USE OF
THE MORALITY TRADITION

By

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ABSTRACT

By focusing on Marlowe's borrowings from the tradition of the morality play, the study endeavours to form a picture of this playwright as neither a teacher nor an iconoclast, but as a continuer of a debate. The debate involves the morality form of his dramas and their non-morality content. It remains unresolved as an indication of Marlowe's own irresolution. Tamburlaine dramatizes the debate between accepting or rejecting a world conqueror; The Jew of Malta vacillates between pitying and condemning its villain-hero, Barabas; Edward the Second has the curious appeal of a study in weakness; Doctor Faustus exposes the double culpability of its rebellious scholar-hero and of the restricting Christian system which Faustus discards. The study analyzes these four plays to show that Marlow uses the morality tradition in furthering his debate; by submitting this tradition to manipulation, perversion, debilitation and violation, the playwright remains clearly in control of the morality structures he uses. Two discoveries result from an examination of such control: Marlowe's artistry in being unresolved continues to be an area of fascination and his deliberate irresolution militates against calling him a morality playwright.

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INTRODUCTION

I used to wonder if anything could be more disparate than the mention of the morality play, that curious form of homiletic and tame drama, along with the name of Christopher Marlowe, the reckless playwright of Renaissance aspirations. And I had initially decided that any effect Marlowe achieved by using the morality tradition was surely inconoclastic. However, following only a sketchy examination of both members of this relationship, I was soon prepared to throw out most of these assumptions. I began to look upon Marlowe as a more subtle yet formative playwright than the exacting label of "iconoclast" would allow him to be. He began to take shape for me as an employer and controller, and not merely as an inverter, of techniques from the morality play. Through coming to appreciate only a few facets of Marlowe's skill, I am beginning to realize that Marlowe's characters can function simultaneously as mirrors of their creator's rebellious mind and as puppets controlled by the very humanity and morality from which they want to escape.

But it was my conception of the morality play that underwent a larger transformation. After having read some examples of moralities, I realized how durable and timeless they are. Their

characters as representations of personified attitudes suggested a wealth of connections with the characters of modern artists like Miller and Williams. Yet I still found the essence of this longevity hard to distil onto paper. It was only while seeing Truffaut's film, "L'Engant Sauvage", that I received the visual summation of what I had been trying to bring together about the morality. In the film, the doctor who has taken it upon himself to humanize a child who has lived alone in the woods as an animal for about twelve years acknowledges that, despite his success in terms of the boy's (Victor) appearance and aptitudes, he has not tested the first requirement for calling this creature a human being. He describes this requirement as "le jugement moral". Only after having submitted Victor to unmerited punishment and having been overjoyed at the boy's rebellion does he allow himself the satisfaction of looking upon Victor as "vraiment un individuel". Then I too realized that this prerequisite of engaging "the moral judgment" was the explanation I needed, and I began to 'settle my thoughts' about this dramatic form.

Despite centuries of re-shaping, the morality play survives as a valuable piece of theatrical currency. This value has fluctuated between many different rates of exchange. At its inception, the morality play served the Christian playwright as a vehicle for his doctrine, as a dramatic sermon which exhorted its audience to make preparations for salvation. The condemnation of vice and the support

of virtue made the Christian impact of the play clear and positive. Under Marlowe's hand, the morality's cultivation of virtue in preparation for the next life is re-routed. Emphasis falls on the secular aspirations of men who seek advancement only in this world; hence, their aspirations do not cohere with, but consciously flaunt the Christian norms of virtue. Yet Marlowe skilfully invites us neither to condemn nor condone such aspirants, but to realize both the ambiguities of the Christian system and the ironies of his protagonists' desires to be liberated from such a system. Marlowe uses his borrowings from the morality to further a debate between his protagonists and the system which judges them. Such a debate does not result in the clarity and positiveness of the initial moralities; however, despite their irresolution, the plays continue to dramatize the same, serious, morality issue of the direction of man's progress in the world.

Even in our own age with such "musicals" as Jesus Christ Superstar, examples of and analogies with the morality play are surprisingly current. For instance, in his play, Camino Real,¹ Tennessee Williams uses a block-by-block progression along this "way of life" to illustrate life's shabby and debilitating aspects. As a form of morality play for our times, Camino Real offers us the

¹Four Plays by Tennessee Williams (London, 1957), pp. 229 - 320.

contest between Man and the Streetcleaners, the choruses pronounced "with a fat man's grace" (p.320) by Gutman, the prologue and epilogue of Don Quixote, a "crazy old bastard" (p.319), and the invitation to follow a single soul, Kilroy, the boxing champion who loses his heart and dignity on the Camino Real. In Williams' play, there are no promises of salvation, only these grim alternatives to living on the Camino: either the trap of the dead-end streets which run off the Camino, or an exit into the surrounding Terra Incognita under Quixote's guidance, or the frenetic, pointless escape offered by the plane with no destination, the Fugitivo. In terms of an analogy with the morality, one commentator on the American opposition to the Vietnam War has viewed the trial of the members of the Berrigan Circle as another form of contemporary morality play. Lee Lockwood observes:

Now this country, its conscience troubled by ten years of the Vietnam War, is attending a new and real-life morality play that might be called the Berrigan Brothers v. the American soul.²

As it has done in adapting to the life style or to the politics of the present, the morality has weathered these fluctuations in its purpose;

²"The Drama Inside the Berrigan Circle", Life Magazine, Vol. LXX, No. 19, May 21, 1971, p.23.

[Lockwood interprets the pronouncement of J.E. Hoover as the prologue, the indictment of the Berrigans as Act One, the indictment of their associates as Act Two and the continuing trial as Act Three.

its value is hardly bankrupted, for it continues to engage the "moral judgment" of its auditors.

In the chapters to follow, I propose to outline the wealth of the morality tradition from which Marlowe could have chosen and the specific borrowings that he did use. By suggesting that Marlowe's borrowings involve his audience in a debate between the expectations of didacticism that the morality structures usually arouse and the unorthodox effects that they achieve in his plays, I do realize that we can arrive at different conclusions about this debate. Such a tactic could cause some of us to condemn Marlowe for his adolescent indecision and heterodoxy, while others could be moved to support him for his artistry in being unresolved, evasive and perhaps even evanescent.

THE MORALITY TRADITION

The moralities have suffered much critical abuse. Just as "the very word [was] like a yawn" for one critic at the beginning of this century, the moralities are still synonymous for some writers with clear-cut "monsters" and simplified "villainy".¹ As dramas, they have barely escaped "insipidity".² The reason for such attitudes seems to me to rest in the writers' bias in terms of another form of drama, or of another age. For example, both Alfred W. Pollard and Katharine Bates have openly admitted their preferences for the miracle play. When discussing the Elizabethan drama, they grant the morality the debased status of a "persistent" component. Thus, the moralities, described by Miss Bates as a "barren and abortive side growth of the miracle plays", are assigned grudgingly by Mr. Pollard as "for better or worse, a thread of the Elizabethan drama".³ The bias is most evident when a writer solicitously

¹ The first comment is made by Katharine Lee Bates, The English Religious Drama (New York, 1909), p. 201; the second comes from Molly Maureen Mahood, Humanism and Poetry (London, 1950), p. 54.

² Edmund K. Chambers, The Medieval Stage (Oxford, 1903), II, 219.

³ Bates, p. 204; Alfred W. Pollard, English Miracle Plays, Moralities and Interludes (Oxford, 1927), p. lxix.

mentions "the modern reader". Such a reader, claims Miss Bates, must find himself "bored", and it is a general opinion that the material must impress him as "dull".⁴

These views result from a refusal to approach the morality in terms of its purpose, structure and wide-ranging success. If we are prepared, however, to accept this drama "within the intellectual possibilities open" in its day, we may realize its surprising degree of "sophistication".⁵ Like O. B. Hardison,⁶ we may come to admire the moralities as psychological forerunners of later Elizabethan dramas that were to make secular tragedies out of their spiritual issues. Along with Louis B. Wright and Glynne Wickham, we may come to appreciate both their social-thesis features and their individual applicability. We may agree with Wright that the plays commented on contemporary conditions, and with Wickham that the cast list could have reflected the spectator's own struggle with vice

⁴The "dullness" of the moralities is an opinion shared, predictably, by such critics as Pollard, p. liv, and Bates, p. 201; however, after he has made a convincing case for the moralities as "early social-thesis plays", even a critic like Louis Wright makes this concession to the "modern reader" in his article, "Social Aspects of Some Belated Moralities", Anglia, LIV (1930), 147.

⁵W. Moelwyn Merchant, Creed and Drama (London, 1965), pp. 5, 28.

⁶O. B. Hardison, Jr., Christian Rite and Christian Drama in the Middle Ages (Baltimore, 1965), p. 289.

and virtue.⁷ In addition, the staged effects of this popular entertainment may take shape for us.⁸ The moralities may come to merit some of the many epithets David Bevington applies to them, like "pragmatic and theatrical", "flexible" and "protean".⁹

My approach will borrow largely from this second group of critics. Without attempting any time-capsule re-entry into the Middle Ages, I hope, however, to free myself from blinkered and modern-oriented criticism of the moralities. Liberated also from any intrinsic objections to didactic art,¹⁰ I propose to discuss the moralities as both complements and antitheses of Marlovian drama. These plays offered a curious but "right" combination: an orthodox yet entertaining joining of "what an audience wanted to hear and

⁷Glynne Wickham, Early English Stages (London, 1963), II, 36.

⁸See T.W. Craik, The Tudor Interlude (Leicester, 1958).

⁹David M. Bevington, From Mankind to Marlowe (Cambridge, 1962), pp. 55, 114, 115.

¹⁰Although such an assertion may seem to be unnecessary, I think it is essential; by balking at didacticism, we accept convenient labels for the moralities like "lifeless", "static" and "boring". We must permit "didactic" and "artistic" to co-exist.

Arguments favorable to this point of view are offered by Merchant, p. 3; Julian David Shuchter, Man Redeemable, The Mankind Character in the English Morality Plays, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation (Berkeley, 1968), p. 3; and Glynne Wickham, Shakespeare's Dramatic Heritage (London, 1969), pp. 26-27.

and what they knew they ought to hear".¹¹ In outlining the nature and components of the morality, in discussing its related purpose and in providing a brief synopsis of the direction it took during its span of popularity from the beginning of the fifteenth century through to the end of the sixteenth, I hope to suggest the wealth and sensitivity of the tradition from which Marlowe could choose. As a result of this analysis, the moralities may emerge as theological tracts, or social commentaries, or studies in evil, all manoeuvred by the playwright to effect a reckoning in the audience.

Mackenzie offers the following definition:

A morality is a play, allegorical in structure which has for its main object the teaching of some lesson for the guidance of life, and in which the principal characters are personified abstractions or highly universalized types. ¹²

The allegory concerns man's pilgrimage through life and, in the initial moralities, to salvation. The personifications represent the virtues and vices which inhabit the soul of man, where one force alternates with the other in the direction of his life. ¹³

¹¹ The combination is Shuchter's, p. 13.

¹² W. Roy Mackenzie, The English Moralities From the Point of View of Allegory (New York, 1914), p. 9.

¹³ As Shuchter has argued (p. 9), it is difficult to accept the "abstraction" idea mainly because the drama's presentation of a "real" actor speaking with others works against abstraction. Drama supports concreteness, and, at most, "personification".

These personifications link the origin of the morality with The Psychomachia of Marcus Aurelius Prudentius, a Father of the Church in the fifth century.¹⁴ Prudentius was an innovator since he used the epic formulae of Virgil in the service of Christian allegory. He presents the "ceaseless wars" (l. 894) "within the body and the soul's grim strife" (l. 892).¹⁵ His final emphasis is spiritual and otherworldly, "for flesh formed of mire/Weighs heavy on the spirit" (ll. 904-05). But while he supports the spurning of the "body's foulness" (l. 907), Prudentius does admit an essential and continuing contrast:

Diverse in spirit, light with darkness wars, And our
two natures are at variance (ll. 908-09).

Such poetic and incisive moments are surprisingly frequent in this fifth century work. The penetration of Heresy and Discord¹⁶ within the troops of the victorious virtues provides a foreshadowing of the potency of the Vice figure in morality drama. Discord is an

¹⁴See Bernard Spivack, Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil (New York, 1958), pp. 60-129. He develops the central theme of the psychomachic contest.

¹⁵Quotations from The Psychomachia are from The Poems of Prudentius, Volume Two, Translated by Sr. M. C. Eagan (Washington, 1965).

¹⁶Although Spivack states that Heresy and Discord "spring from the victorious army of virtues" (p. 106), Prudentius is explicit about their surreptitious entry from the ranks of the overthrown vices (ll. 665-696).

"unforeseen enemy, /A cunning vice" (ll. 667-68). Although her wound to Concord seems only "a trivial puncture" (l. 679), it results in the erection of battlements for keeping constant guard against such lurking evil. With the bravado of a stage vice, Discord has pronounced her nature:

'Discord is my first name and Heresy
My second. God to me is various,
Now lesser, or now greater, now twofold,
Now simple; when I scoff at his divinity,
He is a phantom or the soul within.
My teacher is Belial, my home the world' (ll. 709-14).

Prudentius does not elevate such a vice, but submits it to all the restraints of Faith and Concord.

Borrowing the vigour of the contest from Prudentius, the morality becomes a physical, dramatic sermon, with the play as text, the stage as pulpit and the audience as congregation. In Spivack's terms, it is a sermo corporeus:

Within this metaphorical framework of moral conflict and moral sequence the plot of the morality play presents through visible forms and actions the invisible history of the human soul according to the Christian formulation.¹⁷

It dramatizes the progressive stages of Innocence, Temptation and Fall, Life in Sin and Realization and Repentance. It aims at teaching the means to salvation, "to give religious instruction, establish

¹⁷ Spivack, p. 103.

faith and encourage piety".¹⁸

With such a beginning, the morality is not a narrative like the miracle, but a debate. Man is the battleground. While the course of the action may seem "formalized and predetermined" for Hardin Craig,¹⁹ it must have had considerable impact on the audience of its day. For the audience of The Castle of Perseverance, or Mankind, or Wisdom, Father H. Gardiner suggests that "the interpretations of present realities in terms of eternity was a habit of mind, ingrained and fostered by the whole tradition of medieval exegesis and preaching".²⁰ These dramatic sermons provided their audience with "an ethical yardstick" of their own behaviour.²¹ Just as the medieval sermonizer had used well-known exempla, like the castle, mountain, fountain and tree, morality writers utilized this common knowledge in their theatre. Although their "theatrum" was usually a wide open place, "platea" or "locus", with a "turris" forming the stage, they depended on the perception of their audiences who were

¹⁸Hardin Craig, English Religious Drama of the Middle Ages (Oxford, 1955), p. 15.

¹⁹Craig, p. 342.

²⁰H. C. Gardiner, S. J., Mysteries' End (New Haven, 1946), p. 3.

²¹Wickham, Shakespeare's Dramatic Heritage, p. 27.

"accustomed to abstraction",²² who "expected symbolic costumes",²³ and who possessed a "Gargantuan appetite for moral lessons".²⁴ The playwrights also utilized the proximity of the audience to elicit emotional sympathy for the protagonist²⁵ and to provide a "cabaret intimacy" for fun and profit.²⁶

These audiences were treated to quite a changing array of events and outcomes. The morality's initial preoccupation with mercy and otherworldliness decreased as the denouements took place in this world, righteousness replaced mercy and unrepentant damnation replaced penitent salvation.²⁷ Hence, while the beginning moralities offered guides for action, the later forms became warnings. The morality was the only medieval drama form that successfully weathered the Reformation because it adapted to the change from Catholicism to anti-Catholicism with great

²² Wilhelm Creizenach, The English Drama in the Age of Shakespeare (London, 1916), p. 358.

²³ Bevington, p. 93.

²⁴ Wright, p. 112.

²⁵ See Craik, pp. 27-48.

²⁶ Wickham, Shakespeare's Dramatic Heritage, p. 40

²⁷ Such schemes of development are the subject of two notable studies: Willard Farnham, The Medieval Heritage of Elizabethan Tragedy (Berkeley, 1936); and J.M.R. Margeson, The Origins of English Tragedy (Oxford, 1967).

flexibility.²⁸ Since the moralities, as Bevington has expressed it, had "bridged two worlds",²⁹ they were capable of attracting and interesting the large audience of the trade cycle.

The morality's protagonists mirror these changes in the times. The central character is initially a universal representative like Everyman, Humanum Genus or Mankind, that is, he is both "sufficiently particular to engage feelings on his behalf, and sufficiently universal to insure the applicability of the play's message to all members of the audience".³⁰ With a narrowing of focus, he becomes a social type, a caricature of a fool like Moros, or a grotesque impenitent like Worldly Man. In a slow process, the moralities abandon universalism in their characters and instead concentrate on historical men and women.³¹ As a reflection of the Calvinist tendency of the middle to late sixteenth century, the protagonist is no longer simply heaven-bound after his repentance. In place of this, there appear two distinct camps: the assured and

²⁸ The conversion of successful, Catholic, pre-Reformation morality techniques into equally successful, anti-Catholic, post-Reformation moralities is ably demonstrated by Rainer Pineas, "The English Morality Play as a Weapon of Religious Controversy", SEL, II (1962), 157-80.

²⁹ Bevington, p. 114.

³⁰ Shuchter, p. 6.

³¹ These statements draw on the analyses of Spivack, p. 62, and of Bevington, p. 141.

undeviating saved who are heaven-bound and the proud and equally undeviating damned who are hell-bound. While the former provide a faint memory of psychomachic otherworldliness, the latter are unforgettable pictures of spiritual degeneration. The positive example provided by the virtuous (when they do appear) functions only as a pious chorus, while the negative example, provided by the impenitent Fool riding off on the back of the Devil, has the central focus. In fact, in The Tyde Taryeth no Man, evil comes to dominate most of the stage time as Courage, the Vice, and his three cohorts, Hurting Helpe, Paynted Profite and Fayned Furtherance, control the action; furthermore, in All for Money, there is no mankind character at all, only the vomiting up of various vices "with some fine conveyance" (1.278) along with the parade of criminal supplicants to the court of the judge, All-for-Money.³²

A brief look at some of the outstanding examples from the early through to the late stages of the morality's career may help to illustrate this development. The Macro Moralities,³³ The Castle of Perseverance, Wisdom and Mankind, are the earliest extant

³² George Wapull, The Tyde Taryeth no Man, Edited by E. Ruhl, Shakespeare Jahrbuch, XLIII (1907), 12-52; Thomas Lupton, All for Money, Edited by E. Vogel, Shakespeare Jahrbuch, XL (1904), 146-201. All play references will be from these editions.

³³ Mark Eccles, editor, The Macro Plays (Oxford, 1969).

examples. They are of importance both for their adherence to the Psychomachia idea and also for their extensions of this convention. For instance, they offer insights into structure as an element of the theological pattern, sympathy-arousing outbursts from their universal protagonists and an indication of popularity through the contemporary appeal of their comments.

The Castle (1425)³⁴ presents the whole span of existence from infancy to old age through Humanum Genus' allegorical pilgrimage to the various scaffolds of the World, the Flesh, the Devil, Covetousness and God.³⁵ The second vexillator announces the plan early in the play:

Pe case of oure comynge zou to declare,
Euery man in hymself forsothe he may fynde;
Whou Mankynde into pis werld born is ful bare
And bare schal beryed be at hys last ende (ll. 14-17).

However, the structure of this morality highlights not so much the coming and going of Humanum Genus, as it focuses on the contest of this "werld" itself. A protagonist torn between good and evil

³⁴ Dates are those assigned by Alfred Harbage, Annals of English Drama, 975-1700 (London, 1964).

³⁵ The dominant image pattern of the pilgrimage is treated by Edgar T. Schell, "On the Imitation of Life's Pilgrimage in The Castle of Perseverance", JEGP, LXVII (1967), 235-48. The importance of the tricentric stage for The Castle is the subject of a monograph by Merle Fifield, "The Castle in the Circle", Ball State Monograph Number Six (Muncie, 1967).

angels' could have an applicability for each member of the audience.³⁶ Although there are seven vices to oppose the seven virtues, and two defenders (Misericordia and Pax) as well as two prosecutors (Veritas and Justicia) of Humanum Genus, the number of scaffolds points out the asymmetry, since evil (Mundus, Caro, Belyal and Coveytyse) has four and good (Deus) has only one. As a fallen figure, Humanum Genus shares in the role of the vice who preaches against himself,³⁷ when he advises the audience, "takythe example at me" (1.2995), and when he sues for heavenly assistance, "I putte me in Goddys mercy" (1.3007). However, he voices also the human discontent of a fallen man, and not of a mere abstraction, when he moans,

Now, alas, my lyf is lak
 Bittyr balys I gynne to brewe. . .
 Ow, Ow, my good goth al to wrak! (11.2982, 83, 88).

Several allusions to the times of the mid-fifteenth century are also at work. Miss Bates observes that the storming scene could call out "unbounded enthusiasm from the audience, many of whom had served in the French wars".³⁸ The assignment of a single scaffold to Covetousness and not to Pride may be an indication of how

³⁶ This device could be easily translated into a king torn between good and evil counsellors, as Irving Ribner comments in his book, The English History Play in the Age of Shakespeare (Princeton, 1957), p. 40.

³⁷ Pineas calls this preaching "a positive function", p. 160.

³⁸ Bates, p. 212.

Covetousness was replacing Pride as chief of the Seven Deadly Sins in an age of nascent materialism.³⁹

Mankind (1465-70) offers a similar degree of Psychomachia adherence and extension. As an echo of Prudentius' poem, Mankind manifests the contest of body and soul, "of condycyon contrarye" (1.195) and wishes to dissociate himself from his flesh, "pat stynkyng dungehyll" (1.204). The structure magnifies the difference between good and evil; on the one hand, Mercy serves as the pious, homiletic compendium of Vulgate knowledge, such as, "Vita hominis est milicia super terram" (1.228), while on the other hand, Titivillus, New Gyse, Nowadays, Nought and Myscheff submit his piety to parody through such outbursts as, "Your body ys full of Englysch Laten. / I am aferds yt wyll brest" (11.124-25). Their scatological quips and bawdy action are always in contrast with Mercy's virtuous inaction. A morality pattern of virtue as stasis and sin as kinesis seems to be emerging. The members of the audience are very much a part of the performance since the players run in and out among them, solicit money for Titivillus from them and lead them

³⁹ The dominance of Covetousness at this time is mentioned by Thomas Van Laan in connection with the role of Goods in Everyman and of Covetousness in The Castle in his article, "Everyman, A Structural Analysis", PMLA, LXXVIII (1963), 468.

along in a scurrilous verse. However, the play is not "ignorant, corrupt and vulgar".⁴⁰ Such a vital performance of evil is at once an outlet for the "unregenerate instincts"⁴¹ of both audience and playwright, and also a graphic example of the perils to avoid. In terms of presenting the failings of a human being, and not of a universal representative, Mankind shows a despairing protagonist about to hang himself (l. 800), a man who insists on his unworthiness for repentance (l. 882) and on its impossibility (l. 832). Although his defiance is won over by Mercy's supplication, Mankind does present us with a glimpse of destructive pride:

What, aske mercy zet onys agayn? Alas, yt were a
wyle petycyun.
Ewyr to offend and ever to aske mercy, yt ys a
puerilitie
Yt ys so abhominabyll to rehers my iterat transgrescion,
I am not worthy to hawe mercy be no possibilite (ll. 819-22).

The costume of Mankind is a reflection of his state. The "joly jakett" (l. 711) that he dons could be made from the very robe he first appeared in, only now it has been cut to shreds by the vices. Julian Shuchter observes,

⁴⁰ The epithets are Craig's, p. 351. Spivack provides a suitable riposte to Craig's "failure to read the play as allegory", p. 122.

⁴¹ Spivack, p. 113.

If [this is] so, the iconographic point is strong, for it means that Mankind's own original appearance (that is, his being shaped in the image of God) is distorted by Sin.⁴²

Like the Macro plays, Everyman (1495) concerns preparation for the next life, yet the denouement now occurs in this life. It is only the last segment of life's pilgrimage, the Summons of Death, that comes into prominence. The play's outstanding feature remains its control of structure.⁴³ It presents a negative first half and a positive second half, a downward trend to damnation and an upward trend to Redemption, with a God of wrath in the first section countered by a God of Mercy in the second. The turning point of the action is Everyman's acknowledgement of Sin and his acceptance of Knowledge. The costumes underline this change as Everyman discards his gay attire and, after being scourged, puts on the garment offered by Knowledge, probably a simple penitential gown. As a final iconographic blending, Everyman's entry into the grave to attain heaven provides a simultaneous visual summation of both movements.

With the deft beginnings of Skelton's Magnyfycence (1516), the morality is narrowing its focus and widening its possibilities.

⁴² Shuchter, pp. 22-23.

⁴³ Van Laan provides a detailed analysis of the structure.

Skelton is subtly reducing abstraction, for the young Magnyfycence seems to be a parallel of Henry VIII and the six vices could be elements in a sketch of Cardinal Wolsey. The play can be called a staged warning, cautioning Henry against the dangers of Wolsey. But, it is much more. Skelton yokes together Aristotelian philosophy, incarnate in the title and derived from the Nichomachean Ethics, together with the Christian morality interplay of vice and virtue. Although Skelton was narrowing the social scope of his protagonist to the regal rank, there is still no necessity to label Magnyfycence as Henry VIII, or the vices as Wolsey. Concerning Skelton's character portrayal, Robert Ramsay has introduced this qualification:

At best they are types of more or less simple qualities, good or evil, which might each be shared by many real persons, or a number of which might be united in one real person. Even Magnyfycence is not the portrait of a person, although in drawing it a single person was clearly in mind; on its face is a class type of the traditional sort.⁴⁴

The morality is still upholding its balance between abstraction and reality.

Later developments like Bale's King John (1536) and Respublica (1553), probably by Nicholas Udall, show clearly how the playwright could use the format of the morality to apply to a present

⁴⁴ Robert Lee Ramsay, "Introduction", Magnyfycence (Oxford, 1908), p. cvii.

situation. In keeping with his violent Protestantism, Bale makes King John a stalwart martyr at the hands of the Vices, disguised as Catholic clerics; his point is clear: after three hundred years of Romish domination, the power of the king (Henry VIII) is at last set free and assisted by the truths of the Protestant faith. In contrast, the one Marian morality, Respublica, supports the poor widow, Respublica, and her follower, People, and shows the punishment of the vices who are Protestant doctrinaires, Avarice, Insolence, Oppression and Adulation, at the hands of Nemesis. The play implies that such a restoration of order is comparable to the accession of the Catholic Queen Mary to the English throne in 1553.

In plays like Pacient and Meeke Grissill (1559), Apus and Virginia (1564), Cambises (1561) and Horestes (1567), the author's reliance on secondary English source material becomes a noticeable trend.⁴⁵ The first two plays establish the prominence of the outraged and innocent heroine, while the last two present God's vengeance, first on an outrageous tyrant and then on a righteous avenger. As Willard Farnham has pointed out, these plays make two innovative contributions. They present a single Vice figure along with a coterie of vulgar comedians, and the scenes also alternate between the seven-foot iambics of the heroic and the tumbling verse of the comic

⁴⁵Farnham discusses this trend in the composition of the historical moral play, pp. 213-270.

scenes. In particular, the vice of Cambises, Ambidexter, warrants attention. Although he has the curious capacity, as his name implies, of doing both good and evil, since he is one that "with both hands finely can play" (l. 151), he is always intent on doing evil, "to see if [he] can all men beguile" (l. 145).⁴⁶ Through the play's denouement in this world, Cambises provides an example of a sinner punished for evil according to a temporal scheme of justice. The protagonist offers his own testament since "A just reward for his misdeeds his death doth plaine declare" (l. 1172). The onus is on human culpability, for the Vice remains intact, but the human tyrant suffers.

The world assumes increasing importance in the final branch of pre-Marlovian drama, the homiletic tragedies. In plays like Wager's The Longer Thou Livest The More Fool Thou Art (1559) and Enough is as Good as a Feast (1560), the world and its perils provide the setting. Wager seems to be following a typical morality format with an instructive title like,

A Very mery and / Pythie commedie called The longer
thou liuest, the more foole thou art. / A Myrour very
necessarie for youth, and / specially for such as are
like to come to dig/nitie and promotion.

He calls Enough "a comedy, . . . very fruteful godly and ful of

⁴⁶ Play references are from the edition of J. M. Manly, Specimens of the Pre-Shakespearean Drama (Boston, 1900).

pleasant mirth".⁴⁷ Moros, the protagonist of The Longer, follows the same pilgrimage pattern of Humanum Genus from youth to old age. But Wager's assumptions are different from those of the playwright of The Castle of Perseverance. As his name suggests, Moros is a fool, a petulant buffoon who cannot learn from the teachings of Discipline, but who "turneth all to mock and game" (l. 361). His recalcitrance insures his destruction. In the second play, Wager bifurcates his view and presents a virtuous wooden protagonist, Heavenly Man, as the foil for the unregenerate second protagonist, Worldly Man. Both Moros and Worldly Man create their own damnations, and are hence morally responsible protagonists.

Such a view of human depravity has merited Wager many epithets as an innovative or purely secular playwright. Mark Benbow reasonably tempers such claims:

It is not that Wager is more secular than his predecessors, but rather that he is using the traditional metaphors within a different set of assumptions.⁴⁸

For Wager man seems to be at once wilful and defiant, but encased within a harsh and demanding system. Despite Worldly Man's

⁴⁷ As quoted by R. Mark Benbow, editor, The Longer Thou Livest and Enough is as Good as a Feast, Regents Renaissance Drama Series (Lincoln, 1967), p. ix. Play quotations will be from this edition.

⁴⁸ Benbow, p. xiv.

boasts, his final words (ll. 1400-04) are a pathetic and abortive attempt at repentance. All he can utter is "In the name . . . of". God as the arbiter is an unmerciful and stern Old Testament figure; in The Longer he enters with a "terrible visure" (l. 1758). When the agents of evil arrive to claim their victims in both plays, this final justice arouses an amount of pity in the audience for the protagonist, despite his impenitence. The sight of Moros, still alive and riding out on Confusion's back, provides an eerie gallows humour, but the sight of Satan carrying off the corpse of Worldly Man to be added to his kingdom which he has described as "a very dunghill and sink of sin" (l. 1443) affords a grotesque memento of a life misspent.

Two later homiletic tragedies, The Tyde Taryeth no Man (1576) and All for Money (1578), carry these horrifying details into parody and inversion of Christian norms. For instance, in The Tyde Taryeth no Man, Christianity herself is a debased character who openly confesses,

. . . I lack such Armour as is taught by S. Paule
For in steade of Gods word, and the shield of fayth,
I am deformed with pollicy, and riches vayne (ll. 1453-55).

The trio of Hurting Helpe, Paynted Profite and Fayned Furtherance merits description by one of them as "a whole trinity" (l. 315). Furthermore, although Christianity is refurbished at the play's closing, the chief vice, Courage, exults even in her shackles that Greediness will live on, "so long as couetous people do live" (l. 1765).

In All for Money, the distance from the Psychomachia is pronounced. Prudentius had posed his rhetorical question in favour of otherworldly spiritualism:

What profits it to have repelled the hosts
Of earth-born vices, if the Son of Man,
From heaven descending, enters the body cleansed,
But unadorned, and not a temple fair? (11.816-19)

However, the rhetorical questions of Lupton's Prologue seem to vacillate between incredulity and acceptance, not of asceticism but of materialism:

What mettayle is this money that makes men so mad?
What mischief is it thereby is not wrought?
What earthly thing is not therefore to be had? (11.50-2)

No longer does the morality begin with innocence and end with salvation; unity is not provided by return to a goodly or godly state.

One aspect of unity in All for Money is appropriately provided by Judas, an archetypal example of the title's consequences. He is mentioned as a negative example in the Prologue (1.68) and actually appears (1.1439) following the scene of the court of All-for-Money. He is "like a damned soule, in blacke painted with flames of fire, and with a fearfull vizard". Just as the earlier moralities relied on a learned doctor or a virtuous personification to comment on the action, the damned Judas stands as a significant surrogate of their function.

As this hasty sketch has attempted to stress, the moralities have provided successful visual presentations of the perils involved

in gaining salvation, or in openly refusing it. By highlighting a central protagonist, they have focused not so much on formal punishment as on the self-punishing and self-destructive aspects of sin. Some mankind characters have been naïve, some rebellious, and some impenitent. The common factor for all has been their submission to a form of deceitful Vice. The evil that results has been as graphic and mundane as wenching, gluttony, sloth, and so on, through the Seven Deadly Sins. Costumes and actions have provided a large part of the symbolic fare. They have reflected the change between Sinning and Regeneration, as for instance, in Wisdom, the four Faculties that once danced riotously re-appear wearing crowns and walking in a sombre parade. Costumes have been emblematic of deceit, as the turning of Avarice's cloak in Respublica has been the cue for cunning. Although the didactic purpose has been orthodox, theology has not slipped into the dramatic mode by mistake. It has created a drama that combines mimesis, through imitating the Fall and Redemption of Man, catharsis, in its "psychology of the auricular confession" and anagnoresis, in its lessons as to the true nature of things.⁴⁹

Since there are nine extant moralities that were printed during Marlowe's boyhood, it is possible to make observations about

⁴⁹ The analogy with Greek drama is made by Shuchter, p. 8.

the wealth and precedence of the tradition. The moralities had proved to be rugged theatrical veterans. They had provided a pattern for didacticism which could be useful in conveying lessons to individual spectators, in interpreting history, in commenting on current issues and, in presenting a moral philosophy suitable to the times. In the following chapter, I will attempt to outline how Marlowe availed himself of this "protean" tradition and how he fashioned it, along with his own reading and imagination, in creating his plays.

MARLOWE'S USE OF THE MORALITY TRADITION

Christian morality is a philosophy for a way of living that will lead to salvation; it coheres with the teachings of the Bible and reflects the tenets of the Christian Church concerning the importance of the theological and moral virtues.¹ As begun in the Middle Ages, the morality play is the dramatization of this philosophy. Through its worldly setting and its focus on a single person, the morality play presents the difficulties involved in inculcating these virtues and the perils involved in abandoning them. The play expands the biblical text, and makes the point of dogma personally significant.

¹As a seeking after the "good", this way of living has been characterized by many Christian philosophers. For Augustine, such a morality was living "rightly", that is, "nothing other than to love God with one's whole heart, with one's whole soul, and with one's whole mind", The Way of Life of the Catholic Church, Translated by D. and I. Gallagher (Washington, 1966), Chapter 25, p. 38. In Aquinas' teleological theory of ethics, human acts derived their moral qualities, goodness and badness, from their relation to man's final end; see "On the Sentences", II, 40, The Pocket Aquinas, Edited by V. Bourke (New York, 1960), p. 192. The Christian life for Luther was founded on Faith, "when Christ makes heart, soul, body, works, and manner of life new and writes God's commandments not on tables of stone but on hearts of flesh", "On the Councils and the Churches", The Works of Martin Luther, Edited by J. Pelikan (Philadelphia, 1966), Vol. V, p. 267. For Calvin, our moral purpose was to "know God", while to digress from this knowledge was "degeneration", Institutes of the Christian Religion, Translated by J. Allen (London, 1813), I, 1, iii, 39. Bacon preferred an intellectual morality, the perfect essence of which would be "to have a man's mind move in charity, rest in providence and turn upon the poles of truth", "Of Truth", Bacon's Essays, With Annotations by R. Whately (Boston, 1861), p. 3.

As a form of drama, it has several distinguishing characteristics which it might be helpful to catalogue before considering Marlowe's use of them. The morality's theme is the gaining of salvation; it usually works out in the protagonist's favour but, with plays like those of Wager, Lupton and Wapull, it can also demonstrate the protagonist's utter defeat. The central figure is both an individual and a representative. In his worldly pilgrimage, he encounters personified forces of good and evil who attempt to win him as their ally; thus a common form of the morality is a debate between good and evil for the soul of man. The purpose of this debate is to instruct in the way of the Christian morality espoused by the playwright. Among the techniques used to further this instruction are a prologue to announce and an epilogue to recapitulate the events of the lesson. In addition, symbolic costumes and allusions to current matters, such as royal policy or mercantile expansion, keep the morality play timeless yet contemporary. Emotional appeals to the audience, soliciting sympathy for the protagonist, are also standard fare. As Bevington has illustrated,² the ordered

²Bevington illustrates four structures; alternation, progressive suppression, symmetry and compression (pp. 117-25). As an example, he cites Mundus et Infans (1522), in which the playwright relies on only two actors; while one alternates between playing the friend and enemy of mankind, the other portrays two parallel states of degeneracy and conversion. Since each suppressed character makes way for his homiletic successor, there is a symmetry of contrasting forces. Despite the economy of the stage time, the playwright creates an illusion of expansiveness by referring to characters who never appear.

succession and suppression of characters make symmetry in casting important for the size of the performing troupe and also for directing the perceptions of the audience.

Through analyses of four of Marlowe's plays, Tamburlaine, Parts I and II, The Jew of Malta, Edward the Second, and Doctor Faustus,³ I hope to demonstrate how he uses these morality techniques and structures to pass beyond the strictly moral significance that the Christian philosophers envisioned; that is, I hope to show how he eludes evaluation by the very criteria of the dramatic tradition from which he borrows. Not as the instrument of dogma that it had been, the morality serves Marlowe as an available theatrical medium. It allows him to present his subjects of interest which can appear as remote from the morality as a public spectacle of worldly triumph, and as connected to it as a private confrontation with damnation. His borrowings from the morality tradition allow Marlowe to present a debate, but, unlike the moralities, his plays are unresolved debates. I hope to show that Marlowe does not simply invert the tradition as an iconoclast, but rather that he manipulates it to a double effect: to cause us to question the rightness of the way of Christian morality and to indicate movingly his own agnostic, intellectual confusion.

³ Play references will be from Irving Ribner's edition, The Complete Plays of Christopher Marlowe (New York, 1963). I am following the order of plays in Ribner's edition.

Tamburlaine

By selecting specific elements of the morality tradition and submitting them to either manipulation, or inversion, or adjustment, Marlowe makes Tamburlaine a spectacle of worldly values, encased in a borrowed, moral frame. As Preston did in Cambises, Marlowe chooses a hero of the past, "a well-known fourteenth century dictator", according to Professor Battenhouse;⁴ yet unlike Preston's tyrant, Marlowe's creation meets glory after glory, and even embraces his death contemplating "a heaven of joy" (II, 5.3.227). The central figure is the one towering example of three-dimensional characterization. However, unlike the central mankind figures, such as Humanum Genus and Mankind, Tamburlaine does come into contact with more than personifications.⁵ Zenocrate figures enough in his life that he thinks upon death as an eternal union with her; in fact, her significance has been described by commentators as

⁴R. W. Battenhouse, Marlowe's Tamburlaine: A Study in Renaissance Moral Philosophy (Nashville, 1941), p.v.

His study is devoted to proving the clear moral of the ten-act play as a warning against ambition; hence, in furthering his tendentious argument, he must neglect Marlowe's obvious elevation of Tamburlaine above the level of dictator.

⁵Although Bevington credits only Tamburlaine with three-dimensional characterization (p. 208), good cases for the importance and influence of Zenocrate have been made by G. I. Duthie, "The Dramatic Structure of Marlowe's 'Tamburlaine the Great'", English Studies, I (1948), 101-26; and Robert Kimbrough, "I Tamburlaine: A Speaking Picture in a Tragic Glass", Renaissance Drama, VII (1964), 20-33.

disparately as, on the one hand, "the very pattern of pagan earthly beauty", and on the other, the image of "a God-fearing, Elizabethan matron".⁶ Similarly, Theridamas and Bajazeth function as more than mere integers of audience support or rejection for Tamburlaine; they have their own importance in connection with Olympia and Zabina, respectively. As in the persecution and defense of Humanum Genus, Bevington's terms of "succession" and "symmetry" apply equally to the dramatic confrontation between the forces of Tamburlaine and Bajazeth (I, 3. 3).⁷ But their set speeches and heroic claims refer not to the saving or damning of a soul; in contrast, they concern the secular issue of building or destroying an empire. As an example of Marlowe's tampering with what seems a moral expectation, he presents us with a hero who is the "scourge

⁶In keeping with the restrictions of his moralizing view, Battenhouse offers the first opinion, p. 166; similarly, in keeping with her glorification of only Tamburlaine, Una Ellis-Fermor dismisses Zenocrate in this way in her study, Christopher Marlowe (London, 1927), p. 43.

⁷Bevington's discussion of this play concentrates on three points: first, that the climactic confrontation of Part I, Act III, Scene iii, evidences symmetry and ordered succession; second, that groups of three (three conquered nations, three captains, three crowns, three sons, three physicians for Zenocrate) are important for their relation to casting methods and to the traditional formulas of the homiletic stage; and third, that the moral formula of the hybrid chronicle was only a matter of convenience for Marlowe since Bevington believes he was consciously creating an ambiguity of moral impact, pp. 202-218.

of God", and yet is a man who, without misgivings, orders the slaughter of the Damascan Virgins. Tamburlaine is a two-sided coin; on one side, he is a hero for the Christian world who defeats the Turkish emperor, Bajazeth; on the other, he debases humanitarian feelings as signs of weakness. Hence, Marlowe's manipulation of history, his inversion of recognizable morality structures and his adjustment of moral expectations contribute to the tension of his play. His protagonist fluctuates between "egoism and altruism", culpability and glory, and yet a bias seems to operate in favour of lauding Tamburlaine as "an early edition of the noble savage".⁸ I propose to illustrate how Marlowe creates this tension by relying on morality features to manipulate, invert and obscure the conventional judgments that these features would usually evoke.

Emotional appeals to the audience were a characteristic of moral drama. Indeed, T. W. Craik has stated that "there is not a single Tudor Interlude in which the audience is not brought into the

⁸Eugene Waith recognizes both the tension and the nobility involved in Tamburlaine, but favors the latter in his book, The Herculean Hero in Marlowe, Chapman, Shakespeare and Dryden (New York, 1962), pp. 60-87.

action in this way".⁹ In Tamburlaine, Part I, Marlowe appeals to his audience and manipulates his dramaturgy to insure their support for this morally condemnable "dictator".¹⁰ Like the polemicists, Bale and Udall, Marlowe changes the historical accounts to suit his purpose. His audience does not witness the illegal mustering of troops by Tamburlaine that historically defeated Cosroe, but only Tamburlaine's valour and fairness. Similarly, they do not see the great battle that actually took place in Tamburlaine's defeat of Bajazeth, but only the hero's valiant hand-to-hand contest and triumph. Marlowe re-casts Tamburlaine's opponents so that they form an historically incorrect yet theatrically effective ascent from the weak Mycetes, to the anti-Christian Cosroe, and on to the pompous Bajazeth. Marlowe stresses Tamburlaine's virtues as a leader of men and a respectful lover, so that his hero emerges as a "superman", combatting weakness, intrigue and double-talk.¹¹ Of the parts in the play, the role of Tamburlaine itself is the acting "plum". Whether to create a vehicle for Edward Alleyn, or to focus

⁹ Craik, p. 25.

¹⁰ The following remarks draw freely on the work of F. B. Fieler, "Tamburlaine Part I and Its Audience", University of Florida Monograph (Gainesville, 1961); and Siegfried Wyler, "Marlowe's Technique of Communicating with his Audience, as seen in his Tamburlaine, Part I", ES, XLVIII (1967), 306-16.

¹¹ J. B. Steane, Marlowe, A Critical Study (Cambridge, 1964), p. 90.

audience attention on one towering figure, Marlowe has lavished on the role both fine apostrophes and thundering diction. Tamburlaine's words do become "oracles" (I, 3. 3. 102). On the contrary, Bajazeth only mutters curses, and is allowed no audience-arousing complaints about his treatment as Tamburlaine's captive.

Despite Battenhouse's claims, Tamburlaine is not a "grandly moral spectacle" in ten acts,¹² but rather it is made up of two distinct parts. The first part shows us the feats of a world conqueror, for Marlowe has promised to

. . . lead [us] to the stately tent of war,
Where [we] shall hear the Scythian Tamburlaine,
Threat'ning the world with high astounding terms
And scourging kingdoms with his conquering sword
(I, Prologue, 11. 3-6).

However, we are reminded also that many of these victories involve deposing kings and seizing their domains, since Tamburlaine's picture is presented in a "tragic glass" (1. 7). In the second part, Marlowe promises to allow death to cut off Tamburlaine's progress.

Yet, despite what sounds like the morally just extinction of an increasingly vain conqueror, the second part also awards Tamburlaine a glorious death that is a sign not of divine vengeance, but only of human mortality. Under Marlowe's hand, the direction of this two-part play which purports to an Elizabethan audience

¹²Battenhouse, p. 258.

to be a "tragic glass" of a conqueror and even promises to show "death cutting off the progress of his pomp"(II, Prologue, 1.4) becomes not a progress to defeat but a steady ascent to victory. To produce this effect, Marlowe fashions his play on reversals of expectations. In Farnham's terms, Tamburlaine is a reversed De Casibus tragedy.¹³ Marlowe's conqueror overcomes progressively stronger people; yet, his victims fall not because of the whims of Fortune, but because of the powerful whims of Tamburlaine. As Douglas Cole has observed, this conqueror turns Bajazeth's curses into glories, while the suicides of Bajazeth and Zabina are prologue to the height of his glory.¹⁴ Just before his death, Tamburlaine routs an army by the mere force of his presence. Despite his active life, he meets death¹⁵ with a remarkable calmness, not unremoved

¹³Farnham, p. 370.

¹⁴Douglas Cole, Suffering and Evil in the Plays of Christopher Marlowe (Princeton, 1962), pp. 89-96.

¹⁵The question of how Tamburlaine meets his death is a vexed critical issue. For Battenhouse, his death is a result of "blasphemy" and is accomplished in a "conspicuously pagan manner", pp. 171, 253. Death comes as a result of Tamburlaine's "inordinate passion of ambition, hatred, wrath and revenge" for Johnstone Parr, Tamburlaine's Malady and Other Essays on Astrology in Elizabethan Drama (Alabama, 1953), pp. 3-23.

The opposite view of a glorious death is shared by critics as remote from one another in their main interests as Bevington, p. 215; Cole, p. 111; Margeson, p. 105; and Waith, p. 82.

from kingly pride:

In vain I strive and rail against those powers
That mean t'invest me in a higher throne (II, 5. 3. 120-21).

Visually and aurally, the play furthers the reversals which glorify Tamburlaine. Just as costumes were emblems of piety, or repentance, or worldliness in the moralities, Marlowe employs them and manages to shock his audience into approving Tamburlaine's un-moral progress from pastoral humility to conquering brilliance. Tamburlaine throws off the robes of a shepherd, calling them "weeds that I disdain to wear" (I, 1. 2. 41), and reveals his suit of complete armour with which he intends to "tilt within the earth" (1. 2. 31). Just as the castle could be a problematic emblem of refuge or of retreat, Tamburlaine's chariot can be doubly emblematic, signifying not only cruel scourging but order and rule too.¹⁶ Although allusions to mythology were not part of the morality playwright's tactics, they do provide Marlowe, the Cambridge scholar, an aural means of furthering Tamburlaine's glory. As Frederick Boas has suggested, Tamburlaine is cast in the role of Aeneas who wins his Lavinia (Zenocrate), even though she is engaged to someone else.¹⁷ In addition, Eugene Waith outlines Herculean and Orphic parallels

¹⁶ Waith lends more weight to order and rule, p. 86.

¹⁷ F. S. Boas, Christopher Marlowe, A Biographical and Critical Study (Oxford, 1940), p. 80.

that contribute to our admiration for the hero. As an Orpheus figure, Tamburlaine wins over Theridamas to his side and rhapsodizes about his Euridyce with the apostrophe beginning,

Ah fair Zenocrate! Divine Zenocrate!
Fair is too foul an epithet for thee (5.2.72-110).

However, the circumstances which surround this Orphic rapture underline the dominance of the Herculean traits in Tamburlaine's character, and emphasize the human destruction that his triumphs must entail. Before his apostrophe, he has ordered the slaughter of the Damascan Virgins who were suing for peace, and after his apostrophe, Bajazeth and Zabina commit suicide rather than prolong their torture as Tamburlaine's playthings. The apostrophe itself is a short-lived outburst, for Tamburlaine thinks such eulogizing is "unseemly" (1.111) for his sex and seems ill-at-ease in playing what he considers the "effeminate" (1.114) role of poet-lover. He prefers the Herculean role of the mighty though wrathful conqueror who professes the "discipline of arms and chivalry" (1.112) and the love "of fame, of valor, and of victory" (1.118).

As he does in presenting Tamburlaine's preference for the Herculean role of conqueror, Marlowe imparts obscuring or greying implications to some emblems and allusions, and thereby causes us to doubt or question his hero. The cage of Bajazeth remains an ineffaceable emblem of Tamburlaine's cruelty. The solid red banners that fly in Part II are remarkable by their contrast to the

three-colored array of Part I; the options of mercy, peace and retreat have been replaced by the single emphasis on war.¹⁸ The burning of the Koran (II, 5.1), as overt blasphemy, recalls the action of Infidelitas attempting to burn Christi Lex in Bale's Three Laws. Although Marlowe's hero does not meet the swift punishment of Infidelitas and openly repudiates any sort of nemesis by vaunting to live "in spite of death" (5.3.101), his act of burning sacred literature is hard for us to erase from our minds. Aurally Marlowe imparts to his hero allusions that cause us to wonder about his progress. While Tamburlaine was once confident of Jove's protection (I. 1.2.179), following some of his bloody victories, he concludes that he is now a sufficient match for, and even a conqueror of, the same deity (I, 4.4.82). Pride seems to be verging on presumption. While Menaphon once talked of Tamburlaine in comparison with Atlas and Achilles (I, 2.1.6-30), the Soldan introduces debasing comparisons with the Calydonian Boar and the wolf that Themis sent to describe this "base and usurping vagabond" (I, 4.3.1-22). The expanse between brave heroes and unreasoning, senseless beasts is wide.

¹⁸The significance of the red banners for Part II and eight other structural parallels between Parts I and II are treated by Clifford Leech in support of his thesis that Part II clouds the glory of Part I and prepares for Tamburlaine's fall, in his article, "The Structure of Tamburlaine", Tulane Drama Review, VIII (1964), 34-46.

Part II is full of these grey areas. Clifford Leech has considered Part II as a structural echo of Part I that is designed to prepare us for Tamburlaine's fall, for "the unwinding of the spring". While the suicide of Agydas in Part I was a veiled triumph for Tamburlaine's psychology, his killing of Calyphas in Part II impresses Leech as "absurd".¹⁹ As a parallel of Bajazeth's cage, he interprets the chariot of Tamburlaine in Part II as both crueller and more ludicrous than the first instrument of torture. In contrast to the grim decisiveness of the slaughter of the Virgins, the distribution of the concubines seems only "squalid".²⁰ Unlike the planned siege of Damascus, the capture of Babylon appears an indiscriminate conquest. While Bajazeth's threat was silenced in Part I, the threat of Callapine will continue to plague Tamburlaine's heirs in Part II. Unlike the suicide of Zabina, the death of Olympia elicits

¹⁹ I think the shock value of this homicide is fully intended by Marlowe; it is a determined statement of Tamburlaine's ethic that countenances the shedding of blood, but not cowardice. Despite his incisiveness about the carnage of war, Calyphas retreats from active opposition of his father, and delights only in vapid rants (4. 1. 49-59) and hedonistic daydreams (4. 1. 63-4, 66-9). Hence, I find it difficult to accept Mahood's judgment (p. 63) that Calyphas is the only son who shares Tamburlaine's "vitality" and that his death is "ironic".

²⁰ Eugene Waith has observed that such a distribution of booty is at once a scene of colorful theatre and also "a burlesque rape of the Sabine Women"; Waith tempers some of the enthusiasm of his book and sees Marlowe in Part II as "undercutting Tamburlaine's Herculean nobility", in a later article, "Marlowe and the Jades of Asia", SEL, V (1965), 232.

our full sympathy for this victim of Tamburlaine's conquests.

However, along with these parallels that Leech has noted, we must also recognize that Marlowe imparts a glory to Tamburlaine in Part II that militates against this morally right "unwinding" of the tragic spring. Despite the plans of Orcanes and Sigismund, the vengeance pursued by Callapine and the normal physiological weakening of age, Tamburlaine overcomes external and internal forces against him, and succeeds with more conquests. Even at the time of his killing of Calyphas, Tamburlaine emerges in spite of his monstrous deed as the one center of determined action; when he appears with his two blustery, eager-to-please successors, Amyras and Celebinus, and his one cowardly son, Calyphas, Tamburlaine is a singular yet alienated figure on stage. Towering over his sons, he is both a super-warrior and an irreplaceable force. Furthermore, despite the unheroic display he presents at the time of Zenocrate's death when he is "raving, impatient, desperate and mad" (2.4.112), and also despite his vainglorious desires to have "all the gods stand gazing at his pomp" (4.4.129), Tamburlaine emerges not simply as a theatrical and vain despot, but as a cosmic power to be reckoned with. His captains foretell that Tamburlaine's death will signal a universal inversion when "earth droops and says that heaven in hell is placed" (5:3.16). Their leader meets his death with the strategy of the undaunted soldier:

Techelles, let us march
And weary Death with bearing souls to hell (5.3.76-7).

His final address to Amyras is shot through with omens that forebode the incapacities of his successor whose chariot is like Phaeton's (5.3.231) and who is warned "like Hippolytus" (5.3.240). But what remains outstanding in its positiveness is Tamburlaine's statement of his own singularity:

The nature of thy chariot will not bear
A guide of baser temper than myself (5.3.242-3).

He realizes that his own grandeur is passing and will never be replaced, but he would like still to guide his sons as much as possible. Even with the imminence of death before him, Tamburlaine is indefatigable.

Yet Tamburlaine dies despite his claim that "sickness and death can never conquer [him]" (5.1.220). But as he is dying, he attributes no supremacy to divine powers for having brought about his fall. He dies anticipating re-union with Zenocrate, delivering final orders to his sons, and realizing that "the scourge of God must die" (5.3.248). His approach to death is clearly unlike that of Sigismund, the Catholic King of Hungary who interprets his death as God's "thundered vengeance . . . for his accursed and hateful perjury" (2.3.3-4). Sigismund's realization of divine justification by works would have been understood by Marlowe's audience as the

orthodox Catholic view.²¹ But Tamburlaine makes no concession to either Protestant or Catholic views; he dies amorally.

Marlowe's manipulation, inversion, and re-casting of morality techniques have resulted in a portrait of man that lies beyond morality. By manipulating audience reaction, he has invited us to accept this scintillating figure who, under ordinary circumstances, would be condemnable. By reversing our expectations about a dastardly end for such an ambitious conqueror, Marlowe has fashioned a unique protagonist. By placing Tamburlaine's confrontations within morality structures, he has shown how different the outcome is between a spiritual and a worldly debate. By assigning Tamburlaine no orthodox creed, and, in contrast, by discrediting the hypocrisy of his one Catholic opponent, Marlowe consciously places Tamburlaine beyond the ken of the morality. His impact is not morally "ambiguous" it is amoral; Marlowe is neither "condemning" Tamburlaine, nor making "a grandly moral spectacle in ten acts".²² Rather, I think

²¹As Rainer Pineas has demonstrated, the Catholic justification by works and the Protestant justification by faith were one of the points of difference between the philosophies of pre-and post-Reformation moralities. In view of Sigismund's hypocrisy, we might see his justification as part of the post-Reformation current of Catholic parody. In any event, Tamburlaine's complete lack of justification lends support to his unfeigned amorality.

²²Bevington claims that ambiguity is Tamburlaine's impact, p. 215; Mahood tries to prove Marlowe's condemnation of Tamburlaine, p. 58; Battenhouse staunchly supports the play's moral significance, p. 258.

he is presenting a sketch of glorious humanity, with glory that verges on idolatry and humanity that, with all its potential, must submit to limits.

The Jew of Malta

Harry Levin has written of this play with the fitting title of "More of the Serpent".²³ Although it does show evidence of several morality techniques, the juxtaposition of these features with the wholly material plotting and setting that they depict points out the incongruity. While Marlowe calls on our moral judgments to condemn the protagonist, he also makes the judging figures in the play seem as culpable as the man they condemn. The result is that our moral judgments are stranded, unattached to any character, and whispered only to ourselves. It seems to me that Marlowe's play is much like Wager's Enough is as Good as a Feast in one respect: they both employ a bifurcation of protagonists. But with Wager, there was the virtuous foil of Heavenly Man to oppose the degenerate Worldly Man; with Marlowe in The Jew of Malta, however, there is only the difference between Jewish Worldly Man and Christian Worldly Men. While the effect of Marlowe's inversions and manipulations in Tamburlaine was to lead us beyond the moral level, he now returns us to morality with a thud through the shocking perversions of Christian dogma that are the norm on the Christian Island of Malta.

²³Harry Levin, The Overreacher (Boston, 1952), pp. 56-80.

A brief look at some of the play's morality features will demonstrate the incongruity between device and effect. Machiavel's Prologue may be a conventional introduction of an unrepenting protagonist, but Marlowe insures that the presence of this archetypal schemer is much more upsetting. Machiavel's innuendoes, directed at his audience of cautious lovers (1.6), and his total discounting of religion as "but a childish toy" (1.14) are all to be expected as part of the tenets of popularized Machiavellianism. However, the proud and seemingly ridiculous request with which he concludes is unnerving:

I crave but this: grace him as he deserves,
And let him not be entertained the worse
Because he favors me (11.33-35).

Thanks to this audacious Machiavel, we cannot simply damn Barabas as a villain, but rather, we are asked to suspend our judgment.

Bearing the name of one who is the antithesis of the way of Christ, Barabas seems to be a ready-made parallel with the morality vice. But several factors operate against this facile connection.

Unlike the morality vice, he does not contemplate his victims' spiritual ruin, but is only concerned with their material bankruptcy.²⁴ In fact, the formation of his first plan for robbery seems to be only an appropriate and, curiously, just response to Ferneze's treatment. To the Governor, Barabas is an unchristened man, afflicted with an

²⁴ Cole points out this difference, p. 140.

"inherent sin" (1.2.110), and yet useful because of his riches. In this light, Barabas' "theft" strangely elicits our support and we echo most of his sentiments:

Tush, take not from me then,
For that is theft. And if you rob me thus
I must be forced to steal and compass more (1.2.126-28).

Once he has our sympathies, though, he delights in losing them by promising to "compass more", that is, to go beyond equalization and to enjoy his vengeance. Another factor that operates against categorizing him as a vice is the degree of psychological complexity with which Marlowe has endowed him. Despite his fierce enjoyment in torturing others (or perhaps because of it), Barabas seems to me a quixotic and essentially melancholic character. At one moment he can sigh about the tedium of counting "this trash" (1.1.7), and at the next, he can gloat over his "infinite riches in a little room" (1.1.37). He is both incapable of loving and prizing his daughter and in need of Ithamore's fatal support. His motto, "Ego mihimet sum semper proximus" (1.1.187), offers the best crystallization of the mind of the self-sufficient vice and of the sympathy-evoking Jew.²⁵

Following the pattern of sin as kinesis and virtue as stasis that was noticeable in Mankind, Barabas is the active plotter and

²⁵Eric Rothstein traces the motto to Terence as his example of "pessimus hominum genus", in the article, "Structure as Meaning in The Jew of Malta", JEGP, LXXV (1966), 266.

Ferneze his victim, who is perhaps impotent rather than static.

Each of Ferneze's assertions of power is overcome with a triumph of Barabas' villainy.²⁶ For example, his decision to abandon the league (2.2) is followed by the death of his son (3.2), and his promise to find the instigator of the plot (3.2) is followed by Barabas' heathen victory in poisoning the nuns (3.4). Barabas' sinning is kinetic and remarkably successful, while the hypocrisy of Ferneze and the other justice figures only becomes as kinetic and successful at the end. Virtue is static and untriumphant; the virtuous and innocent Abigail is not only static but also quickly eliminated by her pragmatic and kinetic father. Malta, as Marlowe presents it, is a paradise for the active and experienced plotter, but a wasteland for the morally conscious neophyte.

The exemplars of Christian morality whom we would normally trust, the members of religious orders, are submitted either to grotesque parody or to unanswered sexual innuendoes. The Friars, for instance, are diseased specimens of religious who lament more the passing of Abigail as a virgin than as a tormented soul (3.6.40). Friars Barnardine and Jocomo debase themselves and the vocations they represent by fighting with one another over the silly issue of

²⁶ Rothstein outlines this pattern of ironic crippling of Christianity, pp. 270-72.

convincing the Jew that one's rule is less rigorous than the other (4.1.78-104), and hence that it would be more acceptable to him as a supposed catechumen. What they are displaying for Barabas and for us is the un-monastic extremity of greed. By falling prey to his talk of riches, the Friars are pathetic examples, in Barabas' own words, of "mere frailty" (4.1.100). Although they are allowed no reply to the contrary, the nuns are submitted to vulgar sexual imprecations. Examples range from Ithamore's rhetorical question, "Have not the nuns fine sport with the Friars now and then?" (3.3.32-3), to Barabas' wry comment about the effect of the nuns' deaths on the monks:

Thou shalt not need, for now the nuns are dead,
They'll die with grief (4.1.14-5).

While such remarks could be expected from vice figures in the moralities and would be indicative of their vicious disregard for Christian norms, the actions of the Friars and of Ferneze actually support the comments of Barabas and Ithamore about the Christian way of life on the island of Malta.

Bevington has illustrated that numbers of characters have served as important emblems in the moralities; three could imply a trinity and two could represent complements or antitheses. In Tamburlaine, there was the continued appearance of groups of three, with three captains, three sons and three physicians for Zenocrate; these groups were both evidence of morality casting

techniques and constant reminders of a trinity. In The Jew of Malta,²⁷ the trinity of "me, my daughter and my wealth" (1.1.151) is quickly reduced to its lowest common factor, Barabas' egotism. In addition, it is the questionable "trinity" of Ferneze, Calymath and del Bosco that oversees Barabas stewing in the cauldron. Pairs are part of the play's pattern of victimization and treachery. Barabas delights in dispatching Mathias and Lodowick and the two friars with the forceful regularity of suppressed characters in homiletic drama, while Pilia-Borza and Bellamira along with Barabas and Ithamore represent the pairs of scheming victimizers.

As initiated by the morality feature of the Prologue, the basic tension between outright condemnation and suspended judgment permeates the play. Unlike Wager's Enough is as Good as a Feast, The Jew of Malta is not a completed morality that uses a negative example for its didacticism. It remains an unresolved debate between Jewishness and Justice. I propose now to look at both sides of this debate that contribute to the distortions Marlowe intended.

The name, Barabas, that Marlowe accords to this Jewish

²⁷ Bevington's discussion of The Jew of Malta (pp. 219-33) emphasizes the following points: the importance of casting pairs for both victims of and partners in crime, the co-existence of elements of homiletic farce progressing to a "tragic" end for the unrepentant protagonist with elements of a psychological treatise depicting a persecuted Maltese Jew, and the neurotic delight that Barabas, as a super-vice figure, takes in the cleverness of his acts of cruelty.

protagonist seems to be a glaring indictment. According to Ambrose, the etymology of "Barabbas" is "filius patris". But, as G. K. Hunter warns, this "son of the father" should be interpreted in the light of John, 8:44:

Christ says to the Jews, 'ye are of your father the Devil', and so Barabbas is to be interpreted as "Antichristi typus".²⁸

Hunter also mentions the popularity of treatises adversus Judaeos in Elizabethan England. In terms of theatrical precedents, there are two noteworthy stage Jews. In the Croxton Play of the Sacrament,²⁹ there is the Jewish merchant, Jonathas, who commits sacrilege upon the host, loses his hand in a fiery cauldron, and finally repents. Closer to Marlowe's time, in Wilson's morality, The Three Ladies of London (1582), the Jewish merchant, Gerontus, refuses to allow his Christian debtor, Mercadore, to renounce his faith in order to pay his debt, and hence is gulled by Mercadore's plot. The Judge's comment, "Jews seek to excel in Christianity and Christians in

²⁸Hunter explains the Ambrosian etymology in his article, "The Theology of Marlowe's The Jew of Malta", Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes, XXVII (1964), 214.

²⁹Hardin Craig outlines this miracle play as an example of "perennial, medieval anti-Semitism", in English Religious Drama of the Middle Ages, pp. 324-26.

Jewishness",³⁰ applies as much to the actions of Marlowe's characters as it does to those of Wilson's play. Marlowe's Jew is a bottle-nosed knave, an avowed Christian hater, who is also an able match for their sophistries:

It is no sin to deceive a Christian
For they themselves hold it a principle
Faith is not to be held with heretics (2.3.306-8).

However, not only the Christians are to be mistrusted on Malta. Even his partner in crime, Ithamore, tries to deceive him by deciding that "to undo a Jew is charity, and not sin" (4.6.76). Hence, Marlowe's Jew is at once a stage archetype and victim.

A revealing index of the implications of the "justice" of this play is provided in the opinions of the critics on Barabas, Ferneze and Malta itself. Bevington characterizes Barabas as a "world hater", comparable to Worldly Man; yet, for Steane, Barabas is alternately a "good devil", a "Wall-Street tycoon" and "an Entertainer", while for Alfred Harbage, he is even an innocent, overly maligned protagonist.³¹ Although general critical opinion damns Ferneze, Harbage takes a parthian shot at his popularity,

³⁰W. Carew Hazlitt, editor, A Select Collection of Old English Plays (New York, 1964), Vol. VI, p. 357.

³¹Bevington, p. 225; Steane, pp. 175, 178, 184; good-humored iconoclasm sparkles in Harbage's article, "Innocent Barabas", TDR, VIII (1964), 27-58.

implying that he disturbs much less than we would like to think:

Ferneze would have been greeted by an Elizabethan audience with warm moral approval In a society like London's where men had recently been burned for being the wrong kind of Christians, no one would have been shocked by a society like Malta's where men were fined for being Jews.³²

While Hunter sees Malta as the opposite of our expectations about the celebrated Knights Hospitaler of Saint John of Jerusalem, Steane compares Malta's morality to that of Al Capone's Chicago and.

Harbage rejects both views by terming it "unshocking" to any Elizabethan Londoner.³³ These judgments themselves mirror the debate engendered and purposefully left unresolved by Marlowe.

Through such a debate, Marlowe is highlighting his protagonist. Although his professed creed differs from Christianity, Barabas is neither a recognizably orthodox Jew nor a militant anti-Christian, but a self-styled perverter of religions. Marlowe makes him a man devoted not so much to inversions as to perversions, that is, to conscious abuse and deliberate contortions, of moral or spiritual norms. He is an obstinately materialistic Job (1.2.182-99) who abuses the image of the figure of righteous suffering to evoke our sympathy for "forlorn Barabas" (1.193) and yet also, to alienate us by using the faulty comparison that as a richer man than Job, he

³²Harbage, p. 52.

³³Hunter, p. 229; Steane, p. 169; Harbage, p. 52.

suffers more too. With similar perversity, he patterns his use of Abigail on Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac (2.1.12-14), but the difference is great between Abraham's obedience to the law of God and Barabas' selfish use of offspring to further private vengeance. Like the derivation of "Barabbas", the Hebrew etymology of "Abigail" meaning "a father's joy" needs to be considered in the context of the play's perversions. Unlike her biblical namesake who stole goods from the wicked for David (I Samuel, 25:14-31), Abigail is her father's joy only when she deceives to advance his wickedness. In direct contrast to the benefit that Abigail afforded David by her honesty about Nabal, that is, in relieving David of bloodguilt, Abigail is instructed by her father to "be cunning" (1.2.298), to "dissemble" (1.290) and "to make bar of no policy" (1.273). When Abigail is no longer useful, but because of her conversion, odious, Barabas visits upon her a bitter curse, "like Cain by Adam, for his brother's death" (3.4.30). But Adam does not curse his son, and God allows Cain mercy (Genesis, 4:9-15). James Sims comments on what Barabas has twisted and accomplished:

Barabas, by perverting a story of God's mercy even in judgment to a story of a father's vengeful curse, shows the way by which he can later feel justified in having murdered Abigail and the other nuns.³⁴

³⁴Sims describes the Abraham and Adam perversions in his monograph, "Dramatic Uses of Biblical Allusions in Marlowe and Shakespeare", University of Florida Monograph (Gainesville, 1966), pp. 15-28.

Barabas revels in debasing Scriptures as pious stupidity. He scorns the balance of wisdom and innocence, enjoined in Matthew, 10:16, in favour of showing himself "to have more of the serpent than the dove; that is, more knave than fool" (2.3.36-7). Barabas' pronouncement about "infinite riches in a little room" could have provided some members of Marlowe's audience with a jolting echo of a commonly used prayer addressed to Mary as she carried the child in her womb.³⁵ For other members, the whole opening picture could seem a direct inversion of the view of riches advanced in Proverbs, 8, where the wisdom of the Lord is prized above gold and the endearing wealth of friendship is an invaluable treasure.

Marlowe also employs several tantalizing biblical parallels either to elevate or to damn Barabas. When Ferneze approaches Barabas to claim his money, the Governor's proposition that it is "better one want for a common good / Than many perish for a private man" (1.2.99-100) echoes the philosophy of Caiphas in John, 11:50.

Barabas' pious defense,

The man that dealeth righteously shall live
And which of you can charge me otherwise? (1.2.117-8),

seems to be a re-stating of God's own position in John, 8:46.

However, Barabas is not paralleled as favorably when Ithamore

³⁵ Hunter notes the contrast with Elizabethan prayers, pp. 222-23.

promises to follow and obey him in this reckless assertion:

. . . Why I'll run to some rock,
And throw myself headlong into the sea
Why I'll do anything for your sweet sake (3. 4. 36-38).

His promised path is like the direction the demons take when exorcized from Legion in Matthew, 8:28, Mark, 5:8-13 and Luke, 8:27.³⁶ The implications are doubly damning for Barabas who, in this analogy, becomes either the instigator of the demons, Satan himself, or their exorcizer, Christ, who terrified the countryfolk by his actions and was asked to leave in Matthew, 8:34, Mark, 5:17 and Luke, 8:37.

Although Marlowe engages our moral judgments in The Jew of Malta, his dramatic realization causes us to question the sufficiency of our response. While the moralities usually offered the pronouncements of some exemplar of public morality, such as the remarks of the Doctor in Everyman or the comment of the Judge in The Three Ladies of London, Marlowe offers us only Barabas' schemes and perversions. He is our indicator of the morality of Malta both when he silences his virtuous daughter and when he falls into the trap of Ferneze whose unctuous desire fittingly closes the play:

So, march away, and let due praise be given
Neither to fate, nor fortune, but to heaven (5. 5. 123-4).

³⁶ Cole makes the parallel between Ithamore and the demons, p. 141, but yet, makes no connections with or judgments on Barabas as Ithamore's "master".

Despite its worldly snares and material preoccupations, Malta has not been a typical morality setting, for Marlowe has neither shown us a virtuous person who endures nor presented a religious or public institution for us to look up to. As a morality background, Malta has been a wasteland. Marlowe's protagonist does not meet the morality requirements of a teacher-by-negative-example, either. His remarks are not simply the opposite of positive; they can range from perceptive observations like, "religion / Hides many mischiefs from suspicion" (1.2.282-3), to wilful perversions of the suffering of Job, and even to blind charges against his daughter as a Maltese version of Lucrezia Borgia and a damnable "fiend" (3.4.92-101). However, despite these varying perceptions, Barabas also functions positively in the role of the exposé of Christian hypocrisy, as Rothstein and Cole have characterized him. But their criticisms limit Barabas to this role in the same way that Spivack tries to contain him within the category of a homiletic vice.³⁷ Such role assignments seem insufficient because Barabas breaks away from the confines of these morality functions. As a psychologically complex character, he is hardly the "senseless lump of clay" (1.2.217) that Ferneze thinks he can mould. He is a neurotic vice who amasses "infinite riches" yet calls his wealth "trash", who

³⁷ Rothstein, p. 267; Cole, p. 123; Spivack, p. 351.

spurns his own loving daughter in favour of a deceitful rogue and who values religion only as "a counterfeit profession" (1.2.291), yet falls prey to Christian treachery. His final words are a revealing compendium of the impressions of an eternal plotter, a sympathy-arousing victim and vituperative opponent with which we are left:

I would have brought confusion on you all,
 Damned Christians, dogs, and Turkish infidels!
 But now begins the extremity of heat
 To pinch me with intolerable pangs.
 Die, life! Fly, soul! Tongue, curse thy fill, and die!
 (5.5.85-89)

Edward the Second

Molly Mahood has written of Edward the Second as a play of "realization"; Edward realizes "that natural man, for all his skill and strength, is the plaything of natural forces and victim of necessity".³⁸ However, Marlowe has allowed his characters little skill or strength, and has stressed, as I see it, the victimization of naturally weak man. While the morality features of The Jew of Malta highlighted the immorality of its protagonist and the immorality of his world, the emphasis on these features in Edward the Second is less for shock value and more for evoking pathos. In this play, the morality features provide the frame that encloses a display of human weakness on one hand, and human treachery on the other, both extremes which lead to a trapping of their representatives.

³⁸Mahood, p. 84.

I propose to review the morality features of the play to clarify its theme of weakness leading to ensnarement.

Unlike most moralities and unlike the other three plays by Marlowe being considered, Edward the Second does not begin with a prologue. Instead, the spotlight is awarded to the figure who is at the center of Edward's weakness, Gaveston. From the outset, Gaveston appears proud, if not haughty, over his position of favour with the king as he muses:

What greater bliss can hap to Gaveston
Than live and be the favorite of a king? (1. 1. 4-5)

After this opening address, Marlowe loses no time in inviting us to castigate Edward's favorite. He places Gaveston in the role of Dives who shuns the begging poor; it seems indicative of Gaveston's narcissism that he actually chooses one of the beggars, the traveler, to be his waiting man. The newly-hired man's duties are revealing of his master's needs:

To wait at my trencher and tell me lies at dinner time
And as I like your discoursing, I'll have you (1. 1. 31-2).

By having no prologue introduce his views of Edward's reign, Marlowe has effectively discredited Edward's tastes from the beginning. The action of the play will unfold the pernicious influence that Gaveston's "love" has on the king.

As another difference from the moralities, the play has no epilogue. But, just as he has provided a form of prologue

appropriate for the display of weakness to follow, Marlow also provides a suitable commentary on this display in the words of the new king, Edward III. Unlike the remarks of Ferneze which throw the "justice" of the last scene of The Jew of Malta into a distorted perspective, Edward's final speech is an attempt to return to order when he presents the head of Mortimer as a just revenge for this "traitor's" regicide:

Sweet father, here unto thy murdered ghost
I offer up this wicked traitor's head (5.6.99-100).

But, despite the differences in intention, the words of Ferneze and of Edward III have a similar effect -- they point up the disparity between the scene and the commentary on it. Through the presence of the bloodied head of Mortimer and the hearse of the murdered king, the final scene provides a visual emblem of destruction that contrasts with the words of "grief and innocence" (5.6.102). John R. Brown has described its importance for the theatre:

Against an inescapable visual presentation of treachery,
pain and loss, a clear voice alone affirms an
affectionate loyalty.³⁹

Just as Edward has passed his reign as the weak and outnumbered

³⁹Brown's comment is part of his argument for Marlowe's skill in the theatre, in the article, "Marlowe and the Actors", TDR, VIII (1964), 165.

Because I think Marlowe is consciously highlighting the disparity between the visual and the aural in the last scene, I find it difficult to agree with Margeson that the ending represents "a return to order" that throws "the whole of the preceding action into relief",

man at court, his successor begins his reign, in Brown's terms, as "a clear voice alone"; how enduring the clarity of this voice will be remains a moot issue.

Using the same device as The Psychomachia, Marlowe constructs Edward the Second with a series of epic confrontations, in this situation, between king and subject. While in Prudentius' contests, the virtues were able to score decisive victories over the vices, in Marlowe's confrontations, the king is always at a disadvantage in dealing with his subjects. For instance, when the Mortimers seize "that traitor Gaveston" (1.4.21), in the presence of the king, Edward's first reaction is not kingly outrage at such an attempted seizure, but rather interest for his minion:

Whither will ye bear him? Stay or ye shall die (1.24).

The command is only secondary to his concern over losing his companion, and hence lacks the vigour ⁴⁰ of a justly enraged monarch.

⁴⁰As different as it is from Marlowe's play in all respects except the title, Brecht's Edward II presents a monarch who, in this situation, shouts down his nobles with the indignant protest, "Never, never, never!". Unlike Marlowe's pusillanimous Edward, Brecht's figure remains intransigent, with his "lips stitched" against uttering words of abdication. In contrast to the subtle viciousness of Marlowe's Gaveston, however, Brecht offers a rather pathetic picture of Gaveston as a fat, easily-led "friend" who is more stupid than

p. 125; on the contrary, Brown's comment about this final theatrical imbalance seems more appropriate for Marlowe's purpose in depicting pathetic human weakness.

Edward has even to rely on a cue from Gaveston, "Were I a king-"

(1.27), before he sputters another reply to his subjects:

Were he a peasant, being my minion,
I'll make the proudest of you stoop to him (11.30-1).

Such a grandiose but tardy promise seems now only vapid. Edward confirms this opinion when he resigns completely and can see no cause for continuing without Gaveston:

Nay, then lay violent hands upon your king.
Here, Mortimer, sit thou in Edward's throne.
Warwick and Lancaster, wear you my crown.
Was ever king thus over-ruled as I? (11.35-8).

His resignation does not shock these determined subjects into penitence, and indeed, it does not even evoke our sympathy. Unlike the resounding defeat of Idolatry by Faith (11.20-40) with which Prudentius accustoms us to the victorious strength of the virtues, this pusillanimous retreat by Edward who has been denied his pleasure is a beginning indicative of the weakness that Marlowe is putting on display.

vicious.

The main explanation of such contrasts, of course, lies in the different intentions of each playwright -- Marlowe deftly exposes weakness, while Brecht upholds a figure who finds the courage to say no. Because it is so much more poetic and emblematic than Brecht's sturdy, muscular adaptation, Marlowe's play continues to fascinate me in a way that I find lacking in his adapter's machine-gun approach to dialogue. Although Brecht's play is indeed more vigorous and vulgar than Marlowe's, I think it is unwise to grant Eric Bentley his view that "Brecht's is a better play", "Introduction", Edward II, A Chronicle Play by Bertolt Brecht (New York, 1966), p. xii.

As later meetings between king and subjects confirm, Edward is swayed by favorable words. In the very same scene as he thinks he has lost Gaveston, for example, on hearing one word about him, that he shall be "repealed" (1.4.321), Edward unleashes a torrent of happy promises for the same people to whom he had capitulated. So relieved is he, and so oblivious of his previous, knee-bending resignation to these subjects that he embraces "courageous Lancaster" (1.339) as his "companion" (1.342), makes Warwick his "chiefest counselor" (1.344), elevates Young Mortimer to "Lord Marshal of the realm" (1.355) and rewards Lord Mortimer as "general of the levied troops" (1.361). By paralleling Edward's diverse reactions, Marlowe is employing this symmetry to underline that these are not the carefully considered awards of a thoughtful king, but only the rash and garrulous outpourings of relieved tension from a now-contented pleasure seeker. Just as he is susceptible to his subjects' machinations about Gaveston, Edward is an equally easy prey for their flattery about himself. In answer to the Spencers' sycophantic assurances of everlasting loyalty before Edward's "princely feet" (3.2.45), the king showers on Young Spencer the title of Earl of Wiltshire (1.49) along with the promise of arms and money to combat the Mortimers. Edward emerges not as a king, but as the slave of his subjects' schemes.

The pronouncements of the virtues in the confrontations of

Prudentius' poem, like the addresses of Mercy in Mankind, rang with an authority and knowledge that caused them to be remarked. However, the empty rant in which Edward engages, only serves to re-define his inabilities. While Sobriety inveighs against Sensuality in attempting to bring the sin to penitence (11.407-53), Edward directs this fierce invective against the murderers of Gaveston:

Treacherous Warwick! Traitorous Mortimer!
If I be England's king, in lakes of gore
Your headless trunks, your bodies will I trail,
That you may drink your fill, and quaff in blood (3.2.134-7).

But in contrast to the laudable purpose of Sobriety, Edward is devoting his "bloody colours" (1.139) to elevate his minion whom he considers to have been a martyr, when actually, Gaveston himself had counseled silencing "privily" (2.2.234) the disturbing Mortimers. The different results of these two kinds of pronouncements reveal the gulf between moral strength and human puniness. When Sobriety attacks Sensuality with the crucifix, the "holy wood" (1.421) is able to reduce the vice to a mangled ruin because the metaphor has power for Prudentius; Edward, however, indulges in the "poor revenge" (5.2.141) of tearing up his death warrant signed by Mortimer and hoping thus to destroy his opponent:

By Mortimer, whose name is written here,
Well may I rend his name that rends my heart (5.2.139-40).

The emphasis here, unlike that in The Psychomachia, is on the expanse between words and actions.

As the agents for advancing the plot that they had been in the moralities, the vices are just as active in Marlowe's play. While a bifurcation of protagonists occurs in The Jew of Malta, it seems to me that a bifurcation of vice figures is in operation in Edward the Second. On the one hand, there is the criminal ambition of Mortimer Junior who avows:

. . . whiles I have a sword, a hand, a heart,
I will not yield to any such upstart (1.4.421-2).

Bevington argues that, as an obvious vice figure, Mortimer undergoes no character development, but only reveals more of his deep-seated treachery.⁴¹ While it is true that Marlowe exposes his designs with none of the mitigating or audience-appealing circumstances of Tamburlaine's ambition, he does allow this obvious vice figure an attempt at audience fascination in his approach to death:

. . . weep not for Mortimer
That scorns the world, and, as a traveler,
Goes to discover countries yet unknown (5.6.64-6).

But unlike Tamburlaine in his final address, Mortimer has admitted that he has found "no place to mount up higher" (1.62); furthermore,

⁴¹ Along with this point, Bevington (pp. 235-44) stresses two other analogies with the morality in Edward the Second: first, that Edward is like Christian Faith in The Tyde Taryeth no Man and second, that pronounced casting suppression allows for only four central characters, Edward, Mortimer, Isabella and Kent, while all the others exist, in morality fashion, chiefly to highlight a particular phase in the career of the protagonist.

it is impossible for us to forget that he has hired Lightborn and that we have just witnessed this assassin's cruelty. Despite his attempt at a brilliant exit, Mortimer leaves us only with an impression of his scorn for the world. On the other hand, the second kind of vice is represented in Gaveston who is the surreptitious and subtle foil for Mortimer's overt villainies. In contrast to his kingly "companion", Gaveston exerts a knowing control over situations. For instance, following Edward's fierce anti-papal shouting in which he has vowed to "fire the crazed buildings and enforce / The papal towers to kiss the lowly ground" (1.4.100-01), Gaveston makes a quiet entry and mentions hearing it "whispered" (1.106) everywhere about his banishment. The perniciousness of his influence is evident in the discreetly chosen words of his unobtrusive entrance. He allows Edward to continue his lament, to make promises of gold and to talk of his complete dependence on Gaveston with such expressions as, "Thou from this land, I from myself am banished" (1.118) and "Happy were I, but now most miserable" (1.129). He remains aloof and in control. When he does speak, his remarks can be as evilly perceptive as his comment about Edward's distress, "'Tis something to be pitied of a king" (1.130), and as purposefully incomplete as his innuendo about Mortimer and Isabella, "I say no more; judge you the rest, my lord" (1.147). In reference to Gaveston's control of and "seeming indifference to the destitution he sees around

him",⁴² Michel Poirier has posited a perverse analogy between this serpentine vice and Marlowe himself. Such an analogy does not seem tenable to me because Marlowe has appeared fully aware of Gaveston's malicious influence from the outset; by letting him perform as the surrogate announcer of the prologue and by awarding him the end he meets at the hands of the "treacherous" (3.1.15) earls, Marlowe does not glorify or preach about Gaveston. Rather, he lets his dramatization serve the purpose of exposing a vice.

As the moralities relied on visual emblems to suggest states of mind, Marlowe employs them here to personify or vivify Edward's vertiginous character and ultimate surrender. Like the iconographic figure of Time with the scythe that subdues all,⁴³ the Mower with his welsh hook reveals Edward's refuge to his pursuers (4.6.46). Just as he has attempted to hide his inabilities in the guise of royal robes, Edward attempts to hide in the "feigned weeds" (4.6.96) of a monk. Appropriately enough, these "feigned weeds" of piety and isolation from the world have provided a short-lived disguise for Edward's weakness. The crown itself, symbol of authority and power, becomes

⁴²Michel Poirier, Christopher Marlowe (London, 1951), p. 39.

Since his study is devoted to presenting Marlowe as "the incarnation of the Renaissance" (p. 44), in his revolt "against morality, society and religion" (p. 41), Poirier is often led into the trap of seeing Marlowe's creations, and in particular his vices, as mirrors of their creator.

⁴³Cole mentions the iconographic significance, pp. 172-73.

only the index for judging Edward's fluctuations between resignation and intransigence. Self-pityingly he abandons his crown, crying, "Take my crown, the life of Edward too" (5.1.57), and then defiantly he proclaims, "See, monsters, see, I'll wear my crown again" (5.1.74). Edward's crown, bejewelled and golden as it is, lacks the triumphant force of the crowns of mere flowers that Prudentius shows Faith distributing to her allies after the defeat of Idolatry (11.38-9). Edward even descends to bathos when he asks that his tear-stained handkerchief be sent along with the crown to Isabella, adding,

If with the sight thereof she be not moved
Return it back and dip it in my blood (5.1.119-20).

In fact, tears are a recurring and appropriate emblem of Edward's character. Submitting to the force of his subjects, he signs Gaveston's banishment not with ink but with his tears (1.4.86).

Gaveston realizes what a potent indicator of Edward's character tears are when he observes, as much to disconcert Edward further as to evoke more pity for himself, :

For every look my lord drops down a tear
Seeing I must go, do not renew my sorrow (1.4.136-7).

Isabella's tears, however, are powerless to move her husband, since he dismisses her curtly with, "There weep" (1.4.168). It seems only fitting, therefore, that Isabella should dismiss Edward's final

tearful request⁴⁴ just as summarily.

But, despite how fitting we may think Isabella's dismissal of her inattentive husband is, Marlowe does submit this husband and king to a gruesome death. When Matrevis and Gurney torture Edward with the indignity of being washed and shaved in puddle water, Edward's inner hell has an outward demonstration. Yet Douglas Cole does not afford Edward sympathy even in this debasement because, as he argues, and I think justly, Marlowe selects only those details from the historical account that would contribute to Edward's ignominious defeat. Cole thinks that Marlowe probably viewed the inclusion of a mock-coronation of Edward with a straw crown as too sympathy-arousing a detail and hence that he chose not to use it. As part of this king's ignominy, he appears still to be blind in the midst of his torture since he offers up his suffering for the sake of pernicious sycophants:

O Gaveston, it is for thee that I am wronged;
 For me both thou and both the Spencers died,
 And for your sakes a thousand wrongs I'll take (5.3.41-3).

Cole argues that Edward's end in isolation and brooding self-pity is emblematic of his whole career as a monarch who has been

⁴⁴It impresses me as indicative of his poor inheritance that Edward III closes the play, in spite of the clarity of his words about "grief and innocency", with "tears distilling from [his] eyes" (5.6.101).

unaware of those around him.⁴⁵

Even though Mortimer is an obvious and coarsened vice figure, and Isabella, as his cohort, illustrates the moral decline of those devoted to evil, Edward II still does not become a protagonist ennobled by suffering. As Bevington has observed (p. 235), Edward in his weakness is comparable to Christian Faith in The Tyde Taryeth no Man. But the remarkable difference between these two characters is that one rises above weakness and the other is trapped by it. Christian Faith is refurbished with suitable Pauline armour, but Edward suffers execution at the hands of base subjects. Despite the "relenting mood in Edmund" (4.5.47) and this brother's return to full loyalty (5.2.120), Edward meets his death in the same way that he has encountered the court intrigues, as an outnumbered man. In attempting to win back his companion, Edward has auctioned off the whole realm to his numerous opponents so that he might be alone to "have some nook or corner left/ To frolic with his dearest Gaveston" (1.4.72-3). In order to change the papal edict,⁴⁶ he has made the

⁴⁵ Cole discusses Edward's suffering from the points of view of isolation and lack of awareness, pp. 161-87.

⁴⁶ Although Paul Kocher sees the Archbishop's threats to excommunicate Edward as a parallel to the Pope's bulls against Elizabeth and hence as Marlowe's appeal to English "hatred of Catholicism", this connection seems faulty for two reasons: first, the appeal of the Archbishop is for the benefit of the kingdom and not of Rome, and second, Elizabeth's fiery disregard of papal bulls hardly seems comparable to Edward's willingness to compromise with, or

pathetic offer of the abandonment of his power. Edward is not to be glorified in being outnumbered, but either to be castigated or pitied.

As his inept handling of confrontations has demonstrated and as the visual emblems describing his debased power have implied, Edward is a character "ensnared" in his own weakness. He has been "blocked" by his subjects, but has offered no active opposition beyond his empty rants. As "stasis replaces action", he has retreated and allowed himself to be "caught".⁴⁷ Yet he eludes our judgment as a morality protagonist because he is neither a reclaimed Everyman nor a wilfully damned Worldly Man. Marlowe has created a protagonist unknown to the moralities -- the pathetically weak man. Cole's phrase offers a fitting summation: Edward is "a king and no king".⁴⁸

Doctor Faustus

Doctor Faustus as a morality play is a much discussed issue among the critics, whose opinions range from outright denial and

⁴⁷Eugene Waith treats Edward the Second as a play of "blocking" and "stasis" that presents the theme of the "ensnarement of man", in his article, "Edward II: The Shadow of Action", TDR, VIII (1964), 59-76.

⁴⁸Cole, p. 161.

pay off, the Papacy. See Christopher Marlowe, A Study of His Thought, Learning and Character (Chapel Hill, 1946), pp. 133-4.

and assertions that it is an inverted morality, to the acceptance of it as a quasi-morality.⁴⁹ One reason for these widely differing approaches is the attempt to deal with the main problem of what precisely Marlowe's degree of attachment to his creation is. Knowing only what we have re-constructed and inferred about Marlowe's religious "atheism",⁵⁰ and trying to balance this with the moral intent of the popular legend about a man who sells his soul to the devil, we are left with a very tenuous sort of equilibrium. The critics, in general, offer two solutions to this dilemma: they interpret the play either as a conventional morality or as a mirror of Marlowe's rebellious mind. For instance, opinions can be as

⁴⁹C.L. Barber denies it is a morality in his article, "The form of Faustus' fortunes good or bad", TDR, VIII (1964), 114; Nicholas Brooke analyzes it as an inverted morality in his article, "The Moral Tragedy of Doctor Faustus", Cambridge Journal, VII (1952), 662-87; Leo Kirschbaum awards it the status of a quasi-morality in his article, "Marlowe's Faustus: A Reconsideration", RES, XIX (1943), 225-41.

⁵⁰Paul Kocher has devoted his study to such a reconstruction, through relying chiefly on the Baines Note. Although he admits that we cannot be certain of the identity of Baines since there were two historical people of that name, one a criminal and the other a quiet citizen (p. 27), he still asserts that Marlowe exemplifies the opinions of the Note by being "dogmatic and positive" (p. 11) and by writing his "polemics against Christianity" (p. 30). But despite the questionable logic of his approach, Kocher does offer enlightening views of Marlowe; his theory about Marlowe's connection to Doctor Faustus seems to me especially noteworthy. He claims that Marlowe is "bound to Christianity by the surest of chains -- hatred mingled with reluctant longing, and fascination much akin to fear" (p. 119).

Irving Ribner's approach to Marlowe's "atheism" is less "dogmatic" than Kocher's; he prefers to view him as "a skeptic and

polarized as Farnham's pronouncement, on the one hand, that it was written "to widen and extend the authority of medieval doctrine", and Ribner's claim, on the other, that it is a protest against the Christian system, "a mirror not of Christian certainty, but of agnostic intellectual confusion".⁵¹ Robert Ornstein has insisted that the play is not "a sop to Nemesis or to conventional morality", but in the same article, he has contended in favour of the play's morality features, that is, that it depicts "damnation as an earthly as well as a spiritual fact", that it shows a mind "destroying a soul" and that it concentrates on "hell as a reality".⁵² While critical opinion vacillates between accepting or rejecting these positions,⁵³ it seems that the

⁵¹Farnham, p. 403; Ribner, "Introduction", p. xxxvii.

⁵²"The Comic Synthesis of Doctor Faustus", ELH, XXII (1955), 171-2. His article is a helpful guide for tracing Faustus' descent in the process of his supposed liberation from the confines of various disciplines; in Ornstein's own terms, he describes "the ironic fate of a hero who in striving to be a god becomes less than a man", p. 170.

⁵³In a sense, the critics carry on their own Psychomachia about Doctor Faustus. See Appendix I.

a heretic", but he makes the significant distinction that it "remains to be demonstrated that he was an atheist in any modern sense", "Introduction", p. xviii.

views of Faustus as a morality figure and of Faustus as a mirror of Marlowe are rarely allowed to co-exist. I hope to demonstrate that these views do inter-relate. In addition, I hope to present Doctor Faustus in a line of connection with the three plays previously considered and not as an absolute volte-face. The play's overriding concern with a single protagonist is a feature that unites it with the others. Like Tamburlaine, Faustus has an "aspiring" mind; like Barabas, he is capable of re-arranging values to suit his purpose; and like Edward, he becomes a victim of himself as he faces, not the political conflicts of Edward, but the spiritual conflict within his own soul. I hope to suggest how the concerns of the Cambridge scholar and of the morality playwright can complement one another and effect a disturbing balance between theology and individualism.

In the purely general terms of the morality that Mackenzie defined, Doctor Faustus presents a mortal creature who looks upon his salvation in a way very unlike the heroes of the moralities. Having decided that "we must sin" (1. 1. 45),⁵⁴ Faustus discounts Death and

⁵⁴Gerald Morgan calls Faustus' conclusion a "mocking non sequitur", in his article, "Harlequin Faustus: Marlowe's Comedy of Hell", Humanities Association Bulletin, XVIII (1967), 31.

By drawing analogies between Marlowe's play and two other works, Erasmus' Praise of Folly and Thomas Mann's Doctor Faustus, he presents Marlowe as a compounder of ambiguities. As one of his examples, he cites Faustus' Vulgate quotations which precede this conclusion and which may lead us to "think that a greater than Abelard (with his Sic et Non) holds the stage". However, due to his faulty logic and invalid conclusion that forms his own brand of "subtle syllogisms" (1. 1. 113), Faustus only presents "such a prose burlesque of reason as would flunk a Freshman whatever his 'suppositions' (II, ii, 54)".

the Judgment of God, the very crises that had provided the points of recognition for Everyman and Humanum Genus. Even though several commentators draw an analogy between Faustus and Everyman, this connection is only nugatory and, under examination, becomes untenable. Although Bevington asserts⁵⁵ that "Faustus as Everyman ought to be saved, even in his final hour", he recognizes the difference between these two protagonists when he continues, "Yet as a specific person, he is damned". David Kaula has devoted a complete article⁵⁶ to tracing the contrasts between Everyman and Faustus. In the close parallels of his argument, he interprets Everyman as a pure morality and Doctor Faustus as "an impure hybrid play". While the Everyman playwright gives his character no social or political identity but stresses the importance of his soul, Marlowe

⁵⁵Bevington, p. 261.

To prove his point that Doctor Faustus is Marlowe's "master-piece in the moral tradition" (p. 245), Bevington reviews (pp. 252-61) the play's salient morality features: an established pattern of alternation between edification and amusement, the Seven Deadly Sins as portraits of the wages of evil, linear episodes and homiletic characters, such as the Scholars and the Old Man, which make it a dramatic Psychomachia, the central importance of the spiritual life and of the issue of salvation, and a universal application. In spite of these features, however, he concludes that Doctor Faustus dramatizes the "dichotomy between the Christian ideal and the secular reality".

⁵⁶"Time and Timeless in Everyman and Doctor Faustus", College English, XXII (1960), 9-14.

Bevington's conclusion is really an echo of Kaula's thesis, "that Everyman, the representative individual, is saved, and Faustus, the exceptional individualist, is damned", p. 10. Kaula clarifies his thesis by outlining the differences in protagonists and in concepts of time between the two plays.

creates a "more equal emphasis" between the soul and the individual and allows his play "to develop a growing tension between them". The morality is "essentially reassuring" since "its purpose is not to terrify but to edify"; however, the hybrid is less positive:

Marlowe's play seems at once more primitive and more sophisticated than Everyman: more primitive in that it reflects that original fear of darkness and chaos which is at the core of the tragic experience; more sophisticated in that it sees the exceptionally gifted individual, the man who believes he has mastered all the known fields of human learning, as precisely the one who is most lacking in genuine self-knowledge, the most vulnerable to illicit temptation (p. 11).

I propose to expand on Kaula and Bevington's point about the tension that Marlowe creates between the two aspects of his hero -- as an individual with a social identity and as the universal soul of the moralities. Marlowe's play dramatizes the tension between these two aspects because he does not exculpate one at the expense of the other. While he creates a character who openly denies the salvation promised in Scriptures, Marlowe also allows him to question the rightness of the morality which judges him. He seems to me to impute blame to both sides, to Faustus for his shameless sophistries and self-debasement and to the restricting or ambiguous aspects of the Christian system that Faustus flaunts. The result is an unresolved tension between the values of his protagonist and the values of his mode of presentation. By examining some of the morality features of Doctor Faustus, I hope to clarify this tension.

The prologue seems to be a conventional introduction to human failure since it promises us the sight of a once-brilliant scholar⁵⁷ who has now fallen "to a devilish exercise" (1.23). However, while Faustus' guilt is undeniable, especially when Marlowe describes him with epithets like "glutted" (1.24)⁵⁸ and verbs like "surfeits" (1.25), there is also a hint of insensitive righteousness that Marlowe attributes to his protagonist's judges. The inimical heavens, which plan to melt the waxen wings of Icarian Faustus, have "conspired his overthrow" (1.22). Thus the tension between condemnation and support begins as we witness aspiring but damnable man, pitted against his terribly righteous judges.

The debate of the Good and Bad Angels, a device first noticed in The Castle of Perseverance, also appears in Doctor Faustus. As we have come to expect, their debate dramatizes the inner conflict of the protagonist, and his soul becomes the stage in true psychomachic form. Faustus emerges as responsible for the decisions that he

⁵⁷However, Gerald Morgan sees "ambiguity" even in Faustus' biography; his being "graced with doctor's name" (117) impresses him as meaning "either that Faustus is brilliant, or that doctors of divinity are soon made". He finds more ambiguity in the allusion to Faustus' excellence (11.18-9) "which can mean either that Faustus has brilliantly advanced sacred science, or that theologians are easy game whose profits in heavenly matters consist chiefly in wrangling", p. 28.

⁵⁸Morgan comments on "glutted" as "a gorgeous litotes for the mental poverty which Faustus is presently to reveal", p. 28.

ultimately takes and his decision is, like *Humanum Genus*', part of the volume of timeless philosophy about how to meet or interpret salvation. However, several subtle biases are at work. As wooden and legalistic as was Mercy in Mankind, the Good Angel commands Faustus to "lay that damned book aside" (1.1.71). Her side of the debate consists of a cautious and proscriptive injunction, "Gaze not on it lest it tempt thy soul" (1.72). It is important to note that in this first appearance the Bad Angel outargues the Good. She echoes Faustus' dreams and encourages advancement beyond the proven and into the empyrean realms; she advises him to "go forward" (1.75). But, we are wary of Faustus' ready acceptance of the limitless powers with which she endows him. There is a degree of uneasiness for the conventional auditor when she exhorts:

Be thou on earth as Jove is in the sky
 Lord and commander of these elements (1.1.77-8).

So while the voice of the moralist seems staid and perhaps static, the counterpoint raptures of the Bad Angel overstate Faustus' cause so that it sounds more like a desire to dominate than a desire to be set free.

As Shuchter has demonstrated, the protagonist of the moralities needed to be both "sufficiently particular" and "sufficiently universal" for his audience. Thanks to the specific biography of the Prologue and to the generally intelligible opening picture of an individual scholar in his study, Faustus seems to fulfil both

requirements. According to the detail in the Prologue that Faustus is a Doctor of Theology, he would probably be wearing the visual emblems of such an occupation, the surplice and crucifix. However, after only one scene, Faustus succeeds both in bursting through the moral requirements and in denying the significance of his costume. Unlike a scholar devoted primarily to the advancement of truth, Faustus delights in casting aside each of his acquired doctorates, in logic, medicine, law and theology, as offering insufficient profit. He prefers the necromantic pursuits and over their profitability he rhapsodizes:

O, what a world of profit and delight,
Of power, of honour, of omnipotence
Is promised to the studious artisan (1.1.54-6).

However, Marlowe has not allowed Faustus his abandonment to necromancy with impunity. This polymath has indicated himself with each learned-sounding quotation. Contrary to the Ramus position, Aristotle did not elevate the practical aspect of logic that Faustus stresses with "Bene desserere est finis logices" (1.1.7).⁵⁹ Even as a Ramian logician Faustus is wanting. He approaches this settling of his studies with a desire "to sound the depth of that thou wilt profess" (1.2); by beginning with the very fervour that the Guise in The Massacre of Paris had found lacking in Ramus when he had

⁵⁹In fact, Aristotle would be most opposed to this so-called apostle's pursuit of wealth and honour (Nicomachean Ethics, 1.5); instead of Faustus' "ability at disputation", Aristotle would prize the practice of virtue (Politics, VIII.1).

charged that the forerunner of Faustus "didst never sound anything to the depth" (Massacre, 8.25), the protagonist poses as an enlightened sort of Ramian logician. However, as Gerald Morgan has noted, Faustus seems unaware of Ramus' position that "natural dialectic culminates in theosophy" for he queries:

Affords this art no greater miracle?
Then read no more; thou hast attained that end.
A greater subject fitteth Faustus' wit! (11.9-11).

Morgan comments on this eye-raising presumption with which Faustus begins to "settle" his studies:

Thus Faustus rejects the maxim of Ramus, not because Aristotle has gone beyond Ramus, but because Faustus has.⁶⁰

Continuing to shock us, Faustus reveals that his motive for being a doctor was the un-Hippocratic desire to "heap up gold" (1.14); furthermore, his mention of Galen and not of Vesalius⁶¹ dates his practical medical knowledge as medieval, if not ancient. Irving Ribner observes that Faustus misquotes Justinian's Institutes; yet, despite its poor legality, the clause he does quote (1.31) about a father being unable to disinherit a son has an ironic and "prophetic

⁶⁰Morgan, p. 29.

⁶¹Before the middle of the sixteenth century, Vesalius had surmounted the error of Galen's De Fabrica, by proving that the vena cava arises in the heart and not the liver.

relevance"⁶² in terms of the play's spiritual outcome. Finally, as a theologian, he deliberately⁶³ leaves his Vulgate quotations unfinished, a device which Mephistophilis later defines as the chief "means / Whereby he is in danger to be damned" (1.3.50-1). He only speaks of the reward of sin being death and of the failure of sinning, but does not mention the completion of each text which promises the free gift of God in eternal life (Romans, 6:23) and the forgiveness of sins along with the cleansing of all unrighteousness (I John, 1:8).⁶⁴ Through such wilful perversions, Faustus prepares us for his later examples of perverted pride. He will consider himself more wicked than Lucifer when he laments:

But Faustus' offence ne'er can be pardoned. The
serpent that tempted Eve may be saved, but not
Faustus (5.2.41-2).

In the same vein, he will try to become a special sinner who manages to get a reprieve instead of an eternal sentence:

⁶²Morgan, p. 30

⁶³I find it difficult to conceive of Marlowe presenting only a stupid scholar; Faustus' ignorance would make Marlowe's intentions mere parody, and his negative example would make the play only didactic. I would suggest that Marlowe neither completely supports nor rejects Faustus, but rather, that he himself is unresolved about his creation.

⁶⁴In the light of Faustus' purposefully incomplete Vulgate quotations, it is difficult to swallow T.W. Craik's claim that Faustus is "always confident of repentance", advanced in his article, "Faustus' Damnation Reconsidered", Renaissance Drama, n. s., II (1969), 192.

Impose some end to my incessant pain.

82

Let Faustus live in hell a thousand years,

A hundred thousand, and at last be saved (5.3.165-67).

As a mankind character who wants to be "larger than life",⁶⁵ yet who prides himself on only these scraps of knowledge, Faustus emerges after his first speech as a strange balancing of aspiring silliness and damnable wilfulness. As Ornstein sees him, "the aspiring titan is also the self-deluded fool of Lucifer".⁶⁶

Marlowe employs more morality devices to further the play's debate. As he uses them, the conventional voices of the moral order, usually provided by a chorus or a learned person, are not entirely without equivocation.⁶⁷ The Chorus' Prologue to Doctor Faustus initiates the tension of loyalties for the play and asks us to consider "the form of Faustus' fortunes good or bad" (1.7). At the beginning of Act Three, the Chorus does not offer us a condemnation of Faustus' career as a magician, but rather, presents a breathless and excited catalogue of the deeds of "learned Faustus". Its final appearance in the Epilogue is both an exhortation to the wise to "regard his hellish fall" (1.4) and a lament for "this learned man" who "is gone" (11.3,4).

⁶⁵ Sidney Homan, Jr. refers to Faustus as "larger than life" and to the play as existing "beyond the morality" in his article, "Doctor Faustus, Dekker's Old Fortunatus and the Morality Plays", MLQ, XXVI (1965), 497-505.

⁶⁶ Ornstein, p. 172.

⁶⁷ Morgan even compares the "equivocal chorus" to Erasmus' *Stultitia*, p. 24.

It seems significant too that, as an echo of the wisdom of Romans, 11:17-22, the Chorus does not speak of an "olive branch" as does Saint Paul, but elevates Faustus' intellectual potential by mentioning "Apollo's laurel bough" (1.2). As an undeviating spokesman for the moral order, the Old Man continually admonishes Faustus and asks him to repent. However, Marlowe has also added two Scholars to the group of admonitory and conventional voices, and their roles do seem to be equivocal. It is true that they inform us of the change in Faustus' habits and speak our thoughts about the "danger of his soul" (1.2.29); yet, it is these same secular angels who ask Faustus to demonstrate his skill by letting them see "that peerless dame of Greece" (5.1.14). Having taken their leaves from "this blessed sight" (5.1.35), they soon re-appear in the conventional role of urging Faustus to repentance. Their final remarks are a mixture of Christian sentiment and nostalgic admiration:

Well, gentlemen, though Faustus' end be such
 As every Christian heart laments to think on,
 Yet for he was a scholar, once admired
 For wondrous knowledge in our German schools,
 We'll give his mangled limbs due burial (5.3.13-17).

Like the Chorus, the Scholars vacillate between admiring the magician-scholar and applauding Christian judgment.

The obverse of the pious voices on the morality coin is the voices of temptation. Here too, Marlowe is not content with morality conventions. While the vices in Prudentius' poem were physical

opponents for the virtues, and the Seven Deadly Sins were alluring salesmen in The Castle of Perseverance, the parade of the Seven Deadly Sins, as Marlowe presents it, is not a temptation but only a diversion for Faustus. In fact, while Harry Levin had denied "this quaint procession of gargoyles" any homiletic impact at all, Robert Ornstein has even discounted the value of the parade as gratification or grotesquerie by calling it merely a succession of "harmless bogies".⁶⁸

As the descendant of Titivillus or Myscheff in Mankind, and with the same vigour in evil as Courage in The Tyde Taryeth no Man, the single Vice figure was the prime mover of the morality's plot during the stages of the protagonist's temptation and life in sin. Marlowe has not presented in Mephistophilis as definable a figure as a tempter, nor as clear-cut an issue as temptation between him and Faustus. Contrary to morality procedure, it is the "tempted" who invokes his "tempter"; yet even Faustus' calling up of Mephistophilis is ironic. As Mephistophilis explains, he appears not as a result of Faustus' conjuring hocus-pocus, but because he has heard "one rack the name of God" (1.3.48). We may conclude that although the procedure is unlike that of the moralities, the seriousness of the issue is very similar. Faustus' inquisitive mind is anxious to find

⁶⁸ Levin, p. 119; Ornstein, p. 169.

out about Mephistophilis' life. But from the outset, his wilfully inverted values presage how little he will "learn" from Mephistophilis:

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 (1.3.57-60).

It is natural then, in its own perverse way, that Faustus will not attach significance to Mephistophilis' explanation of his fall, "by aspiring pride and insolence" (1.3.68), and will still "think hell's a fable" (2.1.125), even though he has "experience" before him to change his mind (2.1.126). Indeed the role of Mephistophilis is less that of a tempter and more that of a didact, a personified lesson-by-negative-example. He persists in his attempts to divert Faustus from perdition; even when Faustus is in the full swing of anti-papal hijinks, Mephistophilis intones like a death knell:

Now Faustus, what will you do now? For I can
tell you you'll be cursed with bell, book and candle
(3.3.93-4).

The "tempted" man of the moralities emerges in Doctor Faustus as his own worst tempter.

Although an alternation between the entertainment of Titivillus and the homily of Mercy is a pattern established in Mankind for scene sequence in the moralities, the sort of alternation between grandiose schemes and absurd ridicule that Marlowe uses in Doctor Faustus does not work out eventually in the protagonist's favour, but

rather debases Faustus further. If we are to judge "the form of Faustus' fortunes good or bad", we must recognize that Marlowe seems to be discrediting Faustus throughout the middle scenes of the play, yet is still allowing him to retain some status, however dubious. While the antimasque should come first and by its gracelessness heighten the beauty and elegance of the masque, in Doctor Faustus the pattern is reversed. Robert Ornstein outlines this "consistently wrong" pattern:

In the first scene Faustus announces his intellectual supremacy and his decision to gain a deity through magic. In the second scene Wagner apes his master's display of learning by chopping logic with two scholars. In the third scene Faustus agrees to sell his soul for power and voluptuousness. Immediately afterwards the clown considers bartering his soul for a shoulder of mutton and a taste of wenching. In the following scenes Faustus makes his compact with the devil, discusses astronomy with Mephistophilis, and is entertained by the Seven Deadly Sins. He then launches his career as a magician by snatching away the Pope's food and drink. Next Rafe and Robin burlesque Faustus' conjurations and try to steal a goblet from a Vintner.⁶⁹

Due to such swift undercutting of Faustus' brilliance in the comic scenes, the aspiring scholar becomes only a naughty schoolboy. Even the clowns appear to have superior powers since they can actually conjure and control Mephistophilis, while Faustus only thinks he can. Robin and Dick can bring Mephistophilis back from

⁶⁹Ornstein, p. 167.

Constantinople⁷⁰ and can reduce this august and philosophic sufferer to a whining weakling:

How am I vexed by these villains' charms!
From Constantinople they have brought me now,
Only for pleasure of these damned slaves (3.3.31-33).

By thus aping the "master's" talents, the clowns point to a single conclusion for Ornstein: "the difference between hero and clown is one of degree, not of kind".⁷¹

After having discomfited a Pope, horned a knight, entertained an Emperor, cheated a Horse Courser and delighted a Duchess with grapes out of season, as what kind of heroic necromancer does Faustus emerge? For me, Faustus remains at best a juggler trying to keep our support in the air along with his displays of foolishness, and at worst a tragic, sympathy-evoking failure. In neither respect is he simply a redeemable mankind character from the moralities. He is capable of fluctuating between despair and hope,⁷² between

⁷⁰Percy Simpson takes a very harsh view of these powers bestowed on Robin and Dick and dismisses their antics as "vacuous buffoonery that has not even the merit of a parody", in his chapter, "'The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus'", Studies in Elizabethan Drama (Oxford, 1955), p. 110.

However, I think the superiority of their powers is germane to the ironic and inverted pattern that Marlowe is using.

⁷¹Ornstein, p. 170.

⁷²As a play that dramatizes this fluctuation, and as a triumph over Wood's play from the point of view of "individualization", Lily B. Campbell analyzes Doctor Faustus and concludes that "despair is the underlying motive", in her article, "Doctor Faustus: A Case of Conscience", PMLA, LXVII (1952), 219-39.

avowing, "Faustus must thou needs be damned/ And canst thou not be saved" (2.1.1.-2), and declaring, "Ay, and Faustus will turn to God again" (2.1.9). He can be incisive and perverse, almost simultaneously:

The God thou serv'st is thine own appetite,
Wherein is fixed the love of Beelzebub (2.1.11-12).

Whether he eventually "gains" anything from his twenty-four-year pact is a debatable point.⁷³ Although Robert Ornstein⁷⁴ has made a plausible case for Faustus' gradual awareness of others as shown in his concern for the Scholars in Act V, Scene ii, this meagre form of social consciousness seems to be a poor showing for a man of Faustus' "potential". Moreover, this dubious achievement stands in marked contrast to the tragic fall into hell in the next scene when Faustus gasps:

My God, my God, look not so fierce on me!
Adders and serpents, let me breathe a while
Ugly hell, gape not! Come not Lucifer!
I'll burn my books! Ah, Mephistophilis! (5.2.184-7).

⁷³Several critics devote time to proving how abysmal Faustus' life as a necromancer is. Among those who trace this reversal in his intellectual progress are Farnham, p. 402; Helen Gardner, "Milton's Satan and the Theme of Damnation in Elizabethan Tragedy", Essays and Studies, n. s., I (1948), 50; and Wilbur Sanders, The Dramatist and The Received Idea (Cambridge, 1968), p. 229.

⁷⁴"Marlowe and God: The Tragic Theology of Doctor Faustus", PMLA, LXXXIII (1968), 1378-85.

Ornstein adopts a stricter attitude towards Marlowe's "inabilities" and concludes that, as a "testament" of its creator's despair, Doctor Faustus shows "the correspondence between the nihilism of Marlowe's art and life", p. 1385.

During this fall, Faustus is terrified but unrepentant, and hence, continues until the end his tenuous balance between evoking our support for his individuality and inviting our castigation for his blindness. As Steane has suggested,⁷⁵ he remains a portrait of the energetic mind, but also of the reckless, unintelligent self.

In the four plays considered, Marlowe has employed features of the morality to portray an expanse of heroes whose impacts have been as varied as amorality, on one side, and the direct flaunting of moral codes, on the other. In the following chapter, I propose to discuss Marlowe's achievement in his use of the morality tradition. But, just as these analyses of the plays have involved looking at aspects of Marlowe's art beyond the morality tradition, the discussion to follow cannot divorce itself from a general view of the many facets of Marlowe's dramatic skill.

⁷⁵Steane, p. 367.

MARLOWE'S ACHIEVEMENT IN USING THE MORALITY TRADITION

As with every artistic endeavour, one of the most fascinating yet problematic results of analyzing Marlowe's plays lies in the creation of our own image of the man and the ideas that lie behind them. The first problem we encounter in assembling this composite picture is the disparity of previous assemblers views on how it should be colored. George Bernard Shaw, for instance, revelling in his role of vituperative curmudgeon, offers us these chiaroscuro shadings:

Marlowe is the true Elizabethan blank-verse beast, itching to frighten other people with the superstitious terrors in which he does not himself believe, and wallowing in blood, violence, muscularity of expression and strenuous animal passion as only literary men do when they become thoroughly depraved by solitary work, sedentary cowardice and starvation of the sympathetic centres.¹

As a refreshing contrast, Una Ellis-Fermor exhibits her portrait of Marlowe, the luminary, in these anaesthetizing pastels:

To contemporaries who met and conversed with him casually, he must have seemed a man of strong passions and of obstinate opinions, of acute and pregnant questions, now fearless and contemptuous, now satirical and impish; a man who rejoiced in

¹G. B. Shaw, Our Theatres in the Nineties (London, 1932), II, 181-82.

destroying the idols of the mean and timorous
without offering them the solace of a rival fetish.²

Unfortunately, her portrait affords only another extreme, and our choices seem to range between the meagre spectrum of the flamboyance of her glorification and the blackness of Shaw's condemnation.

But artistic hopes need not be dashed. As a guide to beginning Marlovian portrait-painters, Irving Ribner has catalogued two popular schools of previous artists: the romantics, noted for the ornament and lovingness of their style, and the moralizers, noted for the crispness and unadorned quality of their vision.³ Helpful as his outline is for channelling our interpretations of past efforts, Ribner also pinpoints the incompatibility of these schools and thus states the problem clearly for the budding artist of the present:

We cannot have a Marlowe who is on the one hand a daring freethinker challenging the most widely accepted beliefs of his age, and on the other a pious orthodox Christian using the stage as a virtual pulpit for orthodox pronouncements.⁴

²Ellis-Fermor, p. 131.

³The guide is in the article, "Marlowe and the Critics", TDR, VIII (1964), 211-24. As "romantics", Ribner mentions Ellis-Fermor, Kocher, Levin and Waith; probably Poirier could be added here too. As "moralizers", he includes Battenhouse, Greg, Kirschbaum, Campbell, Mahood and Cole. His third category is that of moral ambiguity, and, along with Bevington, I think Steane could be added to this group. Of course, a critic like Sanders is unincluded mainly because his intention is to "puncture" what he thinks is Marlowe's already distended reputation.

⁴Ribner, p. 216.

In choosing the elements for my portrait, I have neglected the Shavian shadings and attempted to calm the Ellis-Fermor riot of color.

Attentive to Ribner's guide, I have not set out to reconcile the incompatible schools, but rather to depict Marlowe as passing beyond their floweréd or linear borders and as living in an unbordered, unframed sketch.

The label of morality playwright does nor suit Marlowe because he consciously obscures two of the main aspects of the morality: the individual-general attributes of the protagonist and the purpose of instructing in the ways of salvation. In the examples of Tamburlaine, Barabas and Faustus, his protagonists are not characterizations of aspiring but redeemable men. They are would-be supermen who flaunt their humanity and wish to pass beyond it -- Tamburlaine, through world-wide conquests, Barabas, through monstrous villainy, and Faustus, through the deliberate abandonment of what he thinks is limiting theology in favour of unbounded necromancy. Through his outright neglect of kingly duties, Edward seems to be the weakling in the midst of these towering figures. However, I think his position is necessary to an understanding of the others, since he can function as the pathetic foil for their gigantic stature. He remains the obverse of the human coin that Marlowe has tossed before in displaying the shiny side of would-be supermen, but that lands this time on the discolored side of the puny retreat from humanity. With each successive character, the wilfulness of his desire for super-

humanity. brings him back to mortality and morality with an increasingly powerful vengeance. The different impacts created by the deaths of the four protagonists underline this increasing power. The initial aspirant meets his death as a realization of his uniqueness, yet also as an end to his glorious worldly career. The super-villain stewes in his own villainy. The deserter from humanity is tortured by the very forces he has neglected to check. The scorner of theology and salvation falls into the gaping mouth of hell, the symbol of the eternal Christian punishment which he has denied. Moreover, each of these deaths has an inexorable quality which becomes more and more apparent. Tamburlaine can neither deny nor conquer his mortality; Barabas cannot escape the power of his own villainy; Edward cannot convince his own subjects not to kill their king; Faustus goes to hell realizing how powerless he is and how ironic his revolt has been. He has been opposing a secret and immeasurably superior form of hostility, the hostility of the universe. It is Mephistophilis who makes this clear as he rejoices:

'Twas I, that when thou wert i' the way to heaven,
 Damned up thy passage. When thou took'st the book
 To view the Scriptures, then I turned the leaves
 And led thine eye (5.2.90-3).⁵

⁵J. P. Brockbank comments that "the mockery of Mephistophilis administers a last turn of the screw" and illustrates that "man is prey to an adversary whose power daunts even Faustus", Marlowe: Dr. Faustus (London, 1962), p. 55.

What has begun as a force to halt worldly ascents has become a device for placing worldly accomplishments in an ironic and even paltry perspective.

In commenting on this disparity between desire and achievement, Harry Levin has argued for the compatibility of Marlowe's heroes with the anti-heroic characters of the Theatre of the Absurd and has compared their impact to the Brechtian effect of alienation.⁶ But closely allied with our alienation from Brechtian or Marlovian figures is the ineffaceable, though not always moral, sense of admiration, empathy and even comradeship that they arouse in us. For example, despite Brecht's presentation of Galileo as the practical but unheroic scientist who recants his discoveries rather than suffer, he is still showing an incisive and ingenious man who recognizes human fallibility and amuses himself by duping his gullible patrons. In Mother Courage and her Children, despite the ugliness of the play's ethic of profiteering, Mother Courage doggedly persists; facing the loss of her whole family, she pulls her own cart, and in this remarkable urge to continue living, she elicits our respect and support. What Brecht has succeeded in "alienating" are our previously cherished and unchallenged opinions about a heroic individualist and the self-sacrificing ideals of wartime from our

⁶Harry Levin, "Marlowe Today", TDR, VIII (1964), 30-31.

present awareness of the reality of pragmatism for the scientist and the war profiteer. Marlowe creates a similar alienation between our past and present opinions, but he also probes a deeper and more closely guarded facet of our consciousness as we assess his protagonists. Before reading Marlowe's plays, we feel justified in condemning those who engage in rampant conquests, who take vengeance on innocents, who disregard national welfare and who pervert Scriptures; however, after having read or seen the plays, we find ourselves half-encouraging (maybe, wholly supporting) these culpable aspirants. In this respect, Marlowe appeals to and lays bare our private dreams of rebellion and our un-circumspect visions of self-grandeur. When we witness these brave "voyagers"⁷ falling back into humanity, we furtively recall our now-exposed support, hope it has not been recognized, and somewhat self-consciously lavish on the falling human protagonists a cautious degree of sympathy. Thus, his characters can serve us as scapegoats.⁸ Through inviting us to follow the progress of his human representatives, whom he has

⁷The term is Ellis-Fermor's, p. 141.

⁸In reference to this function performed by Marlowe's characters, G.K. Hunter concludes that both Barabas and Faustus are "scapegoats", p. 240; Gerald Morgan mentions that as members of the audience of Doctor Faustus, we are "free as Existentialist actors in a harlequinade to step out of the role of sinister connoisseurs, if we wish not to be numbered by Scholars among the fiends", p. 32.

fashioned mainly in the role of superhuman aspirants, Marlowe is also anticipating from his audience a rapid-sequence emotional reaction that moves from exhilaration, to fear, and then to sympathy. The degree of emotional involvement Marlowe intends differs greatly from that planned by the morality playwright. The author of Mankind, for instance, probably expected from his audience a short-lived delight in Mankind's evil doings and a final relief when Mankind accepts Mercy's instruction. The realization of human limitations by Marlowe's characters does not offer relief, but may resemble for us the awakening from a dream that still has its lingering, hypnotic effect. Unlike Wager, who shocked into extinction his audience's secretive desires for evil by forcing them to recognize the ugliness of such grotesque personifications of evil as Moros and Worldly Man, Marlowe subtly encourages us to unlock and release our private selves in following and supporting the lives of his heroes.

By enlisting such emotional support, Marlowe is clearly not intent on teaching lessons through negative example. His plays read like an unresolved Psychomachia, since he is dramatizing his own debate about these protagonists and is involving us in the issue too. Although one observer of this debate has credited Marlowe with "artistic objectivity",⁹ I think the motives and effects of Marlowe's debate are less clear-cut. Along with Harry Levin, I think Marlowe's

⁹T. McAlindon, "Classical Mythology and Christian Tradition in Marlowe's Doctor Faustus", PMLA, LXXXI (1966), 223.

plays are composed of a mixture of exhilaration and temerity, and an ambivalence of chastened and exalted attitudes.¹⁰ Douglas Cole views Marlowe's use of the morality tradition as pointing up the ironies of his characters' situations and thus as furthering morality didacticism in a Marlovian manner.¹¹ However, such a conclusion attributes to Marlowe a detachment from and superiority over his creations rather than a subjective understanding of them.¹² David Bevington has a more tolerant view of the debate Marlowe proposes by using the morality tradition when he concludes that the effect Marlowe creates is one of conscious ambiguity.¹³ Marlowe commiserates with rather than condemns his protagonists. Such a playwright does not emerge as a milquetoast dabbler, but rather as

¹⁰Levin proposes the mixture in his book, p. 27, and the ambivalence in his article, p. 30.

¹¹Having stated that Marlowe imbues "his scenes of suffering with an unusually strong sense of irony" (p. 75), Cole analyzes the plays to prove his point, pp. 82, 127, 151, 179, 223, 231, 238, 257.

¹²I am not suggesting that Marlowe has no control over his characters, since I am aware that as their creator Marlowe fashions their personalities. However, my difference with Cole is in the degree of detachment Marlowe has from his characters; unlike Cole, I think he is more attached to than detached from them. For instance, even though he does imbue the scene of Faustus' death with irony, it is not an irony which debases Faustus, but rather one which serves to win further sympathy for this impotent, falling soul.

¹³Bevington makes his points about "the ambiguity of moral impact" in Tamburlaine, p. 212, in The Jew of Malta, p. 220, in Edward the Second, p. 244, and in Doctor Faustus, p. 261.

a subtle employer of character to further a debate. By being unresolved, his lessons are not any less moving or effective, for they continue to "teach" us in a way Sidney could not envision when he wrote of tragedy "that, with stirring the effects of admiration and commiseration, teacheth the uncertainty of this world, and upon how weak foundations gilden roofs are builded".¹⁴

Marlowe is frequently placed either in the neatly outlined "establishment"¹⁵ frame of the Bishop Parker scholar who took his theological learning to the stage, or in the pagan arabesques and op-art fillips of the notorious freethinker revealed in the Baines Note. He is neither a conscious morality teacher, nor is the Baines Note the "Rosetta Stone" to understanding him.¹⁶ I have tried to suggest that Marlowe penetrates beyond such confines and that he would prefer the unbordered freedom of a sketch that continues the struggle between these influences. G. K. Hunter understands Marlowe's fluctuations when he writes of him as "a God-haunted atheist, involved

¹⁴Sir Philip Sidney, A Defense of Poetry, Edited by J. A. Van Dorsten (London, 1966), p. 45.

¹⁵The term is used by Clarence Green, "Doctor Faustus: Tragedy of Individualism", Science and Society, X(1946), 275.

¹⁶Battenhouse and Kocher are the two obvious representatives of each view; Battenhouse insists on moral instruction in Tamburlaine, p. 258, while Kocher uses the Baines Note to "decipher" the "dogmatic and positive" aspects of Marlowe's revolt from Christianity pp. 11, 333.

simultaneously in revolt and the sense of the necessity for punishment against such a revolt, simultaneously horrified and fascinated by the apparent self-sufficiency of the fallen world".¹⁷ Marlowe's characters emerge from this ambivalence not merely as human or superhuman representatives, but as scapegoats for the unblinkered vision of their debating creator who is aware of the variety of responses he is provoking. In the face of the number of influences upon him (perhaps, as the result of their conflicting loyalties), Marlowe remains for us the impassioned yet evanescent spirit that Drayton, aptly enough, only hinted at:

Neat Marlow bathed in the Thespian springs
Had in him those brave, translunary things,
That the first Poets had, his raptures were
All ayre, and fire, which made his verses cleere,
For that fine madnes still he did retaine,
Which rightly should possesse a Poets braine.¹⁸

¹⁷"The Theology of Marlowe's The Jew of Malta", p. 240.

¹⁸As quoted by Steane, p. 25. It is curious and also revealing of Marlowe's changing reputation and acceptability that even Drayton's praise of him should be devoted only to the Hero and Leander translation and not to any of his plays.

CONCLUSION

From this examination of the effects Marlowe creates in borrowing from the morality tradition, it is evident that he attempts to surpass the definite tenets of Christian morality that this dramatic form originally sought to inculcate. Just as Wager has been credited with "using the traditional metaphors within a different set of assumptions", Marlowe seems to me to be employing an orthodox formula to portray his secular and perhaps heterodox interests. He has allowed his protagonists to surpass, or pervert, or debilitate, or condemn the orthodox norms. These characters have not simply inverted Christian orthodoxy, but rather, they have demonstrated the quixotic and unresolved state of their creator's "morality".

Because it seems so protean and undefinable, Marlowe's sort of morality impresses me as almost Lawrencian. D.H. Lawrence has written about works of art in terms that seem to have a particular relevance to Marlowe:

Every work of art adheres to some system of morality. But if it be really a work of art, it must contain the essential criticism on the morality to which it adheres. And hence the antinomy, hence the conflict necessary to every tragic conception.¹

¹"Study of Thomas Hardy", Selected Literary Criticism, Edited by Anthony Beal (New York, 1966), p. 185.

The concept of morality that Lawrence and Marlowe seem to share does not involve "nailing things down to get a stable equilibrium", as Lawrence expresses it. But rather, "morality is that delicate, for ever trembling and changing balance between me and my circum-ambient universe, . . . [that] is, how 'I save my soul' ".² By espousing such a personal and fluctuating morality, Marlowe does not merit being damned from any orthodox point of view as atheistic or adolescent; rather, he needs to be understood and indeed lauded as a "for ever changing" playwright who is not nailed down to the stability of orthodoxy.

In maintaining the delicate balance between the individual and his surroundings, Marlowe has fashioned characters of aspiring, perverted, weak and proud minds, who live in a "circumambient universe" that is inimical. The tension involved in the revolt or acquiescence of these characters in the face of their universe has engaged the moral judgments of Marlowe's audience in a way the previous moralities never had. He asks us to observe the continuing debate between the rightness and wrongness of the claims of both sides -- the individual and his universe. The oppressiveness of the universe seems just as questionable as the rebellion or retreat of the protagonist. Although the plays' conclusions grant a nominal

²"Morality and the Novel", Selected Literary Criticism, pp. 110, 109.

victory to the universe which silences the protagonist, there lingers with us the ineradicable element of praise or compassion for the silenced individual; hence, the tension between the individual and his universe remains actually unresolved. Unlike the didactic drama from which they borrow, Marlowe's plays are purposefully ambiguous; his protagonists hardly qualify as typical human representatives and a way of living in the universe in order to gain salvation is not exemplified. On the contrary, the exceptional individual and his inimical surroundings contest with no clear resolution. Marlowe engages our moral judgments in furthering his own extra-moral debate.

In connection with such a debate, Drayton's praise of "neat Marlow" seems to me especially apt. Drayton's eulogy of his "brave" and poetic qualities highlights what I have been attempting to conclude about Marlowe's impact in using the morality tradition. Drayton also seems appropriate for another reason. In his metaphor, he cites "ayre and fire" as the agents for making Marlowe's raptures "cleere". All the terms in this rendering process seem evanescent, and yet, singularly fitting too. If raptures can be made clear, then elements as ambiguous as air, which is invisible yet indispensable, and fire, which is purgative yet destructive, can be relied on to accomplish such a clarification. J. P. Brockbank has commented on a further aspect of the "apt felicity" of Drayton's praise:

Air and fire were respectively the 'hot and moist' and the 'hot and dry' elements whose peculiar property was to ascend upwards in a straight line.³

So Drayton's metaphor reflects the aspirations and dreams of a playwright like Marlowe whose "fine madnes" led him to use the morality play as an element in his own artistic and ambivalent dramas.

³ Brockbank, p. 25.

Appendix I

"The Critics' Psychomachia"

In reading only some of the many commentaries on Doctor Faustus, I have made at least one observation: the critics carry on their own form of point-counterpoint debate in the interpretation of Marlowe's play. My readings initially provided me more parts to the seemingly endless puzzle. However, one diversion I indulged in was listing the names of critics under such columns as "Marlowe, the medieval moralist" and "Marlowe, the Renaissance man", "Too bad, Faustus is damned" and "Bravo, Faustus is damned", and, what proved to be the most amusing, "Helen, the Harlot" and "Helen, the Heavenly". With their names before me, I directed my own mental contest of critics' opinions, as I mapped the strategy with arrows, checks, x's and dashes. The results were graphic and usually bore more resemblance to substandard grade-one art than to a debate of scholarly voices. Realizing that graphic production was limited in effectiveness, I launched into voice production. After a series of auditions in which only outstanding voices were chosen from the available material, I assigned roles of personified attitudes, blocked scenes, and began rehearsals in earnest.

Although the "production", "The Critics' Psychomachia", may perhaps be liable to charges of categorization and childishness, I offer no defense or apology, beyond the enjoyment it has afforded and the insights into Marlowe and his reputation it has suggested. The title may be a misnomer, since the production is unlike The Psychomachia in its open-endedness. However, it is the critics who are speaking and their debate I am dramatizing; so, with their script, the debate continues. In this theatre of the mind, preferences on the part of the producer have been underplayed, and yet hopefully, not suppressed. My intention is not to paint Marlovian scholarship black and white, but rather, through the personified attitudes of the players, to present a sampling of the range of critical opinion about Marlowe's intentions and achievements in Doctor Faustus.

The Cast List

ROLES	PLAYERS	AUDITION MATERIAL
Definite Purpose	M. Mahood	"Marlowe's Heroes", <u>Humanism and Poetry</u> , p. 85.
	W. Sanders	<u>The Dramatist and the Received Idea</u> , pp. 211- 12.
Indefinite Purpose	C. L. Barber	"The form of Faustus' fortunes, good or bad", <u>TDR</u> , VIII (1964), 92.
	J. Margeson	<u>The Origins of English Tragedy</u> , p. 64

ROLES

PLAYERS

AUDITION MATERIAL

	I. Ribner	"Introduction", <u>The Complete Plays</u> , p. xxxvii.
Nay Faustus	D. Cole	<u>Suffering and Evil in the Plays of Marlowe</u> , p. 198.
	J. Steane	<u>Marlowe, A Critical Study</u> , p. 127.
Yeah Faustus	N. Brooke	"The Moral Tragedy of Doctor Faustus", <u>CJ</u> , VII(1952), 664.
	U. Ellis-Fermor	<u>Christopher Marlowe</u> , pp. 62-3.
Coherence	J. Brown	"Marlowe and the Actors", <u>TDR</u> , VIII (1964), 166.
	D. Cole	<u>Ibid</u> , p. 208.
	S. Hawkins	"The Education of Faustus", <u>SEL</u> , VI (1966), 209.
	R. Knoll	<u>Christopher Marlowe</u> , p. 82.
	M. Merchant	<u>Creed and Drama</u> , p. 42.
	J. Steane	<u>Ibid</u> , p. 145.
Incoherence	J. Margeson	<u>Ibid</u> , p. 121.
	R. Ornstein	"Marlowe and God: The Tragic Theology of Doctor Faustus", <u>PMLA</u> , LXXXIII(1968), 1378.
Helenic Damnation	C. Barber	<u>Ibid</u> , pp. 101-2.

ROLES	PLAYERS	AUDITION MATERIAL
	D. Cole	<u>Ibid</u> , p.223.
	W. Greg	"The Damnation of Faustus", <u>MLR</u> , XLI (1946), 105.
	S. Hawkins	<u>Ibid</u> , p.207.
	G. Hunter	"Five-Act Structure in <u>Faustus</u> ", <u>TDR</u> , VIII (1964), 84.
	T. McAlindon	"Classical Mythology and Christian Tradition in <u>Faustus</u> ", <u>PMLA</u> , LXXXI(1966), 222.
	S. Snyder	"Faustus as an Inverted Saint's Life", <u>SP</u> , LXIII(1966), 575.
Helenic Elevation	N. Brooke	<u>Ibid</u> , p. 675.
	P. Kocher	<u>Christopher Marlowe</u> , p. 115.
	R. Ornstein	<u>Ibid</u> , p. 1381.
Merciful Extinction	J. Brockbank	"Damned Perpetually" in <u>Doctor Faustus Casebook</u> , ed. Jump, pp. 173-76.
	C. Brooks	"The Unity of <u>Faustus</u> ", in <u>Casebook</u> , p. 221.
	W. Empson	Excerpt in <u>Casebook</u> , pp. 41-2.
	H. Morris	"Marlowe's Poetry", <u>TDR</u> , VIII(1964), 154.

ROLES	PLAYERS	AUDITION MATERIAL
	I. Ribner	<u>Ibid</u> , p. xxxviii.
	J. Smith	"Marlowe's <u>Faustus</u> ", <u>Scrutiny</u> , VIII(1939), 37.
	A. Swinburne	Excerpt in <u>Casebook</u> , p. 38.
Moral Extinction	C. Barber	<u>Ibid</u> , p. 113.
	W. Greg	<u>Ibid</u> , p. 106.
	M. Mahood	<u>Ibid</u> , p. 72.
	W. Wagner	Excerpt in <u>Casebook</u> , pp. 33-5.
Admiration Without Reservation	W. Hazlitt	Excerpt in <u>Casebook</u> , p. 27.
	C. Lamb	Excerpt in <u>Casebook</u> , p. 29.
	G. Santayana	Excerpt in <u>Casebook</u> , pp. 39-40.
	H. Taine	Excerpt in <u>Casebook</u> , p. 32.
Admiration With Reservation	H. Levin	<u>The Overreacher</u> , pp. 108-10.
	J. Steane	<u>Ibid</u> , p. 367.

The Critics' Psychomachia

Prologue (Marlowe's Purpose)

DEFINITE PURPOSE.

(Mahood) It is a moralized record of disintegration,
Showing humanism's poverty and misled inclination.

INDEFINITE PURPOSE.

(Barber) It expresses the Renaissance both tragically and
heroically.
(Margeson) As it ebbs and flows between the individual and
fatality.

DEFINITE PURPOSE.

(Sanders) A pervasive homiletic strain makes Marlowe's
purpose clear,
His biographical drama is a warning--take care!

INDEFINITE PURPOSE.

(Ribner) It is a multi-effect protest against a limiting system,
A statement of futility from a trapped, human victim.

Mental Exhibit #1 (Marlowe's Opening)

NAY FAUSTUS.

(Cole) In quoting the Scriptures, he quotes only half-truths,
Of his willingness to pervert, I offer this proof.

YEAH FAUSTUS.

(Brooke) Not with perversions, but aspirations, does Faustus
begin;
The Bad Angel supports him, only the Good one pro-
nounces "sin".

NAY FAUSTUS.

(Steane) But this is precisely the tension of Marlowe's creation,
Between extreme enthusiasm and human limitation.

YEAH FAUSTUS.

(Ellis-Fermor) Yet stress the former, the need to interpret, to
find unity,
And losing it heroically to evoke our sympathy.

Mental Exhibit #2
(The Middle Scenes)

COHERENCE.

- (Brown) Theatrically, they're a treat--riotous activity
 after the fusty study;
- (Cole) Psychologically, they're functional, undercutting
 grandeur by burlesque parody;
- (Hawkins) Thematically, too, they're essential--for an evil
 education, they're the itinerary.

INCOHERENCE.

- (Margeson) Since they lack intrinsic interest, we may declare
 freely
 That they are complete breaks for which Marlowe
 is held guilty.

COHERENCE.

- (Knoll) From Prometheus to Tyl Eulenspiegel, they map the
 hero's descent;
- (Merchant) A destruction of the natural order is their didactic
 testament;
- (Steane) They offer the parable's anti-climax, but in a
 Marx-brotherly accent.

INCOHERENCE.

- (Ornstein) Although I once would have been ready to assent,
 I see them now as jumbles and products of discontent.

Mental Exhibit #3
(The Address to Helen)

HELENIC DAMNATION.

- (Barber) Here is the atheist's inverted prayer of ecstatic
 communion;
- (Cole) In terms of myth, he becomes an Arethusa, or a
 Semele ruined.

HELENIC ELEVATION.

- (Brooke) Opposing the lethargic voices of trivial theology,
 Faustus elevates appetitive will in this paean to beauty.

HELENIC DAMNATION.

- (Greg) Precisely in such sensuality lies the sealing of his damnation;
- (Hawkins) An imago diabolis, she is lust's incarnation--
- (Hunter) Tawdry and cheap, like a dancing girl at a "private" re-union.

HELENIC ELEVATION.

- (Kocher) On the contrary, her essence is far more discreet; She is the ideal of beauty from, of course, pagan Greece.

HELENIC DAMNATION.

- (McAlindon) The address stresses fire, tactic that brings heretics to perdition;
- (Snyder) And the very name, Hellen, suggests a heaven-hell inversion.

HELENIC ELEVATION.

- (Ornstein) The subject is not theology, nor damnable conjuration, It is not even beauty, but rather, poetic aspiration.

Mental Exhibit #4
(The Final Soliloquy)

MORAL EXTINCTION.

- (Barber) With appropriate images of surfeit, Faustus examines his conscience,
- (Greg) Still allowing lusty Ovidian thoughts to cloud his repentance.

MERCIFUL EXTINCTION.

- (Brockbank) Structurally, it presents a shrinkage into barren littleness;
- (Brooks) With Faustus' personal dies irae, he comprehends consummatum est;
- (Empson) He is falling like a child, yet broken under adult duress.

MORAL EXTINCTION.

- (Mahood) The despair is not Christian, but pagan and stoical;
- (Wagner) His ending is appropriate, and, like his life, theatrical.

MERCIFUL EXTINCTION.

(Morris, Swinburne) It is the poetry of awe, tremendous and
without parallel,

(Smith) A sincere and cogent inner reckoning that moves
us as well,

(Ribner) Yet offers no affirmation, no about-face, only a
bleak hell.

Epilogue

(Interpretations of Faustus)

ADMIRATION WITHOUT RESERVATION.

(Hazlitt) Here is pride of will and eagerness of curiosity
sublimed!

(Lamb) It is the spirit of Faustus, his curiosity, that
is divine!

ADMIRATION WITH RESERVATION.

(Levin) Faustus is indeed a sketch of aspiring, Icarian man,
Yet, not without medieval admonitions is his progress
planned.

ADMIRATION WITHOUT RESERVATION.

(Santayana) He is essentially good and Christian, driven to
damnation,

(Taine) Yet withal, primitive and genuine, disdaining
purgation.

ADMIRATION WITH RESERVATION.

(Steane) It is true that he has will, imagination and energy to
show,
But reckless, unintellectual selfishness brings him
low.

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