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WOMEN IN THE PLAYS OF  
CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE

by

STELLA COCORIS WHITEHOUSE

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## Introduction

Criticism of the drama of the Renaissance has yielded an abundance of Marlovian scholarship, great and varied in scope. Particularly, there has been an immense interest in Marlowe's creation of the superhuman hero--the Tamburlaine or the Faustus who so completely dominates the stage that all other characters are assumed to be mere figureheads, symbols, abstractions, or embodiments. It is partly because of this interest in the overpowering hero that Marlowe's women have been neglected by many critics. Allardyce Nicoll makes a particularly sweeping statement when he claims that the absence of the "feminine element . . . mars the dramas of Marlowe" and that "the consistent elimination of women" in his works "proves in him a lack of sympathy with the whole of life."<sup>1</sup> I would maintain that the "feminine element" is not absent in Marlowe, but rather too often slighted by critics.

This is not to say that major critical works on Marlowe disregard his female creations entirely. Women in major roles (i.e., Dido, Zenocrate, Abigail, Isabella) are treated in various degrees by Steane in Marlowe: A Critical Study; by Cole in Suffering and Evil in the Plays of Christopher Marlowe; by Kocher in Christopher Marlowe: A Study of His

Thought, Learning, and Character; by Levin in The Overreacher; by Bakeless in The Tragicall History of Christopher Marlowe; and by Bevington in From 'Mandind' to Marlowe. C. I. Duthie emphasizes the significance of Zenocrate's role in "The Dramatic Structure of Tamburlaine the Great, Parts I and II," concerning himself basically with the effect she has on Tamburlaine. W. W. Greg, in "The Damnation of Faustus," and Leo Kirschbaum in "Marlowe's Doctor Faustus: A Reconsideration," shed some light on the importance of Helen's role. F. P. Wilson, in Marlowe and the Early Shakespeare, explores the significance of Isabella's role in Edward II. Larry Goldberg's dissertation, "The Role of the Female in the Drama of Lyly, Greene, Kyd, and Marlowe" (Northwestern, 1969) concentrates primarily on the major female characters in five Marlowe plays in respect to how they pertain "to the form of the plays" and how the role of the female either generates, harmonizes with, or reinforces the informing principle of each play. But while Goldberg's is the only study dealing specifically with a number of Marlowe's women, he pays little attention to the significance of the minor female roles.

None of the above-mentioned works offers an extensive, unified view of all Marlowe's female characters and their importance to the plays as a whole. When the subject of Marlowe's women is approached, comments are usually relegated to only a few lines. For example, Steane notes in passing that "a cynical belittlement of women . . . is a Marlovian characteristic."<sup>2</sup> Such perfunctory assumptions gloss over

some of the carefully wrought portraits to be found in the Marlowe canon, portraits which are a vital part of the tragedies but which are not often explored in great detail. The particular problem under consideration in this thesis, then, is to determine to what degree and in what manner the presence of women adds to the scope of Marlovian drama by carefully examining each of the female roles. The following plays are considered chronologically: Dido, Queen of Carthage; Tamburlaine, Parts I and II; The Jew of Malta; Edward II; and Doctor Faustus. The Massacre at Paris is omitted from the study not only because of the incompleteness of the extant form, but also because it rarely measures up to the level of the other works.

A three-fold method of examining the female characters is employed in this study, using the following questions as bases for analysis:

- 1) Is each woman related to the dramatic structure of a particular play? What part does she have in the play's movement? Does she influence it significantly?
- 2) Are the women thematically important in each play? If so, to what extent?
- 3) Do the female roles help in any way to define the male roles? That is, do our interpretations of the female roles shape our responses toward the men in any way? Do any attitudes and/or emotions espoused by the women themselves

alter or sharpen our responses toward the  
male characters?

Answers to these questions help to form some valid statements  
as to the role of women in Marlowe's drama as well as to  
generate a reconsideration of the theory that Marlowe had  
a "lack of sympathy with the whole of life."

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Allardyce Nicoll, The Theory of Drama, 2nd ed. (1931; rpt. New York: Benjamin Bloom, 1966), pp. 157-159.

<sup>2</sup>J. B. Steane, Marlowe: A Critical Study (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964), p. 83.

## I. Dido, Queen of Carthage

General critical opinion designates Dido, Queen of Carthage as Christopher Marlowe's earliest drama.<sup>1</sup> Believed to have been written during Marlowe's Cambridge years, the play was performed by the Children of Her Majesty's Chapel, "presumably when these young players visited Ipswich near Cambridge in 1586-87."<sup>2</sup> It is interesting to note that Dido is the only Marlovian play with a female protagonist and several significant female roles. If Dido is indeed Marlowe's first play, the rest of the canon reveals a drastic shift in the playwright's emphasis upon women, since females are generally subordinate in the other plays.

Marlowe used the first, second, and fourth books of Virgil's Aeneid as his source for Dido; in fact, in many passages he depended quite heavily on the Latin text.<sup>3</sup> D. C. Allen identifies the following as some of Marlowe's alterations of Virgil: 1) Iarbus is given a larger part and is fancied by Anna; 2) Dido dismantles the Trojan ships and Iarbus' jealous aid helps them get away; 3) Aeneas is much softer than his prototype; 4) Iarbus, "unlike himself," dies with Dido and Anna; 5) the gods have a more important role and are more capricious.<sup>4</sup> Each alteration is especially significant when we consider the consequence it has on the

female roles. Iarbus' enlarged role brings Anna more into play; it also allows us to see a heartless side of Dido's nature when she cruelly spurns him. The "softening" of Aeneas serves to emphasize Dido's apparent strength. The altercation between Juno and Venus culminates in a joint effort to secure a match between Aeneas and Dido. The apparent effect of Marlowe's modifications is that they increase the dramatic possibilities of the female roles. Dido is, beyond doubt, a woman's play. C. F. Tucker Brooke notes that "it contains (at least among his plays) his most elaborate portraits of women--portraits which . . . lack neither subtlety nor delicacy of feeling."<sup>5</sup>

Of the five female roles in the play (Dido, Venus, Juno, Anna, and the Nurse), the most "elaborate portrait," of course, is that of the protagonist, Dido. At first a powerful, commanding ruler, she is reduced to an insecure and forlorn lover victimized by uncontrollable passion. Venus and Juno are portrayed as capricious goddesses who, in effect, map out the queen's destiny to satisfy their own selfish desires without questioning the consequences that Dido will suffer. Dido's sister Anna, whose passion is not willed by the gods but rather by her own heart, nevertheless becomes a victim of burning love. The Nurse, touched playfully by Cupid's arrow, momentarily experiences notions of romance.

The dominant theme in Dido is love--not only romantic love (Dido, Aeneas, Anna), but motherly love (Venus),

grotesque love (the Nurse), thwarted love (Juno), unrequited love (Dido, Anna, Iarbus), and even illicit love (Jupiter, Ganymede). All the major characters and many of the minor characters are in some way involved in a love relationship. There is always the suggestion, however, that love is disruptive; hence, more specifically, the theme is "the destructive power of love."<sup>6</sup>

Love and its implications thus inform the movement of the play. Interestingly enough, dramatic structure is one aspect of the play which has received scant notice, an omission which is peculiar in light of its pattern of development. In terms of dramatic structure, Edward II is acclaimed as Marlowe's most technically mature plot. Harry Levin outlines the Edward play by diagramming the simultaneous decline of Edward and rise of Mortimer.<sup>7</sup> If one looks closely, one can find a similar pattern in Dido. Aeneas, in the earlier scenes of the play, is all but lost to despair, while Dido is at the height of power and strength. As she gradually becomes a slave to her passions, Aeneas concurrently becomes more courageous and aggressive. In essence, she falls from power to helplessness as Aeneas rises from helplessness not to power, but to resolve. Marlowe's use of this dramatic pattern is not as sophisticated in Dido as in Edward II nor as boldly obvious, but the general outline is there and will be more fully explored in the following pages.

Clifford Leech notes that there are two planes of action in Dido--the divine and the human--and that there is

a "recurrent interweaving of the two levels of being."<sup>8</sup> Venus, Juno, Cupid, Mercury, and to some extent, Jupiter, all intervene in the human action; and because these gods who direct the destinies of Dido and Aeneas are often portrayed as comical (or at least trivial), the play resounds with a harsh irony. Not only are the inherently noble mortals denied the chance to act on free will, but petty gods direct their fate.<sup>9</sup> Marlowe establishes the note of pettiness in the opening scene of the play, where almighty Jupiter is begging a flirtatious, petulant Ganymede to be his love. Bribing him with promises and luxurious gifts, Jupiter offers first to punish Juno severely for mistreating his precious cup-bearer, and then to make him fans made of feathers plucked from Juno's peacock. It is darkly comical that these most ungodlike, undignified creatures have the power to "Control proud fate and cut the thread of time" (I, i, 29).<sup>10</sup>

Though Steane is correct in claiming that the gods of the play "are petty childish humans who have all the worlds to play with," I think he overlooks Marlowe's purpose by claiming that they "are not . . . seen by the author as childish." According to Professor Steane, Marlowe "gives no hint of critical burlesque: he is probably offering them in a . . . deliberately outrageous manner, enjoying the freedom which their power . . . gives to the imagination."<sup>11</sup> What could be a better example of "burlesque" than the sight of the king of the gods dandling "that female wanton boy" on

his knee? Marlowe's portrayal of the gods' triviality serves an important function: by having them, in all their pettiness, control fate (and hence denying Aeneas and Dido the use of their own free will), he heightens the bitter irony of the tragedy.

While Jupiter is attempting to direct Aeneas' fate, Venus and Juno intervene with plans of their own, temporarily altering the Trojan's life-plan by involving him in a romance with Dido. In numbers of lines spoken, the parts played by the goddesses seem rather slight. Their significance, however, lies not in the size of their roles, but in their capacity as gods to instigate, if not manipulate, most of the action in the play.

Venus is motivated solely by motherly love for Aeneas; her only wish is to secure his safety: "What shall I do to save thee, my sweet boy . . ." (I, i, 74). She pleads with Jupiter for help; and when she sees her sea-worn son landed safely, she exclaims:

What, do I see my son now come on shore?

Venus, how are thou compassed with content,

The while thine eyes attract their sought-for joys.

(I, i, 134-136)

The disguise of a Tyrian maid which she assumes in I, i, is a means by which she can, undetected, direct Aeneas to the court, "Where Dido will receive ye with her smiles" (234). When she has left, Aeneas recognizes the maid as his mother: "I know her by the movings of her feet" (240). His cry

that she is "Too cruel" to forsake him is ironic in view of the fact that Venus is ultimately responsible for the repairing of his ships and his subsequent voyage to Italy.<sup>12</sup>

Venus' ploy of swapping Ascanius for Cupid is, of course, motivated by maternal devotion to Aeneas, but she also treats the young Ascanius with motherly affection as she abducts him:

For Dido's sake I'll take thee in my arms  
And stick these spangled feathers in thy hat.  
Eat comfits in mine arms and I will sing.

(II, i, 313-325)

The image Marlowe creates in these and the following few lines (she strews him with "sweet-smelling violets" and calls forth "milk white doves" to "be his centronels") is that of a young mother cradling a new-born son. The abduction of Ascanius allows Cupid to assume the boy's shape and smite Dido with his golden arrow.

Ribner notes that the entire Ascanius-Cupid subplot is the result of a cunning device by which Venus may forward the destiny of her son. He claims that she "uses Ascanius first to trick Dido into loving Aeneas so that his fleet may be repaired, and then her use of Ascanius as the false hostage creates the sense of security on Dido's part which permits Aeneas to escape."<sup>13</sup> However, a close look at the text reveals that Venus is not necessarily concerned with fixing his destiny in Rome, but only with procuring for him some type of permanent safety--whether it be Rome or the

Carthaginian throne. She instructs Cupid on how to "wound" Dido:

That she may dote upon Aeneas' love  
 And by that means repair his broken ships,  
 Victual his soldiers, give him wealthy gifts,  
 And he at last depart to Italy,  
 Or else in Carthage make his kingly throne.

(II, i, 327-331)

There is a further suggestion that Venus is not particularly mapping out Aeneas' destiny in Rome when she agrees with Juno about the feasibility of a marriage between Aeneas and Dido.

The confrontation between Venus and Juno in III, ii, exposes a hitherto concealed facet of Venus' nature. Juno has come to the grove where Ascanius sleeps to murder him, but Venus intervenes. She reacts violently to Juno's presence; protecting Ascanius with the ferocity of a lioness guarding her cub, Venus cries:

Out hateful hag! . . .

. . .

But I will tear thy eyes from forth thy head  
 And feast the birds with their blood-shotten balls,  
 If thou but lay thy fingers on my boy.

(32-36)

It is interesting to note that Venus, goddess of love and beauty, is portrayed in Marlowe's play as, at best, a doting mother and raging grandmother. At her worst, she engages in

a waspish argument with Juno. The belittlement of her classical role thus adds a comic touch.

When the two powerful goddesses finally resolve their differences, they make a pact to join Aeneas and Dido in marriage "And bring forth mighty kings to Carthage town" (75). Venus doubts Aeneas' willingness to stay in Carthage, but Juno allays her fears. As Venus has told Juno earlier, "Love my Aeneas, and desire is thine./The day, the night, my swans, my sweets are thine" (III, ii, 60-61). By paralleling "day," "night," "swans," and "sweets," Marlowe comically implies the capriciousness of the goddesses.

The significance of III, ii, is two-fold: first, a pact is made to secure the marriage. More importantly, though, divinity is shown stooping to petty squabbling; as Knoll points out, Juno and Venus "engage in the kind of female tussle that one sees in the farmyard of Gammer Gurton's Needle."<sup>14</sup> Allen calls the goddesses "not divinely supernatural but mortally comic, and they are in keeping with Marlowe's usual denigration of the divine."<sup>15</sup> Irony is implicit in the fact that these petty gods control men's destinies.

The extent of Venus' denigration is not nearly so severe as Juno's. From the first scene of the play, when she is the subject of a conversation between Jupiter and Ganymede, she is portrayed as a shrew. Ganymede asks to be shielded from "her shrewish blows" (3), and Jupiter promises a brutal and grotesque punishment for her if she

stands in the way of his dalliance with "the female wanton boy," as Venus calls him:

I vow, if she but once frown on thee more,  
To hang her, meteor-like, 'twixt heaven and earth,  
And bind her hand and foot with golden cords.

(12-14)

Juno must be viewed as a woman scorned; her involvement in the action, in fact, is motivated by wounded feminine pride. Not only is she neglected by her husband (Jupiter even gives Ganymede her wedding jewels), but she has seen her daughter Hebe replaced by Ganymede as cup-bearer to the gods. Perhaps nothing has served to arouse Juno's vengeance more than Paris' choice of Venus as fairest of the fair. Her intense jealousy of Venus is at the root of her attempts to endanger Aeneas: hurt the son to hurt the mother. Juno is partially responsible for the storm-tossed seas which almost kill Aeneas (I, i, 54-61); and her wish to kill his son Ascanius is also aimed at her rival: "Say, Paris, now shall Venus have the ball?/Say, vengeance, now shall her Ascanius die?" (III, ii, 12-13)

Juno has a sudden change of heart shortly before Venus confronts her; apparently she decides that vengeance should be taken on "lustful Jove and his adulterous child" instead of on Ascanius. To protect herself against Venus' wrath, she claims to have come to Ascanius' aid to save him "from snakes' and serpents' stings" (38). The pact between the goddesses is, in fact, suggested by Juno, who becomes almost

obsequious with Venus: "Hark to a motion of eternal league,/ Which I will make in quittance of thy love" (68-69). The motive behind Juno's agreement of reconciliation is curious and rather unclear; she may, as she claims, have realized how bootless it is to war with fate. On the other hand, she may be attempting to thwart Jupiter's wishes to send Aeneas to Italy. At any rate, she is responsible for creating the storm which forces Aeneas and Dido into the cave. Considering this fact, it is ironic that Iarbus, commenting on the sudden storm, says, "I think some fell enchantress dwelleth here" (IV, i, 3).

As we have seen, divine action on one level in the play intermingles with human action on another level. The three mortal females of the cast--the Nurse, Anna, and Dido--are in some way affected by the manipulative power of the goddesses. While Dido is a prime object in their schemes, Anna and the Nurse are affected indirectly as a result.

The Nurse appears only very briefly in the play. She has been commanded by Dido to hide Ascanius; and in IV, v, we see her taking Cupid (disguised as Ascanius) to her house. She tries to lure him with a rich, almost sensuous description of her orchard:

. . . that hath store of plums,  
Brown almonds, services, ripe figs, and dates,  
Dewberries, apples, yellow oranges,

A garden where are bee-hives full of honey,  
Musk-roses, and a thousand sort of flowers.

(4-8)

Cupid, in his usual playful manner, asks to be carried; the Nurse obliges him and suggests he "call me mother." Up to the point that she picks him up, it is obvious that her instincts are primarily maternal. However, once she holds Cupid in her arms, an amusing reversal occurs, not unlike the to and fro attitude towards Iarbus which Dido exhibits in III, i, after she cradles eroticism's namesake.

Several critics have stressed the drastic change that the Nurse undergoes as Cupid works his spell on her.<sup>16</sup> Judging by her lush depiction of her orchard, though, one cannot claim that she is so old as to be unable to appreciate luxury; perhaps, then, her drastic change is not as totally incongruous as it seems to be. Nevertheless, she does suddenly wish that she "might live to see this boy a man!" (18) She tells him, "You'll be a twigger when you come of age" (20). As Steane notes, "twigger" is a "picturesque term: a vigorous, prolific breeder (as of a ewe), or in slang, 'an unchaste or lascivious person'."<sup>17</sup> She vacillates between an awareness of how time has acted upon her and a desire to enjoy the sensual pleasures of youth once again:

A grave, and not a lover, fits thy age.

A grave? Why? I may live a hundred years;

Fourscore is but a girl's age. Love is sweet.

My veins are withered and my sinews dry.

Why should I think of love, now I should die?

(30-34)

Admittedly, Cupid is a nasty little god; but his affect on the Nurse is grotesquely farcical. Kocher notes that "her alterations between love and common sense are definitely humorous because of the contrasts they provide, not to speak of her being in love at all at that age. 'A husband, and no teeth'!"<sup>18</sup>

This scene is the most comic one in the play, and shows us Marlowe's capacity for humor, even though it is, as Steane suggests, "faintly pathetic and cruel."<sup>19</sup> The dark tone of the humor is typically Marlovian. The Nurse's exclamation, "O sacred love!/If there be any heaven in earth, 'tis love" (26-27), ironically echoes the theme of the play. Clearly, the entire scene suggests the destructive effects of love.

This theme is reiterated in the role of Dido's sister Anna, who in passionate desperation at the loss of Iarbus, throws herself into the flaming pyre at the play's end. When Dido is struck by Cupid's arrow and is suddenly overcome with love for Aeneas, she shares her joy with Anna: "O Anna, didst thou know how sweet love were,/Full soon wouldst thou abjure this single life" (III, i, 58-59). Only in an ironic aside in reply to Dido do we discover the reason for her "single life:" " . . . I know too well the sour of love./O, that Iarbus could but fancy me!" (60-61) The only chance

she has of winning her sister's suitor Iarbus, at this point, is by making certain that Dido abhor him; thus, when Dido praises Aeneas, Anna follows with deprecating remarks about Iarbus:

D: Is not Aeneas fair and beautiful?

A: Yes, and Iarbus foul and favorless.

D: Is he not eloquent in all his speech?

A: Yes, and Iarbus rude and rustical.

. . .

A: Then, sister, you'll abjure Iarbus' love?

D: Yet must I hear that loathsome name again?

(III, i, 62-78)

As passive and secretive as Anna seems to be in Act III, she does undergo a sort of reversal. In IV, iii, she visits Iarbus, who, in hopes of securing Aeneas' swift departure, is offering a sacrifice to "pacify that gloomy Jove/Whose empty altars have enlarged our ills" (1-2). Anna advises him to "Be ruled by me and seek some other love/Whose yielding heart may yield thee more relief" (36-37). We are reminded of the cave scene (III, iv) where Dido at first woos Aeneas with double entendres before she finally reveals her true feelings. As an empress, Dido does not violate rules of decorum in being the aggressor in a love relationship. Not so with Anna; in blatant audacity she admonishes Iarbus: "Away with Dido! Anna be thy song,/Anna that doth admire thee more than heaven" (IV, iii, 45-46). When he repudiates her, Anna's violent reaction ironically foreshadows her

suicide: "I'll follow thee with outcries ne'ertheless/And strew thy walks with my dishevelled hair" (IV, iii, 55-56).

As I have already indicated, the Anna-Iarbus subplot was not Marlowe's own invention; it was based on the Virgilian text. Anna's part in the play is significant insofar as her situation echoes the theme--the destructive effects of love. Like the heroine, she, too, is a woman scorned. She differs from Dido in the sense that her love originates from within herself; that is, it is a sincere love, not prompted by Cupid's arrow. But as Cole points out, both suicides "and the suffering that prompts them, stem from an agonizing and unbearable sense of loss, a loss that the sufferer refuses longer to endure."<sup>20</sup> In the role of Anna, then, Marlowe has created a functional character whose purpose is to emphasize the central dramatic action of the play (the Dido-Aeneas romance) by paralleling it.

Queen Dido, being the earliest protagonist in the Marlowe canon as well as its only female one, bears a great deal of scrutiny in this study. Scholars generally agree that in Dido alone Marlowe has created a well-developed and convincing female character.<sup>21</sup> Indeed, as I have already mentioned briefly, her development is closely correlated to the dramatic structure of the play. In this sense, we must examine Dido's development as a character in direct relation to Aeneas', since the sometimes subtle, sometimes blatant changes these two characters undergo determine the outcome of the play.

In the first and second acts of the play, Dido is unmistakably the stronger of the two characters; Aeneas appears to be almost impotent by comparison. The traditional male and female roles are reversed. By Act III (because of the gods' intervention, which causes Dido to become lovestruck), certain things begin to shift: Aeneas can at least speak as a man of some merit without almost crouching at Dido's feet; and Dido, beginning to feel the effect of her all-consuming love for Aeneas, starts to relinquish some of her monarchical dignity. By Act IV, Aeneas, prompted by Mercury, has gained enough self-confidence to attempt a departure from Carthage (albeit behind Dido's back), while Dido seems to be slipping into irrationality. In the final act, Aeneas' courage, instigated, admittedly, by a divine command, is such that he can confront Dido squarely and announce his farewell; and a hysterical Dido can come to terms with her life only by ending it. A closer look at the acts individually will validate these observations.

Venus' discourse with Jupiter in I, i, prepares us for the entrance of Aeneas. Clearly, he is favored and protected by the gods in all "his resplendent glory;" and Jupiter himself assures that "Aeneas' wandering fate is firm" (83). Aeneas is by far the noblest Trojan to survive the wars; and when he first speaks, this nobility underlies his words to Achates and the others:

How many dangers have we overpassed!

. . . .

Pluck up your hearts, since fate still rests  
our friend,

And changing heavens may those good days return,  
Which Pergama did vaunt in all her pride.

(I, i, 145-151)

Aeneas' courage and optimism in this passage are unmistakable; they serve to bolster his companions, who praise him in divine proportions as their only "god": "Do thou but smile and cloudy heaven will clear,/Whose night and day descendeth from thy brows" (155-156).

After Aeneas' first contact with a woman (Venus disguised as a Tyrian maid, I, i, 183-239), there is a noticeable change in the hero. As if the mere presence of a woman is intimidating, he becomes self-pitying, claiming himself "hapless . . . poor and unknown." This self-pity becomes Aeneas' chief distinguishing characteristic throughout the first three acts of the play.

In the opening scene of Act II, Aeneas and Achates lament the loss of Troy. The now cheerless Trojan is so downcast that, by his own admission, his passions surpass those of a woman. Whereas his optimism supported Achates in Act I, his present dejection seems to be contagious, as Achates, too, weeps. The child Ascanius begs his "mighty father:" "Sweet father, leave to weep" (II, i, 35). The picture, then, that Marlowe has drawn of Aeneas in the opening scenes of the play is of a most unheroic hero, whose melancholy is singularly unmanly. Scholars readily note that in

Marlowe's hands, Aeneas is "not very much of a hero."<sup>22</sup>

Knoll claims that Aeneas "does not measure up to the grandeur of Virgil's hero," and in many details his behavior is "almost contemptible." He excuses this playwright's error by suggesting that Marlowe simply was "not yet firmly in control of his medium."<sup>23</sup>

We can take objection to these scholarly deprecations if we make some inferences as to Marlowe's purpose in weakening Aeneas. My contention is that Marlowe's point was to suggest a contrast between the two main characters--to emphasize Aeneas' weakness so as to stress Dido's strength and supremacy. Knoll claims that "Dido is a female Tamburlaine; braving the gods out of their heavens, she asserts her authority as a goddess on earth."<sup>24</sup> If we agree, then Marlowe's purpose seems clear; he is laying the groundwork for his creation of the superhuman hero, and Dido is but its embryonic form.

Aeneas clearly affirms the contrast between himself and Dido when he first sees her in II, i, and identifies himself: "Sometime I was a Trojan, mighty queen,/But Troy is not. What shall I say I am?" (75-76) The next thirty-odd lines consist of Aeneas groveling in the presence of the dignified Carthaginian queen while she repeatedly tries to bolster and revive him. She clothes him in her former husband's robes and beckons him to take her royal seat and "banquet with a queen." In this scene, Dido is a tower of strength: she literally commands Aeneas to accept his new-found comforts ("I'll have it

so"); and she reminds him that he must act courageously, befitting his place: "Remember who thou art. Speak like thyself./Humility belongs to common grooms" (100-101). The extent of Dido's authority is expressed in these words she speaks to Aeneas: "Lies it in Dido's hands to make thee blessed,/Then be assured thou are not miserable" (104-105). And the dramatic irony is here evident; Dido's words foreshadow her attempt to keep Aeneas in Carthage.<sup>25</sup>

Dido finally persuades a sinking, fainting Aeneas to describe the downfall of Troy, which he does in less than 200 lines. Clifford Leech remarks that Aeneas was unsuccessful in rescuing three women in his escape from Troy--his wife Creusa, Cassandra, and Polyxena. Noting that Marlowe, in this case, has written "independently of his source," Leech sees the alteration as a case of "dramatic convenience," for it "establishes the hero as a man ready to part company with a woman when necessity arises."<sup>26</sup> Robert Knoll also notes Aeneas' failures in Troy, claiming the hero to be "callous" and "unfeeling."<sup>27</sup> But a different view of Aeneas' failures might be taken in light of his total account of Troy. In his entire tale, he is successful as an active agent only twice (once, when he disobeyed Hector's ghost's exhortation to flee and instead stayed for a while longer to do battle; and second, when he rescued his father and son). The remaining 180 lines describe widespread destruction and unfathomable violence surrounding a passive and rather helpless Aeneas. The result of Aeneas' account, then, is that it makes him

appear weaker, more disheartened, and more self-pitying than before. He finally has to cease his tale, since "Sorrow hath tired me quite" (II, i, 293). Dido, realizing perhaps the depth of Aeneas' pain, suggests that they divert their attentions elsewhere, but not before she blames the Trojan war and all its ensuing grief on Helen: "O, had that ticing strumpet ne'er been born!" (300)<sup>28</sup> At the close of Act II, then, two facts are undeniable: Dido is a dignified, powerful, and authoritative monarch (who happens to be a woman), and Aeneas (whose reputation, at least, attests to his bravery) is seen as a weak, blubbering soldier.

The contrast that Marlowe has thus far established between these characters begins to diminish to a certain extent in Act III as a direct result of Venus' and Cupid's intervention. In the opening lines of III, i, Dido is viewed for the first time as a woman with slightly romantic inclinations. She plays the coquette with Iarbus until Cupid (disguised as Ascanius) diverts her attentions long enough to smite her with his golden arrow. As the charm begins to take its toll, Dido is reduced to a comic figure as she alternately rejects and accepts Iarbus, finally dismissing him abruptly and, indeed, cruelly: ". . . I charge thee never look on me" (53). Cole notes that "the conflicts that Dido expresses in such confusion provide what is really comic interest, and emphasize her helplessness as well."<sup>29</sup> This scene also proves thematically significant insofar as it exposes the destructive effects of love, for it shows us

a formerly gracious and benevolent queen now becoming somewhat of a shrew, especially towards Iarbus.

Dido's power and control remain explicit in the remaining scenes of Act III, but she intends to use them solely to attain Aeneas' love; this becomes her single, all-consuming desire. She warns Anna to tell the people that ". . . none shall gaze on him but I, /Lest their gross eye-beams taint my lover's cheeks" (III, i, 72-73). Indeed, Dido views Aeneas as a possession; and when she extolls his beauty, it is seen in terms of wealth:

I'll make me bracelets of his golden hair,  
His glistening eyes shall be my looking-glass,

. . . .

His looks shall be my only library,  
And thou, Aeneas, Dido's treasury,  
In whose fair bosom I will lock more wealth  
That twenty thousand Indias can afford.

(84-92)

It is significant to note Dido's emphasis on her own material wealth because she fully intends to use it to bribe Aeneas into remaining in Carthage.

When Aeneas asks that Dido repair his ships, she agrees conditionally--that is, only if he stays in Carthage, ostensibly to protect the kingdom from bordering enemies, while Achates and the others sail to Italy. The following lines, replete with rich images, reveal the extent of the gifts Dido is willing to bestow on Aeneas to keep him by her side:<sup>30</sup>

I'll give thee tackling made of rivelled gold,  
 Wound on the barks of odoriferous trees,  
 Oars of massy ivory, full of holes  
 Through which the water shall delight to play.  
 Thy anchors shall be hewed from crystal rocks  
 Which, if thou lose, shall shine above the waves;  
 The masts whereon thy swelling sails shall hang,  
 Hollow pyramides of silver plate;  
 The sails of folded lawn, where shall be wrought  
 The wars of Troy, but not Troy's overthrow.  
 For ballace, empty Dido's treasury.  
 Take what ye will, but leave Aeneas here.

(III, i, 115-126)

J. B. Steane comments that in these lines Dido is disguising her passion by "wooing Aeneas in images where the suppressed eroticism finds expression."<sup>31</sup> She even tempts Achates with a vision of himself so richly clad that "sea-born nymphs" and "wanton mermaids" will court him. The wooing nymphs, no doubt, foreshadow the scene where she woos Aeneas. It is interesting to note that in this situation, Dido sees women as the active agents in romantic circumstances.<sup>32</sup> In fact, all three mortal women in the play (Dido, Anna, and the Nurse) involved in romantic relationships aggressively pursue the objects of their affection.

Dido shows Aeneas and his companions a series of pictures of her former suitors, men who, in all their nobility, were unable to "conquer" her. She is proud to boast that her

cunning enabled her to avoid their pursuits--after all, she is a woman not easily satisfied. Dido has cleverly devised this wooing trick: she is psychologically convincing Aeneas that he is worthy of her love if she deems it so, but she probably is hoping to spark up a bit of jealousy as well. Aeneas, oblivious to her purpose, exclaims: "O, happy shall be he whom Dido loves" (III, i, 167). Dido's reply almost betrays her:

Then never say that thou art miserable.  
 Because it may be thou shalt be my love.  
 Yet boast not of it, for I love thee not.  
 And yet I hate thee not. . . .

(168-171)

The queen's confusion recalls her alternating temperament with Iarbus in the early part of the scene--her reason and passion are struggling with each other for supremacy.

Passion clearly takes full control in the following scene, III, iii, when Dido treats an unassuming Iarbus as if he were a stray dog rather than a nobleman.<sup>33</sup> Her cruelty is so blatant that Aeneas, taken aback, tries to defend him: "But love and duty led him on perhaps/To press beyond acceptance to your sight" (15-16). Dido, with somewhat exaggerated disdain, commands Iarbus to return to the palace. For Iarbus, agonized with the pain of unrequited love, Dido becomes a symbol of woman's fickleness:

O love! O hate! O cruel women's hearts,

That imitate the moon in every change  
 And like the planets ever love to range.

(III, iii, 66-68)

Dido's contempt for Iarbus and Iarbus' subsequent mood of dejection are of paramount importance to the dramatic structure of the play for they cause him to swear bloody revenge on his rival. He forsakes the idea of revenge in IV, ii, and instead offers a sacrifice to Jove to "Redress these wrongs and warn him to his ships" (21). Whether or not Jove hears Iarbus' prayers is uncertain; however, Mercury twice warns Aeneas that he must obey Jove and sail for Italy. Iarbus gets his revenge without any bloodshed at all by offering Aeneas the ships and supplies he needs to flee. His kindly aid underlies the intense dramatic irony of the finale--Aeneas' flight causes Dido's suicide, which brings Iarbus to self-destruction. In effect, then, Iarbus is "hoist with his own petard."

The play's fiery conclusion is foreshadowed in the climactic cave scene, III, iv, when Dido and Aeneas meet (ostensibly by accident) to seek shelter from the storm. Here Dido can no longer be coy:

Prometheus hath put on Cupid's shape,  
 And I must perish in his burning arms.  
 Aeneas, O Aeneas, quench these flames.

(20-22)

As Cole notes, the dramatist is afforded the context for the use of ironic imagery since the final disaster of the play

is already known. Accordingly, "Marlowe has placed one such image at the high point of Dido's fortunes, indeed at the high point of the main action. . . . Prometheus, the bringer of fire, has inflamed her with a love that will end in her destruction in flames that are more than figurative. The catastrophe is ironically evoked at the height of her passion."<sup>34</sup> Aeneas is a little slow to understand her protestations. When he says, "Aeneas' thoughts dare not ascend so high/As Dido's heart, which monarchs might not scale" (32-33), we are not certain of whether he is being sincere or obsequious. For Aeneas never vows his heart-felt love with the fervor that Dido does. When he does give his heart, he swears first by the "gods of hospitality:"

If that your majesty can look so low  
As my despised worths that shun all praise,  
With this my hand I give to you my heart  
And vow by all the gods of hospitality,

. . .

Never to leave these new up-reared walls,  
Whiles Dido lives and rules in Juno's town,  
Never to like or love any but her.

(40-50)

That Aeneas' love is not as ardently passionate as Dido's is understandable. Firstly, since he has not been struck by Cupid's arrow, the attraction he feels for her is sincere rather than divinely instigated. Secondly, the Trojan seems to be struggling between a devotion to the harsher

realities of life (battling enemies, founding a new kingdom), and a desire for the enticing, luxurious world that a life with Dido affords. Dido's love, on the other hand, is all-consuming; she is so overwrought that she, like Edward II, would willingly forfeit her responsibilities as monarch in the name of passion: ". . . let rich Carthage fleet upon the seas,/So I may have Aeneas in mine arms" (IV, iv, 134-135). As Steane notes, "For the woman the emotional life is everything while the man looks toward the sea, to a world beyond."<sup>35</sup>

At any rate, Aeneas' vow of love is obviously enough to gratify Dido. She is aware of the fact that, as Aeneas, he should sail to Italy and fulfill his destiny; thus, she suggests he forget both his former name and his destiny:

Stout love, in mine arms make thy Italy,  
Whose crown and kingdom rest at thy command.  
Sichaeus, not Aeneas, be thou called,  
The King of Carthage, not Anchises' son.  
Hold. Take these jewels at thy lover's hand,  
These golden bracelets, and this wedding ring,  
Wherewith my husband wooed me yet a maid,  
And be thou king of Libya by my gift.

(III, iv, 56-63)

The reversal of sexual roles in the conclusion of this scene is quite clear; as Steane notes, both "the initiative and driving passion are hers."<sup>36</sup> Some scholars have noted the comic aspect of this sexual reversal. Cole notes that here

"she is presented as the comic victim of her passion, just as in the end she will be the tragic victim."<sup>37</sup> Leech, less gently, claims that she "has not much reticence or dignity as love comes on her, and she is as lavish with gifts as an insecure lover can be."<sup>38</sup> At any rate, the lovers seem to be sworn to each other eternally.

But there is, I think, some textual evidence to support the claim that Marlowe's Aeneas doesn't love Dido as deeply as Virgil's did. His swearing by the "gods of hospitality" may perhaps suggest that our Aeneas vows his love more out of gratitude and obligation than sincere romantic interest. After all, Aeneas does claim Dido to be "author of our lives" (III, i, 111) when she offers to repair his ships. And when his first attempt to leave Carthage is thwarted, he says to the queen: "O Dido, patroness of all our lives, / When I leave thee, death be my punishment" (IV, iv, 55-56). Steane points out that "Aeneas is never shown to feel about Dido with the intensity of his passionate love for Troy."<sup>39</sup> And technically speaking, we might note that while Dido uses the word (or a form of the word) "love" 32 times in speaking of Aeneas, he only mentions the word four times.

Further proof of Aeneas' lack of deep affection for Dido is evidenced in IV, iii, when he hastily responds to Mercury's summons to depart for Italy. He is very much aware of the dichotomy between the courtly luxury of Carthage and the manly world of adventure that Italy affords:<sup>40</sup>

Grant she or no, Aeneas must away,

Whose golden fortunes, clogged with courtly ease,  
 Cannot ascend to fame's immortal house

(7-9).

As Aeneas sees it, Carthage is a stumbling block that he must overcome. Significantly, this Aeneas is not the blubbering soldier that he was in Act I. His spirits have revived, and he has regained his lost vigor. To this new Aeneas, Carthage is viewed as "these unrenowned realms,  
 Whereas nobility abhors to stay" (18-19); it would not only be foolish, but degrading for him to stay.

And just as Aeneas is recovering his strength, Dido is losing hers. Aeneas' men point out how selfish and cruel she has become: Achates warns Aeneas to "Banish that ticing dame from forth your mouth" (IV, iii, 31); and Illioneus claims that "she cares not how we sink or swim,/So she may have Aeneas in her arms" (42). When Aeneas is ready to depart, he does not so much as bid Dido farewell. He does, however, contemplate his obligation to thank her:

I fain would go, yet beauty calls me back.  
 To leave her so and not once say farewell  
 Were to transgress against all laws of love,  
 But if I use such ceremonious thanks  
 As parting friends accustom on the shore,  
 Her silver arms will coll me round about  
 And tears of pearl cry, 'Stay, Aeneas, stay!'<sup>41</sup>  
 Each word she says will then contain a crown,  
 And every speech be ended with a kiss.

I may not dure this female drudgery.

To sea, Aeneas! Find out Italy!

(IV, iii, 46-56)

While the first three lines imply that Aeneas does feel drawn by love to stay in Carthage, lines 49-50 suggest a sense of friendship more than love. The last six lines of this passage seem not so much a rationalization for leaving, then, as a mocking awareness of the queen's hold on him. Aeneas associates Dido's influence with images of wealth (her "silver arms," her "tears of pearl," and words that each "contain a crown"); and he refuses to become her subject.

Dido discovers and halts the Trojans' furtive attempt to flee; and she is not so overwrought with love that she is blind to the speciousness of Aeneas' excuses. First he tells her that he was only aboard the ship to "take my farewell of Achates" (IV, iv, 17). When she commands the other Trojans to leave, he claims that "The sea is rough. The winds blow to the shore" (25). Finally, to demonstrate his fidelity, he asks: "Hath not the Carthage queen mine only son?/Thinks Dido I will go and leave him here?" (29-30) Clifford Leech notes that "unless there is an oversight here, Marlowe is implying that up to this point Aeneas has forgotten, or has been prepared to abandon, his son in his attempt to steal away."<sup>42</sup> But we must realize that Virgil's Aeneas only takes leave of Carthage once, and Ascanius is with him. Marlowe's alteration of the Latin text, then, surely must have some purpose. He is either making a fool of Aeneas (as



Aeneas promises to remain in Carthage, but he accepts Dido's crown and scepter reticently and with seeming modesty. He is aware of a certain destiny that cannot be ignored-- that he is meant to be a warrior, not a king. There is perhaps the suggestion that Aeneas will again depart, but the Trojan does bestow a kiss on Dido and assures her that he will never leave. However, Dido senses his desire to escape to a life of adventure, and even his assurances cannot convince her otherwise.

Aware of her increasing powerlessness, Dido decides to hide Ascanius and destroy Aeneas' sailing gear. In her desperation she is reducing love to a game of force, something of a symbolic rape. Monomaniacal, she is completely devoid of all sense of responsibility as a monarch:

Armies of foes resolved to win this town,  
Or impious traitors vowed to have my life,  
Affright me not. . . .

. . . .

It is Aeneas' frown that ends my days,  
If he forsake me not, I never die,  
For in his looks I see eternity,  
And he'll make me immortal with a kiss.

(IV, iv, 113-123)

It is coincidental that the last line (123), which Marlowe perfects much later in Doctor Faustus, Dido uses her power to petty ends: in her feeble attempt to forestall destiny, she breaks Aeneas' oars and ties his sails in knots. She

is reduced to sheer exasperation even though Aeneas has given his word to remain in Carthage.

Act V opens with Aeneas mapping out his plans to "build a statelier Troy" in Carthage. Apparently, he has accepted his place as Dido's husband and is enjoying all the wealth and power that go with it:

From golden India, Ganges will I fetch,

. . . .

The sun from Egypt shall rich odors bring,

Wherewith his burning beams, like laboring bees

That load their thighs with Hybla's honey's spoils,

Shall here unburden their exhaled sweets

And plant our pleasant suburbs with her fumes.

(V, i, 8-15)

It seems that Aeneas is basking in the luxury that his throne affords. The rich, sensual imagery employed in these lines is reminiscent of Dido's tempting promise to give him "tackling made of rivelled gold" (III, i, 115). Mercury interrupts to upbraid him for "beautifying the empire of this queen, / While Italy is clean out of thy mind" (V, i, 28-29). He returns Ascanius to his father with an explanation of the boy's absence. When Aeneas comes to understand Venus' involvement, he exclaims: "No marvel, Dido, though thou be in love, / That daily dandlest Cupid in thine arms" (44-45).

There may be some significance in the fact that Aeneas does not mention his own love for Dido; more importantly, however, he finally recognizes Dido's love as being divinely

instigated. Furthermore, he explains his stay in Carthage to Mercury as the result of forced necessity: although he has ships, Dido has destroyed his oar, masts, and sails. In effect, Aeneas is saying that he would have left sooner if he'd only had the means. Iarbus, learning of Aeneas' plight, quickly and graciously offers him the needed supplies to set sail.

When Aeneas tells the queen openly that he must depart, she reminds him that there had been a time "When Dido's beauty chained thine eyes to her" (V, i, 114). But something other than beauty has "chained" him:

O queen of Carthage, wert thou ugly black,  
 Aeneas could not choose but hold thee dear.  
 Yet he must not gainsay the gods' behest.

(125-127)

Fittingly, Dido's last plea is an appeal to Aeneas' sense of obligation; she reminds him of her beneficence: "Repaired not I thy ships, made thee a king, / And all thy needy followers noblemen?" (163-164) As Cole points out, in the farewell scene Marlowe centers the "focus of pity on Dido and softens any signs of struggle in the mind of Aeneas."<sup>45</sup> Dido's utter powerlessness is reflected in her final few words before Aeneas departs: "I have not power to stay thee" (183). At this point the play has come full circle--structurally, that is; Dido's descendancy and Aeneas' ascendancy are fully realized.

As Cole notes, "Dido's anguish over the loss of Aeneas" reduces her to a "state of desperate frenzy."<sup>46</sup> Suffering from the effects of deep grief, she imagines that she sees Aeneas returning; and when she realizes the falsity of her vision, she still refuses to come to terms with the finality of their separation. In hysterical mental anguish, she exclaims:

I'll frame me wings of wax like Icarus,  
 And oe'r his ships will soar unto the sun,  
 That they may melt and I fall in his arms.  
 Or else I'll make a prayer unto the waves  
 That I may swim to him like Triton's niece.  
 O Anna, fetch Arion's harp  
 That I may tice a dolphin to the shore  
 And ride upon his back unto my love.

(243-250)

This is perhaps the most poignant passage in the play, and it serves to underline the ironic helplessness of her situation. The irony is further developed when Dido realizes that "she herself has been partly responsible for her present tragic plight:"<sup>47</sup>

Nothing can bear me to him but a ship,  
 And he hath all my fleet. What shall I do  
 But die in fury of this oversight?

(276-269)

Her decision to commit suicide, then, although based on her inability to bear the loss of Aeneas, is partly self-recriminatory. But as Cole points out, the "loss of Aeneas constitutes

Dido's greatest agony and the emotional climax of the play; her death comes as the inevitable and anticlimactic result."<sup>48</sup>

Dido's preparations for her self-immolation include gathering together the remains of Aeneas' belongings to serve as fuel for the fire. Her last words testify to the fact that she expects the gods to take vengeance in her behalf:<sup>49</sup>

Grant, though the traitors land in Italy,  
They may be still tormented with unrest,  
And from mine ashes let a conqueror rise,  
That may revenge this treason to a queen  
By plowing up his countries with the sword.

(304-308)

Iarbus' and then Anna's suicides, following swiftly after Dido's, have caused critics to suggest that the play's ending is a mere piling up of corpses. Leech seems to think there is a comic effect with the triple suicide.<sup>50</sup> Steane claims that the "rapid succession of suicides calls for . . . parody."<sup>51</sup> Cole, I believe, is much nearer the mark with his contention that the "sudden, final spectacle of the triple suicide at Dido's funeral pyre is emblematic of the fiery destruction wrought in this play by overbearing, passionate love."<sup>52</sup>

That Marlowe intended to explore the destructive powers of love in Dido is undeniable--all the major characters and most of the minor characters suffer to some extent. But more specifically, I think, we can infer that much of this

destruction arises from the loss of personal dignity that is experienced by so many of the characters. The gods themselves are seen as petty: almighty Jove is content merely to "dandle Ganymede on his knee" and tickle him with feathers, while Juno and Venus grapple like witches and childishly toss idle threats to and fro. Aeneas, supposedly a hero, blubbers like a weakling and allows himself to be browbeaten. The old Nurse, a toothless bag of bones, momentarily is stirred by the heat of sexual passion. Anna relinquishes her self-esteem to grovel at Iarbus' feet, and both she and Iarbus throw themselves into an inferno in the name of unrequited love.

Naturally, the most tragic figure is Dido herself; in the course of the play, we see her fall from a position of self-assured dignity to one of abject desperation. She evokes most of our pity and sympathy because of her utter helplessness and her inability to control passions that whimsical gods have kindled. But Marlowe's Dido somehow seems to suffer an even greater loss of dignity than Virgil's because Marlowe's Aeneas rarely responds as passionately as Dido woos. As Steane notes, in Dido "there is no real sense of dignity in life or the possibility of a tragic dignity in the loss of it."<sup>53</sup> Just as Edward II, Dido meets death unpossessed of the slightest shred of self-esteem; this, not her loss of Aeneas, is the real tragedy of the play.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>As Douglas Cole notes in Suffering and Evil in the Plays of Christopher Marlowe (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962), p. 76, this judgment is based on the "verse style, which most resembles that of Tamburlaine, by the numerous lines which seem to have been refashioned to fit other plays, and on the academic nature of the subject and source." He also notes T. M. Pearce's argument for a later date; see Pearce's "Evidence for Dating Marlowe's Tragedy of Dido," Studies in the English Renaissance Drama, ed. J. W. Bennett, et. al. (New York: New York University Press, 1959), pp. 231-247. Pearce bases his theory on Marlowe's experienced knowledge of stagecraft.

<sup>2</sup>Robert E. Knoll, Christopher Marlowe (New York: Twayne Publishers Inc., 1969), p. 32.

<sup>3</sup>C. F. Tucker Brooke, ed., The Works of Christopher Marlowe (London: Oxford University Press, 1910), p. 117.

<sup>4</sup>D. C. Allen, "Marlowe's Dido and the Tradition," Essays on Shakespeare and the Elizabethan Drama in Honor of Hardin Craig, ed. Richard Hosley (Columbia, Mo.: University of Missouri Press, 1962), pp. 55-68.

<sup>5</sup>Brooke, p. 123.

<sup>6</sup>Knoll, p. 39; see also Cole, p. 262.

<sup>7</sup>Harry Levin, The Overreacher: A Study of Christopher Marlowe (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952), p. 189.

<sup>8</sup>Clifford Leech, "Marlowe's Humor," Marlowe: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Clifford Leech (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1964), pp. 167-173.

<sup>9</sup>According to Cole, there was "ample precedent in classical literature for depicting the Olympian residents with levity, but it was another thing to introduce such treatment into the Virgilian legend. The sporting gods, just as in the Iliad, seem to lack the stature and worth of the human characters whose destinies they so unperturbedly control" (p. 84).

<sup>10</sup>Irving Ribner, ed., The Complete Plays of Christopher Marlowe (New York: The Odyssey Press, 1963). All further references to the plays are taken from this text.

<sup>11</sup>J. B. Steane, Marlowe: A Critical Study (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964), p. 47.

<sup>12</sup>She is as powerful a protectress now as she was in the Trojan war when she saved Aeneas from an attacking band of Mymidons by conveying him "from their crooked nets and bands" (II, i, 222).

<sup>13</sup>Ribner, p. xxxi.

<sup>14</sup>Knoll, p. 33.

<sup>15</sup>Allen, p. 67; see also Leech, p. 169.

<sup>16</sup>Allen notes that "Dido's infection is mirrored in the Nurse's" (p. 172). Cole comments in the Nurse scene as an "analogous action" to Dido's being struck by Cupid (p. 85). Steane calls it a "grotesque parody" of a similar disturbance in Dido herself" (p. 35). Goldberg ("The Role of the Female in the Drama of Lyly, Greene, Kyd, and Marlowe," Diss. Northwestern 1969) notes the parallel between this scene and the Dido-Cupid-Iarbus scene; he claims they both show "helpless victims of love" (p. 99). He believes the Nurse's episode "increases our compassion for Dido and sharpens the bleakness of her situation."

<sup>17</sup>Steane, p. 34.

<sup>18</sup>Paul H. Kocher, Christopher Marlowe: A Study of His Thought, Learning, and Character (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1946), p. 269.

<sup>19</sup>Steane, p. 34; see also Kocher, p. 269.

<sup>20</sup>Cole, p. 86.

<sup>21</sup>Harry Levin claims that Dido is "an answer to those critics who contend that he was unable to portray a convincing heroine" (p. 16). Similar sentiments are also expressed by Steane (pp. 29-61), Brooke (p. 123), and Knoll (p. 34).

<sup>22</sup>Leech claims that "the founder of the Roman fortunes is, in Marlowe's hands, not very much of a hero" (p. 169). Allen points out that "When Dido first encounters Marlowe's Aeneas, he is a far more humble and self-deprecating hero than he had ever been before" (p. 66).

<sup>23</sup>Knoll, p. 35.

<sup>24</sup>Knoll, p. 36.

<sup>25</sup>A few lines earlier, Dido tells Aeneas, who claims he is "too mean to be companion to a queen," that "Thy fortune may be greater than thy birth" (89-90). Perhaps Marlowe is allowing Dido a little feminine self-indulgence even before she is struck by Cupid; she might already be a bit attracted to the Trojan.

<sup>26</sup>Leech, p. 170.

<sup>27</sup>Knoll claims that Marlowe reduces the moving episode of Aeneas' attempt to save his wife "to half a line: 'O there I lost my wife'. We might forgive Aeneas' callousness--remembering that Marlowe has only one hundred and eighty lines to tell a story on which Virgil expended 800--but his desertion of his sister Cassandra, whom he leaves 'sprawling in the streets' (II, i, 274), seems equally unfeeling" (p. 35).

<sup>28</sup>Levin notes that with the word "'ticing', the prevailing mood of the play is set;" and it is this "mood of enticement that predominates in the tragedy" (p. 16).

<sup>29</sup>Cole also notes a parallel action between this scene and the Nurse-Cupid scene, both of which show that "Dido treats both the tragedy and the comedy of love" (p. 85). Knoll, commenting on the Dido-Cupid scene, claims that "Marlowe is reaching for more than laughter: He is trying to dramatize the conflict in Dido's mind between the legitimate love which she may feel for Iarbus and the destructive passion for Aeneas which has been inspired by Cupid. Marlowe wants to show Dido's reason in active conflict with her passion, but he does not have the dramatic means" (p. 37).

<sup>30</sup>This passage may be compared to Tamburlaine's wooing speech to Zenocrate in 1, I, ii, 93-105.

<sup>31</sup>Steane, p. 36.

<sup>32</sup>Perhaps Marlowe means to suggest a parallel between Aeneas and Achates, just as he suggests the parallel between Aeneas and Iarbus, who is vehemently pursued by Anna.

<sup>33</sup>Anna mentions Dido's extreme cruelty when she visits Iarbus to protest her love: "Alas, poor king, that labors so in vain/For her that so delighteth in thy pain" (IV, ii, 33-34).

<sup>34</sup>Cole, p. 83.

<sup>35</sup>Steane, p. 38.

<sup>36</sup>Steane, p. 34.

<sup>37</sup>Cole, p. 85.

<sup>38</sup>Leech, p. 171.

<sup>39</sup>Steane, p. 38.

<sup>40</sup>Achates, in the same scene, reiterates this dichotomy:

This is no life for men-at-arms to live,  
Where daliance doth consume a soldier's strength,  
And wanton motions of alluring eyes  
Effeminate our minds, inured to war.

(33-36)

This is not unlike Tamburlaine's attitude toward love.

<sup>41</sup>According to Steane, "Aeneas here is caricaturing deliberately. His tone is knowing and ironical; he is exaggerating what Dido's response will be when she learns that he is leaving her" (p. 51).

<sup>42</sup>Leech, p. 171.

<sup>43</sup>Kocher devotes several pages of inquiry to this particular passage (which Marlowe added independently of his source) because it "raises issues as to the powers of the sovereign which were of living importance in the sixteenth century." He considers it "a dramatically violent expression of a political idea which, while repugnant to the main stream of western European thought, . . . was gaining some currency with a minority group in Britain. . . ." Kocher claims that since "no particular purpose of characterization seems to be

served," and "since it makes no difference to the plot whether Dido is an absolute or a limited ruler and her status as queen is not elsewhere drawn in question," that Marlowe simply brought in these ideas because he held them. It is, according to Kocher, the "logical expression in the area of politics of the high pitched egoism" which the play shares with its creator (pp. 176-180). But Professor Kocher, in his eagerness to prove Marlowe a political egoist, has overlooked his abilities as a dramatist. This passage does indeed have "a particular purpose of characterization:" it shows Dido's impotence in the face of destiny while reinforcing the theme of the destructive effects of love. The irony implicit in her protestations of sovereignty only make her powerlessness more painfully clear.

<sup>44</sup>Leech, p. 171.

<sup>45</sup>Cole, p. 78.

<sup>46</sup>Cole, p. 81.

<sup>47</sup>Cole, p. 81.

<sup>48</sup>Cole, p. 82.

<sup>49</sup>Clearly this passage suggests that Dido dies with vengeance in her heart; Cole is guilty of an oversight in suggesting that Marlowe's Dido is not Virgilian, but "much more akin to the warm and sympathetic Dido of Ovid's Heroides (Letter VII), whose love and concern for Aeneas' well-being rule out all rancor and revenge" (p. 80, footnote).

<sup>50</sup>Leech, p. 172.

<sup>51</sup>Steane, p. 48.

<sup>52</sup>Cole, p. 82.

<sup>53</sup>Steane, p. 50.

## II. Tamburlaine the Great, Parts I and II

With Tamburlaine the Great Marlowe began his career as a playwright for the public theater. The date generally accepted for the completion of Part I and its first performance is the winter of 1587/8; the second part, completed shortly afterwards, appeared in the spring or early summer of 1588.<sup>1</sup> Apparently Marlowe conceived of Part I independently of Part II. Proof of this is well established by two facts: 1) according to most scholars, the fact that Marlowe used up most of his sources in Part I indicates that he was not looking ahead to a sequel; 2) the fact that Part II was written as a result of the successful reception of Part I is explained in its prologue ("The general welcomes Tamburlaine received . . . Hath made our poet pen his second part . . ."). Although the two parts were independently conceived, they were both written within a short period of time and compose a unified story. Hence, they will be examined as a whole in this study to allow a sense of continuity in character exploration.

There are some 40 authors to which Marlowe might have referred to find accounts of the historical Tīmūr Khan, but specific episodes have been traced only to seven with certainty--Chalcondylas, Haytoun, Fregoso, Mexia, Perondinus,

and Primaudaye. The Byzantine historian Chalcondylas is primarily worth noting in this examination because he alone, of all the aforementioned, emphasizes the unusually strong affection and respect that Tīmūr had for his first wife. In Chalcondylas' history, the Scythian consults his wife on military policies and even follows her advice.<sup>2</sup> From this outline, Marlowe develops the relationship between Tamburlaine and Zenocrate to such a degree that it becomes a central aspect of the plays. As he does in Dido, the playwright significantly enlarges a female role and thus increases its dramatic possibilities.

Unlike Dido's world of enchantment, Tamburlaine's is the battlefield or the city under siege. It is a man's world purely and simply, where Marlowe's primary concern is with the revelation of his superhuman Scythian hero; there seems to be no place for femininity. The audience is invited to view Tamburlaine's success in a series of uninterrupted and unqualified victories until Fate claims him through death. In Part I, Marlowe develops the theme of "the power and splendor of the human will"<sup>3</sup> by displaying Tamburlaine's singular ability to conquer anyone whom he chooses, both in love and war. In Part II, the theme is somewhat different, for we come to understand at the play's end that although desire is limitless, fulfillment is not;<sup>4</sup> opposition is controllable, but death is not. In addition, the idea of love, or union, is thematically significant in both plays.

Intricately interwoven with the other themes in various ways, it produces some subtle effects, which will later be explored.

Because of the essential nature of the Tamburlaine plays (i.e., the military exploits of a world conqueror), women's roles are at a minimum; in fact, only about 12% of the cast play female parts. Even Zenocrate, the heroine, has a relatively small part as far as number of lines. The number of lines spoken to or about Zenocrate in Part I (251) exceeds those spoken by her (175). In Part II, the same is true; she speaks only 40 lines, while 210 lines are spoken to or about her. In both plays combined, only 14% of the lines are directly or indirectly related to the heroine. These tabulations reveal an interesting curiosity. Despite the fact that so few lines are devoted to Zenocrate, she is a key figure whose presence is always felt; indeed, it permeates the plays. It is important to keep in mind the fact that although she has few lines, she is nevertheless on stage for much of the action, silent but present. Theater-goers are perhaps much more aware of her and her significance than we are as readers.

Zenocrate's is one of seven female roles in the Tamburlaine plays, and hers is the only one of any major significance. The secondary roles of Zabina, the empress of Bajazeth, and Olympia, the captured widow of an opposing captain, are of some importance in Parts I and II respectively. The remaining four roles are excellent examples of Marlowe's flat, two-dimensional characters. They are "figures" rather than people who distinguish themselves in action: the Virgins

of Damascus in Part I (whome we shall consider as a unit); the Concubines in Part II (who speak only once, and in one voice); and Anippe and Ebea, Zenocrate's and Zabina's maids, respectively (whose roles are so insignificant that they merit no attention at all).

With the exception of Zenocrate, then, the women's roles in the two plays are relatively minor. Oddly enough, even the male characters seem minor in comparison to Tamburlaine. Marlowe was, no doubt, aware of the extreme imbalance of his cast. In fact, he obviously does everything theatrically possible to create and sustain that imbalance by imbuing his hero with such overwhelming strength of body and will that all other characters are dwarfed in comparison, both literally and figuratively.<sup>5</sup> Audience and stage characters alike are mesmerized by the sheer dynamism he exudes. And in recreating the story of the historically ruthless Scythian warrior, Marlowe gives a carefully wrought figure whom we cannot fully despise, no matter how cruel, how violent, or how audacious he is.<sup>6</sup> Tamburlaine mystifies us because, despite his often contemptible behavior, he has a softer side, most notably expressed in his relationship with Zenocrate.

Several Marlowe scholars have commented on the seeming inconsistencies in Tamburlaine's temperament, on his ambivalent, if not paradoxical, nature.<sup>7</sup> Michael Poirier arrives at the following verdict: the "dramatist who attempted to blend the passion of beauty with that of power in the soul of the Tartar conqueror was evidently courting disaster;

. . . from a psychological point of view, the bold synthesis is an utter failure."<sup>8</sup> Such a judgment seems to imply that a passion for beauty and a passion for power must necessarily be mutually exclusive. On the contrary, it is this very synthesis that Marlowe succeeds in; because of it, Tamburlaine is endowed with an unforgettable magic. He is despicable as a tyrant, yet admirable as a warrior. He lacks the fullness of a poet's scope for compassion, yet he is an eloquent rhapsodist. He is unaroused by the heat of sexual passion, yet warmly human as a lover in the spiritual sense. These and other ambiguities attest to the psychological complexity of the hero, and the two plays together constitute a revelation of that complexity.

The women in Tamburlaine I and II play a significant part in leading up to this revelation: to some degree, they all function dramatically to define the essential ambivalence in the Tamburlaine spirit and in Marlowe's tragic vision as well. Oftentimes this ambivalence is revealed by Tamburlaine's response to a certain woman or women. At other times, our response to a particular woman and her situation illuminates our perception of the hero's ambivalence. In still other instances, the two responses (Tamburlaine's and our own) work together for the same result.

These generalizations can best be supported by a close look at Marlowe's women, especially the heroine Zenocrate, who functions most significantly to define Tamburlaine's ambivalence. But before we explore the various aspects of her

dramatic function, and hence, what she is in the play, we should first establish what she is not. She is not, contrary to the opinions of Duthie, Battenhouse, and others, a "source of inspiration" for Tamburlaine in "his pursuit of military glory,"<sup>9</sup> nor does she provide him with a motive for his exploits.<sup>10</sup> Granted, Tamburlaine declares just before the marriage rites that she adds "more courage to my conquering mind" (1, V, ii, 452). Yet we must remember his comment to Techelles early in Part I that "women must be flattered" (I, ii, 107). It is understandable that he flatter his bride hours before the wedding. In addition, before we even see or hear from the Scythian, we are forewarned by Meander that Tamburlaine hopes "To reign in Asia, and with barbarous arms/ To make himself the monarch of the East" (I, i, 42-43). And of course, Tamburlaine himself verifies the fact that his own imagination provides him with sufficient motive and inspiration for military pursuits. Pondering the notion that it must be ". . . brave to be a king,/And ride in triumph through Persepolis" (1, II, v, 53-54), he concludes that he can easily attain whatever he wishes--it is there for the taking. Later, when Tamburlaine explains to Cosroe that the Persian has suffered defeat because "The thirst of reign and sweetness of a crown/. . . Moved me to manage arms against thy state" (1, II, vii, 12-16), there is no doubt that Zenocrate's influence is not only absent, but wholly unnecessary. Tamburlaine's philosophy of life is that nature "Doth teach us all to have aspiring minds" (20); we must, perforce, persevere:

Until we reach the ripest fruit of all,  
That perfect bliss and sole felicity,  
The sweet fruition of an earthly crown.

(27-29)

This philosophy offers undeniable proof that his courage and driving ambition are not motivated by any subjective, external force (i.e., Zenocrate), but rather by an innate desire to achieve earthly glory. Decidedly, then, Zenocrate does not operate as a motivator of action for Tamburlaine. Hence, we know what she is not: more to the point, what is she?

Above all, Zenocrate is a guide for the audience's reaction to the overwhelming figure of Tamburlaine. She adores him, deifies him; yet she is not so enraptured as to lack moral scruples and human compassion for others. Although she prays for Tamburlaine's victories, she is capable of feeling pity for his enemy in defeat. As Eugene Waith notes, "through her, an awareness of the standard judgment of Tamburlaine's 'overreaching' is made without irony and made forcefully;" and like Hercules' Deianira, she can criticize and still have unwavering devotion.<sup>11</sup>

Marlowe makes certain that we accept Zenocrate unquestionably as our moral guide. Firstly, she is the only character who has a truly credible response to Tamburlaine. His enemies are despicable to us, and we have the feeling that his followers are a bit too self-seeking. Zenocrate is really the only character responding to Tamburlaine whose opinions we can respect. Secondly, we are persuaded to trust her judgment

both by the way others view her and the way she views herself.

For example, there is great emphasis placed on her chastity and purity. In Tamburlaine's long wooing speech (1, I, ii, 82-105), his words are fraught with images of whiteness, snow, silver, ivory, and ice, all of which suggest a coldness characteristic of her chastity. In 1, III, iii, she is called "Fairer than rocks of pearl and precious stone/The only paragon of Tamburlaine" (118-119); and in his famous soliloquy on Beauty (1, V, ii, 72-127), he refers to her "silver tresses," to her tears of "resolved pearl," and to the comments that she evokes from Beauty, who writes "volumes with her ivory pen." To Tamburlaine, she is:

. . . the world's fair eye,  
Whose beams illuminate the lamps of heaven,  
Whose cheerful looks do clear the cloudy air  
And clothe it in a crystal livery.

(2, I, iv, 1-4)

Despite the ease with which he imposes calamity on others, the conqueror takes pains to protect her honor; he attests to her chastity, for example, when the Soldan inquires (1, V, ii, 422-423). Zenocrate herself defends her honor both to Agydas (1, III, ii, 25-40) and Zabina (1, III, iii, 169-170).

Along with these many references to her chastity and purity, we can also find an abundance of references to Zenocrate as divine; to be exact, at least 22 such references appear in the two plays. Most often Tamburlaine will simply

call her "divine Zenocrate," as he does five times in one single speech, his eulogy at her deathbed (2, II, iv, 1-47). Or he refers to her "heavenly face" or "heavenly hue." Once she is paralleled to Bellona, goddess of war; but usually she is compared to Juno, the "queen of Heaven."

Added to all these testaments to Zenocrate's chastity and divinity is the fact that she never does anything to make us question their validity. Battenhouse is certainly far off the mark in maintaining that Marlowe conceived of Zenocrate as an evil woman.<sup>12</sup> Granted, she accepts Tamburlaine's proposal even though she is betrothed, which makes her appear fickle; but she does penance for her slight sin when she mourns over the dying Arabia in 1, V, ii, 349-353. In fact, we never seriously doubt her goodness.<sup>13</sup> The play's insistence on Zenocrate's chastity and divinity serve two very important functions. Firstly, Tamburlaine gains our favor simply because he is loved by such a paragon of virtue,<sup>14</sup> even though we, like Zenocrate, are moved to horror by his many repugnant deeds. Secondly, Tamburlaine's praise of and respect for Zenocrate's honor are, by extension, an indication of his own honor;<sup>15</sup> likewise, the emphasis on her divinity makes Tamburlaine more god-like in our eyes, or at least assures us that he is god-like enough to deserve her.

Hence we have a tendency to view the Tamburlaine-Zenocrate relationship as the striking of a perfect balance and, more appropriately, a perfect union, albeit a union of opposites. The theme of union is invoked throughout the plays, to the

extent that the pair seem inextricably bound to each other. The first indication of this union is suggested by the fact that they appear together on stage when we see them for the first time in l, I, ii. The next time Zenocrate appears, it is to protest her love for Tamburlaine to an incredulous Agydas. She expresses her longing in terms of a union with the Scythian:

Ah, my life and soul, still hover in his breast,  
And leave my body senseless as the earth,  
Or else unite you to his life and soul  
That I may live and die with Tamburlaine!

(l, III, ii, 21-24)

According to Ellis-Fermor, the "you" in l. 23 invokes Zenocrate's soul,<sup>16</sup> but it is more plausible (as well as more grammatically correct because of the parallel structure implied) that the "you" invokes both her life and her soul, which she is addressing in l. 21. Zenocrate, then, is aspiring to a complete union of her being with that of Tamburlaine. At this point in their relationship, the union is purely spiritual. There is no physical element involved, and when it is suggested, it is ignored.<sup>17</sup> By the end of Part I, however, the union is absolute since the spiritual union is complemented by the physical union implicit in the marriage.

Part II continues the emphasis on the union theme by placing great significance on the products of the union, their three sons. Twice Zenocrate refers to the fact that the sons partake of both father and mother. She claims that "they have

their mother's looks,/But when they list, their conquering father's heart" (I, iv, 35-36); and her last wish admonishes her sons to "In death resemble me,/And in your lives your father's excellency" (II, iv, 75-76). Amyras, who takes the throne after Tamburlaine's death, is a true representation of the balance struck between Tamburlaine and Zenocrate. He has his father's courage, yet we sense that he also has a great capacity for compassion. As Duthie points out, Calyphas, on the other hand, is unworthy of both his parents.<sup>18</sup> He disobeys his mother's dying wish that he resemble his "father's excellency," and Zenocrate would probably have been disappointed in his refusal to join his brothers in battle. Thus when Tamburlaine kills Calyphas, we not only see it as a "ritual" in which the hero "extirpates an unworthy part of himself,"<sup>19</sup> but also as a reminder that he is an unworthy part of Zenocrate as well.

Finally, when Tamburlaine is dying and Zenocrate's hearse is brought on stage, there is an insistence on the preservation of the union. It becomes both physically permanent, since they will be entombed together in a mausoleum, and spiritually permanent, since both Tamburlaine and Zenocrate make reference before they die to a hopeful reunion in heaven. The Tamburlaine story ends as it began, with Zenocrate and the hero together on stage, albeit not as we saw them at the start. And no matter what Tamburlaine's iniquities, we are aware of the fact that Zenocrate has been by his side all along, subtly tempering our response to them. Her gentle and

sympathetic nature, while contrasting with Tamburlaine's often inhuman treachery, creates a balance in the union and thus serves to qualify our view of him.

Given the fact that Zenocrate is presented as gentle and sympathetic, her conduct during her verbal battle with Zabina (1, III, iii) seems shocking. But as Jocelyn Powell notes, in this scene Zenocrate is part of a "dramatic ritual" since she represents Tamburlaine's enmity for Bajazeth; thus, the verbal battle is the equivalent of the real battle going on offstage. As a result, what commands our attention is not the "personal inconsistency" we sense in Zenocrate, but rather the conflict between the two kings.<sup>20</sup> Irony is implicit in the fact that in supporting and defending Tamburlaine in this instance, Zenocrate is acting very much unlike herself.<sup>21</sup>

As I have earlier pointed out, Zenocrate serves as a guide of our reactions to Tamburlaine; and most of the time, she staunchly supports him, as she does in the skirmish with Zabina. However, she is not so devoid of a sense of morality as to condone totally his cruelty--on the contrary, she is often painfully aware of it.<sup>22</sup> When Damascus is under its second day of siege, Zenocrate begs Tamburlaine to cease his assault:

My lord, to see my father's town besieged,  
The country wasted, where myself was born,  
How can it but afflict my very soul?

If any love remain in you, my lord,

. . .

Then raise your siege from fair Damascus walls.

(1, IV, iv, 63-69)

This is the first time since she professed her love that Zenocrate has verbalized any criticism of Tamburlaine; she goes so far as to suggest that he is not only merciless, but almost without love. Tamburlaine implies that by showing mercy, he would be compromising his honor: "And wouldst thou have me buy thy father's love/With such a loss?" (1, IV, iv, 81-82) When Zenocrate continues to plead, Tamburlaine finally gives in:

Content thyself; his person shall be safe

And all the friends of fair Zenocrate,

If with their lives they will be pleased to yield.

(85-87)

We must keep in mind the fact that IV, iv, takes place on the second day of the siege on Damascus; Tamburlaine, according to stage directions, is "all in scarlet;" this is reiterated in the opening speech when he refers to his "bloody colors." The Soldan's messenger, in IV, ii, explains the significance of Tamburlaine's colors and what they mean for his opponents. When his "furniture" is red, "Then must his kindled wrath be quenched with blood,/Not sparing any that can manage arms" (57-58). What we see in IV, iv, then, is that Tamburlaine violates his established code (of not sparing anyone who can manage arms) by offering to spare the Soldan

and Zenocrate's friends if they yield. With only a little gentle pleading from Zenocrate, Tamburlaine agrees to be merciful. This episode has been glossed over or ignored by some of the most perceptive Marlovian scholars; but it is, I think, highly significant. It shows that Zenocrate's influence inspires in him a capacity for pity, or more appropriately, reawakens it (see his attitude of sympathy towards the suffering of the Christian slaves captured by Bajazeth, I, III, iii, 40-60).

C. I. Duthie, in an excellent paper, discusses the dramatic structure of Tamburlaine Part I in terms of Zenocrate's influence. Duthie maintains that Tamburlaine's conflict between Honor and Beauty in his famous soliloquy (V, ii, 72-127) is resolved as a result of Zenocrate's softening influence as a symbol of Beauty. According to Duthie, the "modifying effect of Beauty on Tamburlaine is to create a disposition to show pity in a greater degree than he has been willing to do before. We may say that what is opposed to Beauty during the conflict in his mind is Honor as he has up to now conceived it--that is, a conception of Honor which excludes Pity after a certain point."<sup>23</sup> Basically, Duthie's argument is sound; Zenocrate does have a softening influence on Tamburlaine. However, Duthie fails to notice the significance of Tamburlaine's concession in IV, iv, claiming that there Zenocrate's plea for pity only makes the Scythian begin to think on it. Contrary to Duthie's analysis, we find that Tamburlaine agrees to spare the Soldan before the Beauty soliloquy.

At any rate, Tamburlaine's concession in IV, iv, is not realized since the Soldan refuses to surrender. The supplicant Virgins who visit Tamburlaine when he is "all in black" (i.e., the third day of the siege) fail to move him to mercy; and when he has them taken away, he exclaims:

I will not spare these proud Egyptians,  
 Nor change my martial observations  
 For all the wealth of Gihon's golden waves

. . . .

They have refused the offer of their lives . . .

(V, ii, 58-63).

Judged in the hero's terms, his anger is justifiable; he has already once agreed to show mercy, to change his "martial observations" (although the opposition had no way of knowing it), and his benevolence was not acted upon. The poignancy of the Beauty soliloquy, which follows the meeting with the Virgins, can partly be attributed to Tamburlaine's wounded pride.

As Duthie has indicated, the soliloquy reveals the hero's "psychological crisis."<sup>24</sup> Tamburlaine is distraught because Zenocrate still fears for her father's life: "With hair dishevelled," she "wipes her watery cheeks," and she "Rain'st on the earth resolved pearl in showers" (176). If he agrees to spare the Soldan again, he risks compromising his principles even more so than before because now his colors are black (indicating total destruction for his victims). He ruminates on Beauty and the fact that its essence is inexpressible. Its effect, however, is not:

But how unseemly is it for my sex,  
 My discipline of arms and chivalry,  
 My nature, and the terror of my name,  
 To harbor thoughts effeminate and faint!  
 Save only that in beauty's just applause,  
 With whose instinct the soul of man is touched,  
 And every warrior that is rapt with love  
 Of fame, of valor, and of victory,  
 Must needs have beauty beat on his conceits.  
 I thus conceiving and subduing both,

. . .

Shall give the world to note, for all by birth,  
 That virtue solely is the sum of glory,  
 And fashions men of true nobility.

(1, V, ii, 111-127)

In these words Marlowe points up the essential conflict which underscores Tamburlaine's ambiguity: the conflict between head and heart, between principle (Honor) and passion (Beauty). Duthie maintains that at the end of the soliloquy, Tamburlaine undergoes a drastic change;<sup>25</sup> in doing so, the scholar overlooks Tamburlaine's fundamental ambivalence. He is not merely a rock that Zenocrate softens, but a multi-faceted gem whose various sides she illuminates.

If Zenocrate evokes in Tamburlaine a conflict between principle and passion, then Tamburlaine, in 1, V, ii, is the source of the same sort of internal struggle for Zenocrate. She has earlier noted her lord's cruelty to Damascus, but at

the sight of the Virgins hoisted up on horsemen's lances and the Turks' brains spilled against the bars of a cage, she calls herself "Wretched Zenocrate." She is, for the first time, painfully aware of Tamburlaine's ruthlessness. She mournfully disclaims his desire for "an earthly crown" with words that are an ironic reflection on Tamburlaine's "sweet fruition" speech. In doing so, she propounds the underlying theme of mutability in the Tamburlaine plays:

Those that are proud of fickle empery  
 And place their chiefest good in earthly pomp,  
 Behold the Turk and his great emperess!  
 Ah, Tamburlaine my love, sweet Tamburlaine,  
 That fights for scepters and for slippery crowns,  
 Behold the Turk and his great emperess!<sup>26</sup>

(289-294)

Is Levin overlooking this passage when he claims that in Tamburlaine's world there is "No room for moral compunctions?" He notes that "only the esthete Calyphas feels 'what it is to kill a man' (3700) and merely the weakling Mycetes curses the man 'that first invented war' (644)."<sup>27</sup> It seems, rather, that Zenocrate is the only character in the plays who strongly asserts the existence of an ethical code of right and wrong. And the audience agrees with her assertion far more readily than that of an insipid Calyphas or a feeble Mycetes. Furthermore, her lament derives greater poignancy from the fact that she is genuinely torn between two conflicting emotions.

Her internal conflict is intensified a few lines later when she is informed that Arabia, her father, and Tamburlaine are meeting in the field. She naturally feels a divided duty between "my father and my first-betrothed love" and "my life and present love." As the wounded Arabia lies dying in her arms, we sense an undercurrent of regret in her words:

Behold Zenocrate, the cursed object  
Whose fortunes never mastered her griefs.  
Behold her wounded in conceit for thee,  
As much as thy fair body is for me!

(350-353)

But regret is only momentary; as Arabia breathes his last, Tamburlaine leads in the Soldan, whom he has decided to spare. Zenocrate forgets her grief and is once more joyously enthralled with the Scythian's presence and his generosity.

What follows are the last 100 lines of Part I; here Tamburlaine's ambivalence is subtly revealed in at least three instances. He claims that Zenocrate has "calmed the fury of my sword" (V, ii, 374), yet he promises to add strength to the Soldan's dominions since "The god of war resigns his room to me" (387). As he views the bloody scene of the Turks, the cold insensitivity of his remark explicitly contrasts with the humanity of Zenocrate; Tamburlaine says:

The Turk and his great empress, as it seems,  
Left to themselves while we were at the fight,  
Have desperately dispatched their slavish lives;  
With them Arabia too hath left his life.

(407-410)

And yet Tamburlaine assures Zenocrate that Arabia and "this great Turk and his fair emperess" will be entombed with honor. He promises her that his "mighty arm" shall extend from Africa to the banks of the Ganges; but, for the time being, "Tamburlaine takes truce with all the world" (466).

The Tamburlaine of Part II, although he is essentially the same character, is directly associated with the mutability theme first voiced, albeit quietly, in Part I by Zenocrate. His attitude toward his sons is but one of several factors which work together to weaken the hero.<sup>28</sup> He fears, in I, iv, that "their looks are amorous/Not martial as the sons of Tamburlaine" (21-22). Zenocrate's attempt to assuage his doubts is unsuccessful because while Amyras and Celibinus are sincerely courageous, Calyphas is content to hide behind his mother's skirts. Tamburlaine's feeling that one or all of his sons is weak and effeminate indicates a weakness in the hero himself. Totally absent is the softening influence which Zenocrate exerts in Part I. Fear of his sons' cowardice causes the hero to rage:

For he shall wear the crown of Persia  
Whose head hath deepest scars, whose breast most  
wounds,  
Which being wroth sends lightning from his eyes,  
And in the furrows of his frowning brows  
Harbors revenge, war, death, and cruelty.

(I, iv, 74-78)

If bombastic rage underlies Tamburlaine's defense against the weakness of his sons, then poignant rage infuses his lament at Zenocrate's deathbed, II, iv. For the first time, the hero is forced to come to terms with the loss of a part of himself.<sup>29</sup> The fear of that loss renders him prostrate with grief. When Tamburlaine claims that "The golden ball of heaven's eternal fire . . ./Now wants the fuel that inflamed his beams" (2-4), the metaphor of Zenocrate serving as fuel for the sun is entirely consistent with his view of himself as larger than life. Tamburlaine is much like the sun, who "binds his temples with a frowning cloud" (6). Marlowe's use of light and dark imagery in this scene is thematically significant; the extinction of Zenocrate's radiance foreshadows the ensuing darkness of Tamburlaine's world, which culminates in his death in V, iii.<sup>30</sup>

Perhaps the most touching lines in the Tamburlaine plays are the hero's elegy on Zenocrate's reception into heaven:

Now walk the angels on the walls of heaven,  
As sentinels to warn th'immortal souls  
To entertain divine Zenocrate.

. . . .

The cherubins and holy seraphins,  
That sing and play before the King of Kings,  
Use all their voices and their instruments  
To entertain divine Zenocrate.

. . . .

The god that tunes this music to our souls

Holds out his hand in highest majesty  
 To entertain divine Zenocrate.  
 Then let some holy trance convey my thoughts  
 Up to the palace of th'imperial heaven,  
 That this my life may be as short to me  
 As are the days of sweet Zenocrate.

(15-75)

Paul Kocher suggests that this passage "seems to have a purely musical and pictorial purpose. . . . Marlowe wanted a gorgeous painting of the abodes of bliss, and got it even if he had to send a Mohammedan Zenocrate to a Christian heaven via a highly heterodox Tamburlaine. Such is the measure of Marlowe's opportunism."<sup>31</sup> This accusation is a blatant denial of everything that Marlowe accomplishes in the elegy. Firstly, this passage is just as pivotal for Part II as the Beauty soliloquy is for Part I; at the very least, it firmly establishes the essential ambivalence in Tamburlaine's spirit. At no other point in the two plays are we made so much aware of the hero's gentleness and of the seemingly incongruous fact that it can exist simultaneously in a soul which "Harbors revenge, war, death and cruelty (2, I, iv, 78). Secondly, the elegy allows us to see a humbled, supplicant side of Tamburlaine. Although the passage is heavily laden with Christian overtones, Tamburlaine's is a non-specific religiosity. Hence, it would be short-sighted to assume that Tamburlaine is finally turning to God in a desperate attempt to compensate for his past sins. The significance of the passage

derives from the fact that he recognizes a deity whom he must revere. There is also a stark realization of an ordered universe of complete harmony, a universe in which a Tamburlaine threatening gods out of heaven has no place. He is aware, if only temporarily, that he is of this earth and not of imperial heaven; he is, more importantly, aware of his own mortality since it is bound up with Zenocrate's.

Tamburlaine's elegy, then, is fraught with prayer; Zenocrate's response to it is fraught with resolution and a peaceful acceptance of the inevitable:

I fare, my lord, as other empresses,  
That, when this frail and transitory flesh  
Hath sucked the measure of that vital air  
That feeds the body with his dated health,  
Wane with enforced and necessary change!

(42-46)

Thus Zenocrate, with her reference to "this frail and transitory flesh," records the essential order of the universe; there echoes a recognition of man for what he really is. The allusion to "other empresses" recalls Zabina, for whose death Zenocrate had wept bitterly, and because of whom she had voiced the mutability theme in I, I, V, ii ("Those that are proud of fickle empery . . ./Behold the Turk and his great emperess," 289-291). In her dying words to her sons, Zenocrate reiterates the idea of accepting one's own mortality: "In death resemble me,/And in your lives your father's excellency" (75-76).

Zenocrate's death renders Tamburlaine "Raving, impatient, desperate and mad" (112); and, as Duthie points out, it is "relevant to the dramatic design of Part II since it is part of Death's initial victory in a drama the main theme of which is Tamburlaine versus Death."<sup>32</sup> Tamburlaine's order that Larissa be burned indicates the extent of his frenzy. Before Zenocrate's death, his conquests had been orderly. He had established a three-day siege using white, red, and black flags to suggest his intentions to the victim. He had justified his destruction by claiming himself the scourge of God. Now he swears death and destruction "Because my dear Zenocrate is dead" (III, ii, 74).

Throughout the remainder of Part II (with the exception of the last 145 lines), Tamburlaine is an enigma. He immortalizes Zenocrate in gold and mourns her death, then suddenly, within a few lines, begins to instruct his sons in the rudiments of war. Structurally speaking, this seems incongruous, but thematically perhaps it is not. The sons of Zenocrate should be taught nobility; they must partake of her greatness. With Zenocrate now gone, Tamburlaine can immortalize both himself and Zenocrate by building strong warriors out of his sons. She is a symbol of perfection; and he will expect the same perfection from his sons when they are trained to be "worthy sons of Tamburlaine the Great" (2, III, ii, 92). Calyphas does not measure up, and hence, is obliterated.

Tamburlaine sees himself at one point as Jove's enemy and 30 lines later as a symbol of the "power of heaven's

eternal majesty" (IV, i, 83). His attitude toward the existence of a deity and his relationship with that deity has been the topic of much scholarly debate, but is not really a question here. What is worth mentioning is his fluctuation from one attitude to another, the cause of which is his loss of Zenocrate. Although he preserves her body in a movable tomb, he cannot preserve her spiritual presence. This fact lies at the root of his gradual demise in Part II.

Confronted with sudden illness in V, iii, the hero at first rages against the gods for having smitten him thus (42-114). But he undergoes an abrupt change of heart shortly before crowning his son Amyras and instructs him:

Let not thy love exceed thine honor, son,  
Nor bar thy mind that magnanimity  
That nobly must admit necessity.

(199-201)

That Tamburlaine should use the word "necessity" is highly significant. Firstly, it recalls Zenocrate's warning that man must accept "enforced and necessary change;" and Theridamas reiterates the mutability theme in his warning to Amyras to "obey his majesty,/Since fate commands and proud necessity." (204-205). Secondly, it reveals Tamburlaine's final acceptance of his own mortality, a fact which he begins to come to terms with at Zenocrate's death, but only now fully admits.<sup>33</sup>

Zenocrate's hearse, an ironic symbol of the mutability theme, is brought on stage at the end of the play; it emphasizes

her personal and dramatic significance to Tamburlaine and to the plays as a whole. In Part I, Tamburlaine's "perfect bliss and sole felicity" is an "earthly crown." Facing death, the hero recognizes the temporal aspects of this-worldly desires; thus, in Part II he admits that real bliss, not of this earth, will be a view of Zenocrate in heaven:

And when my soul hath virtue of your sight,  
Pierce through the coffin and the sheet of gold,  
And glut your longings with a heaven of joy.

(225-227)

Admittedly, an examination of Zenocrate's role is the best means by which to fully understand the scope of the Scythian's character. But although the remaining female roles are relatively minor, each does its part to contribute to the revelation of the Tamburlaine spirit. For example, the pain and degradation suffered by Zabina (and, of course, Bajazeth) is a direct result of Tamburlaine's indomitable cruelty and his relentless yearning for conquest. In I, V, ii, the Turks' double suicide has a dual effect. On the one hand, it emphasizes Tamburlaine's apparent invincibility, his power to control. On the other hand, it suggests that there is a limit to that power. Mahood points out that the double suicide is "the clearest indication that Tamburlaine's power is far from superhuman;" hence, Bajazeth and Zabina "point the way towards his ultimate discovery that, although he can destroy, he cannot keep alive, and that the real power over life and death lies beyond human reach."<sup>34</sup>

It should be noted that though Bajazeth's death has parallels in the historical sources, Zabina's does not. Douglas Cole suggests that Marlowe's addition "not only increases the pathos and terror of the catastrophe; it also represents a rendering of suffering more human than the scene otherwise displays."<sup>35</sup> Beyond this, the "bloody spectacle elicits from Zenocrate the orthodox moral (Beware of "fickle empery" and "slippery crowns") which reflects the mutability theme that Tamburlaine finally comes to realize in Part II.

In a way, Zabina's suicide in Part I (V, i) is paralleled to Olympia's suicide in Part II (IV, iii). Each woman is driven to her death by a fierce devotion to her husband, a devotion which makes him the center of her universe. In the absence of their mates, Olympia and Zabina both find life meaningless. But the distinction between the two women derives from the fact that after Bajazeth's death, Zabina is still a prisoner; Olympia, on the other hand, could be a queen if she were to accept Theridamas' proposal.

Theridamas' wooing of Olympia points up another parallel; there is a striking resemblance between this and Tamburlaine's wooing of Zenocrate.<sup>36</sup> Each man is initially smitten by the beauty of a woman, and each one's first protestation of love comes too quickly to be dramatically effective in terms of naturalism.<sup>37</sup> Both Tamburlaine and Theridamas use identical imagery and language to lament the deaths of their women, although Theridamas speaks in a lower key than his master. There is one significant difference between the attitude that

each man has toward his loved one and her virtue. While Tamburlaine never once forces Zenocrate's honor, Theridamas claims that he will use force if necessary to satisfy his lust (2, IV, iii, 50-54). Tamburlaine's love for Zenocrate, then, is apparently developed on a much higher plane than Theridamas' love for Olympia. Theridamas is also weaker than Tamburlaine in the sense that Beauty can cause him to sacrifice honor ("And I will cast off arms and sit with thee, / Spending my life in sweet discourse of love," 44-45). This weakening of Theridamas symbolically represents a weakening, if not a failure, in Tamburlaine himself, for there is evidence that even his staunchest follower would desert him for love. Furthermore, Theridamas' failure to possess Olympia suggests, by extension, Tamburlaine's failing ability to master nature; Olympia has, as Fanta points out, "eluded Tamburlaine's grasp as much as Theridamas'."<sup>38</sup>

With regards to the Olympia episode, there is a third parallel worth noting, one which is perhaps more significant than the other two combined. One cannot help but see the distinct similarities between Olympia and Tamburlaine. As the Scythian is Marlowe's most powerful male character, so is Olympia, I think, his strongest female character. Both characters are larger than life because of their abnormally determined will to succeed. Each loses a spouse, kills a son, and has a rendezvous with death. There is a contrast, however, between Olympia's passionate desire for death and Tamburlaine's struggle against it. Her fate is an ironic

comment on that of Tamburlaine. Above all, the importance of the Olympia story lies in its reflection of the ambivalence in Tamburlaine. While she does suffer as a result of his cruelty, the likenesses between the two enobles him in our eyes.

Tamburlaine's confrontation with the Virgins of Damascus in 1, V, ii, reveals yet another example of how women function to point up the ambivalence of the hero. His opening lines in the scene indicate that he sees them as helpless creatures and suggest that he feels compassion for them:

What, are the turtles frayed out of their nests?

Alas, poor fools, must you be first shall feel

The sworn destruction of Damascus?

(1-3)

Their plaintive cries for clemency, however, cannot bend Tamburlaine. Despite the sympathy he might feel for them, he vehemently clings to his intentions in the name of principle, "That which mine honor swears shall be performed" (44). The implicit conflict that Tamburlaine experiences in this scene is not unlike the one reflected in the Beauty soliloquy, where the hero is torn between principle and passion--that is, between an intellectual and an emotional response to a situation. He shows the Virgins the point of his sword, where sits "imperious Death;" yet he seems relieved that they will not suffer slaughter at his own hands: "But I am pleased you shall not see him there./He now is seated on my horsemen's spears" (50-51).

What lies at the crux of Tamburlaine's character is his notion of honor. In man, it is realized as an indomitable spirit of bravery. In woman, it is manifested as chastity, most notably in Zenocrate.<sup>39</sup> In Part II, Tamburlaine divides among his followers the Turkish spoils, part of which consists of the captive kings' concubines. When the screaming women beg that they be spared, that their honors be saved, Tamburlaine retorts: "Save your honors! 'Twere but time indeed, / Lost long before you knew what honor meant" (IV, iv, 86-87). How can a man who defends such an orthodox ethical code be at the same time the "scourge and terror of the world" and, in effect, extend himself beyond the limits of morality?

Marlowe paints a full and vivid portrait of Tamburlaine. Using ambivalence as a canvas and chiaroscuro as a basic technique, the playwright produces a heroic figure who elicits simultaneously our admiration and our contempt. From beginning to end, Zenocrate's influence on Tamburlaine stands out with striking clarity. In Part I, she moves him to pity; in Part II, she leads him to an understanding of his own mortality. In both instances, Tamburlaine's response to her influence reveals his fullness of character, a fullness which owes its essence to the hero's ambivalence. The other female characters function in much the same way as Zenocrate, albeit to a much lesser degree. It is significant that although women's roles seem to be relatively unimportant in deriving a literal interpretation of Tamburlaine's life, they

do have a considerable influence on our emotional interpretation of the hero. Thus, an awareness of the function of women in the Tamburlaine plays is basic to our understanding of the Scythian's psychological complexities.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Una M. Ellis-Fermor, ed., Tamburlaine the Great in Two Parts (London: Methuen, 1930), p. 6.

<sup>2</sup>Ellis-Fermor, p. 36.

<sup>3</sup>Helen Gardner, "The Second Part of Tamburlaine the Great," Modern Language Review, 37 (1942), 18-24; rpt. in part in Critics on Marlowe, Judith O'Neill, ed. (Coral Gables, Fla.: University of Miami Press, 1969), 37-43.

<sup>4</sup>Gardner, p. 38.

<sup>5</sup>It must be remembered that Marlowe was writing a play for Edward Alleyn to star in, which affects the nature of the play considerably, given Alleyn's strengths.

<sup>6</sup>Leslie Fieler, in his Tamburlaine Part I and the Audience (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1962), goes into great detail outlining the various methods Marlowe employs to make up accept Tamburlaine favorably.

<sup>7</sup>Eugene Waith notes in The Herculean Hero in Marlowe, Chapman, Shakespeare, and Dryden (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962) that Marlowe never lets us forget the anti-theses which define his hero; "there is no relaxation of

the tensions between his egotism and altruism, his cruelties and benefactions, his human limitations and his divine potentialities" (p. 90). Robert Knoll, in Christopher Marlowe (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1969), points up the error of viewing Tamburlaine as an inconsistent character; rather, he is "attractively diabolical" (p. 43). Paul Kocher notes in Christopher Marlowe: A Study of His Thought, Learning, and Character (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1964) that Tamburlaine exhibits the conflict between "defiant aspiration" and passionate surrender" (p. 304). Douglas Cole emphasizes in Suffering and Evil in the Plays of Christopher Marlowe (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962) the ambivalence of the plays' themes, which implicitly is a reflection of the hero (pp. 102-103). Fieler refers to Tamburlaine as a "morally disturbing paradox" (p. 6).

<sup>8</sup>Michael Poirier, Christopher Marlowe (London: Chatto & Windus, 1951), pp. 109-110.

<sup>9</sup>C. I. Duthie, "The Dramatic Structure of Marlowe's Tamburlaine the Great, Parts I and II," English Studies, n. s. 1 (1948), pp. 101-126. Duthie does concede that Tamburlaine had "obviously conceived his military aspirations before he captured her" but still maintains that she is a major source of inspiration for him (p. 113).

<sup>10</sup>Roy W. Battenhouse, Marlowe's Tamburlaine: A Study in Renaissance Moral Philosophy (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1964), p. 235.

<sup>11</sup>Waith, p. 80.

<sup>12</sup>Battenhouse, pp. 166-167.

<sup>13</sup>According to Fieler, Zenocrate is "a near perfect ideal of femininity, at least from a man's point of view, and is always presented in a sympathetic and admirable light." He adds further that "by her background and personal virtues," she "should be a good representative of traditional morality" (p. 47).

<sup>14</sup>John Bakeless, in The Tragical History of Christopher Marlowe, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1942), v. 1, p. 226, and Fieler (p. 47), among others, suggest that she makes the audience feel sympathetic toward Tamburlaine.

<sup>15</sup>We must remember that Tamburlaine never threatens Zenocrate's chastity, as Theridamas does Olympia's.

<sup>16</sup>Ellis-Fermor, pp. 120-121, footnote 23.

<sup>17</sup>Muriel Bradbrook, in Themes and Conventions of Elizabethan Tragedy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1935) notes that while Agydas' arguments against Tamburlaine are incontrovertible at a naturalist level, Zenocrate doesn't reply at the same level but soars over his argument with a quite "irrelevant reply" (III, ii, 47ff.), thus "dehumanizing Tamburlaine (p. 140).

<sup>18</sup>Duthie, p. 125.

<sup>19</sup>Waith, p. 84.

<sup>20</sup>"Marlowe's Spectacle," Tulane Drama Review, 8 (1964), 195-210.

<sup>21</sup>Charles G. Masinton's comment in Christopher Marlowe's Tragic Vision: A Study in Damnation (Athens: University of Ohio Press, 1972) that Zenocrate and Zabina are objects of Marlowe's satire in this scene appears to be short-sighted (p. 28).

<sup>22</sup>It may be argued that Zenocrate only feels pity when Tamburlaine's cruelty extends to her immediate realm (i.e., Damascus and her father). Granted, she does not moralize when Bajazeth is caged, but neither does she commend the deed. In fact, she is curiously silent except when she questions Tamburlaine in 1, IV, iv (26-27) about suffering the curses of the enslaved Turks. We might conclude that, with regard to the Turks, she feels no immediate pity because their apparent boldness and strength does not elicit it. She does, however, weep bitterly for their bloody death.

<sup>23</sup>Duthie, p. 106.

<sup>24</sup>Duthie, p. 107.

<sup>25</sup>Duthie, p. 105.

<sup>26</sup>Cole sees this speech as the explication of a moral (p. 95).

<sup>27</sup>Harry Levin, The Overreacher: A Study of Christopher Marlowe (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952), p. 54.

<sup>28</sup>Part II opens with a Christian-pagan alliance formed against Tamburlaine as well as a betrayal by one of his men. Taken together with the weakness of Tamburlaine's sons and Zenocrate's death, they work to weaken the hero to the point of madness.

<sup>29</sup>Powell views Zenocrate's death as the death of "part of Tamburlaine's soul" (p. 209).

<sup>30</sup>Levin infers from Zenocrate's death an "intimation of Tamburlaine's vulnerability" (p. 35). M. M. Mahood, in "Marlowe's Heroes," Elizabethan Drama: Modern Essays in Criticism, ed. Ralph Kaufman (New York: Oxford University Press, 1961), 95-122, sees it as Tamburlaine's first "major defeat" (p. 102).

<sup>31</sup>Kocher, p. 94.

<sup>32</sup>Duthie, p. 124.

<sup>33</sup>Paul Kocher claims that Tamburlaine discovers only in dying that he "is a human being and not exempt from mutability" (p. 92). I agree with Kocher's claim that the doctrine of necessity voiced by Tamburlaine (2, V, iii, 199-201) is essentially the same as that voiced earlier by Zenocrate as she dies (2, II, iv, 42-46). Our opinions differ, however, as to Marlowe's interpretation of that doctrine. Says Kocher, "Does he intend it in a broad sense that there is an inexorable

purpose active in all things throughout the cosmos or in the more limited sense that there are physical laws which no one can avoid? The latter seems more likely" (p. 92). It seems that the former is a more desirable interpretation, given Tamburlaine's own relentless will. The hero sees himself, I think, as part of "an inexorable purpose" active in the cosmos.

<sup>34</sup>Mahood, p. 100.

<sup>35</sup>Cole also mentions the fact that although the prosaic mad scene which precedes Zabina's death is not original with Marlowe, he may have been the first to use it in the tragic drama (pp. 96-97).

<sup>36</sup>Cole (p. 119), Gardner (pp. 22-23), and Christopher Fanta in Marlowe's Agonists: An Approach to the Ambiguity of His Plays (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970, pp. 19-20), discuss the implications of this parallel.

<sup>37</sup>Marlowe's poetry, too, is ineffectual and uninspired. Compare Theridamas' "Madam, I am so far in love with you, / That you must go with me--no remedy" (2, III, v, 79-80) with Tamburlaine's "But this is she with whom I am in love" (1, I, ii, 108).

<sup>38</sup>Fanta, p. 20.

<sup>39</sup>C. L. Barber, in his article, "The Death of Zenocrate: 'Conceiving and Subduing Both' in Marlowe's Tamburlaine," Literature and Psychology, 16 (1966), 15-26, offers a perverse

version of this idea by claiming that Tamburlaine suffers from an Oedipus complex. Doubtless, Barber is guilty of exaggerating to make a point. Tamburlaine does not deserve to be labelled "Oedipal" simply because he refuses to violate Zenocrate.

### III. The Jew of Malta

It is generally agreed that Marlowe wrote The Jew of Malta in late 1589 or early 1590. Produced first by Lord Strange's men, the play achieved immediate popularity and was successively produced by at least three other acting companies during the five years after its introduction to the Elizabethan audience. It was undoubtedly the best received of Marlowe's plays, by commoners and royalty alike.<sup>1</sup> The work was not published until 1633, and the first edition is the only source in existence, a lamentable fact for several reasons, the primary one being that it "shows unmistakable signs of revision, probably by Thomas Heywood."<sup>2</sup> To this day the play's authorship is still a subject of controversy. One popular theory, based on supposed incompatibility in tone of the first two acts with the last three, is that Heywood, while adapting Marlowe's play for his 1633 revival, took such liberties that Marlowe's original was unalterably damaged.

Although Marlowe bases his play upon the historical siege of Malta in 1565, he frequently departs from the facts. As Bakeless points out, "the 'historical' figures whom Marlowe introduces are mostly wrong."<sup>3</sup> Scholars have noted that the character of Barabas may be traced to at least two sixteenth-century Jews (Joseph Nassi and David Passi) whose careers in

politics and trade resemble those of Marlowe's hero villain but both of whom have no connection with Malta. Neither Nassi nor Passi had a daughter mentioned in any historical accounts, but according to Levin, the legend of the Jew's daughter, "who serves as a decoy in luring a Christian youth to his doom," is "one of the strangest obsessions of the European consciousness."<sup>4</sup> Thus, Marlowe weaves The Jew of Malta with threads of history, legend, contemporary literature,<sup>5</sup> and his own creative imagination.

In comparison with the Tamburlaine plays, the scope of The Jew of Malta is greatly contracted. Whereas the Scythian marches across whole nations in his drive toward world conquest, Barabas is "content to remain in his countinghouse where the wealth of many lands is compressed into the 'little room' of his jewels."<sup>6</sup> And Malta itself is but an island in the land-locked Mediterranean. Despite Christian Malta's involvement in national politics with Spain and Turkey, which forms the overplot of the play, the main plot centers around Barabas' attempt to avenge himself for the Maltese governor's seizure of his wealth. Desire for wealth similarly forms the basis of the underplot, where Ithamore is cleverly tempted to blackmail his master.<sup>7</sup> Motives for action in the Jew's world, then, are far less honorable than those that govern the world of Tamburlaine.

Tamburlaine's world is primarily one of princes, kings, and emperors; Barabas' society is a multi-leveled one, with the Knights of Malta and Spaniards and Turks on top, the Jews

below them, and Bellamira and Pilia-Borza along with Ithamore representing the dregs of society. The religious ranks, the friar and nuns, form another level of society, albeit outside the social hierarchy. All levels of Maltese society, however, are bound together by one ruling passion--cupidity.

This desire for wealth serves as the essential theme of The Jew of Malta, and the subthemes of policy, lust, hypocrisy, and materialism round out the thematic core of Marlowe's drama.<sup>8</sup> Since these are the principles which govern Malta and its inhabitants, we must admit that the play is permeated with a curious inversion of values. To come to grips with the over-all thrust of The Jew of Malta, we must inevitably deal with the result of this inversion--that is, total disorder.

The disorder in Malta is so pervasive that by being linked with it, all members of society are in some way denigrated; in fact, Marlowe seems to be launching a scathing attack on mankind in general. In the midst of such discord, any good principles and virtues which do emerge are somehow undermined; and no single character is absolutely above reproach. A close look at the play will reveal that with the exception of Abigail, the Jew's daughter, the women in the play fare no better ethically than the men. The second largest female role is that of the courtesan Bellamira, a schemer and a con- niver. The Abbess and nuns, whose speaking parts are small, are the butt of endless sexual jibes. Katherine, Mathias' mother, is as vengeful and haughty as her Christian peers.

Admittedly Abigail is the least reproachable character in the play. Her intentions noble, her actions motivated by love and filial devotion, she seems to be the standard by which all others should be judged. And yet even Abigail is not totally innocent; she is forced to participate in a scheme of deception so that her father may work his revenge. The pervading mood of evil which evolves in The Jew of Malta has a certain tainting effect. She, like all the others, is swept up in the turmoil.

While "disorderly" aptly describes the thematic core of The Jew of Malta, it likewise characterizes the dramatic structure. The major incidents are mechanically linked to one another; one involvement leads inexorably to a new complication. Barabas' revenge on Lodowick involves Mathias, which alienates Abigail, which necessitates Abigail's and the friars' murders, which necessitates trusting Ithamore, which brings about the involvement with Pilia-Borza and Bellamira, which leads to his downfall. Significantly, Abigail never aggressively instigates the action; rather, her reactions precipitate the flurry of complications. Her importance to the dramatic structure, then, is noteworthy only insofar as she initiates action indirectly. Of the other female characters in the play, only Bellamira's role has any substance in relation to the dramatic structure. It is through her aggressive cunning and deceit that Ithamore is lured away from his master and into a scheme of blackmail; Barabas' attempt to silence the blackmailers results in political

turmoil for Malta and, ultimately, death for the hero villain.

Ironically, Barabas' end is hastened because Bellamira's motives are the same as his own: she, like all the other characters in the play (except Abigail), is driven to action by "The wind that bloweth all the world besides,/Desire of gold" (III, v, 3-4).<sup>9</sup> Her initial appearance reveals that she is a striking contrast to Abigail. The scene immediately preceding Bellamira's introduction is focused on Abigail's treasured chastity (the "diamond" conceit, II, iii), while Bellamira opens III, i, with a lament regarding her forced chastity:

Since this town was besieged, my gains grow cold.  
The time has been that but for one bare night  
A hundred ducats have been freely given,  
But now against my will I must be chaste.

(1-4)

The drift of Bellamira's scheme is first hinted at in this brief scene when Pilia-Borza offers her a bag of silver, which she disdains, claiming that instead she will have the Jew's gold. Her means will be his slave Ithamore, on whom she casts a haunting smile; we know the match is struck when Ithamore responds: "Now would I give a hundred of the Jew's crowns that I had such a concubine" (26-27).<sup>10</sup>

Thanks to Pilia-Borza's acting as a go-between, Ithamore has his chance to "have" the courtesan in IV, iv. By hand-delivered letter, the Turkish slave receives Bellamira's

invitation as well as a vow of her love (at first sight, of course). Upon arrival, he is greeted with her ". . . Welcome, sweet love" (44). Before Pilia-Borza sets the wheels of blackmail in motion, Ithamore affirms in an aside that by stealing some of the Jew's money, he could make himself "handsome" to Bellamira. As he is about to leave, ostensibly to "see a ship discharged," the whore begs him to stay. When Pilia-Borza cleverly suggests that Barabas' wealth is easily obtainable in the form of hush money, Ithamore decides to write his master a blackmail note. As the two work out its contents, Bellamira remains silent, her anxious assistant executing her scheme while she maintains a guise of disinterest in the matter.<sup>11</sup> Ithamore's lack of moral conviction makes him an easy mark for Bellamira's plot; even though he has sworn allegiance to Barabas, he is easily duped into betrayal.

While Pilia-Borza pays a visit to the Jew, Ithamore's real lust and Bellamira's feigned lust combine to create one of the truly farcical scenes in the play. She woos and he woos in return; and the comic romance between the unlikely pair is typical of the moral inversion operating everywhere in Malta. In a parody of "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love," Ithamore courts Bellamira with an invitation to love:

Content, but we will leave this paltry land

And sail from hence to Greece, to lovely Greece.

I'll be thy Jason, thou my golden fleece.

Where painted carpets o'er the meads are hurled,

And Bacchus' vineyards overspread the world,  
 Where woods and forests go in goodly green,  
 I'll be Adonis; thou shalt be Love's queen.  
 The meads, the orchards, and the primrose lanes,  
 Instead of sedge and reed, bear sugar canes.  
 Thou in those groves, by Dis above,  
 Shalt live with me, and be my love.

(IV, iv, 84-94)

Hardly a vision of pastoral innocence! As Rothstein points out, here "the pastoral world is made material and common: . . . the meadows require carpeting, and the natural vegetation of 'Sugar Canes' suggests not beauty but a sweet tooth!"<sup>12</sup> The essential beauty of nature is undermined in fact, by the true depravity of the situation. In closing, Ithamore invokes Dis, the king of the underworld, instead of Jove. Whether the error is Ithamore's or Marlowe's is unclear and somewhat immaterial, because it does emphasize the inverted system of values which motivates these characters. Masinton notes that "the two 'lovers' are the exact opposite of Venus and Adonis, whose union produces universal fertility and joy." The Ithamore-Bellamira romance, he says, "signifies spiritual sterility, and their coupling leads them to pain and death."<sup>13</sup>

Pilia-Borza's swift return briefly interrupts the impassioned pair, but Ithamore sends him off again with another note to Barabas, this time demanding more money than before. The scene ends with the lovers locked in embrace, and Pilia-

Borza's reaction echoes Faustus' response to Helen: "That kiss again. She runs division of my lips" (123).

In IV, vi, Pilia-Borza and Bellamira have little difficulty in getting Ithamore so intoxicated that he meticulously catalogues the sum of his and Barabas' villainies. The Jew then enters disguised as a French musician, wearing a poisoned posey in his hat. Each of the three rioters takes a whiff, and Barabas is pleased, since "The scent thereof was death" (141). Once again nature is defiled; one of the beauties of God's creation becomes a vehicle for multiple murder. Corruption attempts to extinguish corruption, and so it goes in Malta.

The audience is never really given to understand why Pilia-Borza and Bellamira determine to expose Barabas' villainies to the Governor. That the revelation is prompted by their moral indignation is a possibility; after all, their iniquities have been trivial in comparison to the Jew's. It is more likely, however, that they hope for some reward. At any rate, in V, i, we have two opposite levels of society meeting with the purpose of destroying Barabas. Bellamira and Pilia-Borza, persons of the lowest social level in Malta, attempt to speak to Ferneze, who is at the top of Maltese social hierarchy. Ferneze at first ignores Bellamira's greeting because she is merely a courtesan, but she and her associate are finally granted a hearing in which they and Ithamore tell all. Barabas is given a chance to answer the allegations, his plea for justice being based on the fact

the informers--a courtesan, a thief, and a bondman--are socially inferior. But his own rank, in the eyes of Ferneze, is none the better. The result is that two antithetical social ranks combine to ultimately destroy Barabas. In fact, the trio itself succumbs to the Jew's poison only minutes after they condemn him. If their exposure has served in some way to stabilize Barabas's injustices, there is little virtue in the deed when one considers the moral depravity inherent in all characters involved.

To a large extent, the nature of Bellamira's profession accounts for her moral reprehensibility. But in spite of their profession, the sisters of the Church in Malta are also characterized by a serious dearth of sexual scruples.<sup>14</sup> The Abbess speaks only eight lines (I, ii), while the Nun silently accompanies her on stage. It is not their own admission, then, which earns them their dubious distinction; rather, it is the harsh jibes heaped on them by the Jew Barabas, the heathen Ithamore, and the two "religious caterpillars," Friar Barnadine and Friar Giacomo. Barabas twice mentions the fact that the nuns increase and multiply (II, iii, 80-89; IV, i, 6). After he sends the poison to the nunnery, he revels in the thought that the monks will die of grief since the nuns are all dead (IV, i, 14-15). Ithamore asks Abigail if the friars have "fine sport" with the nuns (III, iii, 33).

Had we only the innuendos of Barabas and Ithamore as evidence against the nuns, our case might be a weak one since Barabas and his "second self" are quick to condemn

anything remotely associated with Christianity. However, the pervasive hypocrisy of the religious in Malta, be they Christians or Jews, demands that we accept the nuns' misdemeanors as real rather than imagined. In III, vi, the two friars seem to be in a state of frenzy because of the epidemic at the nunnery. Implicit in their lament is a condemnation of themselves as well as the nuns:

Fr. J: O brother, brother, all the nuns are sick,  
 And physic will not help them, they must die.

Fr. B: The Abbess sent for me to be confessed.  
 O, what a sad confession will there be.

(1-4)

While Barnadine hurries to hear the Abbess' "sad confession," Giacomo makes his way to "fair Maria."

The inversion of religious values in The Jew of Malta is largely responsible for the chaotic atmosphere of the play. Friars and nuns violate canon law; Barabas uses Judaic superiority to justify theft and murder ("It's no sin to deceive a Christian;" II, iii, 306); Maltese government officials, exuding false piety, hide behind the banner of Christianity while they use and abuse Jews, "Who stand accursed in the sight of heaven" (I, ii, 64). Katherine, Mathias' mother, has this typical anti-Semitic reaction when she sees her son speaking to Barabas at the slave market; she advises him: "Converse not with him; he is cast off from heaven" (II, iii, 156). As Masinton points out, "The animosity and virulent religious prejudice . . . that govern the lives of the Maltese

reveal a nightmarish moral disfiguration and social disorder in the world on stage."<sup>15</sup> In a society that encourages hostility, distrust, and vindictiveness, Katherine's insistence that the double murder of her son and Lodowick be revenged hardly seems irregular.

Confronted with the topsy-turvy world of Malta, we find ourselves desperately searching for something or someone to defend and applaud, for some virtue or principle that is affirmative and worthy of our respect. No male character in the play fits the bill, nor does the conniving whore, any of the unchaste nuns, or the vengeful mother. What we discover is that in The Jew of Malta, Marlowe chooses to heap all the play's positive values--compassion, patience, duty, passivity, honesty, affection, chastity--into one single role, that of Abigail, the Jew's daughter. She is the only character whose motives are always self-sacrificing. As Richard Levin puts it, she is "characterised by the first four words she speaks: "Not for my selfe . . .'" (I, ii, 226).<sup>16</sup>

Abigail, because she is the most virtuous character in the play, becomes a symbol of virtue and goodness and purity. And set amidst symbols of cupidity (e.g., Barabas), lust (e.g., Bellamira), and hypocrisy (e.g., the friars), her goodness is highlighted by being placed in such an evil context. Abigail's excellence, however, is totally ineffective; it exists solely in herself and never radiates to other characters in the play. Therefore, it functions significantly to emphasize the sins of those who surround her.

Abigail is first mentioned in one of Barabas' early soliloquies (I, i); he is portrayed here as being very thankful for the material blessings conferred on all Jews. Another blessing, it seems, is Abigail:

I have no charge, nor many children,  
 But one sole daughter, whom I hold as dear  
 As Agamemnon did his Iphigen;  
 And all I have is hers.

(134-137)

Barabas' analogy is tinged with irony. While Agamemnon was forced to sacrifice his daughter in order to appease an angry goddess, Barabas sacrifices Abigail of his own accord. And while Agamemnon's motive was a thoroughly unselfish one (he only relented so that the gods would provide the winds to carry the Greek ships to Troy), Barabas acts out of the selfish desire to satisfy his overwhelming greed. Granted that Abigail is important to Barabas ("Nay, let'em combat, conquer, and kill all,/So they spare me, my daughter, and my wealth," I, i, 150-151), her place in the hierarchy of his concerns is never in question.

When Abigail herself first appears in I, ii, we are immediately struck by her compassionate concern for her father. So willing is she to comfort him that she announces her intention to run to the senate house "And rent their hearts with tearing of my hair/Till they reduce the wrongs done to my father" (235-236). Her plan suits her nature since both are passive; a tearful, meek, fourteen-year-old virgin would

at least elicit pity and perhaps even reverse Ferneze's decision. But Barabas, when he learns that his house has been turned into a nunnery, has other plans for Abigail: if she joins the sisterhood, the wealth hidden in his house can be retrieved.

We should note at this point Abigail's willingness, in fact anxiousness, to be of help:

Father, whate'er it be, to injure them  
That have so manifestly wronged us,  
What will not Abigail attempt?

(274-276)

This passage has given rise to at least one rather harsh criticism of Abigail. Alan Friedman claims that she "should not be seen as a romanticized innocent whiteness dirtied by Barabas' black designs. Rather, she is truly her father's daughter."<sup>17</sup> Friedman's emphasis is on Abigail's apparent readiness in deception; but what he ignores is her unselfish motive--that is, her wish to serve her father as best she can. In her great desire to please Barabas, she allows herself to become his instrument; he, in turn, capitalizes on her innocence by manipulating her to work his revenge.

At any rate, she quickly convinces the Abbess and the two Friars of her wish to "pass away my life in penitence" (I, ii, 323). When she is led away, we feel certain that what she is doing is against her better judgment; at the same time, we admire the altruism and filial devotion that have been her guides.

Mathias happens onto the stage as Abigail is leaving, and his reaction toward her apparent conversion is one of indignation mixed with sadness:

. . . Her father's sudden fall  
 Has humbled her and brought her down to this.  
 Tut, she were fitter for a tale of love  
 Than to be tired out with orisons,  
 And better would she far become a bed,  
 Embraced in a friendly lover's arms,  
 Than rise at midnight to a solemn mass.

(I, ii, 365-371)

For a man who supposedly loves Abigail, Mathias' response is most unChristian. He shares with Barabas the desire to use her--in his case, as an instrument for his sexual gratification.<sup>18</sup> Mathias' attitude toward Abigail's entrance into the nunnery is a selfish one; it stands out in ironic contrast with Abigail's unselfish motives.

In the following scene, II, i, Abigail's instrumentality proves successful for Barabas. Standing before his house, the new-made nunnery, he prays that God ". . . direct the hand/Of Abigail this night, or let the day/Turn to eternal darkness after this" (14-16). Her importance is made clear in these words; if she fails to retrieve his fortune, Barabas is lost. The gold, not his daughter, is his "soul's sole hope" (29). When he glimpses Abigail above him on the balcony, she is ironically paralleled to the star of Bethlehem: "But stay! What star shines yonder in the east?/The lodestar

of my life, if Abigail" (41-42). As his guiding star, she does lead him to his savior--his gold. Barabas catches the bags of gold and jewels that Abigail drops from the balcony, accepting them "with a profane yet ridiculous parody of divine worship and religious ecstasy:"<sup>19</sup>

. . . O my girl,  
 My gold, my fortune, my felicity,  
 Strength to my soul, death to mine enemy,  
 Welcome the first beginner of my bliss,  
 O Abigail, Abigail, that I had thee here too,  
 Then my desires were fully satisfied.  
 But I will practice thy enlargement thence.  
 O girl! O gold! O beauty! O my bliss!

(47-54)

Barabas' confusion between "girl" and "gold" is very telling: Abigail is objectified into just another one of his possessions. As such, she is a tool that he manipulates to work his will. Here and elsewhere in the play, Abigail's admirable traits are never recognized and appreciated by others; she is only desirable insofar as she can gratify their selfish ends.

The parallel between Abigail and "material object" that is initiated unconsciously by Barabas in II, i ("O girl! O gold!"), is extended in II, iii, when the Jew and Lodowick chance to meet at the slave market. Lodowick asks if Barabas "canst help me to a diamond" (48), and thus the diamond conceit begins and continues for some 25-30 lines. Abigail's name

is never mentioned, nor need it be, since Lodowick's intention is clear: "What sparkle does it give without a foil?" (55) Barabas assures the youth of Abigail's chastity: that is, the diamond "ne'er was foiled" (56). It is ironically appropriate that Abigail's chastity should be bartered for at a slave market; like Ithamore, she is "purchased" as a tool. Abigail's virtue is never recognized for its true value; instead, it is treated as a marketable commodity.

Mathias and Katherine arrive at the slave market, and Mathias is concerned when he sees Lodowick and the Jew together. Barabas suggests that they end their discussion, informing Ferneze's son that "He loves my daughter, and she holds him dear,/But I have sworn to frustrate both their hopes" (II, iii, 140-141). In private, he tells Mathias to come to his house to see Abigail. Like the morality Vice he is so often associated with, Barabas is adept at playing one man against the other, which he does with the two suitors. But unlike the Vice, he can justify his wish for revenge. Ferneze confiscated his wealth, and, hence, his son will die. Mathias' father was "my chiefest enemy" (II, iii, 247), and the son shall pay for his sins. There is no justification, however, for Abigail's suffering other than Barabas' inherent wickedness. Her pain is the necessary result of the working out of her father's revenge.

Later in the scene, Lodowick meets Barabas at home and Abigail is instructed to entertain the youth, "Provided that you keep your maidenhead" (224). Initially, Abigail is unaware

of her father's intentions; when they become clear, that is, when she is told to "Kiss him; speak him fair" (231), she mildly protests that she loves Don Mathias. But even now Abigail's blind trust in her father prevents her from foreseeing his scheme. Mathias arrives while Lodowick is being entertained; Barabas, quickly embittering him against his friend, beseeches him to hide. When Abigail and Lodowick reappear, we know that she does not approve of what she is being forced to do: "I smile against my will" (284). In an aside, Barabas convinces Abigail to plight her troth to Lodowick, assuring her that Lodowick is simply being deluded and that Mathias can still be hers. She once again innocently cooperates with her father; but as quickly as she has given her word, she regrets it: "O wretched Abigail, what hast thou done?" (317) Lodowick leaves contented and Mathias enters. Abigail, hearing Barabas fabricate a supposed threat that Lodowick made on Mathias' life, still has no conception of his plan: "Father, why have you thus incensed them both? . . ./I'll make'em friends again" (353-354). She is too naive and credulous to comprehend the extent of Barabas' malevolence even as it is being mapped out before her eyes. But for the first time, she questions his motives; in doing so, she ceases to be a useful tool. Barabas' only recourse is to have Ithamore lock her up. The transfer of his "affections" from Abigail to Ithamore (completed in III, iv) actually begins at this point, when Abigail's instrumentality is traded for that of the Turkish slave.

It is with ironic appropriateness, then, that Abigail should learn about the disaster of the two suitors from Ithamore. Immediate recognition of her "Hard-hearted father, unkind Barabas" (III, iii, 36) and her part in his scheme prompts her to take the veil. Abigail willingly obeyed Barabas out of love, duty, respect, and obligation, assuming all the while that his intentions were justifiable. Now she sees the truth of things, that "there is no love on earth, / Pity in Jews, nor piety in Turks" (46-47). Abigail's lament that there is a lack of goodness in men's hearts is perhaps the keynote of the play; and spoken by its only virtuous character, the statement echoes with painful clarity. Abigail's virtue thus has an isolating function; it sets her above and apart from all the other characters.

When Jacomo answers her summons and discovers her intention to be admitted to the sisterhood, he reminds her that she has already had one chance. Abigail responds:

Then were my thoughts so frail and unconfirmed,  
 And I was chained to follies of the world,  
 But now experience, purchased with grief,  
 Has made me see the difference of things.  
 My sinful soul, alas, hath paced too long  
 The fatal labyrinth of misbelief,  
 Far from the Son that gives eternal life.

(59-65)

The "follies of the world"--revenge, greed, hypocrisy--have caused her pain and suffering; through them, Abigail has

found wisdom and peace. Mahood points out that her conversion represents an effort to free herself from the limitations of the narrow, materialistic world of Malta, but that the effort "is rendered pathetic by the fact that the religious, amongst whom she hopes to find release, are as mercenary as the outside world which they pretend to shun."<sup>20</sup> In fact, Abigail is perhaps the only true Christian in the play.

Barabas, learning of Abigail's conversion in the following scene, III, iv, immediately disowns her. The transfer of affection from his daughter to Ithamore (begun in II, iii) is finalized when Barabas calls Ithamore "my love" (14) and "my second self" (15); he tells the slave: "I here adopt thee for mine only heir./All that I have is thine when I am dead" (40-41). Barabas' misplaced devotion is entirely compatible with the inversion of values permeating the play. By disowning Abigail and adopting Ithamore, the Jew "nullifies the graceful, human qualities she stands for (innocence, selflessness, and gentleness)" and replaces them with the diabolical traits of the Turkish slave.<sup>21</sup> As a result of the transference, Abigail's goodness is heightened while Barabas' wickedness increases.

Ithamore, fulfilling Abigail's role as willing instrument, delivers Barabas' brew of poisoned porridge to the nunnery which ultimately kills all the sisters. Abigail, feeling her death approach, makes a final confession in III, vi, to Friar Barnadine:

A: . . . in this house I lived religiously,

Chaste and devout, much sorrowing for my sins,  
But ere I came--

B: What then?

A: I did offend high heaven so grievously

As I am almost desperate for my sins . . .

(13-17).

Abigail's acclamation of chastity, obscured by Barnadine's prurient curiosity ("What then?") is followed by her brief expose of Barabas' part in the double murder of the suitors. Significantly, even at her death she intends no malice toward her father. Knowing that canon law forbids it, she innocently trusts the friar not to reveal her confession, which is only done "To work my peace" (30). It is sadly ironic that a converted Jew should be the only sincere Christian in the play. That "true" Christianity has offered Abigail infinite comfort is evidenced by the fact that her final wish is her father's conversion, so that he, too, may be comforted with the hope of salvation:<sup>22</sup> "Convert my father that he may be saved/And witness that I die a Christian" (38-39). The lecherous friar's reply ("Ay, and a virgin, too--that grieves me most," 40), is a comment on the evil which pervades Malta's world. Marlowe never allows us to find comfort in goodness even for an instant in this play.

It is a travesty of the principle of love that both Abigail's participation in and withdrawal from Barabas' schemes ultimately result in a series of ugly deaths. All the moral virtues that she represents are willfully perverted

by his greed and need for revenge. However, Barabas is merely one representation of the destructive, evil forces which reign in Malta and negate positive principles. Marlowe's portrayal of Abigail suggests that any real, saintly virtues are ineffectual and obscured in a world of disorder, that somehow they are overpowered by the ugliness around them. That ugliness is the product of a society ruled by ignoble desires, and Abigail's conversion to Christianity and ensuing death symbolize their repudiation.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>John Bakeless, The Tragical History of Christopher Marlowe, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1942), pp. 328-330; p. 360.

<sup>2</sup>Robert Knoll, Christopher Marlowe (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1969), p. 92.

<sup>3</sup>Bakeless, p. 336.

<sup>4</sup>Harry Levin, The Overreacher: A Study of Christopher Marlowe (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952), pp. 70-71.

<sup>5</sup>Marlowe's extensive reading at Cambridge included geographical works which possibly suggested descriptions of Malta. During his college career he was also introduced to the teachings of Machiavelli, a popular topic among Cambridge students of the day. See Bakeless, pp. 343-348.

<sup>6</sup>M. M. Mahood, "Marlowe's Heroes," Elizabethan Drama: Modern Essays in Criticism, ed. Ralph Kaufman (New York: Oxford University Press, 1961), 95-122.

<sup>7</sup>Levin points out the distinction between overplot, main plot, and subplot (p. 67).

<sup>8</sup>Nan Carpenter, "Infinite Riches: A Note on Marlovian Unity," Notes and Queries, 196 (Jan, 1951), 50-52.

<sup>9</sup>The significance of this passage is noteworthy since desire of gold is the central theme of the play. The fact that an element of nature serves as a metaphor for cupidity and hence, as the theme, suggests the inversion of values which permeates Maltese society.

<sup>10</sup>The contrast between Bellamira and Abigail is heightened by the fact that while Abigail willingly allows herself to be used as an instrument by others, Bellamira uses others as instruments to work her will.

<sup>11</sup>Bellamira, not unlike Barabas, is clearly associated with the Vice figure of the morality play; both characters adroitly manipulate others to do their bidding.

<sup>12</sup>Eric Rothstein, "Structure as Meaning in The Jew of Malta," Journal of English and German Philology, 65 (1966), 260-273. Alfred Harbage, in "Innocent Barabas," Tulane Drama Review, 8 (1964), 47-58, says: "Sugar Canes!--it is as if one were invoking the fleshly delights of peanut-brittle."

<sup>13</sup>Charles Masinton, Christopher Marlowe's Tragic Vision: A Study in Damnation (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1972), p. 81.

<sup>14</sup>J. W. Flosdorf, in "The 'Odi et Amo' Theme in The Jew of Malta," Notes and Queries, 204 (1960), 10-14, notes that

"The picture which is painted of the nuns is one of loose bawdiness, on a level not far removed from the courtesan, Bellamira."

<sup>15</sup>Masinton, p. 76.

<sup>16</sup>Levin, p. 70.

<sup>17</sup>Alan W. Friedman, "The Shackling of Accidents in Marlowe's The Jew of Malta," Texas Studies in Language and Literature, 8 (1966-67), 155-167.

<sup>18</sup>This scene is but a prelude to a series of discussions and comments related to Abigail's chastity. Each time they occur, we will notice that her virtue is obscured by the fact that men (i.e., her father, suitors, and priests) wish to manipulate her to their own advantage.

<sup>19</sup>Masinton, p. 75.

<sup>20</sup>Mahood, p. 116.

<sup>21</sup>Masinton, p. 72.

<sup>22</sup>In the following scene (IV, i), Barabas' mock conversion is a perversion of Abigail's dying wish.

#### IV. Edward II

There is a good deal of critical controversy in establishing a composition date for Edward II. Ellis-Fermor and Bakeless, for example, make a strong case for its placement at the end of the Marlowe canon, but many others argue that it precedes Doctor Faustus. While supposed dates of composition range from 1591 to 1593, one thing is certain: the work was entered in the Stationers' Register on July 6, 1593, and was first acted in London by the Earl of Pembroke's men.<sup>1</sup> As for dramatic achievement, Marlowe has been heartily praised for the structural soundness of the play; however, the poetry, for the most part, leaves something to be desired.

Edward II is significantly different from Marlowe's other dramas in at least two respects. Firstly, it is his only attempt at a history play; but while the story spans a particularly turbulent time in English political history, it emerges more as a personal than a political drama.<sup>2</sup> Secondly, Marlowe is illuminating weakness, not strength; according to F. P. Wilson's analysis of the play, "Weakness does not act but is acted upon, or if it acts its actions are frustrated and ineffective." Hence Marlowe was forced to distribute interest over a variety of characters as he had never done before, "to exhibit not only the central figure of Edward

. . . but also the agents of power and corruption who act upon this figure."<sup>3</sup> "Center stage" is shared with Edward, then, by other characters, notably Mortimer and Isabella. Isabella's is the most significant female role in the Marlowe canon since Dido; of some forty actors in the cast, her lines compose approximately 10% of the play.<sup>4</sup>

If we look to Marlowe's sources--Holinshed's Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland; Fabyan's New Chronicles of England and France; and Stow's Summary of English Chronicles--we find that he did a considerable amount of compressing to condense 23 years of English history into what seems like roughly a year's time on stage. In the process of condensation, he also made some alterations, one of which is especially important in relation to Isabella's function in the play. Historically, she has no connection whatever with Gaveston's death; in fact, some fifteen years pass between Gaveston's murder and her eventual disenchantment with Edward and her subsequent alliance with Mortimer in France.<sup>5</sup> Marlowe, in rearranging the historical material, significantly expands Isabella's role so that her eventual rebellion against Edward comes as a direct result of his thwarting her for Gaveston. Thus the dramatist is able to take full advantage of the dramatic possibilities inherent in the anguish of a woman scorned.

Insofar as this is true, Isabella is central to the dramatic design of the play and is instrumental in shaping its movement even from the early scenes. Edward, taking

advantage of her weakness and vulnerability in I, iv, promises to trade mistreatment for affection if she secures the repeal of Gaveston's exile. Thus, she is forced into a position of action that is not of her own choosing; ironically, she pleads for the acceptance of the very person who is the source of her misery. One could say that Isabella indirectly bears the culpability for Gaveston's murder. Firstly, she takes Mortimer aside and secretly gives him "reasons of such weight/As thou wilt soon subscribe to his repeal" (I, iv, 226-227). We do not hear what she tells him; we only know that Mortimer sways the nobles to honor Isabella's request by convincing them of how easily Gaveston's murder could be effected. The question of whether or not the idea is Isabella's is never answered, but it does seem possible given her intense hatred of the king's minion. Secondly, she divulges the secret of Gaveston's hiding place to the nobles when an uprising ensues after his return from exile (II, iv), enabling them to capture and kill him. Gaveston's death, in turn, stirs in Edward a need for revenge and results in his victory over the rebellious nobles in III, iii. Isabella's position as queen gives the rebels an apparently legitimate ensign behind which to gather in France so that in the name of Isabella and her son, they wreak havoc on Edward. Finally, it is at the queen's suggestion (V, ii) that Edward is murdered.

As one of the major characters, Isabella is significantly linked to the key themes which emerge in the play--the love

theme, the theme of suffering, and the transformation theme. She is involved in three triangles, each of which reveals the destructive effects of love.<sup>6</sup> In the first triangle, Isabella is painfully rejected by King Edward in favor of his fawning minion. Edward's unnatural affection for Gaveston upsets the order of the realm, an order which could have been preserved had he chosen to love Isabella instead. She turns to Mortimer for the attention that she is denied from her husband; but for a short time she is torn between the two, hence, the second triangle.<sup>7</sup> She, like Edward, makes the wrong choice, one which eventually leads to her downfall. The third triangle involves Mortimer and Prince Edward. Here Isabella is guided by Mortimer's willful instincts instead of by her son's compassion. Ironically, "it is her son, to whom she has been constantly loyal, that finally thwarts her."<sup>8</sup>

The theme of suffering echoes in a low moan throughout the early and middle stages of the play until it explodes in an agonizing cry with Edward's death. According to Cole, the king's "personal behavior" is responsible; "it leads to disorganization in the structure of the family and of the state" and ultimately to his own destruction.<sup>9</sup> Isabella's suffering is a direct result of Edward's behavior, specifically his affection for Gaveston. In fact, she is the only character in the play whose suffering is just as intense in the beginning as it is in the end; initially denied the love of Edward, she is finally denied her dependence on Mortimer when her son orders his death.

All three major characters move from a period of unhappiness or dissatisfaction to disaster by way of a period of hope and even success; and in the process, each one undergoes a metamorphosis of personality--hence, the transformation theme. Edward goes from a despicably weak and revengeful king to a pathetically feeble victim of villainy. Mortimer, initially a proud nobleman who staunchly defends his country's welfare, becomes a conniving, power-hungry scoundrel. Isabella changes from a neglected but loyal wife to a cruel, scheming adultress.

Critics have long been concerned with what they call the "sudden" transformation in the personalities of Mortimer and Isabella. Mortimer's, it seems, is the more plausible, given his mercurial nature in the early scenes. Isabella's metamorphosis, however, has sparked more lively controversy among Marlowe scholars; while many argue its implausibility, an equal if not greater number argue that it is totally acceptable.<sup>10</sup> F. P. Wilson's interpretation comes, I think, closest to the point; he reminds us that if we "do not seek for realism" but remember instead Marlowe's dramatic purpose, Isabella's change of character is credible. The purpose of the transformation, as Professor Wilson explains it, "is to add pity and terror to Edward's end, to assist in the swing from detestation and contempt of Edward when abusing his power, to pity for Edward when he has fallen from his high estate."<sup>11</sup> The complete title of the play (The Troublesome Reign and Lamentable Death of Edward II: With the Tragical Fall of

Proud Mortimer) should give us some indication of Marlowe's intentions; we are to sympathize finally with the king and his "lamentable death."

In presenting us with the pathetic spectacle of Edward's demise, Marlowe puts our emotional barometer through a severe exercise. He is cautious not to fully expose the Mortimer-Isabella alliance until the very point at which he wishes us to transfer our sympathies from the wronged Isabella to the defeated king. Throughout the play and up to the turning point, we are given clues, hints which may instill suspicions about Isabella; but they are never made glaringly obvious. They lie quietly in the background until Kent, in IV, v, says of Mortimer and the queen that they "kiss while they conspire" (22). At this point, we recall the innuendos which Marlowe has deftly left behind preparing us for the seemingly abrupt change. We come to realize that our emotional response to Isabella strongly influences our emotional response to Edward at any given moment in the play. A careful study of each scene in which the queen appears will show this to be true.

Isabella's initial appearance (I, ii) follows the disruptive arrival of Gaveston. We have just heard the nobles' violent objections to the king's "base and obscure" minion and have witnessed the "brainsick" Edward injudiciously granting him a lengthy list of titles, so that we already view the king with some disfavor. Isabella's first words (addressed, interestingly enough, to "gentle Mortimer") betray

the grief she suffers from Edward's rejection of her and strengthens our feelings against the king. When the nobles discuss rebellion, she gains our sympathy by offering to martyr herself for the peace of the realm:

Then let him stay; for rather than my lord  
 Shall be oppressed by civil mutinies,  
 I will endure a melancholy life,  
 And let him frolic with his minion.

(64-67)

We are further touched by the fact that Gaveston's baseness is not an issue with the queen. She objects to him simply because he deprives her of the love and affection she needs from Edward. Before she leaves, she implores "Sweet Mortimer": "for my sake/Forbear to levy arms against the king" (81-82),<sup>12</sup> but her plea bears little weight in light of the nobles' rage. Marlowe accomplishes several things in this scene. He has Isabella speak her first and last words directly to "gentle" and "sweet" Mortimer, thus laying the groundwork for their later alliance. He portrays the queen as a loving but wronged wife who apparently values the peace of the realm more than her own happiness. And he sets up a scale by which our hatred for Edward increases proportionately with our pity for Isabella.

Before Isabella makes her next appearance in I, iv, the nobles have agreed to banish Gaveston; and when she enters, the heart-broken lovers are saying their goodbyes. Edward takes out his frustrations on Isabella, spurning her loving

concern with cruelty: "Fawn not on me, French strumpet; get thee gone" (145). Gaveston, seizing the opportunity to plant suspicions in Edward's mind, casually suggests that the queen and Mortimer are involved but does not pursue the matter. He does, however, accomplish his goal; Edward accuses her of being instrumental in gaining Gaveston's exile. Ironically, she had tried to do just the opposite. Marlowe manages once again to insinuate a connection between Mortimer and Isabella without diminishing our sympathy for her.

Our pathos for Isabella increases in this scene as we watch her being taunted not only by her husband but also by his lover. Edward, on the other hand, incurs our hatred at every turn. He suggests that she might gain his favor by seeing to it that Gaveston be repealed. Isabella perforce must choose between Scylla and Charybdis. If Gaveston is repealed, she cannot expect to win back Edward; if Gaveston is exiled, the king will hold her responsible. In soliloquy, the queen reveals the extent of her agony:

O miserable and distressed queen!

Would, when I left sweet France and was embarked,

That charming Circes, walking on the waves,

Had changed by shape. . . .

. . .

Like frantic Juno will I fill the earth

With ghastly murmur of my sighs and cries,

For never doted Jove on Ganymede

So much as he on curs'd Gaveston.

But that will more exasperate his wrath;  
 I must entreat him, I must speak him fair,  
 And be a means to call home Gaveston.  
 And yet he'll ever dote on Gaveston,  
 And so am I forever miserable.

(I, iv, 170-186)

Because she speaks in soliloquy, we have no reason to doubt Isabella's sincerity. Her desire to be changed by Circe ironically foreshadows the metamorphosis she undergoes as a result of her misery and distress.<sup>13</sup> She is portrayed here as a typically weak, helpless female ruled by passion. Her pain results from a lack of love and fear of rejection; ironically, both she and Edward have the same needs--that is, each craves the admiration and approval of his lover.<sup>14</sup> She decides finally to honor Edward's wish despite the pain that it will necessitate for her.

The nobles' reaction to the queen at this point accentuates the pity we already feel for her; Lancaster notes how she "Sits wringing of her hands and beats her breast" (188), while Pembroke attacks the hard-hearted king for injuring "such a saint" (190). Her close relationship with Mortimer begins in this scene; when she laments that the king no longer loves her, Mortimer replies, "Cry quittance, madam, then, and love not him" (195). It is significant, I think, that Marlowe gives this particular line to him instead of to any other of the nobles. When Isabella fails to sway the nobles by herself, she enlists the help of Mortimer: "And therefore, as

thou lovest and tender'st me,/Be thou my advocate unto these peers" (211-212). We have no reason to suspect any hidden meaning in her words; she simply trusts Mortimer and he, in turn, respects her as his queen. She takes him aside and gives him "reasons of such weight" that he agrees to persuade the others to repeal the order for Gaveston's exile. His most convincing argument, of course, is that Gaveston can easily be eliminated by some "base slave" at court, while his exile to Ireland might allow him the chance to muster up an army.

Goldberg interprets the secret conversation between Isabella and Mortimer as Mortimer's initiation into the "world of cunning and deceit" through the guidance of the queen. In his opinion, Isabella "shrewdly devises the plan for murdering Gaveston."<sup>15</sup> Bakeless implies as much when he comments that Marlowe's device of "having her whisper her arguments to him . . . saves the necessity of boring the audience" with hearing the same thing twice.<sup>16</sup> Both analyses disregard Marlowe's ability to shape the dialogue according to his purposes. If he had wanted us to believe beyond any doubt that Gaveston's murder was Isabella's idea, he could have devised the dramatic means to do so.<sup>17</sup> Instead, he leaves it there as a mere hint--a possible clue to Isabella's growing alliance with Mortimer. To do otherwise would diminish our sympathy for her and upset the delicate balance he has established thus far between pity for the queen and hatred for Edward.

If we assume that Gaveston's murder is not Isabella's idea, the fact remains that she is aware of the plan since the nobles openly discuss it in her presence. What, then, do we make of her seeming innocence when she tells Edward that Gaveston's exile has been revoked? Do we condemn her for dissembling just as we condemn the nobles for play-acting and pretending that all is well when they are secretly planning a murder? I think not. Isabella continues to elicit our sympathy so long as we are convinced of her deep affection for Edward and her need to be loved in return. When Edward hangs a "golden tongue" around her neck for pleading well, she responds:

No other jewels hang about my neck

Than these, my lord; nor let me have more wealth

Than I may fetch from this rich treasury.

O how a kiss revives poor Isabel!

(I, iv, 329-332)

The "treasury" of Edward's embrace is only a temporary restorative; she is perhaps unaware of that fact, while we, the audience, are not. As long as Edward persists in keeping Gaveston by his side, peace in England is tenuous. By the end of Act I, then, our response to Edward is one of disdain; and Isabella still deserves our compassion. She must be viewed at this point as a weak woman whose very existence depends on her husband's love.

In II, ii, our disdain for Edward very nearly turns to disgust. The nobles, in open rebellion for the second time,

catalogue the king's mismanagement of state affairs: the treasury has been milked dry to bestow Gaveston with gifts; the safety of the kingdom is being threatened at its borders; and Edward is a mockery as a king and a warrior. When Lancaster voices the nobles' rage in an open declaration of war, Edward's reaction is typical of his misplaced values: "And so I walk with him about the walls, / What care I though the earls begirt us round?" (220-221) When Isabella enters, Edward ironically blames her as the "cause of all these jars" (222). Once again the king berates his wife while clinging to his minion, who whispers to Edward to "dissemble with her; speak her fair" (227). Edward apologizes and Isabella quickly and gratefully accepts. In this brief but telling encounter, the queen emerges as the still-neglected wife while Edward continues to flaunt his devotion to Gaveston by arranging his marriage to the king's niece.

With the earls up in arms, Edward is forced to dispell his group of followers, sending Gaveston and bride to Scarborough as he goes in another direction. He rejects Isabella's attempt at a parting farewell and she is left alone in abject misery:

From my embracements thus he breaks away.  
 O that mine arms could close this isle about,  
 That I might pull him to me where I would,  
 Or that these tears that drizzle from mine eyes  
 Had power to mollify his stony heart,  
 That when I had him we might never part.

(II, iv, 16-21)

Isabella's references to arms, hands, and embracing here and elsewhere in the play symbolize her need for emotional security and dependence, neither of which Edward is able to provide. She tells Mortimer when he enters and sees her frenzied condition that "These hands are tired with haling of my lord" (26). When Mortimer asks her the whereabouts of the king, she reacts defensively, as if she is suspicious of the earls' intentions. Only after she is assured that Edward's safety is not in jeopardy does she divulge Gaveston's hiding place. Mortimer invites the queen to sail with them, but she refuses since joining the earls would feed Edward's suspicion about her romantic alliance with Mortimer, which, so far, is only slanderous.

Mortimer's parting words in II, iv, leave Isabella with another difficult choice; he bids her to "think of Mortimer as he deserves" (58). Isabella's response to this cryptic request has baited scholars for many years:

So well hast thou deserved, sweet Mortimer,  
 As Isabel could live with thee forever.  
 In vain I look for love at Edward's hand,  
 Whose eyes are fixed on none but Gaveston;  
 Yet once more I'll importune him with prayers.

. . .

But yet I hope my sorrows will have end,  
 And Gaveston this blessed day be slain.

(59-69)

Many view this soliloquy as the critical turning point for

Isabella, the point at which she abruptly transfers her affections from Edward to Mortimer and changes from a "forlorn wife to a scheming adultress," as Levin puts it.<sup>18</sup> And Clifford Leech calls it "one of the most perceptive things in Marlowe's writing." Marlowe, he says, "has not let the woman change without deep provocation"; and although this is the turning point for her, it is "psychologically right that the moment of crisis should come without her realizing it."<sup>19</sup> These summations, it seems, miss the crux of the speech: "Isabel could live" with Mortimer, she says. But then she goes on to say that she will still try to win Edward's love. What Isabella is doing is weighing her alternatives; that Mortimer is even considered as a possibility is simply Marlowe's way of dropping one more clue that will make her eventual alliance with him more plausible. Isabella's real metamorphosis occurs when she is in France and Edward's rejection of her has reached across the channel and, through payoffs, has forbidden her any help from the French court.

When Isabella is in France with the prince and apparently has no one to turn to for support, we naturally sympathize with her helpless situation:

Ah boy, thou art deceived, at least in this,  
 To think that we can yet be tuned together.  
 No, no, we jar too far. Unkind Valois,  
 Unhappy Isabel, when France rejects,  
 Whither, oh, whither does thou bend thy steps?

(IV, ii, 8-12)

We are further touched by the warm, motherly concern Isabella shows for the young Edward, for whose present safety and future welfare she is persuaded by Mortimer and Kent to rally against the king. Mortimer offers her aid and protection when she is in an especially vulnerable position; it seems only natural that she should accept it given her highly dependent nature. Meanwhile Edward has replaced Gaveston with another self-seeking minion, Spenser Junior, who is responsible for thwarting Isabella's attempts to secure aid in France (III, iii, 78-95). Thus Marlowe continues to engage our sympathy in the queen's favor while simultaneously portraying Edward as a suspicious and spiteful husband wronging his innocent wife.

When Isabella, Mortimer, and their supporters arrive in England, a new facet of the queen's personality is revealed. No longer the pathetic and forlorn victim of neglect, she launches into a passionate speech that is reminiscent of a self-assured general about to lead his troupes into battle:

Misgoverned kings are cause of all this wrack;  
 And Edward, thou art one among them all  
 Whose looseness hath betrayed thy land to spoil  
 And made the channels overflow with blood.  
 Of thine own people patron shouldst thou be,  
 But thou--

(IV, iv, 9-14)

Mortimer interrupts her and carries the speech to its obvious conclusion; open war is declared on the king. The above speech by Isabella is far more revelatory of a change of heart

than her soliloquy in II, iv, ("So well hast thou deserved, sweet Mortimer. . . ."); she seems to harbor none of the former affection she felt for her husband. Whereas at one time she had been concerned for his safety when the nobles were rebelling, she now actively encourages a revolt against him.

Marlowe's timing is very important at this point in the play. We find out in the opening lines of IV, v, (immediately following Isabella's "warrior" speech) that "the queen is over-strong" and that Edward's troops cannot withstand a battle. Spenser Junior warns Edward to flee to Ireland; and for the first time in the play, Edward's personal security is in danger. His reaction to Spenser's warning marks the beginning of our transfer of sympathy from Isabella to Edward: "What, was I born to fly and run away/And leave the Mortimers conquerors behind?" (4-5) A few lines later, Kent repents of his alliance with the rebels and transfers his allegiance to Edward:

Edward, alas, my heart relents for thee.

Proud traitor, Mortimer, why dost thou chase

Thy lawful king, thy sovereign, with thy sword?

(11-13)

Kent, "whose judgment throughout the play represents a kind of ethical norm,"<sup>21</sup> also verifies our suspicions about Isabella's new boldness:

. . . for Mortimer

And Isabel do kiss while they conspire;

And yet she bears a face of love forsooth.

Fie on that face that hatcheth death and hate.

(21-24)

We learn a great deal about Isabella in these few lines. We have the first concrete evidence of a romantic alliance between her and Mortimer; what was first mere slander becomes ugly truth. If we remember all the hints that Marlowe left behind in prior scenes--Isabella's secret conversation with the earl, her trust in "gentle," "sweet" Mortimer, her consideration of him as a possible alternative to Edward--we can see that the poet was laying groundwork all along. Isabella is here portrayed as a deceitful woman with a great capacity for cruelty; and because this is an entirely different view from what we have seen of her in the first two acts, our sensibilities are jolted. Marlowe's intention is to shock us into recognition, but he can hardly be accused of not preparing us for the apparently sudden reversal.

From this point forward, all our former sympathy for Isabella is replaced with condemnation. Marlowe carefully guides us to confirm Kent's revelation in the remainder of IV, v, by showing Mortimer whispering in asides to Isabella that they keep close watch of "this relenting mood in Edmund" (47) and by having the queen pretend to show concern for Edward: "I rue my lord's ill-fortune; but alas, / Care of my country called me to this war" (73-74). If indeed Isabella did act out of concern for England's welfare, it is difficult for us to accept as truth; Kent, it must be

remembered, has noted her capacity for hypocrisy. Therefore, we are skeptical about every kind word she utters.

As our contempt for Isabella increases, likewise our pity for Edward increases. Forced to hide in the fields in fear of capture, his situation is rendered more pathetic because he is not just a man pursued, but a king dishonored. When he is finally arrested, it is "in the name of Isabel the queen" (IV, vi, 59). When Edward is imprisoned, he holds the queen responsible: "And that unnatural queen, false Isabel,/. . . thus hath pent and mewed me in a prison" (V, i, 17-18).

Examples of Marlowe's "mighty line" are at a minimum in Edward II; Steane notes that the "verse is . . . normally thin and drab," that it has "little sustaining power."<sup>22</sup> But such a claim ignores the poetic distinction Marlowe achieves in V, i. Having lost his throne, the imprisoned Edward now must face the possibility of losing his crown. Dejected, he ponders the ironies of kingship:

But when I call to mind I am a king,  
 Methinks I should revenge me of the wrongs  
 That Mortimer and Isabel have done.  
 But what are kings when regiment is gone,  
 But perfect shadows in a sunshine day?  
 My nobles rule, I bear the name of king;  
 I wear the crown, but am controlled by them,  
 By Mortimer and my unconstant queen,  
 Who spots my nuptial bed with infamy,

Whilst I am lodged within this cave of care,  
 Where sorrow at my elbow still attends,  
 To company my heart with sad laments,  
 That bleeds within me for this strange exchange.

(23-35)

Isabella's cruelty is heightened not only by her own actions, but by the poignancy with which Marlowe describes Edward's intense suffering. The poet "exploits this suffering," according to Cole, by "alternating scenes of Edward's agony and degrading treatment with scenes involving the queen and Mortimer. These serve to blacken their character and shift to them the major responsibility for the king's afflictions."<sup>23</sup>

For example, in V, ii, when Mortimer and Isabella learn that Berkeley, Edward's guard, is kind and sympathetic toward the king, the queen suggests: "Then let some other be his guardian" (36). Apparently the rejection that Isabella suffered from Edward has embittered her to such an extent that she wants him to feel the same sort of pain. She even goes so far as to suggest his death, but is careful not to implicate herself directly: "I would he were [killed], so it were not by my means" (45). Isabella's ability to "finely dissemble" is also best seen in V, ii. She pretends concern for Edward's comfort and safety before a messenger from the king (24), before Matrevis and Gurney (68-72), and before Kent (82), while she knows the king's murder is being devised.

The queen further earns our contempt by manipulating her son to suit Mortimer's desires. She never mistreats him; on

the contrary, she is always gentle and affectionate with the boy. But the fact that she urges him to usurp his father's throne is in itself an unnatural violation of order. The claim has been made that in doing so, Isabella merely serves as Mortimer's 'tool'.<sup>24</sup> Admittedly, Mortimer does tell the queen to "Be ruled by me, and we will rule the realm" (V, ii, 5); and in soliloquy, he boasts: "The prince I rule, the queen I do command" (V, iv, 48). If we are tempted to feel pity in that Isabella is merely being used, we have but to remember how willingly she participates in Edward's debasement.

Isabella could have gained out sympathy in the final scene of the play if she had shown some sign of remorse for her complicity in the king's death, surely one of the most horrendous spectacles of murder ever to appear on the English stage. Instead, she clings to Mortimer in the fear that "Now . . . begins our tragedy" (23). Motivated purely by selfish concerns and feigning complete innocence, she pleads with her son first to spare Mortimer's life, and then to spare her own. Shortly after Mortimer is taken away and she has been committed to the Tower, she makes a final attempt to evoke the boy's pity by pretending that she is still devoted to her husband: "Shall I not mourn for my beloved lord, / And with the rest accompany him to his grave?" (87-88) As Goldberg notes, she is clearly "referring to Edward in these lines, but there is a fitting ambiguity, a last prod at the emptiness of words, in her use of 'lord', when Mortimer has just been led off to death."<sup>25</sup>

Marlowe portrays Isabella convincingly as a weak-willed woman needing love and affection; she turns to Mortimer and degenerates into a scheming, hypocritical adultress only after becoming embittered by Edward's repeated rejection and mistreatment. John Bakeless succinctly points out that "Marlowe never dealt more subtly in the lights and shadows of character; and his portrayal of the queen, abused, hesistant, erring, is his only successful experiment in feminine character."<sup>26</sup>

Among the varied interpretations of Isabella's role to be found in the pages of Marlovian criticism, there are two widely divergent views of her character which we should examine; they are interesting primarily because they are polar opposites. J. B. Steane, at one end, sees Isabella as a "poor, sad woman"--"pathetic, strained, and unloved." He finds in her behavior nothing contemptible; her suggestion that Edward be eliminated is but a "half-ashamed admission."<sup>27</sup> By viewing Isabella in such a sympathetic light from beginning to end, Professor Steane misses Marlowe's careful craftsmanship. We should not pity Isabella after her dubious alliance with Mortimer; to do so would deprive Edward of the pathos he deserves in his miserable confinement. A definite shift in sympathy from Isabella to the deposed king is vital to the essence of the tragedy. At the other end of the spectrum is the view that Isabella is inherently evil from the beginning of the play, an opinion held by Larry Goldberg and David Bevington. By Goldberg's analysis, Isabella initiates Mortimer

into "a world of cunning and deceit" and is primarily responsible for his debasement. He feels that the queen takes the lead but uses "her supposed inferior position as a woman" to "throw responsibility off on Mortimer"; she is, in effect, a "peculiar blend of the slyly effective and the passively inactive."<sup>28</sup> Bevington notes the "vice-like quality" of Isabella's character; he claims that "Marlowe suggests Isabella's piety, loyalty, and humility are weapons of intrigue, intended to deceive her enemies and her audience at the same time." Finally, he holds that "Marlowe proceeds through the revelation of her natural depravity rather than through development of her human weakness," uncovering "a quality of absolute evil in her nature" and accounting for her "apparent change by unmasking her true identity."<sup>29</sup> Goldberg's and Bevington's analyses, while they contrast with Steane's view, share something in common with it. All three interpretations ignore the significance of the shift in our sympathies from Isabella to Edward.

Underlying Marlowe's plays is the dramatist's intention of eliciting an emotional rather than an intellectual response from his audience. Typically, our reaction to his major characters is one of ambivalence: we are simultaneously attracted and repelled by Tamburlaine's, Barabas', and Faustus' sheer theatricality. Bold histrionic flourishes are, for the most part, absent in Edward II, but impact is not. Marlowe manipulates our sympathy in favor of Isabella with almost mathematical accuracy so that we scarcely realize it until he pulls

the switch. Once Edward is on the run, we are forced to alter our response to both characters; we transfer our disdain from Edward to Isabella and alternately transfer our pity for Isabella to Edward. Marlowe's method is meticulously executed and wholly successful.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>John Bakeless, The Tragical History of Christopher Marlowe, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1942), v. 2, pp. 4-5.

<sup>2</sup>See Wilbur Sanders, The Dramatist and the Received Idea: Studies in the Plays of Marlowe and Shakespeare (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), p. 121; Douglas Cole, Suffering and Evil in the Plays of Christopher Marlowe (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962), p. 161; Robert Knoll, Christopher Marlowe (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1969), p. 111; Charles Masinton, Christopher Marlowe's Tragic Vision: A Study in Damnation (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1972), p. 87; Clifford Leech, "Marlowe's Edward II: Power and Suffering," The Critical Quarterly, 1 (1959), 181-196, rpt. in Critics on Marlowe, ed. Judith O'Neill (Coral Gables: University of Miami Press, 1969), 69-79.

<sup>3</sup>F. P. Wilson, Marlowe and the Early Shakespeare (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1953), rpt. in part in Marlowe: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Clifford Leech (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1964), 128-137.

<sup>4</sup>The only other female in the play is Edward's niece Margaret, whom he marries off to Gaveston. Her part is so

slight (21 lines) that she is merely casted as Niece. She appears briefly in II, i, reading a love letter from Gaveston and swearing devotion to him and again in II, ii, when she introduces Spenser and Baldock to Edward. She is relatively unimportant, then, except for the fact that she serves as the means by which Spenser gains entrance to the court.

<sup>5</sup>C. Warren Hollister, The Making of England: 55 B. C. to 1399 (Boston: D. C. Heath & Co., 1966), 200-201.

<sup>6</sup>Larry Goldberg, "The Role of the Female in the Drama of Lyly, Greene, Kyd, and Marlowe," Diss. Northwestern University 1969, claims that each of the three triangles marks Isabella's position in the action of the play (p. 159).

<sup>7</sup>I am referring specifically to II, iv, 59-69, when Mortimer asks Isabella to accompany him in pursuit of Gaveston.

<sup>8</sup>Goldberg, p. 159.

<sup>9</sup>Cole, p. 162.

<sup>10</sup>Harry Levin, The Overreacher: A Study of Christopher Marlowe (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952), p. 98; Sanders (p. 123), Muriel Bradbrook, Themes and Conventions of Elizabethan Tragedy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1935), p. 161; and Michael Poirier, Christopher Marlowe (London: Chatto & Windus, 1951), pp. 184-185, to name a few, feel that Isabella's transformation is not adequately prepared for. On the other hand, Masinton (p. 88); Leech (p. 74);

Knoll (p. 116); Wilson (pp. 64-65); J. B. Steane, Christopher Marlowe: A Critical Study (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964), p. 229; and David M. Bevington, From 'Mankind' to Marlowe (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), pp. 259-260, among others, defend the credibility of the change.

<sup>11</sup>Wilson, p. 133.

<sup>12</sup>Leech interprets these lines ("for my sake") as Isabella's belief in having some power over Mortimer (p. 71). I believe that this stretches the point somewhat, since our immediate response to this scene is one of pity at her helplessness; she is anything but powerful.

<sup>13</sup>Masinton, p. 95.

<sup>14</sup>When asked why he so loves Gaveston, Edward replies: "Because he loves me more than all the world" (I, iv, 77). There is bitter irony in the realization that Isabella loves Edward perhaps more than his minion Gaveston does. Gaveston is portrayed in I, i, as a self-seeking flatterer who plans to "draw the pliant king which way I please" (53).

<sup>15</sup>Goldberg, p. 154.

<sup>16</sup>Bakeless, v. 2, p. 13.

<sup>17</sup>For example, Mortimer could have credited Isabella with the idea when he presented it to his cohorts without

slighting her honor in their eyes since she did take him aside promising to give him reasons for Gaveston's repeal.

<sup>18</sup>Levin, p. 98.

<sup>19</sup>Leech, p. 74.

<sup>20</sup>It is significant to note that this is how her estrangement from Edward comes about in the sources.

<sup>21</sup>Paul Kocher, Christopher Marlowe: A Study of His Thought, Learning, and Character (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1946), p. 205.

<sup>22</sup>Steane, pp. 207-208.

<sup>23</sup>Cole, p. 174.

<sup>24</sup>Goldberg, p. 156.

<sup>25</sup>Goldberg, p. 162.

<sup>26</sup>Bakeless, v. 2, p. 26.

<sup>27</sup>Steane, pp. 228-230.

<sup>28</sup>Goldberg, pp. 154-156.

<sup>29</sup>Bevington, p. 241.

## V. Doctor Faustus

It is generally agreed that the tragedy of Doctor Faustus is Marlowe's last play. Although an exact date of composition cannot be established, most scholars surmise that the play was written late in 1592 or early in 1593. The source of the play can be traced to the German Historia von D. Johann Fausten, first published in 1587; but Marlowe almost certainly used an English translation by P. F. Gent, The Historie of the damnable life and deserved death of Doctor John Faustus, which was printed in 1592.<sup>1</sup> John Bakeless notes that Marlowe's play closely follows in structure and arrangement the English Historie, and in fact "borrows its language word for word and line for line" in several passages. He further indicates that Marlowe for once "seems to have been content with a single main source," except for slight borrowings from the native English legends of Friar Bacon and occasionally from the classics.<sup>2</sup>

The textual history of Doctor Faustus has been a source of concern over the years, since we have two widely divergent versions of the play, the 1604 quarto and the 1616 quarto. The earlier version omits both the comic scenes and the scenes of magic and hence has been regarded as the more unreliable. It is generally assumed that the play was altered by the hand of at least one collaborator, probably Samuel Rowley.<sup>3</sup>

W. W. Greg, whose analysis of the parallel texts has become perhaps the finest textual comment of the play that we have, asserts that although a collaborator's work is obvious in the middle portions of the play, he was adhering closely to Marlowe's plan.<sup>4</sup>

The stage history of Doctor Faustus is somewhat of a puzzle according to Bakeless, in that no written record of performance exists before September 30, 1594, when Henslowe entered some receipts. "This performance must have been given at the Rose Theatre," where the Lord Admiral's men had gone after separating from the Lord Chamberlain's in June, 1594. The part of Faustus was played by Edward Alleyn, and it was "one of the great successes of the day."<sup>5</sup> Doctor Faustus remains Marlowe's most oft-produced drama on the modern stage and is acclaimed as his greatest literary achievement.

The question now arises as to why we are examining Doctor Faustus in a study about the women in Marlowe's plays, when there is apparently no "real" female role in the work (except for the Duchess of Anholt's five incidental lines). Granted, then, there is no significant speaking part for a woman; but I would suggest that the function and ramifications of the apparition of Helen are of major consideration. As we will see, Helen is directly related to Faustus' ultimate damnation and hence is related to the dramatic structure of the play through her union with the German doctor in V, i. The same scene is also the culmination of certain themes (gluttony,

satiety, lust, delight, etc.) which have been rising in crescendo throughout the course of the tragedy. Examined in this light, Helen's role in the play is highly significant; her relationship with Faustus is the means by which Marlowe most emphatically focuses our attentions on the vices which ultimately escort the hero to his doom.

Doctor Faustus, in striking his initial bargain with Mephistophilis, agrees to surrender his soul to Lucifer in return for 24 years of living "in all voluptuousness" (I, iii, 93). The entire play is an exposition of that voluptuousness and of Faustus' desire to satiate his senses. It has been argued by notable Marlovian scholars that knowledge is Faustus' supreme goal. I would contend, however, that knowledge emerges as a secondary pursuit if we pay close attention to Marlowe's language. Through it, Faustus is revealed first and foremost as a hedonist whose thirst for pleasure far outweighs his thirst for knowledge.<sup>6</sup>

Marlowe establishes the keynote of "voluptuousness" in the Prologue, specifically in the last fourteen lines, where Faustus' career is described (15-28). The lines ring with suggestions of sensuous gratification ("profits," "sweet delight," "swoll'n," "glutted," "surfeits," "bliss"). The remainder of the drama abounds with similar references which suggest pleasure, delight, wantonness, sensuality, gluttony, satiety, appetite, and "physicality" (references to the body or body parts, i.e., dismemberment). These emerge as the major themes of the play, all of which Marlowe correlates

in the Faustus-Helen union. As a result, Helen becomes something of a symbol for Faustus' all-consuming voluptuousness. Faustus' devotion to magic derives from his desire to use it as a tool for obtaining ultimate pleasure. In I, i, he claims that "the studious artisan" can have at his fingertips "a world of profit and delight,/Of power, of honor, of omnipotence" (54-55). The "ultimate" is achieved in Act V, when Helen is conjured to gratify Faustus' senses.

Mephistophilis is keenly aware that Faustus is, above all, a voluptuary. Whenever the Doctor feels the slightest doubt about the heinous contract he has signed, the fallen angel quickly diverts his attention by presenting him with a sensuous display. For example, in II, i, when Faustus initially signs the pact and the inscription "Homo fuge" appears on his arm, Mephistophilis fears the Doctor will repent. In an aside, he determines to "fetch him somewhat to delight his mind" (81). Stage directions indicate that Devils enter, give Faustus crowns and "rich apparel," dance, and then depart. The dancing devils in this scene are the first of a series of sensuous distractions Mephistophilis uses to lead Faustus away from repentance. Like the Parade of the Seven Deadly Sins in II, ii, they foreshadow the consummate distraction of Helen's apparition, which comes at a time when Faustus' repentance is most likely. By producing Helen and by allowing the physical interaction which occurs between her and Faustus, Mephistophilis extends himself more than ever before to "delight" his earthly master.

But ironically, Faustus is no more the master than is Mephistophilis his servant. Servility takes on an abstract nature when we understand that Faustus is the only real slave in this play, and his ardent passion for voluptuousness, the only master. All the rest is play-acting. Mephistophilis allows Faustus to believe that as Lucifer's cohort, he (Mephistophilis) is bound to subservience. But with not a great deal of effort, the forces of evil stand by and watch, as it were, while Faustus damns himself because of his insatiable longings. By simply fulfilling his need for "pleasure and delight," they let damnation take care of itself.

One aspect of Faustus' voluptuousness is his lustful nature, and the themes of wantonness and sensuality run through the play in a steady course until they culminate in the Faustus-Helen union. The Doctor's lasciviousness is merely hinted at in the opening monologue of I, i. He first proclaims, "Sweet Analytics, 'tis thou hast ravished me" (6); but after some analysis and soul-searching, he turns to necromancy, deciding that "'Tis magic, magic that hath ravished me" (11). This early in the play, the word "ravished" has little impact except to subtly reveal the essential wantonness of a man who thinks of the acquisition of knowledge in terms of sensual enthrallment. However, the association between magic and ravishment does ironically foreshadow the climactic union scene, where, by means of magic, Faustus ravishes (and, in a sense, is ravished by) Helen.

Obviously Faustus' sensual nature is not unknown to his friends. When Cornelius and Valdes are extolling the virtues of necromancy in I, i, Valdes emphasizes the fact that "spirits of every element" shall always be "serviceable to us three" (123-124):

Sometimes like women or unwedded maids,  
 Shadowing more beauty in their airy brows  
 Than in the white breasts of the queen of love.

(128-130)

As Mephistophilis so often does, the magicians appeal to Faustus' lascivious nature; and the beautiful women in this passage clearly point ahead to the magical Helen.<sup>7</sup>

Another scene which prefigures the union with Helen is the one in which Faustus asks Mephistophilis for a wife:<sup>8</sup>

. . . let me have a wife,  
 The fairest maid in Germany,  
 For I am wanton and lascivious,  
 And cannot live without a wife.

(138-141)

Of course Mephistophilis cannot honor Faustus' request since marriage is a divine institution established by God. Cole notes that the Faust-Book explicitly states as much, while "Marlowe presents the devil's discomfiture and the spectacle of the woman devil by which Mephistophilis dissuades Faustus from marriage."<sup>9</sup> Indeed, Faustus' reaction to the she-devil Mephistophilis produces is one of revulsion: "Here's a hot whore indeed! No, I'll no wife" (148). Mephistophilis does



We never lose sight of the fact that Faustus' hedonism is guiding him down the path to damnation. The play's many references to gluttony and related themes all lead to V, i, when Faustus "craves" of Mephistophilis "To glut the longing of my heart's desire" (91). Helen appears, kisses Faustus, and he is lost: "Her lips suck forth my soul" (102). It is interesting to note that Helen's "appetite" in this instance is an ironic retort to Faustus' hunger. She, in essence, feeds on his soul and, at the same time, satisfies his craving. Faustus readily admits to the scholars after the interlude with Helen that "A surfeit of deadly sin" "hath damned both body and soul" (37-38), that deadly sin being his insatiable appetite.

Faustus' weakness for pleasures of the flesh is tangentially associated with references to the body or to parts of the body that occur in the play. Interestingly enough, these physical references look forward or backward to the Faustus-Helen union. For example, when the subject of hell arises during Faustus' first meeting with Mephistophilis, the fallen angel tried to define it:<sup>11</sup>

Why, this is hell, nor am I out of it.

Think'st thou that I who saw the face of God

And tasted the eternal joys of heaven

Am not tormented with ten thousand hells

In being deprived of everlasting bliss?

(I, iii, 76-80)

The spiritual "face" of God, who offers man eternal salvation,

touches the heart of Mephistophilis just as the sensual "face" of Helen, who "launched a thousand ships" and brought destruction to thousands, touches the heart of Faustus. Herein lies the central conflict of the Faustian tragedy: the Doctor, by neglecting spiritual values and pursuing physical pleasure, brings about his own damnation.

The steady course of the Doctor's damnation begins in II, i, when he stabs his arm, drawing the blood needed to sign the fateful pact.<sup>12</sup> Although the physical act, in itself, causes no direct pain, it leads to the spiritual and bodily pain that he will ultimately suffer in the final act of the play. Associated with this potentially painful experience is the scene with Helen when her lips "suck forth" his soul. Again he expresses no immediate physical pain as a result of the kiss, but the act does contribute to his everlasting torment.

Faustus' winged soul ("See where it flies!" V, ii, 102) leaving his body is the culmination of several references to dismemberment found throughout the play; when mentioned, they are somehow linked with his repentance or his damnation. For example, in II, ii, the Bad Angel terrorizes Faustus away from repentance by warning him that "If thou repent, devils will tear thee in pieces" (81). Mephistophilis uses the same threat in V, i, when Faustus has just been visited for the first time by the Old Man, who adminishes him to accept God's grace and call for mercy. Mephistophilis commands Faustus to "Revolt, or I'll in piecemeal tear thy flesh" (76).

In the preceding discussion I have attempted to show the significance of several dominant themes as they occur in the main action of the play insofar as they exemplify Faustus' voluptuousness. Running parallel to the main action is a series of comic scenes which "treat Faustus' heinous sins satirically, by exposing them to grotesque exaggeration and caricature."<sup>13</sup> Faustus' servant Wagner parodies his master's wantonness when he claims that "I am by nature phlegmatic, slow to wrath, and prone to lechery" (I, ii, 16-17). Wagner's suggestion that Robin "would give his soul to the devil for a shoulder of mutton, though it were blood-raw" (I, iv, 7-8) satirizes Faustus' gluttonous appetite, as does the scene where Dick and Robin steal the vintner's cup (III, iii). The dismemberment theme surfaces regularly in the comic scenes: Wagner threatens to turn Robin's lice into familiars and "make them tear thee to pieces" (I, iv, 20-21); Benvolio strikes off Faustus' head in an act of revenge (IV, iii, 69-77); and the Horse-Courser pulls off Faustus' leg in IV, v. Bevington explores in detail the function of the comic scenes, concluding that they "dramatize in ludicrous fashion the besetting sins of Faustus himself: ambition, covetousness, and the sins of the flesh." And while Faustus' "nobility of mind" does somewhat overshadow these failings, they do exist. The "vice figures" (Bevington's tag for the comic villains) personify by "indirection and analogy," "the purely degenerate side of Faustus and so allow the loftiness of his tragedy to exist more coherently in its own right."<sup>14</sup>

The "loftiness" of Faustus' tragedy, steadily building in magnitude from the first lines of the play, is fully realized in the last act, which opens with Faustus entertaining the scholars at a feast. Titillated by an earlier conference in which he and the other scholars, along with Faustus, discussed the "beautifullest" fair ladies in the world, the First Scholar asks to see "Helen of Greece." Faustus agrees to show them "that peerless dame," with the warning that they do not speak to her, and Mephistophilis escorts her on to the stage.<sup>15</sup> Naturally, they are awed by her presence; acclaiming her "heavenly beauty," they describe her as "the pride of nature's works" and the "only paragon of excellence." The Doctor is thanked for "this blessed sight" (32-35). The "heavenly" quality of Helen's beauty, the "blessedness" of the sight of her, symbolizes the confusion in which Faustus is caught. As Robert Heilman notes, "The heavenly binds him to hell. . . . Heaven he had denied, but the heavenly, whether real or spurious, he has never been able to escape in his pursuit of secular glories."<sup>16</sup>

The Old Man makes his first appearance immediately after Helen is viewed by the scholars, and his presence alone is a rebuke to Faustus, whose confusion will inevitably lead him to hell for "heavenly" Helen. A faithful servant of God who triumphs over evil, the Old Man gently admonishes Faustus, assuring him that he can still attain salvation if he will but relinquish magic. It is important to note that the Old Man only appears once more, and, like the first, his second

appearance follows Helen's. Because of his extraordinary faith, the Old Man has the ability to move Faustus to admit his sinfulness and think on repentance seriously. But Mephistophilis is also powerful and easily terrorizes Faustus back into submission.

Once again a familiar pattern emerges. When Faustus feels some spiritual apprehension, he is given or requests some form of physical gratification to distract him from thoughts of repentance. In V, i, the "appetites that have led him to damn himself dominate his personality completely;"<sup>17</sup> he asks Mephistophilis to satisfy his craving, "To glut the longing of my heart's desire" (91). His request to have Helen as his "paramour" marks the climax of his long pleasure quest.

There has been much critical comment on Faustus' physical union with Helen. During the last 20 years, most scholars have respectfully acknowledged W. W. Greg's 1946 study of Doctor Faustus as a major contribution to Marlovian criticism. Professor Greg's analysis reveals that Helen is a "spirit," and that in this play a spirit means a devil. He feels that in "making her his paramour Faustus commits the sin of demoni-ality, that is, bodily intercourse with demons."<sup>18</sup> Greg sees this union as ultimately responsible for Faustus' damnation; whatever hope of salvation existed before it is beyond his reach afterward.

Helen of Troy has traditionally been a symbol not only of beauty, but also of destructiveness and sinful pleasure;<sup>19</sup> Faustus implies as much when she appears on stage the second

time, appropriately flanked by two cupids:<sup>20</sup> "Was this the face that launched a thousand ships/And burn't the topless towers of Illium?" (V, i, 99-100) In one of the most memorable passages in all of dramatic literature, Marlowe pinpoints the devastation that follows at Helen's heels while at the same time implicitly suggesting the destructiveness of Faustus' desires. The fire imagery communicates the Doctor's burning passion, and also points towards his fate, a burning hell.

Ironically, Faustus expects his fate to take quite a different direction:

Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss.

(She kisses him.)

Her lips suck forth my soul. See where it flies!

Come, Helen, come, give me my soul again.

Here will I dwell, for heaven is in these lips,

And all is dross that is not Helena.

(101-105)

Nowhere in the play is Faustus' confusion of values so glaringly portrayed. For a moment of sheer physical pleasure, the protagonist willingly sacrifices an eternity of bliss.<sup>21</sup> His blasphemous request for immortality has, as Heilman notes, a tri-fold meaning. "There is the immortality of fame, that of Menelaus and Paris--and Faustus. Then there is a kind of physical immortality: the ecstasy of Helen's kiss will make the recipient feel deathless. And beneath this there is a third immortality: the kiss marks his journey to eternal punishment."<sup>22</sup>

Once Faustus' soul has "flown," it can never return again. Hell, not heaven, lies in her lips, for the taste of which he has sacrificed Heaven. And ironically the first syllable of Helen's name is hell. As Kirschbaum puts it, "Helen is the 'dross' for which he is giving up the 'all'."<sup>23</sup>

Marlowe's irony persists in Faustus' desire to be Paris, who is finally defeated:

I will be Paris, and for love of thee,  
 Instead of Troy shall Wittenberg be sacked;  
 And I will combat with weak Menelaus  
 And wear thy colors on my plumed crest.  
 Yea, I will wound Achilles in the heel  
 And then return to Helen for a kiss.

(106-111)

The element of destruction extends now from Faustus to all of Wittenberg; his willingness to "sack" what is (in this play) symbolically the seat of learning and wisdom proves that knowledge has at least a secondary place on his warped scale of values, pleasure being at the very top. Faustus' conception of Menelaus as "weak" is understandable, given his confused state. Menelaus, as husband, is the symbol of order, while Faustus, like Paris, will be the violator of order. And though Faustus does not detail the "colors" he will wear, we imagine that the insignia contains shades of red, indicating both his passion and the hell to which it will inevitably lead him.

A curious reversal occurs in the closing lines of the Helen speech; in his ecstatic and elaborate praise of the dame's dazzling beauty, Faustus sees her in the role of Jupiter and himself in that of one of the god's mortal lovers: "Brighter are thou than flaming Jupiter/When he appeared to hapless Semele" (114-115). Semele, requesting to see her lover directly in his proper form, was reduced to ashes by the brilliance of the burning vision. Likewise, the "hapless" Faustus is destroyed by his fiery vision; as Heilmann puts it, "the flames of lust are the climax of his passage to the flames of eternal torment."<sup>24</sup> In another allusion, Faustus describes Helen as "More lovely than the monarch of the sky/In wanton Arethusa's arms" (116-117). Actually, this particular incident is not recorded in Greek mythology, where we find references to Arethusa's being turned to water. But Marlowe's image is still clear; "Wanton Faustus, like Arethusa, will hold the burning sun in his arms, but not without fiery pain."<sup>25</sup> That Faustus, by his union with Helen, irrevocably damns himself is never left in doubt. The Old Man says as much when the lovers leave the stage:

Accurs'd Faustus, miserable man,  
That from thy soul exclud'st the grace of heaven  
And fliest the throne of his tribunal seat.

(119-121)

By embracing the illusory, "heavenly Helen," he loses all rights to Heaven.

In V, ii, the final scene of the play, we see the direct result of Faustus' ecstatic union; playing with fire indeed has its hazards. As Mephistophilis tells Lucifer and Beelzebub, "His store of pleasures must be sauced with pain" (16). Faustus, too, knows that he must now "die eternally." During his final meeting with the scholars, the Doctor confesses his sin: "For the vain pleasure of four and twenty years hath Faustus lost eternal joy and felicity: (62-63). "Pleasure" has a special depth of meaning in this context, for Faustus' driving passion has always been sensuous gratification. At this point, hell only has significance for him insofar as it constitutes spiritual pain--that is, the loss of heaven. As his final hour approaches, the Good and Bad Angels appear to prepare him. Their admonitions affirm the fact that those who make their God a god of appetite will pay the price of damnation. The Bad Angel reminds him that for his sin, he "must taste hell's pains eternally" (99).

The torments of damnation are made even more horrible when compared to the vision of heaven suggested by the Good Angel as a throne descends from the sky:

O, thou hast lost celestial happiness,  
 Pleasures unspeakable, bliss without end.  
 Hadst thou affected sweet divinity,  
 Hell or the devil had had no power on thee.  
 Hadst thou kept on that way, Faustus, behold  
 In what resplendent glory thou hadst sat

In yonder throne, like those bright shining saints,  
And triumphed over hell.

(103-110)

We are reminded of Faustus' momentary bliss with Helen. Her lips could hardly be as glorious a dwelling place as God's heaven; and if Faustus is now aware of this, his enlightenment comes too late. The light imagery employed in this passage resembles that found in the ecstatic vision of Helen. The "resplendent glory" of heaven is the reality which Faustus confuses with the apparent "heaven" to be found in Helen's beauty: "O, thou art fairer than the evening's air,/Clad in the beauty of a thousand stars" (V, i, 112-113). And Faustus has forsaken the eternal company of the "bright shining saints" for a fleeting embrace with one who is "brighter . . . than flaming Jupiter" (V, i, 114). The repeated use of light imagery thus serves as an ironic reminder that because of base physical desire, Faustus is so blind to the spiritual light of heaven that he confuses the fires of passion with true bliss.

After the throne to heaven ascends, the "jaws of hell" are revealed to Faustus and the Bad Angel shows him, among other things, another throne:

There are the Furies tossing damned souls  
On burning forks; their bodies boil in lead.  
There are live quarters broiling on the coals,  
That ne'er can die. This ever-burning chair  
Is for o'er tortured souls to rest them in.

These that are fed with sops of flaming fire  
 Were gluttons and loved only delicates  
 And laughed to see the poor starve at their gates.  
 But yet all these are nothing: thou shalt see  
 Ten thousand tortures that more horrid be.

(115-124)

Here, for the first time, Faustus becomes aware of the physical torments of hell; coupled with the spiritual pain of having just lost sight of heaven, this vision drives him to near frenzy. The images of gluttony make a clear, resounding statement: Faustus' voracious appetite has doomed him to everlasting misery. The Bad Angel verifies this when he reminds Faustus he must "taste the smart" of hell's tortures since "He that loves pleasure must for pleasure fall" (126-127). The Bad Angel then exits, leaving the anguished Faustus alone to ponder this neat aphorism.

In his final hour, Faustus' pleas for salvation are at their most desperate, not only because he has just seen the fires of hell, but because he will be burning there himself in just a short time. In a pitiful effort to stop the clock, he cries, "O lente, lente currite noctis equi" (139). The phrase ("O slowly, slowly run you horses of night") is taken from Ovid's Amores and amounts to a lover's prayer for the prolongation of the night and its joys. As Cole notes, "The amorous connotation of the Ovidian lines gives it an ironic weight in Faustus' speech, a weight which undermines the sincerity of the immediately preceding line 'That Faustus may

repent and save his soule'" (138).<sup>26</sup> Faustus' erotic allusion strongly suggests that he is still dominated by the pleasure principle, still driven by passion, and still the weak voluptuary.

As the clock is about to strike twelve, Faustus, still hoping for mercy from above, asks himself: "O why wert thou not a creature wanting soul?" (169) It is supremely ironic that he wishes now to be lower than man on the chain of being when all the while, he was striving to rise above his link and be a "demi-god" (I, i, 63). What he fails to recognize is that his life of "all voluptuousness" has not been unlike the life of a beast, whose only concern is an instinctual desire for bodily comfort. When the clock finally signals the hateful hour, Devils enter to carry him off. His last words are a feeble attempt to strike a bargain with God: "I'll burn my books! Ah Mephistophilis" (187).

In searching for the essential reason behind Faustus' downfall, we can arrive at at least one clear-cut conclusion. In his overriding attempt to gratify his desires in every respect, and never to know the meaning of sensuous deprivation, he brings about his own end. Helen's role, although she never speaks a word, takes on mammoth proportions in this respect. Their consummation is the climax of Faustus' long career of "voluptuousness," a career typified in the dominant themes which emerge in the play. Wantonness, gluttony, satiety--in general, pleasure and delight--are the principles by which Faustus rules his life. In the Helen

scene all those principles come together to drive the protagonist first into a luxurious frenzy and finally into everlasting pain.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Irving Ribner, ed., The Complete Plays of Christopher Marlowe (New York: The Odyssey Press, 1963), p. xxiv.

<sup>2</sup> John Bakeless, The Tragicall History of Christopher Marlowe, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1942), v. 2., p. 288.

<sup>3</sup> Ribner, p. xxiv.

<sup>4</sup> W. W. Greg, "The Damnation of Faustus," Modern Language Review, 41 (1946), 97-107; rpt. in Marlowe: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Clifford Leech (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1964), 92-107.

<sup>5</sup> Bakeless, v. 1, pp. 297-301.

<sup>6</sup> Nicholas Brooke, in "The Moral Tragedy of Doctor Faustus," The Cambridge Journal, 5 (1952), 662-687; rpt. in part in Critics on Marlowe, ed. Judith O'Neill (Coral Gables, Florida: University of Miami Press, 1970), 93-114, insists that "we make a distinction between Knowledge and Pleasure which is foreign to Marlowe: the philosophy of Faustus . . . is primarily hedonistic; the man has appetites, and his pleasure is to satisfy them. He has an appetite for knowledge, and another for sex; but only the qualitative distinction is

between completeness and incompleteness." It seems to me that Brooke glosses over the word "pleasure" and arrives at "sex," which is not the only "appetite" that drives the hedonist. I think Marlowe makes a clear case for the distinction between pleasure and knowledge by his abundant use of words and images that suggest physical gratification. Harry Levin in The Overreacher: A Study of Christopher Marlowe (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952), claims that "intellectual curiosity" is the "activating force" in Doctor Faustus, but it cannot, he says, be "detached from the secondary motives that entrap it, the will to power and the appetite for sensation" (p. 110).

<sup>7</sup>T. McAlindon, in "Classical Mythology and Christian Tradition in Marlowe's Doctor Faustus," PMLA, 81 (1966), 214-232, says of this passage that "Faustus would seem to have these enchanting creatures in mind when he enthusiastically asks permission to 'conjure in some lusty grove': the woodland haunts of the nymphs, fays, and Dianas are both 'pleasant' and 'full of lust and sexual desire'."

<sup>8</sup>Douglas Cole, in Suffering and Evil in the Plays of Christopher Marlowe (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962), notes that "Marlowe has constructed for Faustus' career a symmetrical framework of sexual desire, beginning in this demand for a wife and ending in the request for Helen" (p. 211, footnote 33).

<sup>9</sup>Cole, p. 211.

<sup>10</sup>C. L. Barber, in "'The form of Faustus' fortunes good or bad'," Tulane Drama Review, 8 (1964), 92-119, offers an extensive study of the images of devouring and gluttony in the play. He associates them with the repudiation of Holy Communion and also stresses their oral nature, interpreting them from a psychoanalytic point of view.

<sup>11</sup>In one of the most poignant scenes of the play (I, iii), Mephistophilis tries to dissuade the Doctor from his pursuit of magic by describing the spiritual void one feels in being apart from God (77-82). Hell is abstracted rather than localized and essentially is defined as the deprivation of "eternal bliss." Faustus mocks the fallen angel's "passionate" nature perhaps because he seriously doubts the reality of hell. In II, i, Faustus asks Mephistophilis: "Tell me, where is this place that men call hell?" (114) Mephistophilis' reply is somewhat vague: hell is "under the heavens": it hath no limits": it is "where we are"; and when the world dissolves, "All places shall be hell that is not heaven" (115-124). At this point, Faustus claims that he thinks hell is a "fable," and that the notion of suffering after death is merely an "old wives' tale." We are never really certain about the Doctor's true feelings concerning hell. It appears that he denies its existence, which would explain his willingness to consign his soul to be damned. However, his request of Lucifer in II, ii, to "see hell and return again safe" (165)

implies that he fears he erred in judgment. As far as we know, Faustus is never granted the request which Lucifer agreed to honor--at any rate, not until it is too late and Faustus looks down into hell's gaping mouth (V, ii) in his final hour.

<sup>12</sup>Greg claims that "through his bargain with hell, he has himself taken on the infernal nature, although it is made clear that he still retains his human soul" (p. 102).

<sup>13</sup>David M. Bevington, From 'Mankind' to Marlowe (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), p. 253.

<sup>14</sup>Bevington, p. 254.

<sup>15</sup>Faustus warns the scholars not to speak to Helen in the same way that he stays the Emperor from embracing Alexander and his paramour in IV, ii, after having warned him not to speak to the spirits. He has to remind the Emperor that "These are but shadows, not substantial" (54).

<sup>16</sup>Robert B. Heilman, "The Tragedy of Knowledge: Marlowe's Treatment of Faustus," Quarterly Review of Literature, 2 (1946), 316-332.

<sup>17</sup>Charles G. Masinton, Christopher Marlowe's Tragic Vision: A Study in Damnation (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1972), p. 137.

<sup>18</sup>Greg, pp. 105-106. While Greg's summation may be theologically unsound, it is supported in Elizabethan studies on demonology.

<sup>19</sup>See Cole, p. 222; McAlindon, p. 222; Levin, p. 125; Heilman, p. 329.

<sup>20</sup>We recall that in Dido, Queen of Carthage, Helen is referred to more than once as a "ticing strumpet."

<sup>21</sup>Levin points out that when "Dido wooed Aeneas and spoke of becoming "immortall with a kiss," it seemed to be little more than a figure of speech" (p. 125). Not so with Faustus.

<sup>22</sup>Leo Kirschbaum, "Doctor Faustus: A Reconsideration," Review of English Studies, 19 (1943), 225-241; rpt. in part in Critics on Marlowe, ed. Judith O'Neill, 80-93.

<sup>23</sup>Kirschbaum, p. 92.

<sup>24</sup>Heilman, p. 329; see also Cole (p. 223) and McAlindon (p. 222).

<sup>25</sup>Cole, p. 223.

<sup>26</sup>Cole, p. 226; see also Heilman, p. 330.

## Conclusion

If we were to graph the female roles in the Marlowe canon using the chronology acknowledged in this study, our findings would show that the number of women in each play gradually decreases from Dido (with five female roles) to Doctor Faustus (with one unimportant female role, the Duchess of Anholt, and one silent but highly symbolic part in Helen). Such a chart would seem to indicate that after Marlowe's first play, the role of the female shrinks in significance. At the root of this apparent scarcity of female parts is the fact that the dramatist chose to cull his works from sources describing bold, aggressive, and quite masculine worlds, worlds in which women had very little prominence.

In the Marlowe canon, Dido is the only play where romantic love is at the heart of the action. For the rest, a desire for conquest, power, or wealth dominates the central movement of each play. Certainly Marlowe was aware that his were, for the most part, "masculine" dramas; and perhaps in an effort to compensate for the imbalance in his casts, he made a conscious effort to imbue his plays with the feminine element where dramatically possible. Firstly, he expanded the female roles found in his sources in order to enlarge their significance. Such is the case with Dido, Anna, Juno,

Venus, Zenocrate, and Isabella. Secondly, he created roles for women where they were not always indicated in the sources (e.g., the Nurse, Zabina).

This is not to imply that Marlowe's female roles are such key factors that they are instrumental in shaping action. Quite the contrary. His heroines are usually of minor importance in relation to the central movement of the play. In Dido, minor female characters (Juno and Venus) manipulate action, while the female protagonist is a mere puppet on a string. If Zenocrate is influential in shaping action, it is only insofar as her death causes Tamburlaine to wreak havoc on Larissa because she died there. Abigail's part in Barabas' revenge sets up a series of consequences for which she is only indirectly responsible. The movement in Edward II is bound up with Isabella's reactions rather than her actions. And Helen's role in Faustus' end, coming so late in the play, is but the last of a long series of damning acts which consign the German doctor to hell.

For the most part, Marlowe's women act as a result of being acted upon; most are typically female, characterized by a traditional need for dependence. This trait of weakness is explored in Goldberg's study, which essentially deals with the participation of women in the central action of Marlowe's major plays. He claims that "because of inferiority of social position and lack of physical strength," the female "must act in an indirect manner, either through intrigue, insinuation, or the power of her charm." Since action is

not their "true province," Marlowe's female roles lie "somewhere between object and actor."<sup>1</sup> In a sense, Goldberg's point is well-taken; his conclusions, however, are basically negative. That is, he emphasizes what the female roles do not accomplish and, as a result, obscures their positive aspects.

There are, after all, many dramatic functions a character may fulfill to be credited as a meaningful part of the whole, not the least of which is to aid in the revelation of the dramatist's predominant idea, or theme. While Marlowe's major works are characterized by the unrelenting aspirations of their protagonists, the canon as a whole explores the domination of will, whether it be the capricious will of the gods in Dido, or the selfishly personal will of a king in Edward II. An unavoidable outcome of the obstinacy of will is suffering, either by the willful character or by those upon whom an external will is inflicted, or by both.

Suffering in Marlovian drama is represented in two aspects. On the one hand, there is that experienced by the male protagonists, which usually has an intellectual basis. For example, Edward brings calamity upon himself by refusing to consider the responsibilities of kingship over his own personal desires. On the other hand, there is the suffering of the female characters, which most often has an emotional basis. Typically, Marlowe's women suffer in a romantic relationship; Dido loses her lover, Zabina and Olympia lose their husbands, and Isabella loses both husband and lover.

Zenocrate's pain stems from the sometimes impossible task of reconciling her love for Tamburlaine with his indomitable cruelty. Not romantic in nature but still characterized by love are the familial relationships which result in suffering. Abigail is duped, manipulated, and then disowned by her father, while Olympia and Katherine suffer the loss of their sons. It may be said, then, that while male characters suffer because their intellect wills them to aspire beyond that which is reasonable, the female roles give the audience a different perspective of anguish by adding to the tragedies an emotional dimension.

Quite often, Marlowe's minor female characters strengthen a key theme by paralleling, either literally or ironically, the major female roles. Thus, the experiences of Anna and the Nurse reiterate the rejection that Dido suffers by the man she loves. Honor, a primary theme in the Tamburlaine plays, is portrayed as bravery in the male characters; the feminine expression of honor--chastity--while typified in Zenocrate, is echoed ironically in the Turkish concubines and literally in the roles of the Virgins. In Olympia's role, honor is portrayed in both its masculine and its feminine forms. While Abigail is the paragon of chastity and selflessness, Bellamira is an ironic counterpart whose evil nature is most nearly akin to that of Barabas. And while Helen's role does not serve as a parallel, it does reflect all the themes of voluptuousness which combine to lead Faustus to damnation.

No great claims can be made, then, for the structural significance of the female roles; there is, however, ample evidence to support the contention that they function substantially in the revelation of theme. But the most salient feature of the feminine element in Marlovian drama, the most consequential aspect of the female presence, is that the response elicited by a woman--from the audience, from the male protagonist, or from both--is a pivotal element in each of the plays. And in each case, a woman and the set of values she represents (usually different from that of the male character she relates to) is central to the dramatic conflict being presented.

In Dido, the Carthaginian queen is governed solely by passion, while Aeneas is forever looking beyond it to a world of adventure. Catastrophe results because their desires are incompatible. Zenocrate, while she abhors Tamburlaine's obsessive need for conquest, can nonetheless admire his sense of honor. And Tamburlaine's conflict between Beauty (with its softening influence) and Honor is sparked by his devotion to Zenocrate. Unlike Tamburlaine, Barabas is not the least bit "softened" by a woman; the resulting conflict in Abigail is one that is basic to human existence--the choice between good and evil. Paradoxically, she is forced to choose between "evil" (obeying her father whatever the cost) which is partly attractive because of filial love and devotion, and "good" (clinging to the Judaeo-Christian code of morality) which in itself causes her to turn away

from her father. That Barabas refuses to take an example from Abigail's virtue, but rejects it instead, costs him his life. Edward makes a similar mistake by rejecting Isabella, thus abrogating the chance to bring order to the realm; he chooses instead the disruptive influence of Gaveston. The monarch's abusive treatment of his queen makes us despise him in the early acts, just as her despicable behavior later causes us to sympathize with Edward. And there can be no question of Helen's influence on Faustus; she is not only the symbolic expression of his every damning vice, but the literal conclusion of his consummation with hell.

If we look closely at the four full female portraits in the Marlowe canon--Dido, Zenocrate, Abigail, and Isabella--we can detect a gradual change in the way each woman reacts to a negative force. Dido, unable to deal effectively with rejection, ends her life. Zenocrate recognizes and quietly accepts Tamburlaine's viciousness, but not without great pain. Abigail's conversion to Christianity is a passive yet positive way of denying Barabas' influence over her. And Isabella so vehemently reacts to Edward's abuse that she becomes more cruel than the man whose cruelty provoked her transformation. There is with each play a gradual strengthening of character in the female, an increasing ability to resist, if not oppose, the domination of will.

With the exception of Helen, then, the major female characters in each play have ideals or desires which are at odds with those of the male characters. In the Tamburlaine

plays and in The Jew of Malta, the contrast is evoked most clearly by the woman's expostulation of a moral. Zenocrate exclaims:

Those that are proud of fickle empery  
And place their chiefest good in earthly pomp,  
Behold the Turk and his great empress!

(1, V, ii, 289-291)

But only her maid Anippe hears her; like Zenocrate's, Abigail's pronouncement of a moral is lost to the wind. In soliloquy, she admits to the recognition that "there is no love on earth, / Pity in Jews, nor piety in Turks" (III, iii, 47-48). In these plays, as well as in Dido and Edward II, destruction results because women's needs are unfulfilled or because the ethical code they expound or represent goes unheeded.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Larry Goldberg, "The Role of the Female in the Drama of Lyly, Greene, Kyd, and Marlowe," Diss. Northwestern 1969, p. 165.

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