

EDWARD II AND THE ENGLISH

MORALITY PLAY

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is divided into four main sections as outlined in the following paragraphs.

After a brief introduction setting out the purposes and limitations of the thesis, we examine Marlowe's critical reputation from his own time to the present. We find that he was largely ignored as a playwright until he was "rediscovered" by the Romantic critics at the beginning of the nineteenth century. These critics created the myth of Marlowe as a passionate young rebel against an orthodox world, a myth that persisted well into the twentieth century. When we come to the twentieth century, we divide Marlowe critics into the Romantic (those who maintain the image of Marlowe as a rebel against orthodoxy) and the anti-Romantic (those who view him as a traditionalist). Representative works from each group are examined. It is then decided that this thesis, while it does not deny the validity of the Romantic approach, is anti-Romantic since it seeks to emphasize the traditional side of Marlowe's writing.

We then proceed to a discussion of the morality play in order to set out a working definition of the genre. This is done by an examination of the sources and the history and development of the morality and by a more extensive examination of its outstanding characteristics. We find that there is present at least one of three basic themes: the conflict of good and evil for the soul of man, contempt of the world, and the debate of the Heavenly Virtues

for the soul of man after death. Certain stock characters constantly reappear, the most important of which are the Everyman type, the Vice, the Devil, the Worldly Man, the Good and Evil Angels, and Death. Two basic structural types are used, the first showing a central character who is influenced by alternating groups of good and evil figures, and the second making use of a comic subplot, alternating scenes of moral didacticism with scenes of comic relief. Other characteristics of moralities are found to be the extensive use of debate and the lack of a realistic space-time concept. We then define the morality as a didactic play using one or more of the characteristic themes, stock characters, and one of the structural patterns outlined above.

We then proceed to compare Edward II with this definition. Thematically, we find that the conflict between good and evil for control of man's soul is present in the conflict between the nobles and Gaveston for control over the king. This is developed in the morality fashion, showing the central figure succumbing to vice, repenting, and ultimately gaining salvation. The theme of contempt of the world is also present particularly in the story of Mortimer and Isabella, whose rise and fall is found to follow the pattern of the "Worldly Man" morality. We then proceed to show that thematically Edward II is a combination of two morality play types, the "good and evil conflict" type and the "Worldly Man" type, and that the conflicting roles that characters are required to play in these two

structures sometimes gives rise to character ambiguity. An examination of the character types present in the play shows that Edward plays the Everyman role in the "good and evil" structure and the Heavenly Man in the "Worldly Man" structure. Mortimer's character is found to be ambiguous because he is forced to play a virtuous counsellor within one structure and the Worldly Man in the other. The same applies to Isabella. Less important characters lack this ambiguity and function in a more straightforward manner. Kent represents Moderation, Gaveston is the Vice, Spencer and Baldock are assistant Vices, Lightborn is Death, and Prince Edward is Justice. Structurally, Edward II follows the pattern of a central character coming under the influence of good and evil characters alternately. Debate is of limited importance in the play and the concept of time is loose, as is the concept of space.

The thesis concludes that although there are a number of morality play elements in Edward II, the play cannot be regarded as a morality because it does not teach an overt lesson. Although certain precepts are embodied in the text of the play, Marlowe himself seems to withhold moral judgment on the action.

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INTRODUCTION

Christopher Marlowe wrote his plays toward the end of a twenty-year period during which the English popular stage had undergone a great transition. The established professional troupes of London were faced with fewer limitations in their productions than the former travelling troupes and as a result more complex and demanding productions could be presented. As this transition toward repertory rather than travelling theatre became more complete, there was a shift away from the established theatrical patterns of the popular stage as the versatility of the new theatres and troupes came to be exploited by the playwrights. These old theatrical patterns and conventions had been handed down with only slight alterations from the days of the morality play and many elements of the morality were still present in them. The new playwrights broke away from these old traditions of the popular theatre and introduced many of the elements that had become popular in university and court theatre, thus creating a popular art form that combined elements taken from three important parts of the population, the court, the university, and the common people. One of these new playwrights was Christopher Marlowe.

The question of how strong the break was from the old traditions of the popular theatre, however, has recently been called into question. Critics have lately found more and more elements of the popular morality play in the works of these new playwrights. Spivack in Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil (1958) and Bevington in From Mankind to Marlowe (1962) find strong morality play affinities in the work of the two major

innovators in the theatre of the day, Shakespeare and Marlowe. The purpose of this thesis will be to apply this type of investigation to a play that has not yet been examined in this light, Marlowe's Edward II.

We shall begin this investigation with a survey of critical attitudes and approaches to Marlowe from his own day down to the present. This seems to be necessary because the approach taken here differs radically from the dominant critical approach to Marlowe. Having done this, we shall proceed to set out a working definition of the morality play by an examination of its historical setting and its principal characteristics. Basically we shall attempt to define the genre by reference to its themes, character types, and structure. This will serve as a background to the major section of the thesis, an examination of Edward II's morality play features. We shall examine Marlowe's play within each of the subdivisions of the definition noted above--themes, character types, and structure--and shall attempt to show where, within each of these categories, morality elements may be present. Following this, we shall take a brief look at any moral instruction that may be implied in the play and shall then draw what conclusions we may from the investigation.

There are certain qualifications, of course, that must be made at the outset concerning this approach. We must make it clear that we have no intention of attempting to prove that Edward II is a morality play. It is, of course, not a morality play; it is a combination of a number of theatrical forms into

a dramatic type that could perhaps be called chronicle-history. We shall attempt to demonstrate, however, that morality elements are present in the play and are a determining factor in its dramatic effectiveness.

CHAPTER I

MARLOWE AND THE CRITICS

In this chapter I propose to examine various critics' attitudes and approaches to Marlowe. The approach will be chronological, and will attempt to show that certain nineteenth century attitudes to Marlowe are still influential and that only recently have critics begun to branch away from them. This is intended to serve as a background against which this thesis and its approach may be seen.

It is difficult to give an accurate evaluation of the reactions of Marlowe's contemporaries to his writing. Descriptive criticism seems to be, as Watson suggests¹, a relatively new field of critical endeavour, the earliest examples of which appeared in the seventeenth century with Dryden. Thus, in Marlowe's own day there was little critical evaluation of individual works and literary critics spent most of their time setting down rules of composition and attacking or defending poetic theories. Most comment about individual writers took the form either of attacks on or praise of the writer through his works rather than of the works themselves. This is the sort of criticism we find of Marlowe.

Marlowe's contemporaries seem to have been divided in their reaction to him. Three contemporary references praise him and three condemn him. The condemners are Robert Greene, the playwright; Thomas Beard, a moralist who attacks Marlowe in his 1597 tract, Theatre of God's Judgements; and William Vaughan, who uses Marlowe's death as an example against atheists in his Golden Grove (1600). These are counterbalanced by the three

favourable critics, each of them famous poets in their own right. Chapman praised him and did him the honour of completing the poem Hero and Leander which Marlowe left unfinished at his death. Drayton wrote the longest appreciation in which he said, among other things, that:

Marlowe, bathed in the Thespian springs,
Had in him those brave translunary things
That our first poets had: his raptures were
All air and fire, which made his verses clear:²

The third approving critic was Marlowe's poetic heir, William Shakespeare. In fact, as Hunt suggested, "Marlowe enjoys the singular and (so far) unaccountable honour of being the only English writer to whom Shakespeare seems to have alluded with approbation."³ The allusion occurs in As You Like It when Phebe says:

Dead shepherd, now I find thy saw of might:
'Whoever lov'd that lov'd not at first sight?'⁴

These, then, are the three complimentary references. We must note, however, that each of these refers to Marlowe's poetry and not to his plays. He was admired by some in his own day as a poet, but not as a dramatist. In fact, the tradition of bombastic theatrical blank verse that Marlowe began with Tamburlaine fell into disfavour and was widely satirized during the last decade of Elizabeth's reign and well on into the seventeenth century. An example of this satire occurs in Shakespeare's 2 Henry IV when Pistol is made to say:

These be good humours, indeed! Shall packhorses,
And hollow pamper'd jades of Asia,
Which cannot go but thirty mile a day,
Compare with Caesars, and with Cannibals,

And Trojan Greeks? nay, rather damn them with
King Cerberus; and let the welkin roar.
Shall we fall foul for toys?⁵

This is a direct parody of Tamburlaine when he says:

Holla, ye pampered jades of Asia!
What, can ye draw but twenty miles a day,
And have so proud a chariot at your heels,
And such a coachman as great Tamburlaine,
But from Asphaltis, where I conquered you,
To Byron here, where thus I honor you?⁶

and is a part of the tradition of such satire that grew up among the late Elizabethans and Jacobeans.

During the seventeenth and eighteenth century, he was largely neglected, and the major critic of this period, Dryden, does not even mention him. It was not until the early part of the nineteenth century and the rise of the Romantic movement that Marlowe was given serious attention by the critics. Despite the fact that he is mentioned by Warton in his History of English Poetry, which appeared between 1774 and 1781, it is the Romantic critics who began the re-establishment of Marlowe's reputation.

Although he seems to have been chiefly responsible for the revival of interest in Elizabethan dramatists, Charles Lamb devotes little space to Marlowe. In his 1808 treatise, Characters of Dramatic Writers Contemporary with Shakespeare, he does discuss most of Marlowe's plays and praises Edward II considerably:

In a very different style from mighty Tamburlaine is the tragedy of Edward the Second. The reluctant pangs of abdicating royalty in Edward furnished hints, which Shakespeare scarcely improved in his Richard the Second; and the death-scene of Marlowe's

king moves pity and terror beyond any scene antient or modern with which I am acquainted.⁷

Coleridge, despite the considerable attention he gives to Shakespeare, scarcely mentions Marlowe and it is not until Hazlitt that the real enthusiasm seems to have begun. In his lectures on the Elizabethan age, Hazlitt devotes a good deal of time to an examination of Marlowe's plays and is lavish in his praise. His opening remarks will serve to illustrate this:

Marlowe is a name that stands high, and almost first in this list of dramatic worthies. He was a little before Shakespear's time, and has a marked character both from him and the rest. There is a lust of power in his writings, a hunger and thirst after unrighteousness, a glow of the imagination, unhallowed by any thing but its own energies. His thoughts burn within him like a furnace with bickering flames; or throwing out black smoke and mists, that hide the dawn of genius, or like a poisonous mineral, corrode the heart.⁸

It is entirely possible that it was this statement that touched off the Romantic idea that Marlowe was the young genius unfortunately cut down before his talents had had their full chance to develop. At any rate, the praise of Marlowe becomes more profuse in Hallam's Introduction to the Literature of Europe which appeared in the years 1837-1839 and in Leigh Hunt's Imagination and Fancy of 1844 where Hunt claimed that:

If ever there was a born poet, Marlowe was one. He perceived things in their spiritual as well as their material relations, and impressed them with a corresponding felicity. Rather, he struck them as with something sweet and glowing that rushes by;--perfumes from a censer,--glances of love and beauty. And he could accumulate images into as deliberate and lofty a grandeur.⁹

Thus, by 1844 the Romantic view of Marlowe was already well developed and during the next twenty years it became more or less the common view of the playwright. When Hippolyte Taine's History of English Literature was published in 1865, this viewpoint had reached a full development and his opening paragraph on Marlowe, although rather long, deserves full quotation because it is virtually definitive of the Romantic point of view:

Marlowe was an ill-regulated, dissolute, outrageously vehement and audacious spirit, but grand and sombre, with the genuine poetic frenzy; pagan moreover, and rebellious in manners and creed. In this universal return to the senses, and in this impulse of natural forces which brought on the Renaissance, the corporeal instincts and the ideas which hallow them, break forth impetuously. Marlowe, like Greene, like Kett, is a sceptic, denies God and Christ, blasphemes the Trinity, declares Moses "a juggler," Christ more worthy of death than Barabas, says that "yf he wer to write a new religion, he wolde undertake both a more excellent and more admirable methode," and "almost in every company he commeth, perswadeth men to Athiesme." Such were the rages, the rashnesses, the excesses which liberty of thought gave rise to in these new minds, who for the first time, after so many centuries, dared to walk unfettered. From his father's shop, crowded with children, from the straps and awls, he found himself studying at Cambridge, probably through the patronage of a great man, and on his return to London, in want, amid the license of the green-room, the low houses and taverns, his head was in a ferment, and his passions became excited. He turned actor; but having broken his leg in a scene of debauchery, he remained lame, and could no longer appear on the boards. He openly avowed his infidelity, and a prosecution was begun, which, if time had not failed, would probably have brought him to the stake. He made love to a drab, and in trying to stab his rival, his hand was turned, so that his own blade entered his eye and his brain, and he died, cursing and blaspheming. He was only thirty years old. Think what poetry could emanate from a life so passionate, and occupied in such a manner!¹⁰

This position was accepted by the critics of the day and was propounded most conspicuously by Swinburne in his Age of Shakespeare (1908) and Havelock Ellis in his edition of Marlowe (1887) where he perpetuates the Romantic image of Marlowe by such accounts as the following:

...Marlowe was at the little village of Deptford, not many miles from London. There was turbulent blood there, and wine; there were courtesans and daggers. Here Marlowe was slain, killed by a serving-man, a rival in a quarrel over bought kisses--"a bawdy serving man."¹¹

This, then was the view of Marlowe and his plays that was current at the end of the nineteenth century--the Romantic view that saw the playwright as a rebellious young genius cut down by a serving-man in a fight over a woman before his talent had an opportunity to develop. The plays themselves were regarded by these critics as statements of Marlowe's own beliefs and they felt that he himself was speaking through the main characters. As Ellis says, "Marlowe nearly always clings to his story, but he makes it alive with his own soaring passion. With the exception of Edward II, which stands alone, Marlowe's dramas are mostly series of scenes held together by the poetic energy of his own dominating personality. He is his own hero, and the sanguinary Scythian utters the deepest secrets of the artist's heart."¹²

In the light of more recent critical investigations, we can see that this picture of Marlowe is a distorted one. This distortion does not arise out of any failings on the part of the critics or of their approach, but rather out of the material that they had to work with. The biographical information was,

as can be seen in the passages quoted from Taine and Ellis, to a large extent mythical. Scholarly editions of the works were nonexistent until 1850 and even after that date were inadequate. Thus, it was almost impossible for the Romantic critics, who relied almost entirely on biographical and textual information rather than historical and cultural information in their approach, to create an accurate picture of Christopher Marlowe.

Their interest and enthusiasm, however, did spark an interest in editions of the plays and in 1850, as was mentioned above, Alexander Dyce brought out the first critical edition of Marlowe's works. This was followed by other editions, including Bullen's of 1885 and Ellis' of 1887, but they added little of significance and Marlowe criticism at the close of the nineteenth century consisted of this distorted view of the man and his plays.

There is little doubt that the same Romantic approach has also dominated twentieth century criticism of Marlowe, but in this century, romantic critics have gradually come to find themselves on firmer ground. Biographical investigation, chiefly by Hotson in The Death of Christopher Marlowe (1925) and Boas in Marlowe and His Circle (1931), has uncovered information about Marlowe the man that makes him seem less titanic in his bohemianism now that concrete facts have taken the place of dark speculation. Editions, too, have improved; Tucker Brooke brought out the first, and still the only, reliable old-spelling edition of the plays in 1910, and Case

brought out his six-volume critical edition between 1930 and 1933. Attention has, of course, largely been focussed on Doctor Faustus and 1950 saw the publication of Greg's edition of this play, which brought together the variant 1604 and 1616 texts along with a reconstruction of what Greg felt that Marlowe wrote. This led in turn to Jump's 1962 edition of the same play. Improved editions of the other plays have also appeared. The most important recent contribution to Marlowe scholarship is perhaps the discovery of the "Collier Leaf" which contains Marlowe's manuscript of one of the scenes in The Massacre at Paris, which has otherwise survived only in a badly corrupted edition. The editing of this material is, however, still in progress.¹³

Romantic criticism of Marlowe has continued to be the dominant type in the twentieth century. An examination of the four major twentieth century works of this kind follows.

Una Ellis-Fermor's Christopher Marlowe (1926) was written on the first tide of biographical investigation. She saw the plays as personal statements in which Marlowe expresses passionately his desire to break free from the medieval view of life that he had inherited. "We may trace the beginnings of this disruptive thought in Tamburlaine, in which the barbaric, primitive imagery, the passionate and undisciplined exultations are eloquent of the poet's desire to escape from something dull, oppressive, even menacing."¹⁴ He aligns himself with the Renaissance viewpoint and reflects it in his plays, particularly the desire for the expansion of man's

power set side by side with the realization of man's limitations. Concerning Doctor Faustus, she has this to say:

The predominant mood of the first scene is that of a man who awakes from a dream of mountain-tops to find himself still in the plains, or of a man who, having reached the mountain-top, is more than ever oppressed by his earth-bound nature and by the mocking distance of the skies towards which he had seemed to be climbing: "Yet art thou still but Faustus, and a man!" For Faustus has never accepted the conditions of his human nature; the object of all his studies has been to transcend them, and each branch of medieval learning--logic, physic, law, divinity--as it comes up in its turn for review, is rejected because he sees that its highest reach falls short of that infinity for which he craves with an unformulated desire.¹⁵

Thus, she continues the romantic habit of viewing Marlowe's plays as personal statements about his own emotional and intellectual conflicts.

Kocher, in Christopher Marlowe, A Study of his Thought, Learning, and Character (1946) elaborates the ideas set out by Una Ellis-Fermor. His approach is to take the ideas expressed in the plays and examine them against the background of the intellectual climate of the day. But as the title suggests, the emphasis is on the man rather than the plays and in regarding the plays as personal statements of the man, Kocher shows his indebtedness to the romantic tradition. To choose but one example of this out of many, Kocher says of the invocation of Helen of Troy in Doctor Faustus, "The verse is exultant and the ideas and emotions are the same as those which animate Tamburlaine, Barabas, and the rest of Marlowe's great creations, and hence in all probability animated the poet himself."¹⁶ Thus, the concern with Marlowe the man and

the search for connections between the playwright and his heroes links this book with the romantic tradition.

Harry Levin's The Overreacher (1952) is linked to the romantic tradition, but is different from the preceding books in its approach. Levin is only slightly concerned with Marlowe the man; his main concern is with the dramatist. The ideas as they are contained in the play are what is important, as are the structure and versification. Levin sees Marlowe as a free-thinking iconoclast seeking to break away from ideas and forms that are inadequate for him. He traces a development in the plays, from the expanding horizons of man in Tamburlaine to the ultimate realization of man's limitations in Edward II and Doctor Faustus. The continual desire in the plays is to escape from these limitations, extending, says Levin, to an attempt to escape from the old limitations of structure and versification imposed on Marlowe by the dramatic tradition.

Michel Poirier's Christopher Marlowe appeared the year before Levin's study, but it has been reserved as a summary of the romantic position. The purpose of Poirier's book is to examine the psychology of Marlowe and of his plays and the two aspects of this dual purpose are interrelated throughout the book. He accepts the concept of Marlowe as the romantic rebel, although he finds increasing conformity in his work as he progresses. He sees the Renaissance spirit of expanding horizons in Marlowe and says at one point, "his indomitable will to reach and overstep the boundaries

of his nature make him reconsider the most fundamental values: social hierarchy, moral law, religious dogma."¹⁷ This, then, is the romantic view of Marlowe in the twentieth century.

The approach regards his personality as inherent in the plays themselves and assumes that one can be used to illuminate the other. It views Marlowe as a spirit of the Renaissance, breaking violently away from a view of the world that was inadequate for him and seeking something beyond, and concerned most of all with the possibilities that humanism had suggested were inherent in Man.

As invariably happens with literary movements, whether creative or critical, eventually there was bound to be a reaction against this kind of criticism. This reaction came from a group of critics who, although they take a variety of stances, agree that Marlowe was not as much of a rebel against the attitudes of his day as the romantic critics assume. We may refer to them as anti-romantic critics, and the examination of four basic works will serve to illustrate the variety of positions that this school includes.

The first important anti-romantic critic was Roy Battenhouse, who in Marlowe's Tamburlaine: A Study in Renaissance Moral Philosophy (1941) argued that Tamburlaine was, in its two parts, a traditional morality play spread over a ten-act structure. He argued that Marlowe's philosophy was essentially that of the Christian Elizabethan humanists, who, while they were anti-clerical, accepted a medieval view of the relation of God to man. Marlowe's plays were written

in agreement with these orthodox views of the Christian humanists and are in the same tradition as Lydgate's Fall of Princes and the Mirror For Magistrates. As Battenhouse says in connection with the Renaissance view of tragedy, "the tragic fall is both a consequence and a punishment of sin. The art form of drama, in seeking to mirror this tragedy, has a didactic purpose: it seeks to instruct men in self-knowledge and to lead them to moral amendment."¹⁸ Battenhouse's position has not been widely accepted and it is attacked by Levin in his preface to The Overreacher where he says, "The hazard of extracting ideas from the drama, of codifying incidental allusions into dogmatic professions, is exemplified in Roy W. Battenhouse's doctrinaire study of Tamburlaine."¹⁹ However, in the extremity of its position, the study did succeed in challenging the romantic view of Marlowe, and the view of Marlowe's plays as morality plays found support in Greg, Kirschbaum, and Campbell, each of whom examined Doctor Faustus in this light.

One chapter of M.M. Mahood's Poetry and Humanism (1950), is devoted to a study of "Marlowe's Heroes," and Mahood here takes the anti-romantic position when she states:

Undoubtedly it is true that Marlowe, if he is to be identified with his Promethean heroes, is less representative of the Elizabethan Renaissance than is, for example, Hooker. But such identification is dangerous guesswork. It implies that the dramatist wholeheartedly approved Tamburlaine's career of massacre and rapine, penned the last scene of Doctor Faustus as a sop to the pious, and intended the Jew of Malta for a valiant Enemy of the People. This is to appoint Nietzsche as Bankside critic;

and recent writers on Marlowe have rightly protested against such an anachronism.²⁰

But, unlike Battenhouse, Mahood does not go to the opposite extreme of claiming orthodoxy for Marlowe, for she says, "the view that his dramas represent the protest of traditional ethics against Renaissance individualism seems to me no more tenable than the view that they are so many self-portraits."²¹ She regards the Renaissance as a decadent age between the collapse of the medieval system of values and what she calls "reintegration" of values in the seventeenth century and Marlowe is the chronicler of the age in his four major plays which, taken together, trace the tragedy of the humanist separated from God. This, then, opposes the romantic position in that it sees Marlowe not as a passionate rebel against orthodoxy, but as an objective recorder of the decadence that he saw in his age. It does not see a portrait of Marlowe himself in the plays, but only a personification of the intellectual tragedy that he saw occurring around him. Thus, although Mahood does not regard Marlowe as orthodox, her approach is distinctly anti-romantic.

A return to the view of Marlowe as the orthodox Christian writer was made by Douglas Cole in Suffering and Evil in the Plays of Christopher Marlowe (1962). Cole regards Marlowe as having his roots in the tradition of the English morality play and in his theological training at the university. The emphasis in Marlowe's plays is on suffering and it is seen in the traditional terms of divine retribution for individual sin. Thus, concerning Edward II, Cole has this to say: "The

fact of suffering in this tragedy is no more evident than the fact of human responsibility for that suffering. This, together with the retributive urgency of the play's conclusion, constitutes a view of suffering and evil that is basically moral and traditional."²² For Cole, then, Marlowe is a writer of orthodox Christian polemic, who is simply using traditional stage structure and stereotypes to further this polemic. Cole does allow Marlowe a certain power and dramatic sense, but these are secondary matters in the playwright's mind.

Thus, we have in Cole's book an extreme reaction to the romantic approach. Marlowe was thoroughly orthodox and did not rebel against established conventions. He was concerned simply with the presentation of traditional Christian doctrine and there is no identification of the playwright with his heroes. This is in direct opposition to the romantic approach and undeniably ignores much of what is appealing and dramatically powerful in Marlowe. At the same time, however, Cole is convincing and seems to have developed an approach that, if used with moderation, can be valuable.

The fourth of the anti-romantic critics is David Bevington in From Mankind to Marlowe (1962). Following a similar approach to Cole's, Bevington seeks to demonstrate that Marlowe's plays have certain affinities with the tradition of the popular morality play. He begins with an examination of the morality play and shows that its form was heavily determined by the structure and limitations of the early

professional dramatic troupes. Limitations in the size of these troupes coupled with the frequent requirement of the morality play that a wide variety of characters be represented on the stage led to a need for the doubling of parts and for the immediate suppression of a character once his dramatic function had been completed. This, says Bevington, led to the evolution of two basic structural patterns in the morality play. The first traces the progress of the central character as he comes into contact with good and evil characters in alternating scenes. The second does not have the central character on stage all the time, but makes use of a comic sub-plot, scenes of which alternate with scenes of the tragic main plot. Each of these structures allows one group of actors to be on stage while a second group is backstage making changes to make the transition from one character to another.

These basic structural types, says Bevington, became the mainstays of the popular drama and their influence extended beyond the realm of the simple morality play into all types of popular drama. However, a problem arose in that this type of structure was designed simply to illustrate moral precepts, not to deal with the complex social, political, and psychological problems that were beginning to find their way into this type of drama. This problem, he argues, finds its fullest realization in the plays of Marlowe, where Marlowe attempts to impose psychological and political concerns on this form which is simply not intended to handle such concerns.

This leads to a basic ambiguity in all of his plays. For example, in dealing with Edward II, Bevington says of Mortimer's punishment at the end,

"The ending of Edward II thus appears to be morally unambiguous. Ultimately the virtuous are separated from the depraved, and each group received merited justification or destruction. Ambiguity occurs only when we compare this traditional conclusion with the earlier scenes of political conflict, when Edward was the dissolute and prodigal King, Mortimer the forthright defender of English freedoms, and Isabella the deserted wife. Marlowe's use of the homiletic formula, especially in the concluding scenes of this play, engenders a dichotomy in the characters between moral absolutes and psychological complexities. Even in his most secular play, the homiletic tradition contributes an important part."²³

This, then, is Bevington's basic thesis--that Marlowe relied heavily on the dramatic conventions of the popular theatre and that his attempt to reach beyond the limitations of these conventions led to a basic ambiguity in his plays. It is implied that this ambiguity contributes to the power of the plays.

Bevington's point of view certainly stands apart from those who view Marlowe as the romantic rebel and those who view him as part of an orthodox Christian tradition. It is hard to deny that his final position probably implies that Marlowe's genius was more limited than it is fair to assume. It is quite possible that too much emphasis is placed on the moral ambiguity of the plays. But in view of the evidence he presents, it is difficult to deny the existence of moral ambiguity in the plays and the position that Bevington sets forth is certainly one that warrants further investigation.

Thus, we can see the basic pattern of Marlowe criticism as it has come down to us. There is no criticism of significance before the nineteenth century, at which time the Romantic critics began the revival of Marlowe's reputation and set down certain basic patterns of thought that persist right down to the present. They saw Marlowe as a figure in rebellion against the established thought and conventions of his time and viewed his plays as highly personal statements in that rebellion. This viewpoint was built up by the late-Romantic Victorian critics and has in the present century been modified and developed by a number of critics in light of modern biographical and textual investigation. This is, as has been mentioned before, the most important critical approach to Marlowe. However, we have seen that a reaction to this type of criticism has taken place in the form of a number of critics who attempt to minimize the degree of Marlowe's rebellion against his society and argue that his plays, instead of being personal statements, are simply objective and orthodox Christian tracts. These, then, are the two traditions, and the romantic continues to be the most important, despite the fact that in recent years the anti-romantics have been the most vocal.

The approach of this thesis will be essentially that of Bevington and the emphasis will be on Edward II as an extension of the popular morality tradition. The problem of ambiguity which Bevington raises will be dealt with, with particular emphasis on ambiguity of character. Thus, the approach to be taken is an anti-romantic one. This is not to

deny the validity of the romantic approach, but simply to indicate the partial validity of certain points raised by the anti-romantic critics. Like any piece of criticism or any critical approach, it can only hope to give a partial explanation of the problems and paradoxes raised by a work of art.

CHAPTER II

THE ENGLISH MORALITY PLAY

Having sketched in Marlowe's critical background and having suggested the general approach of this thesis, we can proceed to an examination of the morality play as a dramatic form. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a working definition of the morality play by a brief examination of its history and context and by a more extended examination of its most outstanding characteristics. Once a definition of the morality has been established, we can apply it to Edward II to determine just how much of the tradition is embodied in that play.

English drama had its beginnings in the dramatization of part of the church liturgy which eventually moved outdoors and became increasingly secularized. This secularization of the drama led to the development of two basic types, having their origins in the two basic divisions of the church service. The first type was the miracle play and it had its origin in the actual liturgy of the church, that part of the service that dealt directly with the scriptures and with the glorification of God through His acts among men. Hence, the miracle plays dealt with stories taken from the Bible and with God's revelation of Himself to man, as in saints' lives, popular on the continent although they never seemed to appeal to the English. The second type was the morality play and this had its origin in that part of the church service that sought to help the people to apply God's laws to the governing

of their own lives. It originated, in other words, in the sermon rather than the liturgy. Although heaven and hell are never far distant, the primary concern of the morality play is with the world and with Man rather than with God.

The roots of the morality play extend deeply in other directions as well. The use of allegory to point a moral is a device borrowed from the allegory of the middle ages, a literary type that had its origin in the fourth century poem by Prudentius, the "Psychomachia," which described the spiritual conflict between good and evil for Man's soul. From this relatively simple beginning, the literary allegory developed into a high art form, probably reaching its pinnacle in the thirteenth century poem Roman de la Rose by Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, which described the trials of the courtly lover in pursuit of his love. But courtly poetry was never particularly popular in England where the allegory was mainly used for purposes of religious instruction, as exemplified in The Pearl and Langland's Piers Plowman. Thus, in England literary allegory used much the same sort of material as the morality plays and it is possible that the influence of the literary form on the dramatic form was fairly direct. At any rate, the morality play borrows from literary allegory the technique of using concrete figures to represent abstract concepts--using "the analogy of corporeal things,"¹ as it has been termed. There is also some indebtedness for material to particular types of allegories, notably the "Psychomachia" and its followers, which provided one of the basic morality

plots, and to the popular moral allegories such as Piers Plowman which utilize many of the stock morality characters and devices, such as the pageant of the Seven Deadly Sins.

Other forms of medieval art had a certain degree of influence on the morality plays. One of these forms was medieval tragedy, called by Willard Farnham de casibus tragedy² after Boccaccio's De Casibus Virorum Illustrium, the outstanding example of the type. Tragedy of this kind described the fall of great men from their high offices at the whim of Fortune and projected contempt for the mutable things of this world. As Chaucer put it:

I wol biwaille, in manere of tragedie,
The harm of hem that stode in heigh degree,
And fillen so that ther nas no remedie
To brynge hem out of hir adversitee.
For certein, whan that Fortune list to flee,
Ther may no man the cours of hire withholde.
Lat no man truste on blynd prosperitee;
Be war by thise ensamples trewe and olde.³

Thematically, the morality play was fostered by the same philosophy that produced de casibus tragedy. But in plays of the Worldly Man type, the pattern of development is also the same--the rise of the Worldly Man, his moment of success, and his fall and death at the hands of Fortune. Thus, the tradition of de casibus tragedy also influenced the morality play.

Another medieval art form that influenced the morality play was the Dance of Death, which depicted all classes of men as linked together in one great dance, led by the figure of Death. Rossiter suggests the presence of this influence

when he says, "the King-and-Death theme of the fragmentary play called Pride of Life (c. 1410) suggests a derivation from the Dance of Death and the debats or contentions between Death and Life."⁴ Thus, we can see that the sources on which the morality play drew were many and included the church sermon, medieval literary allegory, de casibus tragedy, and the Dance of Death.

Having reviewed the sources of the morality play, let us turn to a brief examination of its history. There is some question as to which is the earliest of the extant morality plays; claims have been made both for The Pride of Life and The Castle of Perseverance, but whichever it may be, one thing is clear. Both of these plays represent the morality in its fully-developed form and it is certain that the form had undergone a considerable period of development before these plays were written. The earliest reference to a morality play is by Wyclif in 1378 who refers to a Pater Noster play, one part of which was the Play of Sloth. A few Pater Noster plays are mentioned elsewhere and they seem to have been plays dealing with Man and the Seven Deadly Sins; the name is logical since the Lord's Prayer, of which "Pater Noster" is the opening phrase, was regarded in the middle ages as a series of sections, each one a special defense against one of the Deadly Seven. Thus, the Pater Noster plays probably represented the Seven Deadly Sins contesting for the soul of Man, opposed by God's Grace.

Some fifteenth century morality plays have been preserved.

The longest of these is The Castle of Perseverance and it is also the most comprehensive in scope, dealing with the full life and judgment of Man and containing all the themes normally present in the morality play. It may be, as Parrott and Ball suggest, "a sort of condensation of an older cyclical Moral for performance not by a guild but by a troupe of travelling players at one time and in one place, evidently some town or village green."⁵ Probably it may be regarded as the last of the full-scale moralities, because the other plays are much more limited in the action they attempt to handle.

Of the other fifteenth century plays, which include The Pride of Life, Wisdom, Mankind, and Everyman, we may select Everyman as an example. Like the others, this play limits the scope of its action, this time to the summoning of Everyman by Death. However, Everyman is rather an exception to the morality tradition than the rule, because of its power and its consistently serious tone. The lines along which the popular morality was to develop are more fully embodied in Mankind. Mankind is still seriously didactic, but it sacrifices some of its serious tone to the clowning of the Vice Titivillus and his companions. It even extends to include the audience in its lightness, to the extent of taking a collection before the Vice is allowed to appear on stage. Thus, by the end of the fifteenth century, the basic form of the morality as it was to develop in the popular theatre of England was well established.

This type of play continued to be performed during the sixteenth century, but new forms began to develop as well.

One of these new forms was the humanist morality, which first appeared in 1519 in John Rastell's The Nature of the Four Elements. Although this play calls itself an interlude, it is safe to regard it as a morality because its chief purpose is didactic and because it makes full use of allegorical figures. Thus, "Stress is laid upon the desirability of studying Nature as a first step to the knowledge of God, and such characters as Nature and Experience discourse at interminable length to the hero, Humanity, on the four elements, the shape of the earth, and America, the new world discovered beyond the Atlantic."⁶ The basic plot line, too, resembles that of the morality, with the hero being led astray by the temptations of the world, only to be called back to his higher pursuits by Experience. Thus, this play, so closely linked to the non-didactic interlude, makes use of the conventions of the morality play to further the doctrines of the humanists rather than to further orthodox Christian morality.

Another new morality form that arose during the sixteenth century was the political or religious morality. This century was an age of political and religious unrest in England and people were strongly divided in their opinions on these matters. An example of a religious morality which supports the Roman Catholic church is Respublica, perhaps written by Udall, and composed about 1553, during the reign of Mary. It shows England falling under the sway of vices during the Edwardian reign, but rescued by the Heavenly Virtues. On the other side, we have Wever's 1550 Protestant play Lusty Juventus,

where Youth is seduced from the path of true religion by Hypocrisy, but is red³emmed by listening to the preaching of Good Counsel and by the intercession of God's Merciful Promises. This latter play seems to have been quite popular. e
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The classic example of the political morality play is, of course, Bale's King Johan, probably composed sometime before 1540. This play presents King John as England's champion against the oppression of the Church of Rome and as such its concern is religious as well as political. What is most strongly reminiscent of the morality in the play is its use of allegorical figures, but the link with the evolving history play is also present here because these allegorical figures are openly identified with figures in the historical event. Thus, Usurped Power is Pope Innocent III, Sedition is the Archbishop of Canterbury, and so forth. A basic morality structure is also used in the play in the form of the competition of good and evil forces for control over the central character, King John. The play is designed as polemic, in the tradition of the orthodox morality, and it teaches Protestantism and the greatness of the Tudor reign in England.

Although all of these plays will fit within a broad definition of the morality play, we can see that in the sixteenth century there is a movement away from the simple representation of the forces of good and evil struggling for the soul of man. The choice for the central figure is no longer between heavenly things and earthly things, but of which earthly path he will follow, be it ethical, religious,

or political. In King Johan we even have an attempt to introduce realism into the morality play. The development of the morality play, then, reflects the gradual abandonment of the medieval contempt for worldly things and an espousal of the more attractive humanistic concern with making the world a pleasant place for all to live in. This is not to say that moralities of the orthodox Christian type ceased to exist. Indeed, they continued to be presented right down to the end of the sixteenth century. But popular taste had already begun to change in the first half of the sixteenth century and the popular drama reflects this change. To this gradual change of taste we owe the fact that the wide variety of plays described above all more or less fit within a broad definition of the morality play.

Let us then examine the basic characteristics of the morality play. From these we may be able to construct some sort of working definition for the genre. We shall approach this by examining in turn the basic themes, characters, and structure of the morality.

There are three basic themes, of which at least one is present in each morality play. We shall deal with these three in turn. The first theme is the conflict between the forces of good and evil for the control of an individual who is representative of all mankind or has power over them. There are some variations on this theme, but its basic form remains more or less constant. The most important variation is present in The Castle of Perseverance, where the World, the Flesh and

the Devil, with all of their attendants, contest with the Good Angel, the Seven Heavenly Virtues, Confession, and Penance for the soul of Mankind. This same variation appears in other moralities, including Mankind, where Mercy contends with the Vice Titivillus and his assistants, including Mischief, New-Gyse, and Now-a-days, for the soul of Mankind; Wisdom, where the Devil and Wisdom, who is Christ, contend for the control of Mind, Will, and Understanding; and Mundus et Infans, where Wanton, Folly, Lust and Liking, and the World contend with Conscience and Perseverance for control over the three ages of man, Childhood, Manhood, and Age. From the examples given, it is easy to see the form that this basic theme usually takes. Variations do occur, however. The first of these is rather slight and occurs in Rastell's The Nature of the Four Elements. Here the conflict for control of Humanity is between Nature and Experience on one side and Sensual Appetite on the other. Thus, we can see that the different purpose of the humanist morality gives a slightly different twist to the nature of the conflict.

In Bale's King Johan, however, a more pronounced variation on the basic theme is used. The conflict in this play is between Usurped Power and his assistants, Dissimulation, Private Wealth, and Sedition and the Nobility, Clergy, Civil Order, and Commonalty for control of the head of state, King Johan. Thus, we have the basic theme treated politically. The variation extends further, because the forces of good are overcome by the forces of evil, and John is forced to submit to the tyranny of Rome. The play does not end on this negative

note, however, because Imperial Majesty takes control of the state and sends Sedition to his death, thus vindicating King John's position. Thus, although we have a variety of contexts within which this first theme appears, the theme itself remains relatively constant--a battle between good and evil forces for control over either mankind, or an individual with power over men and therefore, by extension, over those men themselves.

The second theme is present in one form or another in virtually all of the orthodox Christian moralities. This is the medieval theme of contempt for the world and the mutability of earthly things. While this theme is implicit in almost all moralities, some give it more emphasis than others. In Everyman, for example, it is the dominant theme. At the opening of the play, Everyman appears to us in all his worldly pride, just after God has described the state to which mankind has fallen:

Of ghostly syght the people be so blynde,
Drowned in synne, then know me not for theyr God.
In worldely ryches is all theyr mynde.⁷

But Everyman quickly discovers that neither his earthly possessions nor his earthly friends will accompany him beyond the grave when he is summoned by Death. Only Good Deeds will go with him and he finds that they must be strengthened with the aid of Confession, Knowledge, Discretion, Strength, Five Wits, and Beauty. It is Good Deeds who finally speaks the moral of the play:

All ertthly thynges is but vanyte.
Beaute, Strength, and Dyscrecyon do man forsake,
Folysshe frendes, and kynnesmen, that fayre spake,--
All fleeth saue Good Dedes, and that am I.⁸

Thus, the basic theme of Everyman is that man must turn away from the vanity of earthly things to contemplation of spiritual things in order to gain salvation. Another morality in which this theme is dominant is The Pride of Life. It is also found in the political morality of the sixteenth century where the emphasis is on the mutability of temporal power and is even present in the humanist moralities, which advocated that attention be devoted to things of this world. In these plays, it is the base things of the world that are to be spurned in order to pursue knowledge. The second basic theme of the morality is thus contempt for worldly things and a recognition of the mutability of life.

The third basic theme is relatively unimportant in the sixteenth century, but was quite frequent in the earlier moralities. This is the debate of the Heavenly Virtues in the judgment of the soul of man after his death. The Heavenly Virtues are Truth, Justice, Mercy, and Peace and the debate usually takes the form of a trial before the throne of God where Truth and Justice prosecute the soul of Man, and Mercy and Peace defend him. Mercy and Peace, of course, invariably win the debate through the grace of God, and the soul of Man is admitted to heaven. The most outstanding example of such a debate in English occurs toward the end of The Castle of Perseverance, but the theme seems to have been popular on the continent. This religious theme did not carry over into the secular morality of the sixteenth century.

These, then, are the three basic themes of the morality

play--the conflict of the forces of good and evil for the soul of man, contempt for the world and a stressing of the mutability of earthly things, and the debate of the Heavenly Virtues for the soul of man after death. One or more of these themes is present in every play that falls within the morality genre.

Let us now turn to the basic characters of the morality play. As was mentioned earlier, the morality had its roots in medieval allegory and as a result its characters consist almost entirely of personifications of abstract concepts. Other characters are representatives either of mankind or of classes of mankind. Thus, we encounter such characters as Everyman, Kindred, Mercy, Idleness, and Confession. Although a wide variety of characters could be brought on stage, certain of them appear to have been more popular than others. These figures appeared again and again and gradually came to acquire a set of characteristics that turned them into stock characters. It will be worth our while to examine the more important stock figures in detail since they appear in almost all the morality plays.

The first is the Everyman type. He appears under a variety of names, such as Mankind and Humanum Genus, and in the play is the representative of all men. Invariably he is the central figure; he may not participate in as much of the action as some of the other characters, but that action always revolves around his fate. He is weak-willed and is easily tempted to despair by the forces of evil, but at the same time he appears to be basically good and his repentance is sincere. He usually

returns to the forces of good and triumphs at the end. Mankind, in the play named for him, describes the Everyman figure quite accurately:

My name ys Mankynde. I haue my composycyon
Of a body and of a soull, of condycyon contrarye:
Be-twix the tweyn ys a grett dyvisyon.⁹

These few lines seem to contain the essence of the Everyman figure and the plight he faces in the morality play.

The second important figure is the Vice. Although this figure is not as central to the morality play as the Everyman figure and, indeed, does not appear at all in many moralities, he seems to have been a very popular character. His function in the play is to act as an assistant to the Devil and to seduce Everyman away from the forces of good, and as such he probably represents a compression of the Seven Deadly Sins which played so important a role in the earlier moralities. He is characteristically a braggart and frequently directs his boastful remarks directly to the audience in an aside, such as Titivillus' statement of purpose on his first appearance in Mankind:

To speke with Mankynde I wyll tary here this tyde,
Ande assay hys goode purpose for to sett a-syde.
The goode man Mercy xall no lenger be hys gyde;
I xall make hym to dawnce a-nother trace!¹⁰

This, then, is always the purpose of the Vice--to win Everyman to the ways of evil.

A third morality figure, which has a direct link with the Vice, is the Devil. The function of the Devil is virtually the same as that of the Vice, but there is considerable difference between the two characters. The Devil is a more

terrifying figure than the Vice and is much more earnest in his efforts to lure Everyman to sin. As he says in The Castle of Perseverance:

In care I am cloyed
And fowle I am a-noyed
But Mankynde be stroyed
Be dykes and be denne...¹¹

If we compare this with Titivillus' speech quoted above, we can see that the Devil's speech carries a real sense of evil that is absent in the Vice's speech. The Devil wants the total destruction of Everyman and says so, while the Vice only wants to lure him into sin. The Vice, of course, is a product of the later moralities and seems to have taken over his functions from the Devil and to have absorbed both the Devil and the Deadly Sins into himself. Thus, as far as the morality tradition is concerned, the Devil is secondary in importance to the Vice.

The fourth important figure is Worldly Man. He may be regarded as a subdivision of the Everyman character or perhaps as a stage in his development and he is simply the man who has succumbed to the pleasures of the world and risen to important heights and who must now fall at the hands of Death and Fortune. He is often confronted at some point by his opposite, the Heavenly Man, but the emphasis in the play is on the more worldly figure. An example of a play in which he figures importantly is Enough is as Good as a Feast by Wager in which is traced his rise to fortune, his exultation in his worldly power, and his eventual fall, after which he is carried off to Hell by a devil. Obviously his real importance lies in

those plays that emphasize the contempt of the world theme, and his characteristics vary only slightly from play to play.

In those plays that deal with the conflict of good and evil for control of man, these forces are represented in a variety of ways, but frequently at one point they take the form of Good and Evil Angels counselling the central figure. These figures seem to be extensions and representations of the dual nature of Man and they strive to govern his actions. They appear in many plays from the early Castle of Perseverance right down to Doctor Faustus. Their functions may be illustrated by a few lines from The Castle of Perseverance:

Good Angel: Neuyr-the-lesse, turne thee fro tene,
And serue Jhesu, heuene kynge,
And thou schalt, be greuys grene,
Fare wel in alle thyng.¹²

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Bad Angel: Cum on, man! Where-of hast thou care?
Go we to the World, I rede thee, blyue;
For ther thou schalt mow ryth wel fare,
In case if thou thynke for to thryue.¹³

They take many forms in later plays, including the good and evil counsellors of the political moralities.

The final figure is Death. Although Death does not appear very frequently in the morality plays, his presence is constantly felt because of the important role that he plays in the life of the central character and because he is the ultimate means by which man will enter into salvation or damnation. When he does appear, as in Everyman and The Castle of Perseverance, he is a terrifying figure, as the following lines will show:

Whanne I com, iche man drede forthi,
 But yit is ther no geyn i-went,
 Hey hyl, holte, nyn hethe.
 Ye schul me drede, euery-chone;
 Whanne I come, ye schul grone!
 My name in londe is lefte a-lone:
 I hatte "Drery Dethe."¹⁴

Death, then, is terrifying, impartial, and unyielding, often personified, as in Everyman, as the agent of God.

These are the most important of the stock Morality characters. A number of other personifications are of considerable importance, but have names that almost completely explain their functions, such as Mercy, Good Deeds, Revenge, and Sedition. The use of figures such as these also extends into the non-didactic popular theatre, and one finds characters such as Revenge appearing in The Spanish Tragedy and Commons Complaint appearing in Cambises. However, their importance is not so great in the non-didactic theatre because their function could easily be taken over by a character who is not representative of an abstract concept, whereas in the morality, the personification of abstractions is the basic means by which the lesson of the play is presented to the audience. While the names of these abstractions may vary from play to play, their functions are always basically the same--they are engaged in a war over mankind and they seek either to help him or to harm him. Aside from the Vice, who developed a personality of his own, very few of these characters has any interest for the audience apart from his influence on the Mankind figure. The basic problems of Mankind remain the same and these characters and their functions change little with the thematic and

structural development of the morality in the sixteenth century.

Turning now to the matter of structure, we find that the morality play is relatively uncomplicated. There are two basic methods of development used in moralities, linked together and yet sufficiently different to warrant individual attention. The first method belongs more to the earlier moralities and it traces the development of the central character, who is on stage virtually from beginning to end, as he comes into contact with different groups of characters, good and evil, in alternating scenes. Bevington explains this:

This hero was invariably introduced to a succession of acquaintances, both good and bad, his tempters and supporters in his wavering quest for salvation. The total number of roles thus presented grew to considerable size. The actors were able to portray numerous roles by shifting rapidly from scenes of comic degradation to scenes of moral edification, with one group of actors filling both types of roles.¹⁵

The second method is probably an outgrowth of this. The action still revolves around the central character, but he is no longer on stage all the time. A comic subplot seems to have developed, usually involving the Vice and his bungling henchmen, and we have an alternation of scenes, one involving the central figure and his temptations, followed by a comic scene involving the Vice. This became one of the basic plot structures in the Elizabethan popular drama. As Bevington says, "The practice of alternation led to a structural separation in the morality between serious and comic action, and

created in the scenes of vice comedy a routine of burlesque viciousness that was to persist in popular drama, because of its widespread appeal, beyond the days of the conventional morality."¹⁶ This kind of structure has its beginning in Mankind and extends on into the popular drama through such plays as Cambises and Doctor Faustus.

Another characteristic common to most morality plays is the extensive use of debate. Originally a relatively static form, the morality relied heavily on language to represent the various points of view it presented and this persisted in the serious parts of the morality, although the scenes of Vice comedy came to rely heavily on stage action and spectacle. The debate took many forms, such as the debate of the Heavenly Virtues and the battle between the Good and Bad Angels, but it was invariably connected with the serious moral teaching of the play and was used extensively to present that teaching.

A final structural point about the morality is the fact that it does not make use of a realistic space-time concept. Not only does it not obey the "unities" that later came into vogue, but it makes little or no effort to give any indication of setting or passage of time. The stage is a neutral area and is used to symbolize the world or some other part of the universe. Concrete settings of place are rarely used. Time, too, is very flexible. The period represented may be as long as the span of man's life in The Castle of Perseverance and it may even extend to eternity, as it later does in the same play. There is no sense of a particular year or a particular

place in these plays because they are designed to be for all men and for all time and as such cannot limit themselves to an ordinary time-place setting.

The time has now come to offer a working definition of the genre on which we can base our examination of Edward II. I propose that we define the morality play as a play, didactic in purpose, which involves one or more of the basic themes outlined above, makes use of stock allegorized personifications, and employs one or the other of the two methods of plot development that we have discussed. It may or may not utilize debate and a non-realistic space-time structure, but these elements are likely to be present. This definition seems to be restrictive enough to exclude popular dramas that make use of certain morality elements, such as the Vice, and yet are not moralities because of their non-didactic purpose or their thematic content, and yet is broad enough to include certain interludes that seem to be interludes in name, but moralities in concept. We can now proceed to see what happens when Edward II is set against this definition.

CHAPTER III

EDWARD II AND THE MORALITY PLAY

Now that a definition of the morality genre has been established, we can proceed to apply it to Edward II and see if points of contact do exist between the play and the earlier dramatic tradition. In this process, we shall stick closely to the definition. We shall deal first with the themes of the play and see how they compare with morality themes. Secondly, we shall deal with characters, and third, with structure. In a final brief section, we shall analyze the didactic possibilities of the play. In the process of applying this definition, we cannot hope to find absolute and complete correspondences between Marlowe's play and the morality tradition. Marlowe was, after all, a highly original and creative dramatist and his genius was of such a stature that it enabled him to affect drastically the course of the English theatre. He was not a slavish adherent to any earlier dramatic tradition, but an innovator who created his own dramatic devices to serve his ends when those that already existed were not adequate. However, if we find that correspondences do exist between the morality genre and Edward II, it may be a case of Marlowe consciously or unconsciously making use of the existing popular tradition for his own ends. If the correspondences are not exact, it is undoubtedly not a case of Marlowe being unaware of the nature of the form from which he borrowed, but a case of the form not being adequate for the use Marlowe intended it to serve.

It is just this lack of correspondence that attests to Marlowe's originality and we may expect to encounter it in our examination of the play.

A. Themes:

The first important theme in our discussion of the morality genre was the conflict between forces of good and evil for control of the Everyman figure or of a figure who had power to work Everyman good or evil. This theme is quite explicitly present in Edward II. The figure over whom control is sought is Edward himself and the competing forces are Gaveston on one side and Mortimer and the nobles on the other. Gaveston is, of course, the force of evil, representing abandonment to the sensuous pleasures of the earth, while the nobles represent virtue, reason, temperance, and always have their eye on the good of the country. At the beginning of the play, this conflict is already well advanced and Edward has already greatly succumbed to the temptations—that Gaveston has placed before him.¹ When, in the first scene, the nobles demand that Edward sever his ties with Gaveston, Edward says:

I cannot brook these haughty menaces.
Am I a king, and must be overruled?
(I, i, 134-135.)

These lines indicate that Edward has already succumbed to the worldly sin of pride. The next lines indicate how closely he has allied himself with Gaveston:

Brother, display my ensigns in the field;
I'll bandy with the barons and the earls,
And either die or live with Gaveston.
(I, i, 136-138.)

Even in the opening lines this involvement is made clear in the letter from Edward to Gaveston:

'My father is deceased. Come, Gaveston,
And share the kingdom with thy dearest friend.'
(I, i, 1-2.)

Thus, we see very early in the play that the conflict between good and evil is well advanced and that Edward is almost completely under the influence of evil. In the opening scene, the nobles, the forces of good, fight a frustrating battle to assert their control over Edward, and are beaten. Thus, by the end of the first scene, Edward is completely under the control of evil.

Despite its apparent importance in the opening scene, however, this theme does not remain the dominant one in the play. Once Gaveston has been removed, the forces of evil in the play shift their center and we enter into the second phase of Edward's tragedy, a phase, however, that is still related to the conflict between good and evil forces as it is presented in the morality play. Our discussion of this, however, should wait until we clarify the nature of the forces in conflict in the early phase of the play.

The force of evil, as we said earlier, is represented by Gaveston. That he is basically evil is made clear from the beginning of the play and it appears in such scenes as his mistreatment of the three poor men in the first scene and his insinuations against Isabella in the fourth scene, when he says:

...Mortimer, with whom, ungentle queen--
 I say no more; judge you the rest, my lord.
 (I, iv, 147-148.)

The insinuation rather than the accusation goes far to strengthen the image of Gaveston as the evil sycophant. However, his evil nature in itself is not really enough to link him with the evil forces of the morality tradition, for those forces also seek to draw their prey into their evil ways. Titivillus' words are illustrative of this point:

To speke with Mankynde I wyll tary here this tyde,
 Ande assay hys goode purpose for to sett a-syde.
 The goode man Mercy xall no lenger be hys gyde;
 I xall make hym to dawnce a-nother trace!
 (Mankind, 518-521.)

As he indicates in several places, Gaveston's intentions toward Edward are exactly of this type. For instance, in the opening scene he says in soliloquy:

I must have wanton poets, pleasant wits,
 Musicians, that with touching of a string
 May draw the pliant king which way I please.
 (I, i, 51-53.)

Thus, early in the play we are given ample evidence that Gaveston is wicked, and is successfully attempting to draw the king into his evil ways. On such evidence, it is safe to regard him as the evil force battling for control of the king.

The forces of good are not quite so clear-cut in the early stages of the play, possibly because they have a number of representatives among the nobles and therefore some diversity of character, and possibly because it was not as easy to adhere to the historical sources and make the nobles virtuous

as it was to make Gaveston evil. Despite this, there is a definite air of virtue surrounding Mortimer and the rest of the nobles in the early scenes. If we accept Mortimer, the leader and usual spokesman for this group, as representative of it, we can see it in his actions. He is loyal to what he believes is right, for he is willing to risk treason charges rather than break his oath:

And Know, my lord, ere I will break my oath,
This sword of mine, that should offend your foes,
Shall sleep within the scabbard at thy need,
And underneath thy banners march who will,
For Mortimer will hang his armor up.
(I, i, 85-89.)

The desire for personal aggrandisement that becomes so prominent in his character later in the play, is not present at this early stage and Mortimer does not appear to be seeking power in his bid to eliminate Gaveston, but seems only to have the realm in mind:

We'll hale him from the bosom of the king,
And at the court gate hang the peasant up,
Who, swoll'n with venom of ambitious pride,
Will be the ruin of the realm and us.
(I, ii, 29-32.)

He also displays the virtues of courage and resolution in his leadership of the nobles:

My lords, now let us all be resolute,
And either have our wills or lose our lives.
(I, iv, 45-46.)

Mortimer thus seems to represent at this stage the traditional English political virtues of integrity, concern for the commons, and courage of conviction.

The other lords, taken as a group, maintain these virtues and others as well. Lancaster, for instance, defends the

established church:

What! Will they tyrannise upon the church?
 Ah, wicked King! Accursed Gaveston!
 This ground, which is corrupted with their steps,
 Shall be their timeless sepulcher or mine.
 (I, ii, 3-6.)

Kent pleads for moderation on all sides, first with the nobles that they should not reproach the king, and then with the king not to incense the nobles by raising Gaveston too high in power or by attacking the bishop of Coventry. He gives typically practical advice:

Ah, brother, lay not violent hands on him,
 For he'll complain unto the see of Rome.
 (I, i, 189-190.)

Thus, in the early scenes of the play, the nobles are represented as virtuous and as desiring to influence the king, and may therefore be regarded as the good forces contending for control of the central figure.

The death of Gaveston removes the main figure of evil in this conflict, and the center of attention in the play shifts away from this theme. Spencer and Baldock take over Gaveston's functions to a certain extent, but they are weak and ineffectual characters compared with the powerful Gaveston and do not hold our interest as figures of evil. Edward becomes less passive in this phase of the play and the central conflict shifts to become one between himself and Mortimer. It still remains a conflict between good and evil forces, however, for Mortimer in his desire for personal power more and more takes on the trappings of evil as the play progresses, while Edward becomes "the innocent victim whose suffering must

be avenged."² The shift in the conflict occurs because of the dual-plot construction of the play, which we shall deal with later in some detail. At the moment, our concern is with Edward and what happens to him after the forces of good and evil have ceased to contend for control over him.

I would propose that the development of the play from this point on remains strictly within the morality tradition. What happens is that Edward undergoes expiation and purgation by means of worldly loss and physical torture that eventually leads him to the threshold of salvation. We can see this in his loss of his kingdom, his imprisonment, and the manner of his death. In the morality tradition, the central figure invariably succumbs to the temptations of evil, thus making himself eligible for salvation in the manner of Adam's fall. He undergoes a period of despair and finally starts toward salvation after turning to the spiritual world for help. A typical pattern of this kind occurs in Mankind where Mankind is tempted away from the good and true by the Vice, Titivillus, is deserted by the Vice, and falls rapidly into despair and contemplates suicide.³ He is prevented by Mercy and is taught the way to salvation through earthly abstinence and God's mercy:

Beware of Titiuilly with hys net, and of all his
 enuyus will,
 Of your synfull delectacion that grewyth your gostly
 substans.
 Your body ys your enmy; let hym not haue hys wyll!
 (Mankind, 888-891.)

Thus, Mankind goes off to find salvation.

Virtually the same thing happens in Edward II. At the opening of the play, Edward has already succumbed to the forces

of evil in the person of Gaveston and has caused the forces of good, the nobles, to turn away from him. The death of Gaveston more or less corresponds to the desertion of Mankind by Titivillus, leaving him in the hands of lesser evil forces, New-gyse, Now-a-days, Nought, and Myscheff, or, in Edward II, Spencer and Baldock. Edward then sinks into despair. The first sign of it appears when he hears the news of Gaveston's death and cries:

O shall I speak, or shall I sigh and die!
(III, ii, 122.)

This despair becomes more articulate as things turn more and more against the king and the nobles rise against him and he is forced to flee the abbey. He cries here:

O day! The last of all my bliss on earth,
Center of all misfortune! O my stars,
Why do you lour unkindly on a king?
(IV, vi, 61-63.)

And slightly further on:

A litter has thou? Lay me in a hearse,
And to the gates of hell convey me hence.
Let Pluto's bells ring out my fatal knell
And hags howl for my death at Charon's shore,
For friends hath Edward none but these and these,
And these must die under a tyrant's sword.
(IV, vi, 86-91.)

The two "friends", of course, are Spencer and Baldock, who have remained with Edward up to this point as ineffectual evil counsellors in a losing cause. At this point, they are separated from Edward, leaving him in complete despair and frustration, which he expresses in the following scene:

The griefs of private men are soon allayed,
But not of kings. The forest deer, being struck,
Runs to an herb that closeth up the wounds,

But when the imperial lion's flesh is gored,
 He rends and tears it with his wrathful paw,
 And highly scorning that the lowly earth
 Should drink his blood, mounts up into the air.
 And so it fares with me...

(V, i, 8-15.)

Thus, we can see that a parallel exists in the reactions of Mankind and Edward to their respective losses of worldly felicity.

This parallel even extends to the wish for death. In the morality play, Mankind's attempt to hang himself was prevented by Mercy. Edward does not attempt suicide, but his wish for death is made quite explicit at several points in the play. One is in the abbey when he says:

Good father, on thy lap
 Lay I this head, laden with mickle care.
 O might I never open these eyes again,
 Never again lift up this drooping head,
 O never more lift up this dying heart!

(IV, vi, 39-43.)

Another occurs just after the surrender of the crown to Mortimer's forces:

Come, death, and with thy fingers close my eyes,
 Or if I live, let me forget myself.

(V, i, 110-111.)

Thus, Mankind and Edward both sink into despair and long for death.⁴

Mankind, however, is taught by heavenly forces to resist the temptations of this world because they are transitory and nothing compared to the pleasures of heaven, and Edward, just after he surrenders his crown, one of the last symbols of his earthly pride, calls upon God to teach him a similar lesson:

Now, sweet God of heaven,
 Make me despise this transitory pomp
 And sit for aye enthronized in heaven.
 (V, i, 107-109.)

This is Edward's first turning toward heaven for aid in spiritual matters and is the beginning of his process of expiation. Having lost all that he has to lose on earth--his wife, his evil friends, his kingdom--he can now proceed to learn the lesson of humility and move toward salvation. This humility is underlined by the physical degradation that Edward undergoes in his dungeon, marked by fasting and sorrow, traditional devices for the purgation of sin:

Within a dungeon England's king is kept,
 Where I am starved for want of sustenance.
 My daily diet is heart-breaking sobs,
 That almost rends the closet of my heart.
 (V, iii, 19-22.)

Matrevis and Gurney then proceed to inflict physical degradation on the former king by shaving him with puddle water. By this process Edward is purged of his worldly pride.

That he is purged is plain enough in the murder scene (V, v.). Edward meets his death with the calm dignity of a man who is at peace with God and unafraid to leave the world behind. He recognizes Lightborn as his murderer and speaks to him about the murder in terms that reveal a calm acceptance of the fact of death with none of the earlier passionate yearning for it and none of the fear of it that marks the worldly man. On seeing Lightborn, he says:

These looks of thine can harbor nought but death.
 I see my tragedy written in thy brows.
 Yet stay awhile; forbear thy bloody hand,
 And let me see the stroke before it comes,
 That even then when I shall lose my life,

My mind may be more steadfast on my God.
(V, v, 72-77.)

He gives Lightborn his final possession, a jewel, the last small vestige of his worldly pride, and abandons himself totally to the mercy of God as the murderers approach:

I am too weak and feeble to resist.
Assist me, sweet God, and receive my soul!
(V, v, 107-108.)

This then, is the way in which Edward dies, and his attitude and words at death certainly imply that he is a man destined for salvation.

The parallel is thus complete between the thematic content of the first type of morality play and Edward II. We have the forces of good and evil contending for control of the central figure in the figures of Gaveston and Mortimer struggling to gain control over Edward. We have the disappearance of the evil forces with the passing of worldly goods and the subsequent despair of the central figure, who finally turns to God, undergoes a process of purgation and expiation, and is saved at the time of his death. The parallel roughly holds true throughout and we can see that both the first morality theme and its standard method of development in the morality play have been used by Marlowe.

We may now turn to the second theme as laid down in our definition of the morality genre, the theme of the mutability of fortune and the transitory nature of worldly things. This theme also seems to be present in quite an explicit form in the story of the rise and fall of Mortimer, and of Isabella who shares that rise and fall with him. Mortimer and Isabella

ride the tide of fortune throughout the play. Their fortunes rise as Edward's decline and at the moment of his death, they are at the pinnacle of their success. But immediately after this, they experience reversal and Fortune hurls them down in the standard manner of the medieval de casibus tragedy. In this way, they learn the lesson of the vanity and mutability of earthly things (a lesson that Edward had learned earlier in the play) and that happiness grows out of concerning one's self with the kingdom of Heaven.

We have been prepared dramatically for Mortimer's and Isabella's fall long before it occurs by a number of allusions to the fact that earthly power invariably leaves men miserable. Most of these statements are made by Edward in his lamentation of his own fall. The first occurs in the scene in the abbey:

Stately and proud, in riches and in train,
Whilom I was powerful and full of pomp;
But what is he whom rule and empery
Have not in life or death made miserable?
(IV, vi, 12-15.)

In the following lines, he extols the virtues of the contemplative life, the standard alternative to worldly power:

Come Spencer; come, Baldock, come, sit down by me;
Make trial now of that philosophy
That in our famous nurseries of arts
Thou sucked'st from Plato and from Aristotle.
Father, this life contemplative is heaven.
O that I might this life in quiet lead.

Later, he makes another allusion to the transitory nature of earthly power:

Now, sweet God of heaven,
Make me despise this transitory pomp
And sit for aye enthronized in heaven.
(V, i, 107-109.)

Thus, throughout the play the theme of transitory worldly power has been verbally underscored and we are aware that the play is operating within a framework wherein all things are subject to sudden change. As a result, we are prepared for, and even expect, the fall of Mortimer and Isabella when it finally comes.

Thus far, we have spoken of the rise and fall of Mortimer and Isabella as if the two cases were identical and I think that if we examine them, we shall find that they are. The two characters do not enter into full and unconcealed league until the end of Act four, scene two, just prior to their decision to return to England and depose Edward, and it is from this point on that their rise really begins. In the section prior to this, Mortimer's fortunes have been at a low ebb and Edward's have been high. Isabella's fortunes, too, have been at a consistently low level throughout the play. The alliance of these two, however, turns the tide, and the rise of their fortunes immediately begins. Since they follow identical paths toward an identical goal, it is quite safe to speak of their ascent as one and the same. The same may be said of their respective falls. They occur within minutes of one another, and although they differ slightly in that Isabella is not sentenced to immediate death as Mortimer is, her words as she is led off imply that her death is not far off:

Nay, to my death, for too long have I lived,
 Whenas my son thinks to abridge my days.
 (V, vi, 83-84.)

Thus, since their rise begins at the same time and follows the

same course toward the same goal, and since their falls are so similar and so closely allied, I feel that we may speak of the rise and fall of Mortimer and Isabella as a single rise and fall. For the sake of convenience, then, from this point on we shall refer to this as the rise and fall of Mortimer, but by this we shall understand as well the rise and fall of Isabella.

Having thus established the presence of the theme of the mutability of worldly things in the play, let us examine the development of this theme in a typical morality and see how this compares with its development in Edward II. Its development in the morality can be clearly seen in Wager's Enough is as Good as a Feast. Bevington summarizes the action of this play very clearly and he divides its action into six basic parts:

The phases of Enough, after the prologue, are as follows: (1) A scene of confrontation between Worldly Man, Heavenly Man, and Contentation (contentment). The unregenerate Worldly Man is callous at first, but wavers and then sincerely renounces his mercenary ambitions. (2) The Vice Covetousness and his lieutenants Temerity, Inconsideration, and Precipitation discredit Worldly Man's pious mentor, Enough, and win their protege back again to vice. (3) Heavenly Man briefly comments on the pitiable spectacle of Worldly Man's recusancy. (4) A number of Worldly Man's victims, Tenant, Servant, and Hireling, plead for mercy and are haughtily refused. Worldly Man, at the height of fortune, exults in his power. (5) Retribution falls as Worldly Man is visited by Prophet, God's Plagues, Ignorance (with the Physician), and finally Satan. Worldly Man is carried off to Hell. (6) Heavenly Man receives promises of reward from Contentation, Enough, and Rest.⁵

This outline seems to present a fairly typical example of that

type of morality which dealt with a central figure who lost himself in his desire for worldly possessions and was damned as a result.⁶

If we apply this outline to the story of Mortimer in Edward II, we find that the development of Mortimer's rise and fall does not correspond exactly to that of Worldly Man. However, the basic outline is the same. The opening scene of confrontation described by Bevington may be regarded as corresponding roughly with the opening scene of Edward II with its confrontation between Mortimer and his nobles, Edward, and Gaveston. In this scene, Gaveston plays a very small role in the actual confrontation and we may dismiss him as irrelevant to our purpose. Of those who remain, the main parts are taken by Edward, Kent, and Mortimer. As has been mentioned above, Kent is the voice of moderation in this scene and his comment to the nobles, "Yet dare you brave the king unto his face?" (I, i, 116.) implies that they should be content with what they have, and his comment to Edward when he threatens to raise Gaveston in power

Brother, the least of these may well suffice
For one of greater birth than Gaveston.
(I, i, 158-159.)

implies that Gaveston and Edward should be content with their state. It is possible, from this, to see Kent as a figure corresponding very roughly to that of Contentation in the confrontation mentioned above.⁷

Despite the fact that he is already deeply sunk in the sin of worldly pride, Edward may be regarded in this

confrontation as a type of the Heavenly Man--but only in relation to Mortimer, not in relation to the structure of the play as a whole. By this I would suggest that in this scene Edward, although he is not virtuous, does possess certain virtues that Mortimer lacks and their lack in Mortimer mark in him the embryonic signs of the Worldly Man. These virtues are an awareness of one's own place in the structure of society and the need, as Kent suggests, to maintain that place in order to maintain the social structure. Edward is fully aware of his place as king and makes it clear that he intends to maintain his authority in several places. For example, he says:

The sword shall plane the furrows of thy brows,
And hew these knees that now are grown so stiff.
I will have Gaveston, and you shall know
What danger 'tis to stand against your king.
(I, i, 94-97.)

Mortimer, on the other hand, threatens rebellion and challenges the authority of the king. In the very fact that he issues this challenge, Mortimer is hinting that he may be dissatisfied with his place and may yearn for personal power beneath his guise of defender of virtue. Thus, this scene can be regarded as corresponding roughly to the morality confrontation between Heavenly Man, Worldly Man, and Contentation, Edward corresponding to Heavenly Man, Mortimer to Worldly Man, and Kent to Contentation. We must make it clear, however, that this relationship exists only between these three in isolation in this scene and does not extend to the full role that they play within the total structure of the

drama. The correspondence here between the morality and Edward II is rough, but the very fact that it exists at all when the morality theme is totally out of keeping with the content of the scene indicates that the morality method of developing this theme had a fair amount of influence on Marlowe's approach.

The ending of this confrontation scene in Edward II again roughly parallels the morality version. Mortimer exits in a virtuous light and when we see him in the next scene speaking against the king to the nobles, he appears to have no selfish ends in view. This may correspond to the Worldly Man's rejection of mercenary pursuits that comes before his worldly desires really break through to the surface. The main difference between the two figures in this connection is the fact that Mortimer maintains his unselfish appearance far longer into the play than Worldly Man does. This, however, is simply a matter of dramatic convenience for Marlowe, because his interest in the rise of Mortimer is secondary to his interest in the story of Edward and Gaveston in the first half of the play and he does not really pick up the development of Mortimer's rise again until the fourth act.

The second phase of the action as described by Bevington is the temptation of Worldly Man by the Vice and his succumbing to those temptations. There is no real parallel to this in Edward II. Mortimer's desire for worldly power seems to develop of its own accord after his imprisonment by Edward and his subsequent escape. It arises after he has begun to taste

worldly power and it grows in proportion as his power grows. There is thus no vice figure to tempt Mortimer into his quest for power; there is only his own slowly-awakened desire.

The third stage of the action consists of the Heavenly Man commenting on the actions of the Worldly Man. There is a possibility that a vestige of this may remain in the structure of the Mortimer story in Edward II. We have already mentioned the possibility that Edward, taken in relation to Mortimer and not to the structure of the play as a whole, may play the role of the Heavenly Man. Thus, his comment which occurs just as Mortimer's rise in power begins may be regarded as a comment on that rise. This passage occurs when Edward surrenders his crown and though it has already been quoted, it bears repetition in this context:

Now, sweet God of heaven,
Make me despise this transitory pomp
And sit for aye enthronized in heaven.
(V, i, 107-109.)

It is entirely possible that this comment, which we cited earlier to indicate the beginning of Edward's despising of worldly things, may also be intended to function as a comment on the folly of Mortimer's rise and desire for worldly power. At any rate, the parallel between Edward II and the morality play can be found here, but only in a vestigial form.

From this point on, however, the correspondences become closer. Worldly Man's maltreatment of his victims, such as Tenant, Servant, and Hireling, who plead for mercy and are refused, is paralleled by Mortimer's treatment of those surrounding him. Kent, who has been of great assistance to

Mortimer, is eliminated at the first opportunity, when he attempts to rescue his brother. Mortimer pronounces his sentence:

Strike off his head! He shall have martial law.
(V, iv, 88.)

This sentence is out of all proportion to the crime committed, and the young king himself pleads for Kent's life, but Mortimer is adamant and the sentence is carried out. A second example of such maltreatment is Lightborn who, after having carried out the murder of the old king at Mortimer's command, is murdered by Gurney with the words, "Take this for thy reward." (V, v, 116.). The murder of Lightborn was, of course, planned in advance by Mortimer to protect himself. A third example is Mortimer's treatment of Matrevis after Gurney has fled. He is warned of the consequences of betrayal:

Matrevis, if thou now growest penitent
I'll be thy ghostly father; therefore choose
Whether thou wilt be secret in this
Or else die by the hand of Mortimer.
(V, vi, 3-6.)

Thus we can see that Mortimer maltreats many of those who aided him in his rise and in doing so behaves in a manner that corresponds to that of the Worldly Man.

The Worldly Man also exults in his power and Mortimer does this as well. Two passages will serve to illustrate this. The first occurs in a conversation between Mortimer and Gurney concerning the imprisoned Edward, where he says:

As thou intendest to rise by Mortimer,
Who now makes Fortune's wheel turn as he please,
Seek all the means thou canst to make him droop,
And neither give him kind word nor good look.
(V, ii, 52-55.)

Many characters in de casibus tragedy have exulted in their fortune with words almost the same as these, claiming that they had gained control of Fortune's wheel. Such words inevitably precede a fall. The second passage occurs in his soliloquy following his conversation with Lightborn:

Now is all sure; the queen and Mortimer
 Shall rule the realm, the king, and none rule us.
 Mine enemies will I plague, my friends advance,
 And what I list command who dare control?
 (V, iv, 65-68.)

The third passage occurs after his dismissal of Matrevis:

As for myself, I stand as Jove's huge tree,
 And others are but shrubs compared to me.
 All tremble at my name, and I fear none;
 Let's see who dare impeach me for his death.
 (V, vi, 11-14.)

Here, we see Mortimer clearly exulting in his power in the manner of the Worldly Man.⁸

In the summary by Bevington, we see that retribution comes to the Worldly Man in many forms, but it essentially takes the form of a loss of worldly power, death, and damnation. These elements are all present in the death of Mortimer. The first among them to appear is, naturally, the loss of worldly power, and this occurs offstage in Edward II. It occurs when the young king, having heard of his father's death, takes matters into his own hands and summons his council, thus robbing Mortimer of his power as protector. This event is described by Queen Isabella:

Ay, ay, but he tears his hair, and wrings his hands,
 And vows to be revenged upon us both.
 Into the council chamber he is gone
 To crave the aid and succor of his peers.

Ay me, see where he comes, and they with him.
Now, Mortimer, begins our tragedy.

(V, vi, 18-23.)

Following this loss of power Mortimer's death comes almost immediately. His death is not a simple one, but one involving physical torture and degradation as the young king orders it:

Ah, Mortimer, thou knowest that he is slain;
And so shalt thou be too. Why stays he here?
Bring him into a hurdle, drag him forth;
Hang him, I say, and set his quarters up;
But bring his head back presently to me.

(V, vi, 50-54.)

This type of death may parallel the loss of worldly power and the retribution visited on the Worldly Man as described in Bevington's summary, because here we find a visitation by the Plague and Ignorance, both implying physical pain. In any case, the third element of damnation is also present in Mortimer's death. He goes defiantly to it and in this contrasts strongly with Edward's marked air of peace. Like the Worldly Man, Mortimer realizes the futility of his hopes, but refuses to accept the implied lesson that he should never have tempted Fortune. Instead he goes to his death with a defiance and a lack of appeal to God that clearly marks him as damned:

Base Fortune, now I see that in thy wheel
There is a point, to which when men aspire,
They tumble headlong down. That point I touched,
And, seeing there was no place to mount up higher,
Why should I grieve at my declining fall?
Farewell, fair queen; weep not for Mortimer,
That scorns the world, and, as a traveler,
Goes to discover countries yet unknown.

(V, vi, 59-66.)

The career of Mortimer thus parallels in many ways the rise and fall of Worldly Man in those moralities dealing with

the mutability of worldly things. The development of this theme in this manner in Edward II is not exactly parallel to the development in Enough Is as Good as a Feast and there are elements in the morality version that are lacking in Edward II. This is probably because the story of Mortimer is not the central concern in this play, but remains at all times secondary to the story of Edward. Thus, if the typical pattern that Mortimer follows is not fully developed in this play, it is because such development would hamper Marlowe's main purpose, the telling of Edward's story.

The third morality theme that we included in our definition was that of the debate of the Heavenly Virtues for the soul of man after death. This theme is not really present in the play, but it is possible to see in the young king's actions in the final scene a vindication of King Edward's earthly life and as a result, this scene fulfills the same dramatic function as the Heavenly Virtues debate does in the story of the progress of man's soul toward salvation. However, there is no element of debate present, the scene does not affect the salvation of the central figure in the play, and there is only one point of view involved in the scene. Therefore, dramatic function aside, it is probably safest to regard the theme of the debate of the Heavenly Virtues as absent in this play.

B. Dual morality structure in Edward II:

In From Mankind to Marlowe, Bevington regards Edward II as based strictly on the pattern of the unregenerate protagonist,

the Worldly Man, as we discussed it above. He sees the political forces as the central ones in the play and says of them:

These forces move simultaneously in the diverging paths of the homiletic tragedy, such as Enough Is as Good as a Feast. Mortimer's fortune exalts him, like the Worldly Man, through a series of triumphs until he topples and is punished. Conversely, King Edward suffers the ignominy of unfavorable reputation and persecution at the hands of Mortimer, until finally his cause wins moral justification.⁹

This viewpoint leads him to regard character ambiguity in the play as arising from Marlowe's concern with the psychology of his characters. He explains it as follows:

In the intermediate morality, this scheme of divided paths for the opposed protagonists invariably separated the godly from the profane, and rewarded each according to his merit. Its structural force in Edward II similarly implies a contrast between a meek but worthy king and his depraved persecutor. Marlowe's preoccupation with complexity of character, however, forbids such a plain interpretation of right and wrong. Just as he sought plausible reasons for Barabas' viciousness, here he delves into the reasons for King Edward's unpopularity with the nobles, and is not satisfied with a simple explanation of Mortimer as the Worldly Man. He becomes especially interested in Queen Isabella's motives for transferring her loyalty to Mortimer. At the same time he retains the pattern of dual protagonists as a solution for his casting dilemma. The result is that his characters occupy two spheres, human complexity and moral abstraction.¹⁰

From this position, Bevington maintains that concern with psychological complexity, which results in character ambiguity, manifests itself most strongly in the early scenes of the play and gradually gives way to the standard character types of the morality pattern. "The complexity," he says, "appears chiefly in the exposition, as in The Jew of Malta, in order to set an historical event in motion, whereas moral causality leading to a restoration of order figures increasingly in the play's

continuation and denouement."¹¹ This, he maintains, is how the morality play pattern functions in Edward II.¹²

It is possible, however, that this point of view may represent an oversimplification of the matter. We have already demonstrated that the morality pattern of the conflict of good and evil is present in the play along with the pattern of the rise and fall of the Worldly Man. If we accept the presence of these two themes, it is quite possible to view the play not simply as conforming to a standard morality pattern, but as, in fact, two morality plays operating simultaneously within the framework of a single dramatic structure. This point of view will enable us to explain any character ambiguity that exists in a quite different manner. Before we turn to an examination of character, however, let us examine the way in which these two morality plots interact to form a single dramatic whole.

As a whole, the play falls into two sections. The first presents the story of Edward's temptation and fall, and the second, which begins roughly at the point where Mortimer and Isabella combine forces, deals with their rise and fall, as well as finishing Edward's story by presenting his movement toward salvation. Edward's story is thus dominant in the first part of the play while in the second part, the story of Mortimer and Isabella becomes more important. This clarifies Bevington's view of the play as conforming less to the moral pattern at the beginning than toward the end. The morality pattern that he sees does not become important until well into the second half

of the play. As a result, the characters in the first section of the play do not conform to their roles in this morality pattern except in a very limited way, as we noticed earlier when we attempted to find in the early scenes of the play evidence for the presence of the Worldly Man theme. In the first half of the play, most of the characters conform to the roles laid down for them in the morality pattern of the conflict between good and evil forces. Thus, it is possible to see the play as consisting of two layers of dramatic action laid one on top of the other. The upper layer would represent the dramatic action dominant on the stage at any given moment while the lower layer would represent a secondary dramatic action operative at the same time, but of less momentary significance than the dominant action. Therefore, in the first section of the play, the story of Edward's fall would occupy the upper layer of action, while the story of Mortimer remains in the secondary layer. In the second section, however, the Mortimer-Isabella action rises in importance until it occupies the primary layer of action, leaving the story of Edward in a secondary position throughout most of this section. During the abdication scene and the murder scene (V, i; V, v), the Edward story once again becomes dominant, but through most of the second section, the Mortimer story is more important. This, then, is the manner in which these two morality plots interact with one another during the course of the play.

C. Characters:

If we turn now to an examination of the central characters in Edward II and compare them with their morality play prototypes, we should expect to find that a certain number of correspondences do exist. This correspondence would not arise from any desire on the part of the playwright simply to present a stock portrait of a type of figure, but from the fact that with a given role to perform in a given dramatic situation, a character will invariably show a certain number of stock traits. This is an unavoidable situation and one of the marks of the good dramatist is his ability to build an individual character out of the set of stock responses that his situation has given him. As a result of this, then, bearing in mind that the situations and roles in Edward II are similar to the two basic morality patterns outlined above, we should expect the main characters in Edward II to behave in a manner similar to the characters to which they correspond in the morality plays. On examination, I think we shall find that this is, to a large extent at least, true.

We must remember, however, that we cannot expect these correspondences to be exact. The figures in the morality plays were allegorical and, although they had certain character traits, their essential purpose was simply to present a point of view. Marlowe, on the other hand, was a highly sophisticated dramatist and a concern with the psychology of individual characters is present throughout the play. His characters were historical and as a result certain traits had to be

retained in order to remain true to his sources. Thus, we cannot expect the simple morality abstractions to correspond to the individuated characters in Edward II in any exact sense, though we may find an approximation in their manners and their traits.

Bevington, of course, maintains that Marlowe's concern with individual psychology gives rise to ambiguity in the characters of Edward II when the individual's morality role and the character given him by Marlowe do not quite correspond. We shall encounter another problem as well. We have maintained in this section that Edward II is not a history play built up on a single morality framework, but a history play built up on two interacting morality frameworks. We have also just maintained that a character playing a given role in a given situation must necessarily show certain stock characteristics. In a play structured like Edward II, however, problems can arise. When a character is forced to play one type of role in one morality structure and another type of role in the other morality structure and when the roles do not correspond exactly with one another in nature, ambiguity can result. Thus, the character may be thrust into a situation where his dominant character demands that he behave in a certain way, and his minor morality role, which may at that moment be more important as far as the total structure of the play is concerned, may demand that he behave in another quite different way. Since the role which adds most to the total structure of the play is most important, it will invariably be given primary consideration

and character ambiguity becomes apparent. Thus, we shall maintain in this section that what character ambiguity exists in Edward II is not a two-tiered matter, as Bevington suggests, of individual characteristics being forced upon stock characters who cannot consistently bear their weight dramatically, but a three-tiered matter of individual characteristics being forced on a character already split between two stock morality types who may or may not be similar in nature. We shall examine in turn, then, each of the main characters to see what ambiguity of character is present, what stock figures they correspond to within the dual-morality structure, and to what extent any character ambiguity present arises from this split in role-function.

Let us begin with an examination of King Edward. Ambiguity of character is least in his case and it occurs entirely toward the beginning of the play. It arises out of the contrast between the evil nature of Edward in the opening scenes and the signs of virtue that he still manages to give in his confrontation with his nobles. Bevington, in fact, maintains that there is no real ambiguity here since Edward is never really presented as evil. He says, "He himself is never regarded as vicious, but only misguided, inexperienced, and pleasure-seeking. Nevertheless Marlowe imputes evil to his rule in the persons of his sycophants, who embody many vice-like qualities."¹³ This shifts the blame from Edward to Gaveston and presents the king as the innocent victim of his evil counsellors.¹⁴

However, since we are working within the morality framework

and are regarding Edward as the Mankind figure who is tempted by evil and succumbs to that temptation, it is probably fair to apply the morality view of such an action here. The Everyman figure is responsible for his own actions. He has a dual nature, composed both of good and evil, each attempting to gain control over him, as symbolized by the good and bad angels. When he succumbs to evil, it is the evil side of his own nature that is brought to the surface. Mankind implies this when he speaks to Mercy after his transgression:

Alasse! I haue be so bestyally dysposyde I dare
not a-pere.
To se yowur solaycyose face I am not worthy to
dysyer.

(Mankind, 806-807.)

He realizes that the evil is his own, not simply the transferred evil of his tempters.

The same can be applied to Edward. When he succumbs to the temptations of Gaveston, it is the evil side of his own nature that is brought out. Examples of this evil in Edward are present in the first scene. For example, he places his love for Gaveston above his feelings for his kingdom:

If for these dignities thou be envied,
I'll give thee more, for but to honor thee,
Is Edward pleased with kingly regiment.
Fearst thou thy person? Thou shalt have a guard.
Wantest thou gold? Go to my treasury.
Wouldst thou be loved and feared? Receive my seal;
Save or condemn, and in our name command
Whatso thy mind affects or fancy likes.

(I, i, 163-170.)

Here, Edward is purely and simply concerned with the personal pleasure to be gained from his position. He has fallen victim to the deadly sins. We can see Pride here, along with Gluttony

and Lechery, in that he places his own appetite above his duties to his kingdom. Thus, in the opening scenes there is evil present in Edward himself, not just in his counsellors.¹⁵

At the same time, however, Edward displays certain virtues. When we discussed the mutability theme earlier, we maintained that on one level Edward is intended to serve as a contrast to Mortimer. He is intended to momentarily possess those virtues of loyalty and realization of the need to maintain the social order, the lack of which in Mortimer leads him to succumb to the temptations of worldly power. This led us to conclude that Edward, momentarily and in isolation from the overall structure of the play, played the role of the Heavenly Man in the pattern of the Worldly Man morality.¹⁶

From this duality arises a certain ambiguity of character. In his first moments on the stage, Edward appears to be loyal, brave, and to represent the established social order. Then, a few moments later, he appears as a dissolute and irresponsible king--a king who truly does not warrant the right of kingship. Two parallel quotations will illustrate this. The first occurs in the opening confrontation of Edward by his nobles where they defy his authority. He replies to them:

Well, Mortimer, I'll make thee rue these words.
 Beseems it thee to contradict thy king?
 Frown'st thou thereat, aspiring Lancaster?
 The sword shall plane the furrows of thy brows,
 And hew these knees that now are grown so stiff.
 I will have Gaveston, and you shall know
 What danger 'tis to stand against your king.
 (I, i, 91-97.)

This speech shows Edward as strong and courageous, representing that quality of magnificence that a great ruler must have. A

few scenes later, however, with the situation still basically the same, being again confronted by his nobles, Edward reveals a more accurate picture of the character he is to present consistently throughout the play:

My lord, you shall be Chancellor of the realm,
 Thou, Lancaster, High Admiral of our fleet;
 Young Mortimer and his uncle shall be earls,
 And you, Lord Warwick, President of the North,
 And thou of Wales. If this content you not,
 Make several kingdoms of this monarchy
 And share it equally amongst you all,
 So I may have some nook or corner left
 To frolic with my dearest Gaveston.

(I, iv, 65-73.)

Here Edward shows himself willing to sacrifice the existing social order for the sake of his own pleasures. He is willing to split up the kingdom, the mistake of Lear and Gorboduc, in order to keep Gaveston with him. Thus, he shows himself as a man deeply enough sunk in sin to be willing to sacrifice the good of all around him to the gratification of his own appetites.¹⁷

We can see, then, that there is a certain amount of ambiguity in Edward's character in the opening scenes. We can see also, from the nature of the examples cited, that this ambiguity arises from the dual roles that the structure of the play requires him to fulfill. The first speech is that of the Heavenly Man displaying certain qualities and virtues that the Worldly Man, with whom he is contrasted, lacks. The second speech is that of Everyman after he has succumbed to the temptations of his evil counsellors and is willing to sacrifice anything to be allowed to gratify his appetites. Thus, we have in Edward a character playing two roles simultaneously, one role

strongly virtuous and the other completely lacking in virtue. This results in some character ambiguity in the opening scenes. It does not continue, of course, because one role remains fairly constant in character while the other changes toward it. The Heavenly Man role remains with his eyes fixed on heaven throughout, while the Everyman role gradually moves away from vice and toward virtue. Thus, by the time the end of the play arrives, the functions of the two roles are so similar as to be indistinguishable and as a result, character ambiguity has vanished. In a limited way, then, in the character of Edward, the two morality roles that he plays result in a certain amount of character ambiguity in the opening scenes only.

This same ambiguity of character exists in the case of Mortimer. His character is presented sympathetically at the beginning of the play and unsympathetically at the end. He is dominantly virtuous at the beginning and dominantly evil at the end. This shift in character, however, is not due to any development of a psychological nature, such as the corrupting influence of power that we might expect to find, but is due to a gradual revelation of the true character of Mortimer beneath the virtuous mask present at the beginning. Bevington says of this:

Marlowe is careful at first to give him plausible motives, as he had done with the Jew. Mortimer professes to hate Gaveston for the ill effects of his corrupt presence on the public weal. As champion of 'the murmuring commons' he wins our respect. His subsequent villainy, like that of Macbeth, might be explained in terms of the corrupting effect of power upon a naturally ambitious man. But Marlowe portrays him as representing something more basically evil than

ambition. Mortimer becomes a cunning manipulator, a master of duplicity.¹⁸

He has been this "master of duplicity" presumably throughout the play, but during the early scenes does not display it to the audience. In his initial appearances on stage, he gives certain traces of ambition which we discussed earlier, but his dominant impression is one of a justifiably angry lord defending his own rights and those of his peers. His opening speech shows him to be an honest man, one who would rather risk being called a traitor than break his word:

And know, my lord, ere I will break my oath,
This sword of mine, that should offend your foes,
Shall sleep within the scabbard at thy need,
And underneath thy banners march who will,
For Mortimer will hang his armor up.
(I, i, 85-89.)

This image continues to be presented with no explicit hint of the duplicity that Mortimer is capable of. When he pleads for Gaveston's return in the fourth scene, the explicit reason that he gives is that it is for the good of the nation:

My lords, that I abhor base Gaveston,
I hope your honors make no question,
And therefore, though I plead for his repeal,
'Tis not for his sake, but for our avail;
Nay for the realm's behoof, and for the king's.
(I, iv, 239-243.)

He repeats this motive a few lines further on:

This which I urge is of a burning zeal
To mend the king and do our country good.
(I, iv, 256-257.)

His motives, then, are altogether honourable, and at the end of this scene, he declares his loyalty to the king. His uncle tells him that the king has changed, to which Mortimer replies:

Then so am I, and live to do him service.
 But whiles I have a sword, a hand, a heart,
 I will not yield to any such upstart.
 (I, iv, 420-422.)

In the second act, he sees the folly of Gaveston's return and reiterates the fact that he must be eliminated for the public good. He says to the king:

The idle triumphs, masks, lascivious shows,
 And prodigal gifts bestowed on Gaveston,
 Have drawn thy treasure dry and made thee weak,
 The murmuring commons overstretched hath.
 (II, ii, 155-158.)

Thus, all the explicit indications in the first acts point to the fact that Mortimer is a virtuous man, without any self-interest in his opposition to Edward.

At the end of the third act, however, we have the first indication of a change in the picture of Mortimer that is being presented. When the victorious king sends him to prison, he replies:

What, Mortimer, can ragged stony walls
 Immure thy virtue that aspires to heaven?
 No, Edward, England's scourge, it may not be;
 Mortimer's hope surmounts his fortune far.
 (III, iii, 72-75.)

Here is the first real hint of Mortimer's ambitious nature and it is completely unprepared for in the play up to this time. He escapes and allies himself with the young prince, obviously in hopes of the advancement this position will gain for him. He begins to display real signs of duplicity in his mistrust of Kent, when he says to Isabella:

I like not this relenting mood in Edmund.
 Madam, 'tis good to look to him betimes.
 (IV, v, 47-48.)

By the next time we see him, Mortimer's transformation is

complete and he is presented to us as the Worldly Man lusting after personal power. He says to Isabella:

Think, therefore, madam, that imports us much
To erect your son with all the speed we may,
And that I be protector over him,
For our behoof will bear the greater sway
Whenas a king's name shall be under writ.
(V, ii, 10-14.)

After this point in the play, Mortimer does not appear to us in any other role than that of the "master of duplicity," except perhaps in his final speech where he goes out displaying some of those virtues that we saw in him before. The change in presentation has been complete--from a courageous political fighter battling for his rights to an underhanded plotter seeking personal aggrandisement. Since the audience is given no explicit preparation for the revelation of Mortimer's true character and since it is a process of character revelation rather than character change, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the character of Mortimer in the play is ambiguous.¹⁹

This ambiguity can be readily explained by the conflicting roles that Mortimer must play within the dual-morality structure. On the primary level of the play, the level of the story of King Edward's fall, repentance, and salvation, Mortimer, as we have already demonstrated, plays the role of the leader of the good counsellors. This story, as we have shown, is of primary importance during the first half and does not become at all secondary until the beginning of the fourth act. This, then, explains the fact of Mortimer's virtuous behaviour during the first half of the play. While this role was not really in

keeping with Mortimer's character as Marlowe finally intended to present it, it was necessary, in order to be historically accurate and to maintain the thematic unity of the play, that Mortimer play the role of the virtuous counsellor during the first half.²⁰

During the second half of the play, when the story of his own rise and fall became important, Marlowe allowed Mortimer to shift his role to that of the Worldly Man. We have already shown that Mortimer embodies the characteristics of the Worldly Man.²¹ We have also seen that he embodies the characteristic of cunning duplicity, the sort of thing that is not normally associated with the Worldly Man, but rather with the Vice. The Vice normally manipulates the circumstances and characters around him to suit his own ends. Mortimer does the same, as is demonstrated in his duplicity in his scheme to murder Edward and then have the murderer, Lightborn, done away with. Thus, it is possible to see Mortimer as a fusion of the Vice and the Worldly Man into one character and this explains one of the difficulties we encountered in demonstrating the correspondence between the Worldly Man pattern and the story of Mortimer. We found that the Vice, present in the Worldly Man pattern, was lacking in the story of Mortimer. This can now be explained by the fact that Mortimer embodies Vice characteristics and thus contains his own Vice--he is his own tempter.

Thus Mortimer in the second half of the play shifts to the role of the Worldly Man and begins his rotation on Fortune's Wheel. The result of the conflict between the two roles he

plays is that in the first half of the play he appears as virtuous while in the second half he appears as evil. This leads to ambiguity of character presentation because the change in character is not explained by the playwright and remains as a puzzle in the minds of the audience. Thus, the ambiguity here, as in the case of Edward, arises from the two roles that Mortimer is required to play within the dual-morality structure.

The same sort of character ambiguity is found in the case of Isabella. Bevington maintains that her character is the most perplexing in the play. He says of her:

On first impression one is tempted to suppose her loyal and sincere. She holds onto the hope of reconciliation in spite of Edward's indifference to her. In soliloquy (II, iv) she protests her adoration for her husband, and is in anguish at the prospect of deserting him. Her indecisiveness in this internal monologue is psychologically perceptive and convincing. Isabella thus seems a good-hearted but weak-willed woman who consents reluctantly to accept Mortimer's drive for power only because she has no other choice. Thereafter the lust for power begins to corrupt her too, until she becomes an adulteress and willing accomplice in murder.²²

This, then, is the superficial impression that one gets of Isabella. But the fact remains that her reversal is too complete and overwhelming to be entirely due to the apparent psychological motivation that Marlowe has given her. Bevington maintains that the change arises from the fact that Isabella is in essence a morality figure of depravity and that Marlowe gives her psychological complexity early in the play to make her human, but proceeds to strip away this complexity as the play goes on until we are left with nothing but the truly

evil nature underneath. As Bevington puts it, "Marlowe proceeds through the revelation of her natural depravity rather than through development of her human weakness. He uncovers a quality of absolute evil in her nature, and accounts for her apparent change by a gradual unmasking of her true identity."²³ Thus, the ambiguity in Isabella's character is explained here in terms of psychological considerations being forced upon the morality abstraction.²⁴

Certainly if we look at the character of Isabella as it appears in the play we can clearly see that this ambiguity is present. In her first appearance on the stage she is a noble figure. She opposes Gaveston, but is self-sacrificing and is willing to let the king have his minion and to undergo suffering for his sake:

For now my lord the king regards me not,
But dotes upon the love of Gaveston.
(I, ii, 49-50.)

Later in the same scene she makes her own self-sacrificing nature even clearer:

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.
(I, ii, 64-67.)

Thus, she immediately appears as a good woman, devoted to her husband and willing to undergo personal anguish for the sake of his welfare in public life.

Shortly thereafter, Gaveston openly accuses her of consorting with Mortimer, but even when she is left alone on stage after this, she makes no affirmation of the accusation, which

we would expect her to do if it were true. Instead, she claims that all her interest is in the king's love and she bewails the fact that ^Kis is denied her to Mortimer: E

Ah, Mortimer! Now breaks the king's hate forth,
And he confesseth that he loves me not.
(I, iv, 193-194.)

Later in the same scene, she clarifies her feelings:

I love him more
Than he can Gaveston; would he loved me
But half so much, then were I treble blessed!
(I, iv, 30-303.)

Later Edward himself levels this accusation of infidelity at Isabella, but she still denies it, even in soliloquy:

Heavens can witness I love none but you.
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, 15-21.)

And yet, strangely enough, by the end of this short scene, she indicates a growing affection for that same Mortimer whom she has just denied interest in:

So well hast thou deserved, sweet Mortimer,
As Isabel could live with thee forever.
(II, iv, 59-60.)

This feeling for Mortimer becomes more open as the play progresses until by the fourth act she greets the word of his safety with unexpected warmth:

Lord Edmund and Lord Mortimer alive!
Welcome to France. The news was here, my lord,
That you were dead or very near you death.
(IV, ii, 36-38.) r

The "my lord" of this speech, by the way, appears to be directed toward Mortimer, perhaps a further indication of Isabella's

changing loyalties. At any rate, two scenes later her loyalty has shifted completely and she opposes Edward openly:

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.
(IV, iv, 9-12.)

Publicly, however, Isabella still maintains that her motives are entirely virtuous:

I rue my lord's ill-fortune; but alas,
Care of my country called me to this war.
(IV, v, 73-74.)

This pretense has completely vanished the next time that Isabella appears on stage. She now reveals the fact that she is completely Mortimer's and has turned against Edward totally:

Sweet Mortimer, the life of Isabel,
Be thou persuaded that I love thee well,
And therefore, so the prince my son be safe,
Whom I esteem as dear as these mine eyes,
Conclude against his father what thou wilt,
And I myself will willingly subscribe.
(V, ii, 15-20.)

This is just a private revelation, however, because she still maintains her loyalty to Edward when she is in the public eye:

Whither goes this letter? To my lord the king?
Commend me humbly to his majesty,
And tell him that I labor all in vain
To ease his grief and work his liberty,
And bear him this as witness of my love.
(V, ii, 68-72.)

The "this" refers to a ring which she gives to Matrevis to carry to the king. Mortimer comments then on the queen's behaviour toward the messenger:

Finely dissembled. Do so still, sweet queen.
(V, ii, 74.)

Despite her dissembling, however, others on the stage do suspect

her true loyalty. Kent is among the first, as is shown later in this same scene. Prince Edward asks about his father:

Prince Edward: Why, is he dead?

Queen Isabella: No, God forbid.

Kent: I would those words proceeded from your heart.
(V, ii, 98-100.)

Thus, Isabella dissembles to those around her on the stage during the later phases of the play, but the audience is allowed to have a glimpse of her real character.

By the time the end of the play arrives, Isabella's role as a guilty agent has been completely presented and the audience has forgotten the innocent and wronged woman of the early scenes. It is even implied that she has been guilty throughout the play:

Queen Isabella: Weep not, sweet son.

King Edward III: Forbid me not to weep; he was
my father;

And had you loved him half so well as I,
You could not bear his death thus patiently.
But you, I fear, conspired with Mortimer.

(V, vi, 33-37.)

By this time, she will not even name Edward as her lord in public. Her only lord now is Mortimer:

Shall I not mourn for my beloved lord,
And with the rest accompany him to his grave?
(V, vi, 87-88.)

This line is, of course, ambiguous, but the context points to Mortimer as her lord since she refers to him as "beloved" and Mortimer is now her beloved, not Edward.

Thus, we can see that Isabella undergoes a complete turn-about in character between the beginning of the play and the end. It is a change that is unwarranted by the psychological motivations present in the play and as such may be regarded as

at least somewhat ambiguous. In this way, it is similar to the change in Mortimer's character already discussed.

We have already pointed out that the roles played by Mortimer and Isabella during the last half of the play in the course of their rise and fall are identical. At the same time, it can be readily demonstrated that Isabella is on the side of the good counsellors during the first section of the play. First of all, she is totally opposed to Gaveston, the evil counsellor in this morality pattern, and to his wicked influence on the king. Secondly, she is repeatedly seen conferring with the nobles, the forces of good, concerning the fate of Edward during this early part of the play. Thirdly, within the text of the play, Isabella is repeatedly associated with the nobles and Mortimer, through the accusations of Gaveston and the king, and through speeches such as the following:

Queen Isabella: My lord, 'tis thought the earls are
up in arms.

King Edward: Ay, and 'tis likewise thought you favor
'em.

(II, ii, 223-224.)

Thus, Isabella is clearly associated with the nobles, the forces of good, in the early sections of the play, just as she is associated with the forces of evil in the later sections.

As a result, the ambiguity of her character is virtually identical to that of Mortimer. It arises from the fact that she is forced to play conflicting roles in the two morality patterns present in the play. Her most important role, of course, is that of the Worldly Man, the central role in the

second pattern. This is an essentially evil character and it forms the basis of her character. This accounts for the fact that Bevington can see the character of Isabella as essentially evil. In the early sections of the play, she temporarily dons the mask of one of the good counsellors and plays this role until the story of Edward's fall is completed. Then, when this story is out of the way, she shifts rapidly to her true evil nature and continues in this role to the end of the play. There are, of course, present in the early scenes implications of Isabella's basically evil nature, such as the hint that she has taken Mortimer as her lover. But these hints are small and the shift in roles is sudden and psychologically unmotivated. The motivation arises almost entirely from the dramatic needs presented by the dual-morality structure of the play. Isabella's character changes because the nature of her role within the overall dramatic structure of the play changes. In this way, then, the ambiguity of Isabella's character can be explained by the structural demands of the play rather than by a lack of psychological perception on Marlowe's part.

We have seen, then, that each of the three central figures in the play displays a certain amount of ambiguity of character. This ambiguity can be explained in each case by relating it to the conflicting roles imposed on the individual characters by the dual-morality structure of the play. This is not to deny the possibility of the ambiguity arising from psychological considerations, but simply to point out that the structure of this play is a complex one that makes heavy demands on the

roles played by the three central characters and can contribute to the ambiguity that has been noted in these characters.

Other figures in the play perform their morality roles in a more straightforward manner. Kent, for instance, is on stage more than any other minor figure in the play and seems to represent one of the virtue figures, along with the rest of the nobles. We could perhaps regard his virtue as Moderation, since that seems to be what he preaches throughout the play.²⁵ We have already noted how this is apparent in the opening scenes. He is also the last of the nobles to leave Edward's side and even after he has escaped from England to join young Edward and Isabella in France, he longs for a peaceful and moderate settlement of the problem:

Would all were well and Edward well reclaimed,
For England's honor, peace, and quietness.
(IV, ii, 57-58.)

Later, after Edward's forces have been routed and Edward himself is running, Kent realizes the rashness of his actions and regrets it:

Edward, alas, my heart relents for thee.
Proud traitor, Mortimer, why dost thou chase
Thy lawful king, thy sovereign, with thy sword?
Vile wretch, and why hast thou, of all unkind,
Borne arms against thy brother and thy king?
Rain showers of vengeance on my cursed head,
Thou God, to whom in justice it belongs
To punish this unnatural revolt.
(IV, v, 11-18.)

Thus Kent, along with the other nobles whom we have already discussed, is a figure of virtue and, in this particular case, Moderation.

Gaveston quite readily aligns himself with the Vice

figures of the morality tradition.²⁶ Like the Vice figure as we have defined him, Gaveston is evil and attempts to seduce Edward away from the forces of virtue. We have already seen that he leads the forces of evil or evil counsellors during the first half of the play. Some other characteristics of the Vice include the fact that he is a manipulator of people and events and that he loves to confide his plans and feelings to the audience in soliloquies and asides. Gaveston displays both these characteristics. He manipulates those around him whenever it is to his advantage to do so. This occurs in the scene with the poor men at the beginning of the play and immediately after this Gaveston reveals a desire to control the actions of the king:

I must have wanton poets, pleasant wits,
Musicians, that with touching of a string
May draw the pliant king which way I please.
(I, i, 51-53.)

Gaveston also makes extensive use of the aside. This is usually used to impart the Vice's true attitude to the audience while he dissembles to those on stage with him at the time. An example of this occurs in Gaveston's scene with the three poor men when Gaveston turns away from them to the audience and says:

Ay, ay, these words of his move me as much
As if a goose should play the porpentine
And dart her plumes, thinking to pierce my breast.
But yet it is no pain to speak men fair.
I'll flatter these and make them live in hope.
(I, i, 39-43.)

He then turns back to the poor men and feeds them with false hopes. Thus, Gaveston is evil, seeks to manipulate those around him, and makes use of the aside to reveal his true

nature to the audience, all characteristics of the Vice.

There is another Vice characteristic that he also displays. When the Vice is brought face to face with the forces of good in the presence of the figure over whom the contest between good and evil is being waged, he will seek to discredit them and insult them.²⁷ Gaveston frequently does this to the nobles, the most notable example being in the second act when, in the presence of Edward, Gaveston says:

Base, leaden earls, that glory in your birth,
Go sit at home and eat your tenants' beef,
And come not here to scoff at Gaveston,
Whose mounting thoughts did never creep so low
As to bestow a look on such as you.
(II, ii, 74-78.)

Characteristics such as these mark Gaveston as a Vice figure and it is a role which he plays consistently throughout the play.

Spencer and Baldock are also evil figures and are probably best regarded as assistants to the main Vice, Gaveston.²⁸ Baldock is the less important of the two figures, because Spencer always seems to take the initiative and to be the more experienced of the two, but they are almost always seen together and their thoughts and opinions are similar. They are on the side of evil from their first appearance when they ally themselves openly with Gaveston:

The liberal Earl of Cornwall is the man
On whose good fortune Spencer's hope depends.
(II, i, 10-11.)

Baldock implies his alliance on this side as well. Marlowe then begins to expand somewhat on their characters and shows them both as hypocritical manipulators and opportunists.

Spencer says to Baldock:

Then, Baldock, you must cast the scholar off
And learn to court it like a gentleman.

And saying, 'Truly, an't may please your honor,'
Can get you any favor with great men;
You must be proud, bold, pleasant, resolute,
And now and then stab, as occasion serves.
(II, i, 31-32, 40-43.)

Baldock replies to this:

Spencer, thou knowest I hate such formal toys
And use them but of mere hypocrisy.
(II, i, 44-45.)

Further evidence of their alliance with the Vice, Gaveston, and of their performing similar functions to his comes when Gaveston recommends Spencer's service to the king:

His name is Spencer; he is well allied.
For my sake, let him wait upon your grace.
Scarce shall you find a man of more desert.
(II, ii, 247-249.)

Later, when Gaveston has gone, both Spencer and Baldock take over his functions completely and try to sway the king against his nobles. Spencer says:

Did you retain your father's magnanimity,
Did you regard the honor of your name,
You would not suffer thus your majesty
Be counterbuffed of your nobility.
Strike off their heads, and let them preach on poles.
No doubt, such lessons they will teach the rest,
As by their preachments they will profit much
And learn obedience to their lawful king.
(III, ii, 16-23.)

Baldock adds his weight to this as well:

This haught resolve becomes your majesty,
Not to be tied to their affection,
As though your highness were a schoolboy still,
And must be awed and governed like a child.
(III, ii, 28-31.)

Thus, we can see that Spencer and Baldock may be regarded as

corresponding to the assistants to the Vice in the morality tradition inasmuch as they openly ally themselves with him, display characteristics similar to his, and take over his functions when he is gone.

Another minor character who has his counterpart among the stock morality figures in *Lightborn*. Levin says of this character, "*Lightborne's* name reveals the cloven hoof; for it had also belonged to one of the devils in the Chester cycle, and is neither more nor less than an Anglicization of '*Lucifer*.'"²⁹ Despite the diabolical nature of his name, however, it is not the devil of the morality plays to which *Lightborn* corresponds. It is instead the mysterious figure of Death that occasionally appears on stage in the morality tradition.³⁰ There are several resemblances between *Lightborn* and Death as we have already discussed him. In the first place, Death displayed great skill in his own special art of dealing death. *Lightborn* displays a similar pride in his work in his interview with Mortimer when he says:

'Tis not the first time I have killed a man.
I learned in Naples how to poison flowers,
To strangle with a lawn thrust through the throat,
To pierce the windpipe with a needle's point,
Or whilst one is asleep, to take a quill
And blow a little powder in his ears,
Or open his mouth and pour quicksilver down.
But yet I have a braver way than these.

(V, iv, 30-37.)

When Mortimer questions him about the "braver way," however, he becomes mysterious and cryptic in the manner of Death:

Nay, you shall pardon me; none shall know my tricks.
(V, iv, 39.)

We have described the morality figure of Death as impartial and unrelenting. The impartiality of Lightborn is shown in the impersonal way in which he dismisses the matter of death. When Mortimer asks him if he is still resolute about killing Edward, Lightborn treats the matter in an off-hand manner:

What else, my lord? And far more resolute.
(V, iv, 23.)

There is nothing personal about the killing; it is a matter of business. He also claims to be unrelenting. Mortimer suggests that when Lightborn sees Edward he will weaken in his resolution. Lightborn replies to this:

Relent! Ha, ha! I use much to relent.
(V, iv, 27.)

Thus, in his appearance on stage, Lightborn embodies several of the characteristics of the morality figure of Death, such as his mysterious nature, his pride in his work, his impartiality, and his unrelenting nature. Edward's description of Lightborn when he first sees him underlines this nature and emphasizes the Death-like quality of the character. One can easily imagine the speech being made by a man gazing directly into the face of Death:

These looks of thine can harbor nought but death.
I see my tragedy written in thy brows.
Yet stay awhile; forbear thy bloody hand,
And let me see the stroke before it comes,
That even then when I shall lose my life,
My mind may be more steadfast on my God.
(V, v, 72-77.)

Thus, there are several similarities between Lightborn and the morality figure of Death and their functions are roughly the same.

The final figure in the play who corresponds directly to a morality character is Prince Edward. Prince Edward, after he has been crowned king, takes over a function that would probably be performed in the morality play by the abstraction Justice. The concept of Justice becomes important only in the second half of the play and is therefore most closely connected with the Mortimer-Isabella story since that is the dominant one at that time. Prince Edward, then, is an instrument. He is the instrument of Justice by means of which the fall of Mortimer and Isabella is brought about and he also displays such characteristics of Justice as the necessary impartiality when he says to the Queen:

Mother, you are suspected for his death,
And therefore we commit you to the Tower
Till further trial may be made thereof;
If you be guilty, though I be your son,
Think not to find me slack or pitiful.
(V, vi, 78-82.)

Prince Edward, then, performs the function that would be performed by Justice within the morality framework and may be approximated to the morality figure at this point. He does not represent Justice throughout the play, but simply performs the function of Justice in this scene.

The other characters in Edward II, aside from the nobles who correspond to the contending forces of good in the morality structure, are relatively unimportant as far as morality correspondences are concerned. The main load of the play falls on the characters we have discussed and the correspondences there do seem to exist. Thus, the characters here do contain certain vestigial elements of the abstractions of the

popular morality play.

D. Structure:

We decided in our definition that there were two basic structural patterns of morality play. The first type presented the progress of the central character as he came into contact with groups of good and evil characters in alternating scenes and traced their influence upon him.³¹ The second type presented a seriously moral main plot alternating with a comic subplot or series of Vice comedy.³² Edward II does not, of course, strictly follow either of these patterns, but it does make use of certain elements of the first type. In its main outline, the play follows the progress of King Edward as he comes into contact with different groups of characters and it traces their influence upon him. Thus, at the beginning of the play, Edward is confronted by his nobles and argues with them. Gaveston then makes his presence known as the nobles leave and reasserts his influence over Edward. The nobles, however, manage to have Gaveston banished and reassert their control over the king. Gaveston then returns and regains his influence. But this time the nobles kill him and they regain control over the king. Spencer and Baldock soon take over Gaveston's functions, however, and influence Edward to declare war on his nobles. They win and the influence of Spencer and Baldock is complete. However, their reversal of fortune comes, the sycophants are separated from the king, and the nobles reassert their influence.

The final contact is with a new group of characters, Mortimer's henchmen, who kill the king. We can see from this bare outline that the pattern of the play follows Edward as he comes under the influence of alternately good and evil forces. The basic morality structure, then, is present, although it is skillfully handled and not apparent on the surface of the play.

According to Bevington, this structure was a result of the need in small professional troupes to double roles in the morality plays presented. Actors who doubled roles would find it very inconvenient to switch costumes and makeup in order to revive a character that they had played earlier in the play, having portrayed different roles in between. Thus, the usual procedure was to bring on minor characters, have them perform their functions, and then get them off the stage permanently. This technique of character suppression became quite important in the popular morality as is evidenced by the material presented in Bevington's book. It is interesting to note in passing that this same technique of character suppression is present in Edward II. As Bevington points out:

Casting suppression is pronounced. Only four characters are central to the entire play: Edward, Young Mortimer, Isabella, and Kent. All the rest exist, in morality fashion, chiefly to highlight a particular phase in the careers of the protagonists. Mortimer Senior, Lancaster, Warwick, and their peers belong solely to the period of Young Mortimer's baronial protest against Edward's caprice. Matrevis, Gurney, and Lightborn seem part of an almost entirely different story of suborned murder and duplicity. Similarly, in the King's party Gaveston lives as an embodiment of Edward's extravagance for only ten scenes out of twenty-three, whereas Baldock and the two Spencers occupy the middle portion of the play. Like the authors of hybrid chronicle, Marlowe treats lesser historical figures in sequence.³³

Thus, Edward II seems to owe something at least in its bare outlines to the structural traditions established in the popular theatre by the morality play.

The other pattern of the alternating serious and comic scenes is, of course, not present in Edward II. There is no comic sub-plot in the play and therefore such a structure simply does not fit the material to be presented. This is not to say, however, that the play is without Vice comedy, although its presence is very limited. There are only two scenes in the play that may really be regarded as comic, and each of these has a serious current running through it. Both of these scenes are associated with characters that we have already described as Vice figures. The first scene is Gaveston's encounter with the three poor men in the opening of the play. Although his treatment of the men is not lightly comic, it does contain certain of the elements of grim humour associated with Vice comedy. One is reminded of Titivillus and his attendant Vices in Mankind or of Ambidexter and Huf, Ruf, and Snuf in Cambises. The same kind of ironic humour is present in Gaveston's deception of the poor men and it may be a vestige of the morality scenes of Vice comedy.

The same may be said of the opening to the second act where Spencer and Baldock discuss their positions. This scene is basically light in tone and this lightness is underlined by the fact that Baldock cuts short the conversation by saying:

Leave off this jesting, here my lady comes.
(II, i, 56.)

This scene is reminiscent of those in which the assistant Vices

gather together and boast about their own virtues. Spencer and Baldock each talk only about themselves and their own hopes and advantages, ignoring completely the value of the emotion felt by the King's Niece. Thus, in these two scenes, both of which involve Vice figures and comic elements, we may have some vestige of the scenes of Vice comedy that were so popular in the morality tradition.

Debate as a structural element is not really important in Edward II. Most of the play is carried along by the action of the plot rather than by the conflict of ideas that debate implies. There is a basic conflict of ideas, of course, but it is set up in the first scene and is not really elaborated beyond that point. It is only in the setting up of this conflict in the opening scene that debate plays an important role. Here the characters, if we regard them in the light of their morality counterparts, play their roles in the accepted morality fashion. The forces of good, the nobles, degrade and discredit the forces of evil. Lancaster says:

My lord, why do you thus incense your peers,
That naturally would love and honor you
But for that base and obscure Gaveston?
(I, i, 99-101.)

They also threaten to leave him if he will not conform to their wishes:

Come, uncle, let us leave the brainsick king
And henceforth parley with our naked swords.
(I, i, 125-126.)

The forces of evil, on the other hand, in the person of Gaveston, are subtle and tempting, placing the emphasis on worldly pleasure:

It shall suffice me to enjoy your love,
 Which whiles I have, I think myself as great
 As Caesar riding in the Roman street,
 With captive kings in his triumphant car.
 (I, i, 171-174.)

Thus, while the two forces never really confront one another (another morality feature, by the way, since in that tradition the forces of evil are usually shown to be unable to stand up to the forces of good) they each are given an opportunity to present their case in a manner resembling a debate. This structural element, then, although it is only used once, is used in the true morality fashion.

The concept of time in Edward II is like that of the morality play in that it is exceptionally loose. Although the play historically covers a period of twenty-three years, there is no sense of this length of time being passed. Instead, one is left with the impression that the action takes a few weeks, at most a few months. This sense of extensive compression of time is conveyed first of all by the rapid pace of the play which moves very quickly from event to event, and secondly by the fact that in the text of the play there are very few references to the passage of time. These two techniques are used in morality drama, where the passage of periods of time is virtually never mentioned and where one passes very rapidly from one important event to another in a man's life with all of the unimportant intervening material left out.³⁴ Such resemblances of technique aside, however, the important point here is the fact that Edward II is a chronicle play and as such can rightly be expected to adhere to a tight and rigid

time concept. The fact that time is not a major concern with Marlowe may be an indication that he was not interested primarily in writing a chronicle play, but was concerned with the eternal nature of the conflicts and suffering that he was presenting and therefore left the time concept loose in order to underline this.

The concept of space is more concrete than that of time, but even here there is a certain looseness that is out of keeping with the chronicle play. Very seldom within the actual text of the play are we given an indication of the location of the scene. There is a general sense that the action takes place in England and France, but there is little of the concrete physical description of the setting that one finds in, for example, Shakespeare. This too, as we saw in our definition, is characteristic of the morality play and Marlowe may have found that these concepts both of space and time fitted his basic morality structure better than the more concrete concepts normally found in chronicle plays.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

We have seen, then, that our definition of the morality play can, to a certain extent, be applied to Edward II. We have seen that two basic morality themes and patterns of development can be found in the play. We have seen that certain basic character types are present in the play and play roles corresponding to the roles they would play in the morality tradition. Finally, we have seen that the basic structure of the play is that of a morality, that character suppression is present, that the structural device of debate is present, and that the concept of space and time is loose like that of the morality. Although these elements are hidden beneath the surface of the play, their presence becomes clear on examination.

The presence of these elements is, of course, not enough to enable us to call Edward II a morality play. There remains to be discussed the basic element of morally didactic purpose, without which no play can be considered a morality. It is really here that Edward II diverges most completely from the path of the morality play because Marlowe seems to reserve any moral judgment.

This is not to say that morally didactic elements are not present in the text. Such elements are very markedly present and reveal themselves clearly. Perhaps the easiest way to deal with these elements is to deal with didacticism present in each of the two main stories separately. Thus, in connection with

the story of Mortimer and Isabella, the basic moral teaching is the same as that of de casibus tragedy--that one should learn to despise worldly power because it is transitory and Fortune always brings low those whom she exalts. First of all, this moral is implied in the very nature of the Mortimer-Isabella story. Their fall is a typical de casibus fall and as such would probably imply its usual moral to the audience. But this is underlined by several references in the play to the transitory nature of worldly power. We have already cited several of these in connection with the presence of the mutability theme in the play, but one which we have not cited before will serve to illustrate here. Baldock says after the king has been taken:

Reduce we all our lessons unto this,
To die, sweet Spencer, therefore live we all;
Spencer, all live to die, and rise to fall.
(IV, vi, 109-111.)

Thus, we can see that in the text of the play and in the very nature of the story of the rise and fall of Mortimer and Isabella, the lesson of the abhorrence of worldly power and material possessions is taught.

The story of Edward's fall presents the same moral, but it is also designed to teach the wickedness of listening to evil counsellors. This moral is a natural implication of the story itself, but it is not directly stated in the text of the play. It is, however, implied at several points. At the conference between the nobles, for example, Mortimer says of Gaveston:

We'll hale him from the bosom of the king,
 And at the court gate hang the peasant up,
 Who, swoll'n with venom of ambitious pride,
 Will be the ruin of the realm and us.

(I, ii, 29-32.)

This implies, of course, that Gaveston's wicked counsel will have a bad effect on the kingdom. Virtually the same thing is later said by Kent, this time directly to Edward:

My lord, I see your love to Gaveston
 Will be the ruin of the realm and you.

(II, ii, 206-207.)

Perhaps the closest that this moral comes to being directly stated is in the analogy of the cedar tree, the device on Mortimer's shield for the festivities at Gaveston's return. Mortimer describes this as:

A lofty cedar tree, fair flourishing,
 On whose top-branches kingly eagles perch,
 And by the bark a canker creeps me up
 And gets unto the highest bough of all;
 The motto, AEque tandem.

(II, ii, 16-20.)

The civil war is the direct result of Edward's attention to Gaveston and he can still avoid its final results as late as following Gaveston's death, when the nobles send him a messenger advising him:

To cherish virtue and nobility,
 And have old servitors in high esteem,
 And shake off smooth dissembling flatterers.
 This granted, they, their honors, and their lives,
 Are to your highness vowed and consecrate.

(III, ii, 167-171.)

Thus, the lesson of the consequences of listening to evil counsel is present in the play, but the emphasis upon it is not too great.

We can see, then, that each of the morality patterns

present in the play carries with it its own basic moral. From the textual evidence presented, we can see that these lessons are stated to some extent in the text. However, their statement is never particularly emphatic and it always seems to represent the point of view of the character speaking, never the dramatist. As far as Marlowe's own point of view is concerned, he does not seem to have had one. He seems to be concerned simply with setting down the historical events as he found them in his chronicle sources along with an extensive character study. It is possible that he simply found that the situation of history fitted these two standard dramatic situations exceptionally well and unconsciously employed some of the stock devices that these situations usually made use of. At any rate, the sense of Marlowe preaching a moral in this play simply does not come through, and as a result, the play cannot ultimately be regarded as a morality, the basic requirement of a morality being the presentation of a moral lesson. Thus, although Edward II embodies certain morality elements beneath its chronicle-play surface, it is a morality play neither in concept nor in execution. The morality borrowings are turned instead to the purposes of historical tragedy and somehow serve to give a universal significance to a particular historical event.

NOTES

Chapter I:

1. George Watson, The Literary Critics, Harmondsworth, Middlesex, Penguin Books, 1962, p. 15.
2. Michael Drayton, "To My Most Dearely-loved Friend Henery Reynolds Esquire: Of Poets and Poesie," 105-108.
3. Leigh Hunt, Imagination and Fancy, London, 1883, p. 122.
4. As You Like It, III, v, 80-81.
5. 2 Henry IV, II, iv, 176-182.
6. 2 Tamburlaine, IV, iv, 1-6, The Complete Plays of Christopher Marlowe, ed. Irving Ribner, New York, 1963. All subsequent references to the plays are to this edition.
7. Charles Lamb, The Works of Charles and Mary Lamb, ed. E.V. Lucas, London, 1903, I, p. 42.
8. William Hazlitt, The Complete Works of William Hazlitt, ed. P.P. Howe, London, 1931, VI, p. 202.
9. Hunt, op. cit., p. 121.
10. Hippolyte Taine, History of English Literature, trans. Henry Van Laun, New York, 1900, I, 282-3.
11. Havelock Ellis, "Christopher Marlowe," Christopher Marlowe, London, 1887, p. xlviii.
12. Ibid., p. xxxiv.
13. Mentioned by Irving Ribner in "Marlowe and the Critics," Tulane Drama Review, VIII (Summer, 1964), p. 215. For further information, see Adams, J. Q. "The Massacre at Paris Leaf." Library, XIV, 1934; and Van Dam, B. A. P. "The Collier Leaf (of Massacre at Paris)." English Studies, XVI, 1934.
14. Una Ellis-Fermor, Christopher Marlowe, London, 1927, p. 137.
15. Ibid., pp. 63-64.
16. Paul H. Kocher, Christopher Marlowe, A Study of his Thought, Learning, and Character, New York, 1962, p. 115.
17. Michel Poirier, Christopher Marlowe, London, 1951, p. 70.

18. Roy Battenhouse, Marlowe's Tamburlaine: A Study in Renaissance Moral Philosophy, Nashville, 1964, p. 17.
19. Harry Levin, The Overreacher, Boston, 1964, p. xi.
20. M.M. Mahood, Poetry and Humanism, London, 1950, p. 54.
21. Loc. cit.
22. Douglas Cole, Suffering and Evil in the Plays of Christopher Marlowe, Princeton, 1962, p. 187.
23. David M. Bevington, From Mankind to Marlowe, Cambridge, Mass., 1962, p. 244.

Chapter II:

1. "Walter Hilton, In Defence of Images, quoted by Owst in Literature and Pulpit, etc., iii, from an unpublished MS." cited in A.P. Rossiter, English Drama from Early Times to the Elizabethans, London, 1950, p. 79.
2. Willard Farnham, The Medieval Heritage of Elizabethan Tragedy, Oxford, 1956, passim.
3. Geoffrey Chaucer, "The Monk's Tale," Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, ed. F.N. Robinson, Boston, 1957, text VII, 1991-8.
4. Rossiter, op. cit., p. 96.
5. Thomas Marc Parrott and Robert Hamilton Ball, A Short View of Elizabethan Drama, New York, 1958, p. 17.
6. Ibid., p. 19.
7. Everyman, 25-27, in Chief Pre-Shakespearean Dramas, ed. Joseph Quincy Adams, Boston, 1924.
8. Ibid., 870-873.
9. Mankind, 189-191, ed. Adams, op. cit.
10. Ibid., 518-21.
11. The Castle of Perseverance, 205-8, ed. Adams, op. cit.
12. Ibid., 331-4.
13. Ibid., 385-8.
14. Ibid., 2785-91.
15. Bevington, op. cit., 196-7.

16. Ibid., p. 197

Chapter III:

1. It is possible to see a situation similar to this in Hickscorner where on their first appearances, Freewill and Imagination, both of whom eventually repent, are thoroughly sunk in evil and under the influence of Hickscorner.
2. Bevington, op. cit., p. 244.
3. Other examples of this theme given similar development occur in Wisdom, The Castle of Perseverance, Mundus et Infans, Mary Magdalene, and Magnificence. It is also present in a less obvious way in Hickscorner and Wit and Science. Mankind, however, is probably the best example because it presents the theme in its most basic and complete form.
4. Similar patterns of despair resulting in a wish for death and the contemplation of suicide are found in the characters of Age in Mundus et Infans, Philologus in The Conflict of Conscience, Xantippe in Nice Wanton, and Magnificence in Magnificence.
5. Bevington, op. cit., p. 159.
6. While the mutability theme is present in virtually all morality plays, it is this pattern of development that gives the theme central importance. Similar patterns of development occur in The Pride of Life, The Conflict of Conscience, and The Longer Thou Livest the More Fool Thou Art. There are also similarities in Like Will to Like, Everyman, and Magnificence.
7. Compare Kent's remarks with the following speech by Contentation:
 It is true, and therefore a mind well content,
 Is great riches as wise Salomon doth say:
 For we have seen of late dayes this canker pestilent
 Corrupting our Realme to our utter decay.
 Ambition I mene which cheefly doth reign,
 Amongst those who should have been example to other:
 (W. Wager, Enough is as Good as a Feast,
 sig. Blv.)
8. In Enough is as Good as a Feast, the Worldly Man exults in his wealth in a similar manner:
 Oh policy, how glorious my buildings do shine;
 No gentlemans in this contrey like unto mine.
 Sira what shall I do; I must make by barnes more great:
 For I have not rowme inough to lay in my Rye and whete.
 (Enough is as good as a Feast, sig. E4v.)

9. Bevington, op. cit., p. 235.
10. Ibid., p. 236.
11. Loc. cit.
12. Other critics have had little to say about the structure of the play. Kocher, Ellis-Fermor, and Levin do not deal with it at all. Cole indicates that thematically Edward II is a de casibus tragedy, but does not deal with its actual structure. Poirier, however, does recognize that there are two main plots, the Edward story and the Mortimer-Isabella story. He mentions the swiftness of movement in the play and its compression of time and regards it as well-constructed with a tight, logical plot, although repetitious in places and occasionally lacking in proportion. (Poirier, op. cit., 173-178.)
13. Bevington, op. cit., p. 243.
14. Other critics have taken different views of Edward. Ellis-Fermor regards him as essentially frivolous without any sense of responsibility or proportion and without any sense of the power and duty of his kingship. She sees in him a streak of violence which brings about his fall, after which his violent passions are subdued into simple dignity and courtesy. (Ellis-Fermor, op. cit., 110-118.) Kocher sees Edward as embodying the amorous side of Tamburlaine without the ambition. Edward is essentially a weak man, but monomaniacal in his friendship in the manner of other Marlovian heroes. (Kocher, op. cit., 309-311.) Levin sees in Edward an exponent of libido sentiendi (the will to appetite) who does not seek power, but wants to enjoy it since he has it. His obsession with Gaveston extends through every level of his being and he is seen to be an esthete and a voluptuary rather than a military and political commander. (Levin, op. cit., 86-97.) Poirier regards Edward as ruled by emotion and liable at any moment to display a violent fit of anger or a real need for affection. He champions the divine right theory, but refuses to acknowledge any of its responsibilities. Edward lacks both intelligence and a sense of reality and these deficiencies lead to his fall, but once he has lost his power, he becomes a sympathetic character because of these same shortcomings. (Poirier, op. cit., 178-184.) Cole sees the king as an embodiment of suffering that results from his own weakness (and perhaps evil) and is hence basically ironic rather than pathetic. (Cole, op. cit., 161-187.)

15. Most morality plays that deal with the conflict of good and evil show the central figure becoming inherently rather than superficially evil after he has succumbed to vice. Examples of this include Mankind in The Castle of Perseverance, Freewill and Imagination in Hickscorner, Wit in Wit and Science, Mary in Mary Magdalene, Philologus in The Conflict of Conscience, Mind, Will, and Understanding in Wisdom, and Magnificence in Magnificence.
16. Other examples of Heavenly Man characters include Theologus and Eusebius in The Conflict of Conscience, the Queen in The Pride of Life, and Barnabas in Nice Wanton.
17. Other morality characters who are willing to sacrifice the good of those around them for their own gratification include, to a certain extent at least, Wit in Wit and Science, Mary in Mary Magdalene, and Magnificence in Magnificence.
18. Bevington, op. cit., p. 241.
19. The critics have taken a number of attitudes toward the character of Mortimer. Ellis-Fermor sees him as subtly handled in his relationship with the Queen up to the time of Edward's abdication and claims that he holds our sympathy almost to this point. Beyond this, he loses his impetuosity and is doomed to fail because he lacks imagination. He becomes, in fact, a dull Machiavellian. (Ellis-Fermor, op. cit., 119-120.) Kocher maintains that while Edward has been given the amorous side of Tamburlaine's nature, Mortimer has been given the ambitious side. He also observes that Mortimer is politically much more aware than any of Marlowe's earlier heroes. (Kocher, op. cit., 310, 202-208.) Levin regards Mortimer's character as ambiguous. He sees him as agreeable and hearty at the beginning of the play, but as becoming increasingly Machiavellian as the play progresses. He increases in hubris, but becomes stoical when he is toppled by Fortune. (Levin, op. cit., 98-102.) Poirier sees in Mortimer an embodiment of Machiavellianism who practises dissimulation, pretends he has not sought power, and practises the Machiavellian policy of pretending to religion, along with other Machiavellian devices. Poirier claims that Mortimer has no moral conscience. (Poirier, op. cit., 189-190.) Cole sees the driving force behind Mortimer as material ambition. He notes that Mortimer is cruel and audacious in the later scenes of the play and suggests that Marlowe intended this to show the corrupting influence of power. Mortimer's pride is noted and Cole maintains that his ambition is one of the forces that creates the cruelty in the universe of the play. (Cole, op. cit., 255-257, 161-187.)

20. Virtuous consellers are numerous in morality plays, but a few notable examples include Instruction in Wit and Science, Wisdom in Wisdom, Measure in Magnificence, and the Good Angel in The Castle of Perseverance.
21. Other examples of Worldly Man figures include Philologus in The Conflict of Conscience; Tom Tossopot, Ralph Roister, Hance, Philip Fleming, Cuthbert Cutpurse, and Pierce Pickpurse in Like Will to Like; Moros in The Longer Thou Livest the More Fool Thou Art; the King in The Pride of Life; and Ismael and Dalilah in Nice Wanton.
22. Bevington, op. cit., 239-240.
23. Ibid., p. 241.
24. Most of the other critics have noticed the ambiguity in Isabella's character. Ellis-Fermor says that since Isabella is attached to Mortimer, our sympathies for her follow much the same line as our sympathies for him. We sympathize until the murder of the king is planned, and then Isabella and Mortimer become partners in crime. The dignity attached to the Queen's wrongs is lost and she simply becomes Mortimer's tool. (Ellis-Fermor, op. cit., 119-120.) Kocher regards the Queen as the determining factor in the audience's sympathy. This sympathy could go either toward Edward or toward the nobles until the Queen is wronged. From this point on, we sympathize with her until she takes Mortimer for her lover. (Kocher, op. cit., 204-205.) Levin sees the Queen as a split personality. At this point in the history of the theatre, characterization of women was largely undeveloped, but Isabella is more alive than Zenocrate or Helen. She is both shrew and long-suffering wife, and the transition from the latter to the former is very abrupt. (Levin, op. cit., 98.) Poirier sees in her a clumsiness typical of Marlowe's delineation of minor characters. She is a puppet, ready to do anything for Edward at the beginning of the play, but she suddenly turns around to devote herself to Mortimer, without any awareness of her inconsistency. (Poirier, op. cit., 184-185.) Cole sees in the story of the Queen the fact that sympathy shifts away from her. Her alliance with Mortimer causes the audience to react to her as they do to him. She is the one who hints that the king should be liquidated, while at the same time she dissembles in the messages she sends to him. Thus, the Queen, along with Mortimer, embodies the evil in the universe of this play. (Cole, op. cit., 161-187.)
25. Such a figure appears in Magnificence in the person of Measure. The fates of this character and of Kent are

similar in that they both attempt to influence the king and are eventually banished from his presence, but return to support him later.

26. Vice figures are common in morality plays. Examples include Hypocrisy in The Conflict of Conscience, Nichol Newfangle in Like Will to Like, Iniquity in Nice Wanton, Folly in Mundus et Infans, and perhaps Hickscorner in Hickscorner.
27. This occurs in The Castle of Perseverance in the various attacks on the castle by the vice figures; in Hickscorner when Imagination, Freewill, and Hickscorner insult Pity (Hickscorner, Dodsley's Old English Plays, New York, 1964, I, 169-173.); in Wit and Science when Idleness insults Honest Recreation (Wit and Science, ed. Adams, op. cit., 355-385.); and in Nice Wanton when Ismael and Dalilah mock Barnabas (Nice Wanton, Dodsley's Old English Plays, New York, 1964, II, 164-165.)
28. Assistant vices in morality plays include Tyranny and Avarice in The Conflict of Conscience and all of the figures of corruption in Magnificence.
29. Levin, op. cit., p. 101.
30. Death appears on stage in such plays as Everyman and The Castle of Perseverance. There are also indications in the fragment that we have of The Pride of Life that Death appears somewhere in the lost portion of that play as well.
31. Examples of this type include Enough is as Good as a Feast, Mundus et Infans, The Castle of Perseverance, Wit and Science, Everyman, The Longer Thou Livest the More Fool Thou Art, Wisdom, The Pride of Life, and Nice Wanton. This structure is also present in a less obvious form in Mankind and Mary Magdalene.
32. Examples of this type include Hickscorner, The Conflict of Conscience, Like Will to Like, and Magnificence.
33. Bevington, op. cit., 236-238.
34. This occurs in a number of plays including Mundus et Infans, Hickscorner, and The Longer Thou Livest the More Fool Thou Art.

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