8495

DATE ___ February 26, _____ 1962

James George Tulip
_____
Author   Birth Date

RICHARD III: A STUDY OF THE ELIZABETHAN VILLAIN-HERO
_____
Title of Dissertation

English Lang. and Lit.   Ph. D.   March, 1962
_____
Department or School   Degree   Convocation

Permission is herewith granted to the University of Chicago to make copies of the above title, at its discretion, upon the request of individuals or institutions and at their expense.

MAR. 2, 1962   _James G. Tulip_
Date filmed   Number of pages   Signature of writer

Extensive Quotation or Further Reproduction of This Material by Persons or Agencies Other than the University of Chicago May Not Be Made without the Express Permission of the Writer.

SHORT TITLE: _____

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

RICHARD III: A STUDY OF THE ELIZABETHAN VILLAIN-HERO

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO

THE FACULTY OF THE DIVISION OF THE HUMANITIES

IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

BY

JAMES GEORGE TULIP

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

MARCH, 1962

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

PROBLEMS OF CRITICAL METHOD

The "glorious" villains of the Elizabethan stage have long suffered

from being their own, and almost only, expositors. For when a Richard, a

Barabas, a Volpone, an Iago goes out of his way to announce that he is a vil-

lain, it is all too easy to accept such statements at their face value and

conclude from them that we are dealing with a simple, melodramatic character

of a certain type and that we can add nothing to the analysis of his nature

that he has not already, and so gratuitously, provided. In doing this, how-

ever, our villain is his own worst enemy; for criticism never seems to enjoy

an easy problem, a fact which underlies the disproportionate amount of atten-

tion given to <u>Hamlet</u> in comparison with perhaps its greatest rival for popular

favor on the English stage, <u>Richard III</u>.[1]

Now this is an unfortunate situation in at least three respects. The

first is the simple fact that these villains <u>are</u> "glorious"; once used, the

epithet has remained, in spite of its lack of articulation, the most convinc-

ing term that criticism has been able to find to describe their dramaturgic

qualities. Intuitive judgment, it would therefore seem, has left the more

discursive and systematic forms of criticism well behind in this regard, and

it is one of the principal concerns of this study to close the gap.

---

[1]See C. J. Sisson (ed.), <u>William Shakespeare The Complete Works</u> (New
York, 1953), p. 685; see also, as the most recent account of the fortunes of
this play on the English stage, C. B. Young's "The Stage-History of <u>Richard III</u>"
in the Introduction to J. Dover Wilson (ed.), <u>Richard III</u> (Cambridge, 1954),
pp. xlvi-lxi.

The second unfortunate aspect of this situation relates to the issue of literary history and arises from the fact that the boundaries of species in Elizabethan drama are by no means clear and from the fact that villain-hero drama has suffered from this confusion to an extreme degree. For, as often as this form has found expression in serious drama, it has been included under the category of "tragedy," a fact that has distorted the real difference in structural principles between the two kinds of drama and generally to the detriment of the villain-hero. The cause of literary history also suffers in this respect in that the number of villain-hero plays in Elizabethan drama is not inconsiderable. Contemporary theory also bears witness to their significance for literary history: for the Elizabethans themselves, Sidney and Puttenham in particular, thought of tragedy not in terms of the Shakespearean pattern that modern criticism assumes to be normative, but in terms of a more punitive pattern; the punishment of a tyrant and the moral lesson of just retribution for crime to be drawn from such a dramatic presentation was more the historical Elizabethan norm for a tragic action.[1] Literary history may therefore be said to have been led astray in this respect by the genius of Shakespeare to give a picture of Elizabethan drama that is more qualitative than historical. That Shakespeare is pre-eminent is an issue for critics to deal with; but that he was the exception to a very large rule is the proper point of departure for literary historians.

---

[1]Thomas Nashe, for example, thought the value of tragedies lay in the fact that "they shew the ill successe of treason, the fall of hastie climbers, the wretched end of vsurpers, the miserie of civill dissention, and how just God is euermore in punishing of murther . . . for no Play they haue, encourageth any man to tumults or rebellion, but layes before such the halter and the gallowes; or praiseth or approueth pride, lust, whoredome, prodigalitie, or drunkennes, but beates them downe vtterly." The Works of Thomas Nashe, ed. Ronald B. McKerrow (London, 1904), I, 213-14. See also George Puttenham, The Arte of English Poesie, ed. Gladys Willcock and Alice Walker (Cambridge, 1936), pp. 33, 35; and for Sir Philip Sidney's assertion on tragedy, see G. Gregory Smith (ed), Elizabethan Critical Essays (Oxford, 1937), I, 177.

But criticism itself has also suffered from these qualitative and normative assumptions concerning Elizabethan drama, and this is the third unfortunate issue for the villain-hero. The fact that The Jew of Malta and Richard III were among the most popular of all plays in their own day and the fact that Richard III has successfully held its place on the stage ever since, these are truths that most critics either simply do not acknowledge or do so in the manner of Dr. Johnson when he said of Richard III: "This is one of the most celebrated of our author's performances, yet I know not whether it has not happened to him as to others, to be praised most when praise is not most deserved."[1] Criticism, in short, is embarrassed for want of a method of mastering the Elizabethan villain-hero and to conceal this embarrassment affects an air of disdain or, at its most charitable, mystification.

Of these three aspects to the villain-hero's plight in the modern world, it is primarily the third that will receive the attention of this present study; for in clarifying and resolving this issue certain principles must necessarily emerge which will in turn have their practical applications for literary history and taste. But to clarify the issue of criticism we will need first of all to see that the problem is not simply one of method but also one of the nature of the subject on which this method is to be used. As a result, the critique of villain-hero drama that is to be presented in this study may be understood to be determined by two general points of reference and to be a function of both--the method and the subject.

The first step in terms of method is implicit in the above discussion; for if villain-hero drama suffers from being judged according to the principles of tragedy, then the first step must involve a differentiation between the two species. The next step also is implicit in the above discussion in that a

---

[1] Quoted in Sisson, op. cit., p. 685.

certain kind of dramatic character has been assumed to be the distinctive element of this species; it must therefore be shown in what sense this is true. It is at this point that the issue of the nature of the subject will become of great importance to this study; for it will be shown that the essence of the kind of character that distinguishes this species of the villain-hero can only be apprehended through the historical tradition from which this character sprang, the tradition of the Devils and Vices of the native English stage.

But granted these stages in our argument, we will find that we are confronted with another kind of problem when we turn to the question of form in Richard III, the play we have postulated as the exemplar of its species. For here the issue of its subject matter and its derivation from the historical material of the Chronicles poses the problem as to how far the play's sources determine its form. This being so, it will therefore be necessary to examine in principle and in detail the relationship of narrative and dramatic structures with specific reference to Richard III. With this done, it will then be possible to revert to what is the central problem of this study, the problem of dramatic form in the villain-hero species.

The result of formulating the problem in this way is that the greater part of this study will revolve around the issue of the one play, Richard III. That is to say, it is to be essentially a critical study, which is historical only insofar as history is the necessary means to its ends; as such, it is not intended to be a literary history, surveying all forms of the species. It will be found, however, that two other plays, The Jew of Malta and Volpone, can most usefully be discussed in terms of the theory, traditions, and structure of Richard III. All three plays are alike in having a villain as a hero; all three, however, are quite different in terms of the contexts in which they place their villain-heroes. Thus it will ultimately be possible to approach

the problem of the total species from three radical points of reference and in this way suggest what are the most probable principles of its aesthetic.

This, then, is the problem and the proposal for its solution. What must be done now is to clarify and to elaborate upon the assumptions that went to its formulation. To do this, we need first to illustrate how this present approach differs from other methods of analysis that have been brought to bear upon the subject; in this we will see that the several kinds of dialectic used by scholars and critics are in themselves the reflections of what those who employ them consider to be the essential formal element or elements of the dramatic form.

The postulate of a distinct species of plays with <u>Richard III</u> as their exemplar rests upon a concept of plot and a concept of character. The plot with which the villain-hero play is most commonly confused is that of tragedy, and yet the distinction between the two is both simple and clear. For the tragic hero suffers in his catastrophe more than he deserves, while the villain-hero suffers only what he deserves. Thus the punishment of Lear as compared to that of Richard is excessive and produces in the spectator a completely distinct set of emotions from those which the spectator feels on seeing Richard brought to justice at last. And this concept of a "punitive" plot for <u>Richard III</u> is one that describes a general formal difference in the kinds of serious drama of the Elizabethan theatre. For, as asserted earlier, the tragedies of Shakespeare are really the exception to th ... of Elizabethan drama and theory; and no historian can give a true picture of the theatre for the period before 1600 in particular without coming to grips with the precept and practice of the "punitive" form.

This position has been recently advanced by Mr. R. L. Levin in his dissertation, "The Punitive Plot in Elizabethan Drama," the thesis of which consists

of an attack on "the unitary conception of tragedy" and an attempt to describe in theory and historical evolution what he maintains to be the distinct form and species of "punitive" drama.[1] We will be discussing this approach in detail at a later stage of this chapter, but at this point it will suffice to say that the present study agrees with Levin in his concept of plot and disagrees with him in his concept of character. That is to say, we agree with him in his description of the moral nature of just deserts in the "punitive" resolution, but disagree with respect to the kind of character involved in this catastrophe in that the villain-hero is a much more exclusive figure than the protagonist whom Levin has in mind. For example, Levin sees The Changeling and Beatrice its protagonist as the best representatives of his "punitive" species; yet the relation between this play and Macbeth, which Levin concedes after a strenuous analysis to be tragedy, is surely much closer than that between either of these two plays and Richard III. The character of Richard is the point of differentiation: he is the villain-hero; Macbeth the hero-villain; and Beatrice the heroine-villain. In Richard, heroism is essentially an attribute and predicate of villainy; in Macbeth and Beatrice, as with Marlowe's Faustus, the reverse is truer.

This issue of a specific moral nature in Richard is also given emphasis by the fact that his character subscribes to a clear dramaturgic convention in the Elizabethan presentation of villains; such elements in his presentation as the opening monologue of self-discovery, his direct address to the audience, his inordinate delight in villainy and mischief, the bravado of his exit, and his general versatility as distinct from the tragic protagonist's variety--all these are the conventional elements of a stage character to be found both

---

[1]R. L. Levin, "The Punitive Plot in Elizabethan Drama" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1957).

before and after Shakespeare in the theatre. Such a description as this will also explain why it is that Richard is at odds with criticism generally; for the most common kind of character analysis in English criticism has traditionally assumed as its subject the _individualized_ character; and since Richard, in spite of his apparent versatility, is essentially specific in his nature, he has had to suffer from being judged according to criteria other than his own. Thus, with respect to the general problem of the nature of the subject, together with its categories of species, tradition, plot, and character, the present study finds the current state of affairs in scholarship and criticism unsatisfactory; and assuming part of Levin's differential method while making it more exclusive in species and more inclusive in tradition, it will attempt to describe the total forms of those plays which comprise the focal points of achievement in the villain-hero pattern.

This concept of total form, furthermore, is a crucial issue in the present method, and in clarifying what we mean by it we are provided with a useful point of entry into the achievements of scholarship on the subject of the villain-hero; for it is on this issue that the present study differs most sharply from previous approaches to the subject of the villain-hero. In its most general terms, our present objection is to those forms of criticism which isolate for analysis some particular aspect of structure and from it and it alone infer the nature of the total form. Thus we will find critiques of plot, of character, of theme, and of diction--each as an entity in itself, and, as often as not, part of a larger inquiry into this same aspect of structure for a playwright's canon as a whole, thereby making the efficient cause, rather than the formal, the principle of unity. Shakespeare's characters, his philosophy, and his use of language have all received attention in and for themselves with an evolutionary pattern frequently being assumed that reflects the life

of the author. One result of this is that in studies of character, or of diction, Richard III invariably suffers from comparison with the later works of Shakespeare; whereas, from our point of view with its concern for this play as a total and unique formal entity, it will be shown that in spite of their apparent artificiality and simplicity both the character of Richard and the diction of the play observe the mutual and necessary decorum one to the other. In this way, we are therefore attempting a form of analysis of the play as it exists dramaturgically, with all of its elements integral and organic, and in the existential moment of its effect. Now the corollary of this emphasis on the unity of the play will be a diminution of emphasis and interest in those parts of it which do not relate to this unity; and in the case of Richard III we will find it necessary to distinguish carefully just what the essential dramaturgic elements are, lest we be led away from the central action of the play and the mystery of its achievement. For this, we believe, has been the fate of those critiques to which we must now turn.

Critical systems, as noted above, may be described as a function of the nature of their subjects and the kind of dialectic brought to bear upon these subjects: and since, as we have also already observed, criticism commonly isolates some particular element of form as its subject, it is therefore possible to describe three major patterns in the history of critical approaches to villain-hero drama and to Richard III specifically. Thus we may now consider the respective approaches to character, theme, and plot.

The order in which we will treat these three critical approaches deserves some mention first of all; for the sequence is a deliberate one and is meant to reflect both the chronological order of their appearance and the distinctive mode of reasoning used by each. Admittedly, there is some oversimplification here, but it nevertheless seems generally true to say that

English criticism has evolved from the intuitive judgments on character to the consideration of theme in the light of historical research and thence to a theoretic approach to plot. Thus we have a long tradition of character analysis extending from the late eighteenth century to the twentieth, a tradition which the Variorum editor of Richard III has brought together by extensive but selective quotation in an Appendix; then there is the more recent thematic approach to be found in the work of Tillyard and Ribner, which has grown out of their historical research into the background of Elizabethan philosophy and historiography; and then, finally and most recently, we have the interest in plot as exemplified by Levin together with its corollary interest in dramatic species, an approach which may generally be said to have grown out of a reconsideration of the specific powers and limitations of Aristotelian theory for contemporary poetics.[1]

Concerning the character of Richard, first of all, there is an irony in the fact that of all the studies devoted to this subject the first still remains the best, viz., Remarks on Some of the Characters of Shakespeare by Thomas Whately, published posthumously in 1785.[2] This study, considerably in advance of its time, is remarkable not only for its insights but for the way it formulated the problem as well. For Whately, in seeking to establish "the genius of Shakespeare," chose to do so by showing "his excellence in distinguishing characters," and in order to display this skill at its finest point, he elected to discuss two related characters, Richard III and Macbeth, in comparison with whom, he argues, no other Shakespearean characters "seem to agree

---

[1]Variorum Shakespeare: Richard the Third, ed. H. H. Furness (Philadelphia, 1908), pp. 549-72, hereafter termed Variorum; E. M. W. Tillyard, Shakespeare's History Plays (New York, 1947); Irving Ribner, The English History Play in the Age of Shakespeare (Princeton, 1957); Levin, op. cit.; see also C. V. Boyer, The Villain as Hero in Elizabethan Tragedy (London, 1914).

[2]Selections as quoted in Variorum, pp. 549-55.

so much in situation, and to differ so much in disposition."[1] Now this dis-

tinction lies at the heart of our present distinction in species between trag-

edy and villain-hero drama; and, what is more, it provides Whately with a

foundation on which he is able to build up a consistent formal analysis of the

two plays. We need, therefore, to see to what degree he takes these two issues

of species and formal analysis.

There is an apparent resemblance, Whately first observes, that masks

the real source of character:

> Both are soldiers, both usurpers; both attain the throne by the same means,
> by treason and murder; and both lose it too in the same manner, in battle
> against a person claiming it as lawful heir. Perfidy, violence, and tyr-
> anny are common to both; and those only, their obvious qualities, would
> have been attributed indiscriminately to both by an ordinary dramatic writer.
> But Shakespeare . . . has ascribed opposite principles and motives to the
> same designs and actions, and various effects to the operations of the same
> events upon different tempers. Richard and Macbeth, as represented by him,
> agree in nothing but their fortunes.[2]

Whately then proceeds to analyze these differences, making use of a neat dis-

tinction between the "disposition" and "symptoms" of character:

> The first thought of acceding to the throne is suggested and success in the
> attempt is promised, to Macbeth by the witches: he is, therefore, repre-
> sented as a man, whose natural temper would have deterred him from such a
> design, if he had not been immediately tempted, and strongly impelled to it.
> Richard, on the other hand, brought with him into the world the signs of
> ambition and cruelty: his disposition, therefore, is suited to those symp-
> toms; and he is not discouraged from indulging it by the improbability of
> succeeding, or by any difficulties and dangers which obstruct his way.[3]

In the particulars of their characters Richard is furthermore "the very reverse

of Macbeth"; he displays, as Whately notes,

> . . . a natural propensity to evil; crimes are his delight: but Macbeth is
> always in agony when he thinks of them. . . . An extraordinary gaiety of
> heart shows itself upon those occasions, which to Macbeth seem most awful.[4]

And even when they seem most alike, there are yet essential differences in their

respective compositions:

---

[1]Ibid., p. 549. [2]Ibid., pp. 549-50.

[3]Ibid., p. 550. [4]Ibid., p. 551.

. . . the characters of Richard and Macbeth are marked not only by opposite qualities, but even the same qualities, in each, differ so much in the cause, the kind, and the degree, that the distinction in them is as evident as in the others. Ambition is common to both; but in Macbeth it proceeds only from vanity, which is flattered and satisfied by the splendour of a throne: in Richard it is founded upon pride; his ruling passion is the lust of power, . . . he hardly ever mentions the crown except in swelling terms of exultation; and, even after he has obtained it, he calls it 'the high imperial type of this world's glory.' But the crown is not Macbeth's pursuit through life: he had never thought of it till it was suggested to him by the witches; he receives their promise and the subsequent earnest of the truth of it, with calmness. His wife complains of his moderation; the utmost merit she can allow him is that he is 'not without ambition'; but it is cold and faint, for the subject of it is that of a weak mind; it is only pre-eminence of place, not dominion. . . . He later styles himself, 'High-plac'd Macbeth,' but in no other way does he ever contemplate his advancement with satisfaction; and when he finds that it is not attended with that adulation and respect which he had promised himself, and which would have soothed his vanity, he sinks under the disappointment, and complains that: '--that which should accompany old age As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends I must not look to have.' These blessings, so desirable to him, are widely different from the pursuits of Richard. He wishes not to gain the affections, but to secure the submission of his subjects, and is happy to see men shrink under his control. But Macbeth, on the contrary, reckons among the miseries of his condition, 'Mouth-honour, breath, Which the poor heart would fain deny, but dares not,' and pities the wretch who fears him.[1]

And from such general characteristics as "the towering ambition of Richard, and the weakness of that passion in Macbeth," Whately infers that "The necessity for the most extraordinary incitements to stimulate the latter becomes apparent; and the meaning of the omens, which attended the birth of the former is explained."[2]

Now this is essentially a sense of the formal function of character, and we may see this further when Whately goes on finally to speak of the "courage" that they both possessed:

. . . in Richard it is intrepidity, and in Macbeth no more than resolution: in him it proceeds from exertion not from nature; in enterprise he betrays a degree of fear, though he is able, when occasion requires, to stifle and subdue it. . . . Nothing can be conceived more directly opposite to the agitations of Macbeth's mind than the serenity of Richard in parallel circumstances.[3]

The issue at stake here is the simple one of the interrelation of character

---

[1] Ibid., pp. 552-53.　　　[2] Ibid., p. 553.　　　[3] Ibid.

and plot. That is to say, Whately is sensitive to the changes in character which the plot brings about as it develops; he also shows an awareness of this relation in reverse, of character causing the plot to change. Where his position, however, is unsatisfactory is in the degree to which he presses this interaction; for his principle of analysis, in abstracting from the total play a single element as though it could be examined purely by itself, prevents his view from being sufficiently comprehensive. Thus we may see that his observations are based on a limited selection of material: the Richard and the Macbeth he addresses himself to are to be found primarily in the rising actions of their respective plots. In this respect, the two characters, in spite of their respective versatility and variety, do answer to Whately's clear distinctions; but after the point of reversal in each play, when Richard has his moments of confusion and Macbeth, to use T. S. Eliot's phrase, reveals his "habituation to crime," the two characters undergo such subtle changes that Whately's argument from principles of character simply fails to describe them. Nor does Whately attempt to face up to what is perhaps the most striking of the parallels between the two characters, the similarity of their exits: Richard's cry, "A horse, a horse," and Macbeth's "Lay on Macduff" are virtually two forms of the same statement, and how it should have happened that these two characters, who began so differently, should end so similarly is one of the most pertinent questions that any formal analysis of character in the two plays has to solve. Finally, it should be noted that Whately never attempts to develop the implications of his distinctions: he does not see the possibility of there being a more basic distinction behind his distinctions in character, a distinction in species; nor does he see that this distinction in its turn is a measure of the difference between the old theatrical tradition from which Richard's stage personality came and the new concept of the individualized character which Marlowe initiated and Shakespeare consolidated on the

Elizabethan stage. The only intervening agency between the Richard and the Macbeth of the Chronicle sources for Whately is Shakespeare himself; for the present study an intermediary agency is of prime importance in Shakespeare's creation of Richard. This was, as we shall subsequently see, the native tradition of the English drama before Shakespeare and specifically the figure of the Morality Vice; for it was here that Shakespeare found the generic pattern of his play, recreating it in terms of the particular material from his historical sources.

We need, nonetheless, to pay tribute to Whately for taking the issue as far as he did; and as a measure of his acumen we need only note the controversy which sprang up around his study in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and observe how in the work of such critics as Richardson, Kemble, and Cumberland the issue of relative value entered the debate over Richard and Macbeth, thereby distorting the controlled premise of Whately's inquiry into Shakespeare's genius in "distinguishing characters."[1] As an illustration of this trend, and since it may be said to represent what is still the most widespread opinion on this Richard-Macbeth issue, we may quote the judgment of Richard Cumberland:

> It is manifest that there is an essential difference in the development of these characters [Richard the Third and Macbeth], and that in favour of Macbeth: in his soul cruelty seems to dawn, it breaks out with faint glimmerings, like a winter morning, and gathers strength by slow degrees: in Richard it flames forth at once, mounting like the sun between the tropics, and enters boldly on its career without a herald. As the character of Macbeth has a moral advantage in this distinction, so has the drama of that name a much more interesting and affecting cast: the struggles of a soul, naturally virtuous, whilst it holds the guilty impulse of ambition at bay, affords the noblest theme for the drama . . .[2]

The only value of a judgment such as this is a rhetorical one: for Shakespeare was obviously not trying to represent "the struggle of a soul naturally

---

[1]Ibid., pp. 555-61.　　　[2]Ibid., p. 557.

virtuous" in Richard; on the contrary, he was seeking to make credible and exploit the dramaturgic qualities of a demonic nature in his protagonist, and this involves a quite distinct set of critical and aesthetic problems from those surrounding Macbeth. Hence all critical comparisons which cross the boundaries of species, and especially those with assumptions of value, need to be considered irrelevant for the present purposes of formal analysis.

The study of character, as a distinct critical system, is, however, not fully represented by the works mentioned above; for in Bernard Spivack's Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil, we have a recent and extensive analysis that is highly relevant to our present concern in that it postulates a distinct species of character, and in that it is cognizant of the historical researches of modern scholarship. Professor Spivack is, furthermore, aware of the new position he is taking up in the tradition of character analysis, and hence sets out in his opening chapter to formulate the nature of his break with tradition.

The difference in his approach is determined essentially by the nature of his subject, which, like the present subject, is the Elizabethan villain. The problem, as he saw it, was to get out from under the schema of character analyses whose subject lay in the individualized character, a problem he finds best illustrated in the confusion surrounding that most subtly particularized of all Elizabethan villains, Iago. To make this point, Spivack takes two quite distinct approaches--the literal and the psychological, as represented respectively in the work of Kittridge and Bradley--and describes how each misses its mark, the one by not being able to go far enough and the other by going too far.[1]

Literalism, as a form of critical inquiry, assumes a simple cause-effect relation; but, as Spivack argues, Iago himself makes mock of his own

---

[1]Bernard Spivack, Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil (New York, 1958), pp. 3-27.

motivation by the "ambiguity resident within the language of the motives them-
selves," by his "close mating of a specific provocation with a generalized anu
vague, but impelling, animosity," and by the "literal and formal frivolity" of
his own introspection. The motives of Iago, Spivack concludes, are "such . . .
as a dramatist might employ to refashion into tragic naturalism a stock figure
out of an archaic dramatic convention that had no use for the conventional in-
citements of human life." Given such a character, his motivation finds expres-
sion in and as a superfluity of causes.[1]

Spivack presses this further in postulating a "profound disjunction of
mood" between the apparent and the real Iago. His apparent passions with their
specific causes have no more than a nominal existence: for behind this crea-
ture who says he hates and he loves there is another creature, one given over
to "leaping jubilation and sardonic mirth," and to a "monolithic passion of
laughter"; it is this generalized, absolute, and unrelated passion that de-
fines the real Iago. "He grows," Spivack observes, "more vivid as he discards
the human garments to which literal criticism clings in its baffled effort to
comprehend him."[2]

This distinction in the being of Iago finds support in Iago's own words:
for he identifies himself with the demonic. "Hell" to him is a metaphor of
substance, and not some empty and rhetorical referent; he takes delight in
drawing the veil from before his eyes to display "Knavery's plain face" leering
out at the modern spectator, who can be caught unawares and mystified by "a
partially concealed order of motivation," as Spivack puts it, "we no longer
recognize, the logic and energy of which elude us."[3] This assumption of a
generic rather than an internally individualized character must therefore be
the starting point in any analysis of an Elizabethan villain.

---

[1]_Ibid._, pp. 7-10.　　　　[2]_Ibid._, p. 21.　　　　[3]_Ibid._, p. 23.

Nor is this answer that Spivack gives to the literal approach the same thing as its opposite in Coleridge and Bradley; that is to say, it does not need to postulate Iago's real source of reference as being outside the play itself. Spivack's postulate, on the contrary, seems quite literal in comparison with these psychological readings of the ultra-Iago, where the apparent confusion of his literal presence is rationalized as "the searching for justification of an uneasy conscience," or "the motive hunting of a motiveless malignity."[1] This latter position has also long been the object of attack on the part of such critics of "function" as Professors Shucking and Stoll, the latter having put the point of Spivack's concern very succinctly when he said of Iago: "Having motives, then, he acts as if he had them not."[2]

To propose this solution to the problem of Iago is not to adopt a middle of the road position between untenable extremes: it is more than a mere compromise of the abstract and the concrete. For it holds together as in a polarity what is generic and what is particular in Iago's nature; it allows that Iago in action creates for himself an illusion of the concrete, and yet it also proposes that this effect is in itself a game played by a character, well known and standardized on the English stage, who, in this instance, is performing to the rules of a Shakespeare. The problems of his achievement are, therefore, no more and no less than those of a virtuoso performance, the versatility of which is so dazzling in its particulars as to conceal from most of the audience the fact of its being an old routine.

Thus the character of the Elizabethan villain differs radically in its structure from that of the tragic protagonist, the usual subject of the critical analysis of character; and with Spivack's approach to the problem the present study may be said to be in general agreement, together with his attempt

---

[1]Ibid., pp. 24-27. [2]Ibid., p. 25.

to substantiate his thesis by appealing to the historical tradition of the native theatre before Shakespeare and in particular to the Vice of the Morality plays as Iago's progenitor. Where this study differs, however, from Spivack's is again over the issue of the relation of character to total form, and then in his terms of theory for describing the process of change from the Morality drama to that of the Elizabethans. This latter question may well wait for clarification until a later chapter; we need only say at this point that the terms "generic," "specific," and "particular" will be used here in preference to Spivack's "allegoric" and "naturalistic" to describe the stages of this evolutionary process. This change springs from the fact that the present study intends to propose an integral aesthetic for both villain-hero plays and their Morality precursors, and hence finds it desirable to describe these relationships in the formally abstract language of logical classification.

As for the issue of Spivack's concept of character, the same objection may be raised as with Whately and character criticism in general. For while it is true that the problems of <u>character as character</u> are much the same for Iago and Richard, yet the problems of <u>character in action</u> are not. That is to say, the problems of a villain-hero are not the same as those of a villain simple. Iago has but one dominant function in <u>Othello</u>; and as soon as this function is performed, his role for all significant purposes is over. In terms of function, therefore, he remains generally consistent throughout: he is the villain simple. But with a villain such as Richard, however, Shakespeare has the additional problem of making his decline just as dramatically signif-icant as his rise; that is, the villain hero has to observe and live through a change of fortune. Now whether Shakespeare succeeded in handling this problem is a moot point; but no analysis of Richard would be complete without acknowl-edging its existence. Thus we arrive at an even more limited definition of

the nature of our subject by this differentiation among villains themselves;
and while this distinction may not be as radical as the one between villain-
hero and hero-villain, as exemplified by Richard and Macbeth, it will none-
theless be important in defining the course of our ensuing analysis and in dis-
tinguishing it from other related analyses such as that of Spivack.

One final point, and by way of a transition to our next topic, needs
to be mentioned in connection with character criticism, and it springs from
the difference between Whately and Spivack within their common tradition. This
difference, in itself, is largely a measure of almost two centuries of scholar-
ship primarily historical and textual in nature; and thus it is now possible
by reference to factual and literal evidence to refute or to substantiate the
propositions advanced on the basis of intuition by critics such as Whately.
But as one of the corollaries of this historical method there has appeared in
recent years a desire to broaden the scope and the subject of scholarly in-
quiry. As a result, the material of drama has been expanded to include its
conceptual elements; and this, in the form of the history of ideas, has given
rise to a distinct discipline in its own right, and of which Tillyard and
Ribner, to mention two scholars who have written significantly on the present
subject, are among its most eminent practitioners. And largely as a result of
this development, in turn, there has appeared in even more recent years the
desire on the part of criticism to address itself to all of the elements of
drama and to provide a theory of its form. The point of departure for this
discipline has commonly been the issue of the extent and implications of
Aristotelian poetic theory for literature generally. Thus we have Levin's
analysis of the "punitive plot" as a serious attempt to differentiate kinds
of Elizabethan drama, an analysis which proposes a definition of a dramatic
species in which are to be found the villain-hero plays of our present concern.

Thematic criticism has as its central interest the apprehension of unity in variety; and although it is practiced more widely than our present inquiry might suggest, there is a special significance in the way it has developed in relation to what are called the History plays of the Elizabethan theatre. For it has been a common observation in the annals of criticism to depreciate the Elizabethan History play on the grounds of its heterogeneity of material and its instability of plot and character. It was this obstacle to the appreciation of these plays that scholars had to overcome, and to do so they approached the problem from two points of view. The first was by showing that within the plays themselves there was a definite sense of structure. Often, it was observed that this sense of structure took the form of a legacy of devices from the Morality tradition: thus a variety of "ritual" phenomena has been detected such as the formal presentation and deployment of characters in a given play together with a stylized diction using repetition and antiphony.[1] But to show how the elements of a History play could be explained historically was not a sufficient argument in their defense. It therefore remained for Tillyard to prove, specifically for the Shakespearean History cycles, that these plays did possess a unity and that this unity consisted of a philosophy of history and that this philosophy of history consisted of, what has since Tillyard's use of the phrase become known as, "the Tudor myth." The result of this was that these plays assumed a certain profundity as articles of religious, political, and social orthodoxy in a period when orthodoxy implied a complete ontological structure. Thus the History play was redeemed by being converted into a secular sermon.

How this approach concerns Richard III will become apparent when we

---

[1] A. P. Rossiter, "The Structure of Richard III," Durham University Journal, XXI (1938), 44-75; Tillyard, op. cit., pp. 208-209.

consider Tillyard's method of argument more closely; for essentially what we have here is a dialectic determining the subject matter, a fact that will appear most clearly when certain of Tillyard's corollary arguments relating specifically to <u>Richard III</u> are examined. In this way, we find the following deduction apropos this play:

> In spite of the eminence of Richard's character the main business of the play is to complete the national tetralogy and to display the working out of God's plan to restore England to prosperity.
> In its function of summing up and completing what has gone before, <u>Richard III</u> inevitably suffers as a detached unit. Indeed it is a confused affair without the memory of Clarence's perjury to Warwick before Coventry, or Queen Margaret's crowning York with a paper crown before stabbing him at Wakefield, and of the triple murder of Prince Edward at Tewkesbury. The play can never come into its own till acted as a sequel to the other three plays . . .[1]

Now this is quite true on the material and conceptual levels; it is, however, not true on the formal level. The simple evidence of the stage popularity of this play as a detached unit refutes Tillyard; and, we may note, it has been precisely those elements of the play which to Tillyard are crucial that have been most often omitted in the immediate interests of stage presentation.[2] This is to say no more than that <u>Richard III</u> has led an existence relatively abstracted from the uses of philosophy and history: its aesthetic pleasure has been found less in its expository material and the declamations of Queen Margaret than in the presence of Richard himself. The play, in its essential formal sense, is therefore a villain-hero play rather than a History play. This same objection may also be raised in connection with Ribner's elaborate attempt to construct a definition of the History play; for such is the heterogeneity of material that the critic is necessarily forced to posit the essence or unity of his subject as being outside or beyond the play's

---

[1]Tillyard, <u>op. cit.</u>, pp. 199-200.

[2]See Wilson, <u>op. cit.</u>, pp. xlviii-l.

form--in this case, the final cause or didactic purpose of the play.[1]

One further corollary of Tillyard's thesis concerning the providential plan of Shakespeare's Histories lies in the concept of Richard as a "scourge of God," a concept that has been taken up by Ribner also and given an emphasis that again distorts the formal nature of the play.[2] We do not deny that such an interpretation is possible, nor indeed that the total hypothesis of the "Tudor myth" is the most probable explanation in ethical and political terms of the thematic implications of the History cycles. But each interpretation is a measure of its own formulation of the problem, and our present objection to an exclusively thematic formulation is solely on these grounds; that is to say, we consider that in Tillyard's approach to Richard III the issue of form is made subservient to the issue of concept with the result that the play he examines is not the play as it is presented on the stage and as it has appealed to the audiences of almost four hundred years. For our reaction to Richard is hardly allegorical: we do not see him in the immediate moment of our experience as a "scourge of God." The degree and the spell of his evil subsumes the lesser sins of those around him, so that we see in the people he kills pathetic victims rather than justly punished sinners. Richard III admittedly follows on the Henry VI trilogy in its subject matter; there is, however, such a formal change in the presentation of character and the shaping of incident that generalizations made on the basis of the latter plays bear only a limited relation to the former. It is to the differences between the plays of the History cycles just as much to the similarities that formal criticism must therefore address itself.

Theme, as the present study will conceive it, is therefore both more literal and restrictive than the allegoric projections of Tillyard and Ribner;

---

[1]Ribner, op. cit., pp. 14-26.　　[2]Ibid., pp. 116-23.

and insofar as we will consider it separately it will take the form of the least generalization needed to describe the unity of the major action of the play. Thus we will postulate that the theme concerns the rise and fall of Richard himself as distinct from the fatalistic sententiae of the secondary characters; the statements of morality that come from Clarence, Margaret, Buckingham, and the others, as we will show, are part of a formal technique that derives from narrative structures, as distinct from dramatic ones, and in particular from the confused moral reference of The Mirror for Magistrates. The essential theme or moral for our play is then the simple one of the punishment of usurpation.

In turning next to the issue of plot, we need to observe that this approach first appeared by way of a reaction to Aristotle's concept of the tragic protagonist and in particular to his precept that the thoroughly wicked man should not be made the subject of tragedy. Professor S. H. Butcher, in an essay appended to his translation of Aristotle's Poetics, was the first to note the inadequacy of Aristotle's rules when applied to such a tragedy as Richard III. This was followed by the article of Professor Noyes, who, in discussing four types of tragedy classed as weak by Aristotle, questioned the soundness of Aristotle's definitions, and cited Richard III and Sejanus as successful tragedies representing "the fall of a bad man into adversity."[1]

These alleged deficiencies in Aristotle next led Professor C. V. Boyer to take up the whole question and treat it more extensively in his study, The Villain as Hero in Elizabethan Tragedy, a work which has remained up to the present day the only full-length published analysis of the issue. There exists, however, the dissertation already mentioned by R. L. Levin, and as this latter work amounts to an extensive and theoretic rejection of Boyer's

---

[1]Cited by Boyer, op. cit., p. 3.

position, the present study may benefit from a consideration of the contrast of the two approaches.

According to Levin, there is a basic assumption in Boyer's work that vitiates his whole analysis. This is what Levin has called "the unitary conception of tragedy," and by this he means the assumption that all serious plays involving the downfall of some important personage are tragedies without any differentiation according to the nature of the character involved. This is, of course, the basic point of dispute common to all four critics; where they differ is in the solution that each puts forward for the problem. The simplest solution, as given by Boyer and his two predecessors, is that the fault lies in Aristotle and the limitations of his definition. Levin, on the other hand, begins by acknowledging the limitations of Aristotle's definition, but then goes on to argue that these limitations are inherent in any logical structure and that since the definition as it stands does answer the needs of its given subject tragedy, what must be altered in the present problem is the notion of what constitutes the subject. He therefore proposes that what we are dealing with here is a species of drama distinct from that of tragedy, and then proceeds to define this new species and to describe its history on the Elizabethan stage.

Now on this issue of methodology Levin has undoubtedly the better case, for Boyer, in his attempt to integrate villain-hero drama in the tragic species, is forced into one contradiction after the other. In terms of its method, Boyer's critique is forced to repudiate its own criteria. Thus he writes:

> Aristotle says that pity and fear are the only tragic emotions, and that "pity is aroused by unmerited misfortune, fear by the misfortune of a man like ourselves." Therefore, he argues, a villain cannot arouse tragic emotion, because he merits his misfortune, and is unlike ourselves . . . . but experience teaches that Richard III does arouse tragic emotion. The final effect has even something of the "katharsis" about it, for the play does not leave us depressed or rebellious. It follows, therefore,

that either (1) pity and fear are not the only tragic emotions, or (2) pity and fear may be aroused by other means than the unmerited misfortune of a man like ourselves; or both (1) and (2) may be true.[1]

When these emotional effects that Boyer uses as his formal criteria are further defined, we see that they become not fear _for_, as in Aristotle, but fear _of_ or terror and assume not likeness between protagonist and spectator but difference and distance; and, in like manner, pity is no longer directed towards the moral issue of undeserved misfortune befalling a character of a given disposition, but merely toward the waste of his talents and powers at the hands of a corrupt will. The only consequence that Boyer can draw from these observations is that he is dealing with a dramatic form that is tragedy, but yet more than tragedy:

> It must be admitted that Richard III arouses at different stages of the action admiration, terror, and sadness, and that owing to the violence of the struggle and the magnitude of the forces involved we feel even awe. Now, these emotions are tragic; they are even more tragic than pity and fear, for they include them. Aristotle's definition is not quite comprehensive enough for a tragedy like Richard III.[2]

These assertions and assumptions of value are next compounded with confusion, for when Boyer moves on to discuss Macbeth he finds that it is the exemplary villain-hero drama simply because it _does_ fit the Aristotelian definition.

On the question of what constitutes villain-hero drama itself and of the traditions from which it sprang, we may also note Boyer's lack of consistency. Concerning the villain-hero himself, Boyer observes: "Investigation showed that the greatest villains were Machiavellians." But Macbeth, whom Boyer considers to be the finest figure of this type, is, as he admits, "no Machiavellian at all."[3] Similarly with The Jew of Malta, where Boyer follows the common practice of praising for their tragic potential the first two acts and damning the rest without realizing that it is only in the final three acts that Barabas is a true Machiavel. Hence the general assumption of the identity of

---

[1]Ibid., p. 86.   [2]Ibid., p. 94.   [3]Ibid., p. 221.

the Machiavellian villain-hero and the tragic protagonist falls by Boyer's own admissions. The present study therefore intends to retain no more of Boyer's method other than his title, and even here we will not be using it in as broad a sense. The villain-hero in this study is exclusively of the Machiavellian kind; and this kind, in turn, is a specific form of the Morality Vice, as our analysis will subsequently show.

We may therefore agree with Levin in his attack on Boyer's position, and accept his contention that the number of plays (he finds over one hundred punitive plots in Elizabethan drama), together with the general Elizabethan theory of tragedy as expressed by Sidney, Puttenham and others, as well as the heritage of the medieval concept of tragedy--that all these give historical support to his identification of a species of drama distinct in its definition from that described by Aristotle and to which the major tragedies of Shakespeare are universally assumed to belong.

Agreeing therefore in general principle with Levin, this study none-theless differs with him in certain specific, but quite important, respects. The extent of this species and the aesthetic depth of individual forms are two of the most pertinent sources of difficulty with Levin's analysis; but both of these problems may be traced back to a single issue to be found in his defini-tion of the punitive form and in that definition to the issue of the kind and degree of emotional effect involved. Essentially, Levin argues that the puni-tive form involves the just punishment of an evil protagonist which at its best makes use of a complex plot with a crime-punishment sequence, a specific kind of protagonist, and which arouses in the spectator the emotions of fear and indignation and their subsequent catharsis. The course of the history of this form also makes Levin propose that the total species should be divided into two sub-species, the one with an emphasis on the crime and the other with

an emphasis on the punishment. Of these two sub-species, Levin, using The Changeling as his best illustration, prefers the latter by virtue of the fact that the punishment is both extensive and internal, hence giving rise to a greater emotional reaction in the spectator.

The questions which such a theory as this gives rise to are primarily two: the first is whether the sub-species which emphasizes punishment is as distinct from tragedy as Levin believes; the second is whether the emotional response of the spectator is the best determinant of form, and, if so, whether fear and indignation are the emotions produced? The second question needs to be considered first in that the issue of emotional reaction is the premise of Levin's entire analysis. That is to say, Levin measures the virtue of a play in terms of the degree of emotion aroused; and since the most intense emotion is aroused by seeing a character suffer internally for his crimes, it follows that those plays which emphasize the commission of crimes, such as Richard III, generate little emotion and hence are defective forms. But this is simply not true, and primarily because Levin has not considered in sufficient depth the techniques used in the presentation of Richard's character. For, as we will show in our subsequent analysis, it was a cardinal feature in the dramaturgic convention of the Vice and the villain-hero for the protagonist to anticipate the moral reaction of the audience to his villainy and to forestall their judgment by discovering his nature to them in the opening scene and then proceeding by concentrating on the means rather than the ends of his villainy. This gives rise to what is essentially a bifurcated effect: the audience knows and expects the moral outcome of the total play, but finds its emotional antipathy to the protagonist not only pre-empted by the villain's self-revelation but even deflected into an amoral admiration for his subtle machinations. In short, the villain-hero demands and gets an especially full share of that

willing suspension of disbelief essential to the aesthetic experience; the only hold which the audience has over him is a general attitude of irony, an attitude which is resolved when the villain finally meets his punishment. To say, then, that fear and indignation may be aroused by a dramatic action is to ignore the basic tenet of aesthetic illusion: a necessary distance must be preserved between the stage and the audience; and should this tenet not be observed, as it is not, for example, in some of Barabas' actions, then the audience feels real indignation and turns away from the play in disgust. Levin's direct equation of an immoral act to an emotional effect may be said therefore to neglect the formal presentation of both action and character. His basic premise of emotional effect is therefore invalid in terms of those plays of his crime sub-species.

In turning next to Levin's second sub-species, the one in which the punishment is emphasized rather than the crimes, we may note that the crux of this issue lies in a special kind of character, one that can be individualized psychologically. Now it would appear that Macbeth answers to the criteria of the punitive form in this and other respects, and Levin, aware of this, faces the problem in an intensive analysis of this play. The conclusion he reaches is that Macbeth is a tragic form and not punitive, a conclusion that is founded upon the nature of Macbeth's hamartia. This, he argues, consists essentially in an ignorance of the true morality of his situation and of the possible consequences of his choice, thus making Macbeth's deeds and then his downfall tragic. It should be noted, however, that Levin places Macbeth just inside the "tragic frontier" and distinct in degree from Shakespeare's other major tragedies.[1]

When we turn to The Changeling and follow Levin's analysis of this

---

[1]Levin, op. cit., pp. 436-79, 779.

epitome of the punishment sub-species, we can hardly help observing that Levin
has placed it just outside the "tragic frontier," and distinct in degree from
the other punitive dramas he has considered. Furthermore, the criteria of
Macbeth's tragic nature, as distinguished by Levin, also seem to have a posi-
tive application to Beatrice's nature as well. Levin, however, argues that
her motives are clear and not determined by external agencies; thus she fully
merits her punishment. But once this punishment begins and we see her growing
"habituation to crime" and her deepening commitment to De Flores, our emotional
response, Levin argues, runs parallel to that of a tragic denouement and hence
generates the great power that makes The Changeling the exemplar of its species.[1]

Now whether this is subtlety or sophistry is difficult to determine:
for could it not be that The Changeling has a punitive complication and a tragic
denouement or could it not also be that its opening scenes are the defective
formulation of a tragic structure which is set right by those that follow?
Perhaps the best solution is a verdict of "not proven"; and, in any case, the
problem is ultimately immaterial to our present study. For it must be apparent
by now that our concern is with a limited group of plays which do not respond
significantly to the criteria of the punitive form as proposed by Levin. We
need not reject his theory entirely, but we do need to understand the nature
of the subject of villain-hero drama better than Levin does in order to compre-
hend its form.

An emphasis on the nature of the subject will therefore distinguish
the present study from that of Levin where the emphasis lies in the dialectic.
This also means that the notion of species will take on correspondingly differ-
ent emphases in the two studies. Here it will be considered primarily as a
means toward an end, the end being the description of the formal structures of

---

[1]Ibid., pp. 707-68.

certain plays and the means those necessary distinctions in principle needed to attain this end. In Levin, however, the theoretical system is more important than the individual plays and is committed to a premise of emotional effect that in its principle is inadequate and in its illustrations is distorting.

Two corollaries follow from this more elastic formulation of the problem, and both are determined by the need to apprehend through every means possible the dramaturgic quality peculiar to villain-hero drama. The one concerns that legacy of qualities in Elizabethan drama, and specifically in the plays of our concern, inherited from the world of the Mysteries and Moralities of medieval drama; it will be proposed therefore that an integral aesthetic is needed to describe this tradition and the formal elements in it that keep on repeating themselves throughout its history. The other corollary of the present formulation is that the issue of comedy is also germane to an understanding of the qualities of our subject; that is to say, a special kind of comic structure is closely related to the structure we are considering. Thus we will see that the only differences between serious villain-hero drama and comic villain-hero drama are differences of context and consequence. Hence Jonson's Volpone will be shown to be relevant to Shakespeare's Richard III and Marlowe's The Jew of Malta, an hypothesis which will find support in our examination of the Morality tradition and specifically in our contention that each of these three plays is indebted in its formal structure to the Morality play Respublica.

Support for these new emphases in the interpretation of villain-hero drama may be adduced in both a positive and negative manner; and since the process of our analysis follows this pattern, we need to conclude this chapter on critical method by clarifying the issues involved. In essence, therefore, the present study will propose that a basic distinction needs to be made in

the traditions which lie behind Elizabethan villain-hero drama, a distinction that separates material sources from formal sources. Richard III, in this respect, is not only the pre-eminent drama but also the one with the most complex tradition preceding it, and may therefore serve as the best illustration of the problem involved here. For, as our subsequent analysis will show, consideration of what we have called the material sources of this play is of decidedly limited value as a means of inferring from them the formal nature of the play itself. A consideration, on the other hand, of what we have called formal sources or what are more commonly called analogues leads to surprisingly fruitful results for formal analysis.

The material sources of Richard III are those texts in which the subject matter of the Richard story--its incidents, characters, and concepts-- had been used prior to Shakespeare, and which on the basis of textual evidence he may be said to have used in the composition of his play. These sources are by now well known to scholars and generally may be divided into three classes: first there is the category of the prose Chronicles, with the works of Polydore Vergil, Sir Thomas Moore, and Edward Hall of principal significance; then there is the class of poetic narrative as exemplified in The Mirror for Magistrates; and finally there exist two plays contemporaneous to Shakespeare's which deal with Richard, The True Tragedy of Richard III and Thomas Legge's Richardus Tertius. It should be noted, however, that we are approaching this subject with a quite specific problem in mind and one that differs from the usual criterion in the study of sources; for what we will be asking of these texts is whether they contributed any formal element to Shakespeare's play, and not merely some incidental matter which does not relate to the central structural issues of the play. Now, in this respect, it will be shown that material sources are of considerable use in describing plot and to a lesser extent

theme, but that on the important issue of character these sources are of limited value only. It will therefore be necessary to bridge this gap between Shakespeare and his sources by appealing to a tradition in which, while Richard does not appear as a character, there are to be found analogues of his nature and function. This tradition, in short, is that of the native theatre, in which we will find from the earliest Mystery play onwards characters analogous to Richard and illustrating essentially the same powers and limitations of his dramaturgy. In this way, the problem of Richard III, so largely determined by the restricted criteria of source hunting, will open out into the possibilities of establishing an aesthetic for our subject and also of discovering new relationships between many an Elizabethan play which conventional scholarship has not been able to see.

The aesthetic which emerges as pertinent from this line of inquiry is that which relates to what Professors Farnham and Rossiter have termed "Gothic drama" and more specifically to its "Schadenfreude" qualities.[1] It may furthermore be shown that this aesthetic observes an ordered transition from its beginnings in religious drama to its conclusion on the Elizabethan stage and that the order of its development is of prime importance to the particular forms of the plays we are to analyze. For there are distinct ontological levels in this tradition which determine the characterization which in turn determines the individual form. Thus, in the Mystery cycles there are the figures of Satan, Antichrist, and the Towneley Pilate moving in an absolute world where God himself presides; then there is the protagonist of the Miracle play The Croxton Play of the Sacrament who moves in a world half-divine, half-human, where miracles may occur and where redemption is still a possibility;

---

[1]Willard Farnham, The Medieval Heritage of Elizabethan Tragedy (Berkeley, 1936), chapter ii; A. P. Rossiter, English Drama from Early Times to the Elizabethans (London, 1950), chapter iv.

then follows the Morality plays, with Respublica of most relevance to our present concern, where the characters represent generic moral qualities and where the resolution is commonly worked out ethically in punishing the villain; then at last changing to human characters as villains, this tradition leads on to Marlowe's Barabas who operates in an international context and who although human is barely subject to his environment, but who because of his humanity must suffer a catastrophe somewhat in the manner of a tragic protagonist; then on the national level, there follows Richard III who as a prince is superior in degree to mankind generally, but who is even more so than Barabas subject to the laws of society and so like Barabas must undergo an even more credible punishment; and finally on the civic level, there is Volpone who finds himself subject to the same canons of probability as ourselves and whose punishment because of his lesser status is legalistic.

Thus we see a tradition and an aesthetic possessing both unity and variety: each play has its cruel comedian as protagonist and traces the delight he finds in causing suffering until he meets his nemesis; but each play also is distinct in terms of its context and hence in terms of the possible power of action of its protagonist and hence ultimately in terms of the consequences that can be meted out to him. The relation of Richard III to tragedy is therefore no more than coincidental in that Richard is a man of high estate and the context of the play is serious; in terms of the play's structure, however, and the tone of Richard's proceedings it could as well be argued that what we have here is essentially a comic pattern, just as it has been argued that Volpone through its consistent parody of hubris is a comic imitation of a tragedy. That is to say, it is a distinctive mark of all these plays that they produce an ambivalent effect of repulsion and attraction, an effect which defines the essence of the Gothic aesthetic.

This integral scheme that we have outlined is an analogical one; and since the value of this method lies in the testing of the hypotheses that it produces, it behooves us finally to suggest specific reasons for its acceptance. To do this, we may adduce two pieces of evidence, one general and one specific. The first is to be found in the philosophic legacy that the Elizabethans inherited from the medieval world and to which Tillyard has given the name "The Elizabethan World Picture." In essence, this picture comprehends an integral ontology in which all supernatural and natural phenomena are placed in a "great chain of being" determined by "degree." What we are proposing here is that in the tradition described above we have an analogue in history to this philosophical pattern. That is to say, if it is possible to accept analogues philosophically, it should also be possible to accept them historically. And that the early native drama abounds in archetypal situations which once realized will add new depth to our reading of Elizabethan drama may be attested to by many an example. The symbolism of Macbeth, for example, has received exhaustive analysis for its philosophic analogues: but this same symbolism is also to be found in the native drama; as, for example, in The Croxton Play of the Sacrament where the protagonist after stabbing the Host finds his hands stained indelibly with blood and thereupon proceeds to speak lines that bear a remarkable parallel to those of Lady Macbeth. Here we have a genuinely dramatic analogue. And to press the issue further, we need hardly doubt, so strong are the assertions in the play itself, that Richard shares an identity with the Devil: but what is not sufficiently realized is the extent to which this is a dramatic identity in terms of his stage character and fortunes. The total form of Richard III, furthermore, and its function and place in the History cycles suggest many a parallel with the Antichrist plays of the Mystery cycles. We may therefore develop these parallels systematically by including the historical

tradition of Gothic drama, with all of its ontological stages as noted above, in this Elizabethan World Picture.

But evidence of an even more specific nature may be found in a consideration of the relations between such plays as Respublica, The Jew of Malta, Richard III, and Volpone. For it is indeed fortunate that in this remarkably well-constructed Morality play there are to be found virtually all the structural elements of our villain-hero plays worked out on a generic level. In plot, theme, and character the analogues to Richard III are striking: the Vice Avarice makes his entrance, and declaring his nature sets out with the help of accomplices to usurp the kingdom from the weeping widow Respublica; to do this he disguises himself as Policie just as Richard uses the guise of the Protector to achieve his ends; Respublica on the other hand has only the assistance of People to help her, and so the Vices triumph over her in spite of their own deceit one to the other; the play is resolved only by an appeal to supernatural forces and the subsequent visitation to the scene of Nemesis. As for The Jew of Malta and Volpone, the analogues lie primarily in character: thus we may note the Avarice-Policie, Jew-Machiavel, Volpone-Sir Politic coincidence and use it as a guiding principle in our particular analyses of form in these two complicated structures and as the basis of new insights into their variations of plot and theme. But the full value of proposing Respublica as an archetypal form for these plays lies in the recognition of interrelationships between the plays themselves and among those other plays on the Elizabethan stage which make use of the structural elements of villain-hero drama as we have described them in this chapter. Hence we will have an intrinsic principle of evaluation for this abnormal species of theatre.

The total result of all this consideration of critical method, we may therefore say in conclusion, is to propose a solution to a critical problem by

making use of historical knowledge. Hardly any other dramatic form on the Elizabethan stage requires the perspective of the native tradition in such a degree to appreciate it as does villain-hero drama. By the same token, however, hardly any of these other forms would not benefit to some degree by being seen through this perspective of their past.

CHAPTER II

THE MATERIAL SOURCES OF <u>RICHARD III</u>

"Shakespeare's Richard is More's Richard." This is essentially the

simple conclusion that no study of the material sources of <u>Richard III</u> can es-

cape. It was proposed in this form in 1935 by Professor R. W. Chambers, who,

although admittedly a More enthusiast, was able to base his judgment on the

evidence accumulated over more than a century of historical research.[1] It is

also accepted as true today, even after the exhaustive re-examination of the

Shakespearean Histories conducted by Tillyard, Ribner, and others; and while

modern scholarship, it is true, generally places much more emphasis on the in-

fluence of Edward Hall in connection with the unifying themes and patterns of

these Histories, on the specific issue of <u>Richard III</u> Chambers' judgment none-

theless stands secure.

The reason for this unanimity is, of course, the simple fact that all

of the Tudor historians after More--Hardyng, Grafton, Hall, Holinshed, and Stow

--adopted his account of Richard III practically word for word up to the point

where his history breaks off on the eve of Buckingham's rebellion. It was

Polydore Vergil, the Italian historian, who provided the material for the

events subsequent to this, but since the two texts that were actually used by

Shakespeare were the 1569 edition of Hall and the 1587 edition of Holinshed,

it can be agreed with Professor J. Dover Wilson, the most recent editor of the

---

[1]R. W. Chambers, <u>Thomas More</u> (London, 1935), p. 117. For the most
comprehensive study on which Chambers' judgment is based, see G. B. Churchill,
<u>Richard the Third up to Shakespeare</u> (Berlin, 1900).

play, that ". . . when all is said Shakespeare's chief debt, whether he knew

it or not, was to Sir Thomas More."[1]

It is not, therefore, to dispute this general agreement that we are

broaching the issue again in this study: it is rather to reformulate the

problem and to inquire into the nature of this debt, and, more generally, into

the nature of the relationship between two kinds of literature, narrative and

dramatic. For in the sense that the criteria of historical scholarship allow

it to be true, Chambers' proposition is true: in the sense, however, that our

present formal criteria would permit it to be true, Chambers' proposition is,

if not untrue, at least a considerable oversimplification of the problem. This

is not to say, of course, that we are proposing some absolute distinction be-

tween form and material and that the Shakespearean form owes nothing to More's

work: indeed, it is impossible to separate the two categories so easily, par-

ticularly when the source concerned is of so high a literary quality. We may

even assert, furthermore, that More's History is in its own right a formal

structure possessing both a unity and the parts that are necessary to achieve

this unity: such elements, for example, as the character of Richard, its re-

lation to events, the dramatic use of portents, the pervasive and unifying

tone of irony, the droll wit, the quasi-personification of London--these are

the remarkable features of a book that has won consistent praise from the six-

teenth century down to the present day.[2]

---

[1] Wilson, op. cit., p. xiv.

[2] A representative statement of this high opinion in which More's
History has universally been held is that made by Roger Ascham in 1552: "Sir
Thomas More, in that pamphlet of Richard the Third, doth in most part, I be-
lieve, of all these points so content all men, as, if the rest of our story
of England were so done, we might well compare with France, or Italy, or
Germany, in that behalf." Quoted by R. W. Chambers, "The Authorship of the
'History of Richard III,'" The English Works of Sir Thomas More, ed. W. E.
Campbell (London, 1931), p. 28.

But to say that More's History has a form, and that this is, as we
will propose, a literary form, is only to give further cause why it should be
distinguished from the form of Shakespeare's play. For since form pertains to
that which is unique in a given work, it follows that it is the most inimitable
of the elements of literature: material in its rudimentary state and even the
principles of structure may be borrowed in whole or in part; but form, that
peculiar complex and effect of all these lesser elements, most resists trans-
lation from one work to another. Consequently, we will find it necessary, for
example, to qualify Professor J. Dover Wilson's hypothesis that Shakespeare
derived the droll wit of his Richard from More: for, as we will show, the wit
in Shakespeare is that of a given character within a dramatic action, while
that of More is commonly a function of the narrator standing outside and iron-
ically detaching himself from the scene. That is to say, for the two effects
of wit there are different causes in Shakespeare and More and to propose a
simple relation of Shakespeare's being indebted to More in this respect is to
ignore the nature of the medium in which Shakespeare was working, and, specif-
ically, the problem of presenting a character ironically without the external
point cf view of a narrator to distinguish the apparent from the real in his
subject. Now if this example is valid, then it must also follow that a dis-
tinction is needed in terms of the most general principles of form in each
work: it will therefore be necessary first of all to examine the possible re-
lations in principle of narrative and dramatic forms and to use this distinc-
tion in principle as the premise of any subsequent investigation into the re-
lation of particulars.

But here we will immediately encounter the problem of describing More's
History as a formal literary entity, a problem that presents itself primarily
in terms of the degree to which and the way in which More brought a character-

istic shape and power to his work. That is to say, his <u>History</u> is distinct from most of the literal-minded chronicles of his age in that it presents "conceived" rather than "raw" material. Compared with the approach of Polydore Vergil, for example, More's is a method that focuses on principles rather than particulars. He has a definite conception both of the nature of Richard's character and of the way in which it operates; the sense of chronology and the sense of what constitutes the proper matter of history that Polydore Vergil has are made subservient in More to a predetermined plan. On the other hand, however, he differs from Edward Hall in the way he presents his generalizations. For the concepts in More's <u>History</u> are presented as assumptions, while Hall presents his as inferences.

Hall, for the most part, is similar to Polydore Vergil in being factual and chronological. He does, however, depart from this pattern in certain prefaces where he enunciates a theory that for its theological and political implications has become known as "the Tudor myth." But the point at issue here is that the presentation of this theory is, formally speaking, extrinsic to his narration. In More, on the other hand, this is not so: assumed values enter his narration at the very beginning and become the polemic premise of his presentation; but once established, however, they become absorbed into the story. The narration, therefore, having begun by damning is able to proceed by describing in vividly dramatic and ironic detail the essential events of Richard's conspiracy and reign.

The above distinctions are, of course, only relative in nature and have a use only insofar as they throw light on the problem of the literary qualities to be found in More's <u>History</u>. It must therefore now be said that the distinction made between More and Polydore Vergil does an injustice to the latter in that while he does for the most part present his historical accounts without

presuming to go beyond the "raw material" of the facts he does so on the basis of certain principles of historiography which make him appear, from the modern point of view at least, the best of the Tudor historians.

Needless to say, the Tudor age thought differently; and Polydore Vergil, in bringing from his native Italy a more scientific approach to the writing of history, in being in his own sentiments Catholic and European and therefore unsympathetic to the rising nationalism of England, and finally in not concealing his scepticism over such cherished English myths as the Brutus and Arthurian legends, met with a general vilification for his efforts. The Tudor chroniclers did not hesitate to use his material, but the Protestant polemicists saw to it that his reputation was so damaged that it has taken some four centuries to repair.[1] Thus, while More for his legacy to Shakespeare might be called "the poet's historian," and Hall for his articulation of the Tudor myth "the philosopher's historian," Polydore Vergil was in his own day and remains still today "the historian's historian" of the Tudor period.

But besides these general aspects to his achievement, Polydore Vergil is of most interest to this present study in providing a valuable point of reference for many of the aspects of technique in More's method of writing history. It will therefore be useful to set down certain of the principal elements of Vergil's method in order to see more clearly how More constructs his own work.

One important issue in Vergil's approach lies in his understanding of the nature of sources: he distinguishes, for example, between such sources as the chronicles of city, monastic, and foreign origin; the direct observation he could make of contemporary England; the oral traditions and their varying

---

[1]Denys Hay, _Polydore Vergil_ (Oxford, 1952), pp. 79-184, especially pp. 145-51. See also Ribner, _op. cit._, pp. 15-24; and Wallace K. Ferguson, _The Renaissance in Historical Thought_ (Boston, 1948), p. 5.

antiquity; and finally the memories of his older contemporaries. And so, while using these sources as a means towards the end of his narration, in terms of his historical method he looks on these sources almost as an end in themselves and does not hesitate to qualify his conclusions if there should be any problem of verification. The process of reaching historical conclusions is therefore his prime concern and the reader of the Historia Anglica is always aware of his scrupulous intellect at work.

With More, however, the case is different; for with him the effect or conclusion is as important as, if not more important than, the cause. Thus we will see numerous examples of cause-effect relations in his work, but no matter how tentatively the causes are established the conclusions always follow with certainty. Again and again we will be confronted with what is essentially "history by supposition" in More, and always for the simple reason that he is more interested in his subject than in his method. Thus he frequently reasons backwards from an event to its most probable causes suggesting what might have happened and thereby establishing in the record of the Richard legend many of its principal items without necessarily giving them his own sanction as the truth. The fact that these items were accepted as the truth by subsequent historians and dramatists is therefore the most striking evidence of More's power of bringing credibility into a largely hypothetical world.

One illustration of this difference between the two historians lies in their distinctive uses of "rumour" as evidence. In Vergil, it is usually qualified in a sceptical manner by such utterances as "fama in vulgus iam tum exiit." In More, however, the opinion of the people is used rhetorically to suggest things which cannot be stated; and so widespread is this practice that many a reader of the History has drawn the erroneous conclusion that More is

to be identified with the people's point of view. Professor J. Dover Wilson's ultimate distinction between More and Shakespeare, for example, as being that of civic official to country gentleman rests on this assumption and fails to see the literary element in each use of the people and specifically the narrative-dramatic issue at the heart of the problem.[1] For the simple truth is that in a dramatic structure it is not possible to develop such secondary characters as the London citizens except at the expense of the protagonist, whereas in a narrative structure these same people become an admirable device for expressing the viewpoint of the author towards his subject. It is therefore essentially a formal issue that Shakespeare's citizens receive so little attention and More's so much.

But even more significant differences arise when the method of presentation in the two histories is considered. They both depart from the medieval manner of the monastic and city chronicles by striving to sustain the reader's interest in the sequence and relative significance of events. In Vergil, however, this is virtually the limit of his rhetorical intent. In More, on the other hand, the reader is constantly aware of the presence of a narrator both in the sense of Froissart in seeming to celebrate and enact the dramatic nature of his subject and in the sense of an intervening and ironic consciousness giving sharper form and value to the events it is describing. In general, it may therefore be said that this difference is that of the simple to the complex, a relation among historians not peculiar to these two; for in classical literature the relations of Herodotus to Thucydides and Livy to Tacitus illustrate much the same pattern.

As a corollary of this issue we may also note the marked difference between the two authors in their presentation of character. Vergil constantly

---

[1] Wilson, op. cit., p. xxiii.

follows the convention of Cicero and Suetonius in appending at the end of a
Life a formal portrait of his subject. More, on the other hand, transfers
this portrait to the very beginning of his book where together with the por-
traits of Clarence and Edward it functions as the premise of the ensuing ac-
tion. Thus character becomes the grounds of motivation and probability for
the narration, a device more commonly found in the poetic method than in the
historical.

And with a definite logic thus introduced into the narration, More can
and does indulge in more frequent digressions and sententiae than Vergil. He
puts long and eloquent speeches into the mouths of Edward, Richard, Elizabeth,
and Buckingham, and he interrupts his narrative to describe Mistress Shore and
the courtship of Edward and Elizabeth. Admittedly, these are not made entirely
relevant; but each is such a success in its own right that the structure of the
work is diversified and a sense of many-sided and many-leveled existence, of
complexity and depth, is achieved without any essential diminution in the gen-
erality and particularity of the book.

This final observation leads back to crucial difference in the use of
universals in More from that of his contemporary historians. For Vergil is
even more literal-minded than Hall and uses generalizations sparingly and even
then as incidental to his main purpose of simple narration. From this point
of reference More's technique looks all the more symbolic in the general sense
of this word as the inhering of universal in particular. For both references
are present, integrally related: all the sharp particularity of More's famous
portrait presents the same Richard as is known today over four centuries later;
and yet the universality is also there in such a way as to lead a critic such
as R. W. Chambers to read the History "with all its grim characterization of
the last Yorkist king . . . not [as] a piece of Lancastrian propaganda" but as

"an attack on the non-moral statecraft of the early Sixteenth Century."[1]

Somewhere between these two extremes lies the form of More's History, a concretum with a unified effect and a set of formal principles that makes for a unique prose narrative. And of these principles, the role of the narrator will appear, as we proceed now to analyze this form, as the crucial point of differentiation both from the principles of More's contemporary historians and from the principles of the Shakespearean dramatic form. For More seems instinctively to have understood the problems and potentials of his genre, thereby doing things which Shakespeare, who had an equally perceptive grasp of the possibilities of the dramatic manner, in principle could not do. And to say this is not to decry or devaluate either, but merely to differentiate them in the interests of formal criticism and its relation in method to the more traditional pursuits of literary history. This is the crux in our concern to qualify the statement of Chambers with which we began this argument: our intent is merely to establish in what senses Shakespeare's Richard is and is not More's Richard.

More's History, as is well known, has a beginning, a middle, but no end; it is nevertheless extensive enough and so well ordered in its existing parts as to permit a formal analysis in terms of these three basic divisions of structure. And not only is it possible to point to these divisions in terms of subject matter but also in terms of distinctive styles and different points of view on the part of the narrator. Thus we will find the beginning concerned primarily with the presentation of character, where More defines Richard by contrasting him with the other characters, by direct and indirect assertion of his villainy, and by concluding this opening section with the climactic pathos of the death of King Edward IV. The middle section deals with Richard's

---

[1]Chambers, Thomas More, op. cit., p. 117.

conspiracy to gain the crown and contains the bulk of the narrative: here we

find his covert intrigues against the Princes, his stratagem in separating the

Queen in Sanctuary from her younger son, and then finally his increasingly

overt plotting to win the nobles and then the people to his cause. In its

presentation this middle section is marked by a considerable flexibility of

style, point of view, and the deployment of character with the result that the

reader now confronts vivid narrative detail, now high sententious orations,

now the perspective of a sullen city passing judgment on a king through the

irony of its silence. One further remarkable feature in this presentation of

the conspiracy is that More captures the spirit of it by keeping Richard, for

the most part, in the background and by repressing his own personal indictment

of his subject in order to let it speak for itself. This reticence of the

middle section is of course made possible by the fact that More has established

so forcefully the premises of Richard's world in the opening section that all

the assumed values carry forward under their own momentum and provide the con-

text of values for the ensuing narrative of the conspiracy. This same sense

of logical and rhetorical organization also determines what there is of the

concluding section of the History; for in describing Richard's reign More pre-

sents a simple picture of disaster both for the commonwealth and the king with

all the force of a deduction drawn from his original premise of Richard's char-

acter. There is here a narrowly focused point of view trained on the evil con-

sequences of Richard's career; the style is terse and assertive; and the inev-

itability of Richard's fall is presented with an overwhelming irony which is

so naturally assumed as barely to impede the narrative. With this notion,

therefore, of the total pattern of the History we may now proceed to look more

closely at these parts, paying particular attention to More's exploitation of

the narrative manner and observing how Shakespeare tried to translate it into

the different medium of the drama.

We have already noted that More differs from Polydore Vergil in beginning his <u>History</u> with character portraits and we need first to observe that this difference is primarily a measure of the difference between a biography and a chronicle. For the chronicler could assume, on the basis of his preceding volumes, the exposition that More, starting off with Richard, had to give his reader regarding characters and events. But if there is this basic expository purpose to More's introduction there is yet an even more significant one in the way this exposition is handled. For these portraits of Edward and Clarence and their children serve to determine the world in which Richard is to move as a world peopled by his future victims and yet victims who in being Yorkist need not expect too much Tudor sympathy. We may note therefore a certain equivocation in More's point of view here as he tries to avoid being caught in the dilemma of damning Richard by defending his victims. At all times he has a Tudor audience in mind, and caution is the criterion of his style at this stage. Witness the adroitness in his description of the fates that befell Edward IV's children:

> Elizabeth, whose fortune and grace was after to be Queen, wife unto King Henry the Seventh and mother unto the Eighth; Cecily, not so fortunate as fair; Bridget, which representing the virtue of her whose name she bore, professed and observed a religious life in Dartford, an house of close nuns; Anne, that was after honourably married unto Thomas, then Lord Howard, and after Earl of Surrey; and Katherine, which long time tossed in either fortune, sometimes in wealth, oft in adversity, at the last, if this be the last (for yet she liveth), is by the benignity of her nephew, King Henry the Eighth, in very prosperous estate, and worthy her birth and virtue.[1]

The effect here illustrates one element of More's style that recurs frequently in his writing; the double attribute is used both to sustain the rhythmic formality of the piece and to provide for flexibility of ideas within

---

[1]Sir Thomas More, "The History of King Richard the Third," <u>The English Works of Sir Thomas More</u>, ed. W. E. Campbell (London, 1931), p. 399. Hereafter referred to as More's <u>History</u>.

the formality. The syntax runs the gamut of their fortunes from the honorific

"wife unto . . . and mother unto" to the pathetic "not so fortunate as fair"

and "sometimes in wealth, oft in adversity." Another device to be noted is

the way the final sentence on Katherine concludes the paragraph. It breaks

out of the concise and tersely patterned syntax of those before it, enlarging

the context of the subject by the complimentary mention of Henry VIII and yet

at the same time injecting an almost superfluous qualification into her for-

tune by means of which the description is left suspended and unfinished and to

a degree dramatic. This use of the subjunctive mood to compromise the narra-

tion is one of the cardinal features of More's style and bears out our conten-

tion of the literary qualities and effects in his work.

We may see this principle in operation in another way when it comes to

the portrait of Edward himself. The marginal notation for this section is "The

Love of the People," but the compliment is a cautious one. For More has found

in the persona of the people a foil for his own point of view: it enables him

to praise Edward without himself being responsible for the praise; it also en-

ables him to qualify his own criticism. Thus we find Edward:

> A king of such governance and behaviour in time of peace (for in war each
> party must needs be other's enemy) that there was never any Prince of this
> land attaining the crown by battle, so heartily beloved with the substance
> of the people; nor he himself so specially in any part of his life as at
> the time of his death. Which favour and affection yet after his decease,
> by the cruelty, mischief, and trouble of the tempestuous world that fol-
> lowed, highly towards him more increased.[1]

In appearance More presents him as somewhat the worse for wear from a "youth

greatly given to fleshly wantonness, from which health of body . . . hardly

refraineth," but for which

> . . . not greatly grieved the people, for neither could any one man's
> pleasure stretch and extend to the displeasure of very many, . . .[2]

a plausible excuse particularly when we note the later observation:

---

[1]Ibid.   [2]Ibid., p. 400.

He had left all gathering of money (which is the only thing that with-
draweth the hearts of Englishmen from the Prince), . . .[1]

This process of allowing one character to define another is brought

to an explicit summation by More when he chooses to depict Edward's act of

magnanimity in inviting the Mayor and aldermen of London to a hunt at Windsor.

In More's words this is "benign, courteous, and . . . familiar," a character-

ization that is less sympathetic than may at first appear: for More under-

stands the rationale of this action as only one who is both skilled in and de-

tached from the ways of politics can. He writes:

> . . . he [Edward] made them not so stately, but so friendly and so familiar
> cheer, and sent venison from thence so freely into the city, that no one
> thing, in many days before, got him either more hearts or more hearty favour
> among the common people, which oftentimes more esteem and take for great
> kindness a little courtesy than a great benefit.[2]

The people therefore have been used to portray Edward, and we next

find that Edward has been used to portray Richard; for the characterization

switches from this portrait of the good king to its contrary in Richard. And

nowhere is the rhetorical element in Edward's portrait at this stage more ap-

parent than in the later fate More meted out to him: for when Edward next

appears, he is in a context of the Yorkist brothers as a group, and hence

comes in for a greater share of denigration. The change from Edward to

Richard, however, is effected by a transition which serves, in the same way as

the people served to set off Edward's magnanimity, to set off Richard's infamy.

For Richard is introduced solely as the man who had his own nephews murdered.

Now this aspect of More's History deserves especial emphasis in any

formal analysis in that it represents the climactic evil in More's eyes: it

is this one particular crime that More writes indelibly against Richard's name.

We note how skillfully More has led up to its announcement; we will note how

---

[1] Ibid.   [2] Ibid.

it becomes a recurring motif throughout the History; and we will see finally how More uses this action as the focal point in his description of Richard's reign. Thus the issue needs to be examined as to why on the one hand More should choose to emphasize this element of his story while on the other Shakespeare should choose to de-emphasize it.

In general, the answer to this question lies in More's recognition of the powers of his narrative medium. For, first of all, it was a significant choice of material on More's part in that the fate of the Princes represented a pathetic deed on which all parties could agree in sympathy for the victims and indignation at their murderer. We have already seen how cautious More could be in charting his way through the description of the more important figures of the Yorkist court; the Princes, therefore, provided him with an opportunity to escape from equivocation and establish an absolute point of moral reference in his work. We may observe the rhetorical force of More's style on this issue:

> . . . if division and dissension of the friends had not unarmed them and left them destitute, and the execrable desire of sovereignty provoked him to their destruction which, if either kind or kindness had held place, must needs have been their chief defence. For Richard the Duke of Gloucester, by nature their uncle, by office their protector, to their father beholden, to themselves by oath and allegiance bound, all the bonds broken that bind man and man together, without any respect of God or the world unnaturally contrived to bereave them, not only their dignity, but also their lives.[1]

The simple point that More is making here is that Richard killed his nephews. But rarely throughout his work is there such a good example of the way More's style builds up around a narrative detail a superstructure charged with feeling and implicating universal values in the action. The first sentence, through a syntactic sequence of Latinate subjunctives, sets up a hypothetical world which in collapsing intensifies the pathos of the crime. The

---

[1]Ibid., p. 401.

second sentence then proceeds to consolidate this effect by the opposite technique of cumulative assertion through ever expanding phrases set between subject and verb with such total effect that when we come at last to the predicate we realize that it is hardly needed and that the abstract diction in which the deed is related is appropriate to its context. Only the final word "lives" has the feel of the particular to it; and yet in being the final word and the climax it stamps the whole passage with particularity, and brings balance and hence credibility to the intense flight of rhetoric that leads up to it.

This then is the first issue of More's realization of the powers of narration, his selection and emphasis of that detail in Richard's life where every emotion and antipathetic effect could be concentrated and universally felt among his Tudor audience. Shakespeare, on the other hand, did not have to tread quite so warily in dealing with the kings and queens of bygone times and hence could afford to develop other victims than the neutral princes. And yet this greater freedom in the choice of subject that Shakespeare enjoyed is also a measure of the demands of his dramatic medium, and springs from two specific causes: the one is the kind of characters to be used as victims; and the other is the position of the pathetic deed in the plot. For the young Prices, first of all, as children could hardly be made to support the role that Shakespeare wanted from his victim figure: for while More, in that he had and wished to use the power to dilate intensively on the pathos of the deed, needed as helpless and as neutral a figure as he could find for his victim, Shakespeare on the other hand needed a character within the dramatic action itself to evoke this pathos, and hence had to look for a substitute for the Princes. He found this substitute, as many critics have already pointed out, in Clarence, who as a brother of great power, maturity, eloquence, and feeling could and did introduce into the play all the intensity that More himself had first established

through his narration. But even more than this, the position of the pathetic

deed in the two structures illustrates this same problem: for the narrator in

his omnisience can, and as More does, anticipate the deed and establish its

significance long before it happens; the dramatist, however, has to follow the

literal sequence of his chronology, and, as we will see, Shakespeare needed

the pathetic deed early in the play to balance his striking presentation of

the protagonist and to lay the premise of all the ensuing pathetic actions in

the play. After Clarence's death we note a gradual lessening of intensity in

the presentation of pathos so that by the time of the Princes and Buckingham

the deeds need not be performed on stage at all; the spectator, remembering

Clarence, can assume the drama of these scenes. Thus we see how in the formal

selection of material both More and Shakespeare are guided by the principles

of their respective genres.

Returning then to the presentation of Richard in More's text we should

note that intense rhetoric of this kind with the narrator playing such an ex-

plicit role is the exception rather than the rule of More's History. It will

return again only at the end when in describing the reign More gives another

portrait of Richard, this time showing the tyrant answering for his sins through

his guilt and confusion, a description that is the logical and rhetorical com-

plement of the one we have just been discussing. But generally More will be

found to be making his point indirectly and ironically. Indeed, he seems to

sense his excess in this particular instance and his need to make these asser-

tions credible, and therefore he sets out to defend his judgment in the follow-

ing way:

> But forasmuch as this Duke's demeanour ministreth in effect all the whole
> matter whereof this book shall entreat, it is therefore convenient some-
> what to show you ere we farther go, what manner of man this was that could
> find in his heart so much mischief to conceive.[1]

---

[1]Ibid.

The argumentative sequence of his narration and the definition of the character

of Richard as the subject of his History are evident in this transition and

provide evidence to support our contention as to the formal nature of this work.

What follows is a devastating family portrait of the Yorkist line:

each portrait is set off against the others, and all are set off against

Richard's; the only thing the three brothers have in common is that they are

"great and stately of stomach, greedy and ambitious of authority, and impatient

of partners."[1] The portrait of Clarence is of particular interest both for the

brilliance of its presentation and for the material it contains on the cause of

Clarence's death. For here again Shakespeare had to depart from More to make

his dramatic situation perfectly clear; he emphasizes Richard's role in this

action whereas More merely envelops the scene with a mesh of suppositions.

There was, however, a strong enough suggestion to these suppositions for the

authors of The Mirror for Magistrates and then Shakespeare to single Richard

out as the principal agent. The portrait reads:

> George, Duke of Clarence, was a prince, and at all points fortunate, if
> either his own ambition had not set him against his brother, or the envy
> of his enemies, his brother against him. For were it by the Queen and the
> lords of her blood which highly maligned the King's kindred (as women com-
> monly, not of malice but of nature, hate them whom their husbands love),
> or were it a proud appetite of the Duke himself, intending to be king: at
> the leastwise, heinous treason was there laid to his charge and finally,
> were he faulty, were he faultless, attainted was he by parliament, and
> judged to the death, and thereupon hastily drowned in a butt of Malmesey;
> whose death King Edward (albeit he commanded it) when he wist it was done,
> piteously bewailed and sorrowfully repented.[2]

Again More has only a modicum of fact to relate; he chooses, however,

to delay the narration of it to indulge this elaborate excursion into its

probable causes, establishing so many of them as to make Clarence's fate seem

as inevitable as it was unsolved. The deed nonetheless was done; and More

underlines this fact by making his narration of it explode out of the context

---

[1]Ibid.   [2]Ibid.

of suppositions with the sharp particularity of diction and the fast rhythmic
release of "and thereupon hastily drowned in a butt of Malmesey." Now this is
a rhetorical use of particularity that is both similar and dissimilar to More's
earlier use of this figure in his description of the relation between Richard
and the Princes. It is similar in that the particular fact is reserved for the
climax of a long and involved syntactical pattern and is thus endowed with the
added force of resolving such a pattern: it is dissimilar, however, in that it
generates almost an opposite effect; for while the earlier scene concludes with
a climactic pathos, this present description of Clarence ends with close to an
anti-climactic bathos. For the Malmesey butt, forever to be associated with
Clarence's name in later tradition, is an inspired drollery on More's part,
and we will see when we come to Shakespeare how the idea of it evokes a cluster
of images that unifies the murder scene: Clarence unwittingly anticipates his
inglorious end in the butt by dreaming of drowning in the Channel; Richard, on
the other hand, very wittingly--and, we might add, drily--anticipates the same
end with his suggestion of Clarence's being "new-christened in the Tower."
There was surely in Shakespeare's elaboration of this idea a recognition of
More's original and inspired effect; for what happens here is that More is de-
flating both cause and effect, both criminal and victim, both Court and
Clarence. He uses the Malmesey butt as a point of reference from which he may
observe with grim irony the ways and the fates of people in high places. His
moral is the old medieval one of the King become cadaver, but made more point-
edly ironic as befits the context of an intriguing court, none of the members
of which call for much sympathy. This is, in short, the De Casibus theme with
a delicious vengeance. And the deftness in the style, it should finally be
noted, continues by sustaining the irony at Edward's expense when More catches
the King in an act of post-mortem penitence.

But here the light facetious touch to More's style ends. For the narration now turns to Richard, and the classic portrait of him emerges in all its startling clarity. It is, however, a clarity achieved by a confusion of assertion and malicious supposition:

> Richard . . . was . . . little of stature, ill-featured of limbs, crook-backed, his left shoulder much higher than his right, hard-favoured of visage. . . . It is for truth reported that the Duchess, his mother, had so much ado in her travail that she could not be delivered of him uncut; and that he came into the world with the feet forward, as men be borne outward, and (as the fame runneth) also not untoothed--whether men of hatred report above the truth or else that nature changed her course in his beginning which in the course of his life many things unnaturally committed. . . . He was close and secret, a deep dissimulator, lowly of countenance, arrogant of heart, outwardly compinable where he inwardly hated, not letting to kiss whom he thought to kill; . . . He slew with his own hands King Henry the Sixth, being prisoner in the Tower, as men constantly say, and that without commendement or knowledge of the King, which would undoubtedly, if he had intended that thing, have appointed that butcherly office to some other than his born brother.[1]

Cumulative epithets followed by qualifications that do not so much qualify as intensify is the simple principle of presentation here. And that the "It is for truth reported" and "as the fame runneth" phrases function as intensifiers may be seen conclusively in the next paragraph when More takes up the issue of Richard's role in the death of Clarence. His argument is that it is likely that Richard "helped . . . Clarence to his death" for the simple reason that Richard was intending to be king. His style reveals, however, how hypothetical is his case, for virtually every sentence begins with a qualification of the veracity of its contents: "Some wise men also ween that . . . (as men deemed) . . . And they that thus deem . . . And they deem that"--all these occur in the space of three sentences only to be capped by the comment,

> But of all this point is there no certainty, and whoso divineth upon conjectures may as well shoot too far as too short. Howbeit, this have I by credible information learned . . .[2]

---

[1]Ibid., pp. 401-402.   [2]Ibid., p. 402.

Whether "may as well" means "is likely to" or "is licensed to" is a moot point, but what More has "by credible information learned" is a masterpiece of circumstantial evidence:

> The self night in which King Edward died, one Mistlebrook long ere morning came in great haste to the house of one Pottier, dwelling in Red Cross Street without Cripplegate; and when he was with hasty rapping quickly let in, he showed unto Pottier that King Edward was departed. "By my troth, man," quoth Pottier, "then will my master the Duke of Gloucester be king." What cause he had so to think hard it is to say, whether he, being toward him, anything knew that he such thing purposed, or otherwise had any inkling thereof: for he was not likely to speak it of naught.[1]

This is the conclusion to the presentation of characters, and we need only note the particularity of Mistlebrook closeted with Pottier "in Red Cross Street without Cripplegate" to recognize the device earlier remarked on with regard to the clinching element of paragraph structure. Here it serves to clinch an entire section, and is significant, apart from its rhetorical function, in its use of townsfolk to impart the general point of view that More wishes to bring to his subject. We have already noted his looking up from the Malmesey butt at kings and queens and we will have occasion again and again to note further uses of this literary device as the means by which More both narrates and evaluates. That More is close to the citizens of London in his feelings is an important element of his History; but that he uses them so brilliantly in the structure of his work is an even more important element in the history of English literature generally. For More has in this way achieved a form that is essentially anti-heroic in its point of view and a world in which the protagonist is continually being repressed by the narrator's irony as a person fundamentally inferior in his values. Now the medium of prose narration is essential to this kind of presentation, and we need only think of how much later in literary history it was before this form found full expression in the

---

[1]Ibid., pp. 402-403.

genre of the novel and then of how much later in the history of the novel it
was before an anti-heroic protagonist made an appearance to appreciate the
significance of More's formal achievement in this work. It therefore becomes
a fascinating problem to observe the way that Shakespeare had to translate so
many of the elements of More's narrative form not only into dramatic form, but
more particularly into one built round an ultra- as opposed to an anti-heroic
character.

"But now to return to the course of this history," writes More, thereby
revealing an awareness of and a control over his own formal design in narration.
But before he actually does so, he sets the stage carefully for his actors:
and again the logical and rhetorical principles are first established in terms
of Richard's character. The death of the Princes is laid down as the climactic
act of his career, and the necessary steps that led up to this act--the foster-
ing of dissension among the opposition, the winning of accomplices, and the
role of dissimulation in Richard's method--all receive clear definition in an-
ticipation of the narrative proper:

> . . . were it that the Duke of Gloucester had of old foreminded this con-
> clusion, or was now at erst thereunto moved and put in hope by the occasion
> of the tender age of the young Princes, his nephews (as opportunity and
> likelihood of speed putteth a man in courage of that he never intended),
> certain is it that he contrived their destruction, with the usurpation of
> the regal dignity upon himself. And forasmuch as he well wist, and helped
> to maintain, a long-continued grudge and heartburning between the Queen's
> kindred and the King's blood, either party envying other's authority, he
> now thought that their division should be (as it was indeed) a fartherly
> beginning to the pursuit of his intent and a sure ground for the foundation
> of all his building, if he might first, under the pretext of revenging of
> old displeasure, abuse the anger and ignorance of the one party to the de-
> struction of the other: and then win to his purpose as many as he could;
> and those that could not be won might be lost ere they looked therefor.
> For of one thing was he certain, that if his intent were perceived, he
> should soon have made peace between the both parties with his own blood.[1]

Then as the first illustration of these principles and as a transition

---

[1] Ibid., p. 403.

from the opening section into the narration of events, More presents the scene

of Edward's deathbed and the King's futile attempt at reconciling Hastings and

the Queen's faction. The method of presentation here is of considerable in-

terest in that it reveals how More constructs a digression without losing his

sense of its formal relation to his dominant narrative line; and since the

principle involved here is used again in subsequent digressions, and since it

relates to the more general narrative-dramatic issue, it will be of value to

our study to formulate it at this stage.

To describe the method of presentation as a simple principle is how-

ever somewhat misleading: for it is not the simple principles of logical in-

ference or suppositional implication that we have so far detected in More's

presentation. It consists rather in the establishing of a deliberate incon-

gruity between the methods of drama and narrative: for what More does is to

allow the dramatic element of the scene to overexpand itself and to develop a

situation with considerable depth of character and theme, and then at its con-

clusion and through his power as narrator to destroy the very scene he has

created by concisely narrating its futile outcome.

Edward is delivering his last oration and his purpose is noble. He

speaks eloquently, and, as only More could make him, wittily:

> "My lords, my dear kinsmen and allies, in what plight I lie you see and
> I feel."[1]

He appeals in a distinctive way to their sympathy and sense of piety:

> "That we be all men, that we be Christian men, this shall I leave for
> preachers to tell you,--and yet I wot ne'er whether any preacher's words
> ought more to move you than his that is by and by going to the place that
> they all preach of."[2]

And yet he gives the scene a generality by discoursing on the problems of king-

ship and in particular on the problems of "a child's reign" and the dangers

---

[1] Ibid., p. 404.   [2] Ibid.

therein of ambitious nobles. He does not refer to Richard, and it is doubtful that he had him in mind at all; for Hastings and Dorset are the specific objects of his adminition:

> "Such a pestilent serpent is ambition and desire of vainglory and sovereignty, which among states where he once entereth creepeth forth so far till with division and variance he turneth all to mischief--first longing to be next the best, afterwards equal with the best, and at last chief and above the best."[1]

And yet this is so much a premonition of Richard that we see how More has been relating the entire scene in spite of itself to the narrative context. It should also be noticed that while Polydore Vergil places Richard in York at this moment and More is merely silent as to his whereabouts, Shakespeare has to wrench his historical material in order to place Richard at court for at least the end of this scene. He could not, in other words, relate the scene to Richard without his being present. More, however, can achieve an illusory presence for Richard by his introduction, by the way Edward unwittingly underlines the pattern of the usurper, and then and most strikingly by a conclusion that in its brevity and utter reversal of Edward's theme makes the dramatic moment of the deathbed scene collapse. The ironic reference of reality, of Richard's world, again protrudes its head in the manner of the "pestilent serpent" Edward had so feared:

> And therewithal the King, no longer enduring to sit up, laid him down on his right side, his face towards them. And none was there present that could refrain from weeping. But the lords, recomforting him with as good words as they could, and answering for the time as they thought to stand with his pleasure, there in his presence (as by their words appeared) each forgave other, and joined their hands together, when (as it after appeared by their deeds) their hearts were far asunder.[2]

Thus the scene ends having caught the best of both worlds, the dramatic and the narrative, and what was (and will be again) a seemingly unrelated digression becomes yet another highly rhetorical device that More uses in his

---

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 405.　　　　[2] *Ibid.*

unremitting irony. Richard may be absent from the scene in person, but his personality is its spoken and unspoken point of reference.

The three extensive episodes that follow--the separation of Prince Edward from the Queen's party, the separation of his younger brother from his mother in Sanctuary, and the appeals of Richard to the nobles and citizens for their support--all make use of the narrative device described above. Generally the pattern consists of some incident first being developed for its own sake with Richard hidden from the scene and then resolved in an astounding concision and with Richard's reappearance. This is not to say, of course, that Richard is lost sight of: at times, as in the Rivers and Hastings episode, he is very much in evidence; but the point of More's relative omission of him in this central section of the History is worth emphasizing in that it contrasts sharply with Shakespeare's method of presentation. For not only did Shakespeare restrict his material to those episodes where Richard could be on stage, but he commonly transformed their presentation by permitting Richard himself to speak the lines that More reserved for himself at the beginning and end of an episode. Thus Richard has his introductory and concluding monologues of self-deprecation in Shakespeare: and while in terms of their subject matter they are also to be found in More, their final effects in the two writers are quite contrary. The effect in More is that Richard is overwhelmed with irony: in Shakespeare it is that Richard is overwhelming--with the same irony.

The first episode, it should be noted, begins with an abrupt transition from the deathbed scene, thereby allowing More to carry over the tones of his ironic denouement into the next and more narrative sequence. Thus the scenes are juxtaposed: the one with all its pathos in spite of Richard's absence and the other with all the power derived from his presence; what is constant in this apparent contrast is the sense of an inevitability of evil hanging over

the participants. And given this basic tone More can afford to have his sub-
ject ignore it, for we see a light-hearted Richard confidently toying with his
opposition: thus the meeting with Rivers is accompanied with "much friendly
cheer" only to be followed by Rivers' and his companions' sudden arrest and
then concluded with the "comfortable courtesy" of Richard sending a dish from
his own table to the Lord Rivers, "praying him to be of good cheer, all should
be well enough." More steps into the picture to conclude this scene in typ-
ically concise, ironic manner:

> But for all this comfortable courtesy of the Duke of Gloucester, he sent
> the Lord Rivers and the Lord Richard, with Sir Thomas Vaughan, into the
> north country into divers places to prison, and afterwards all to Pomfret,
> where they were in conclusion beheaded.[1]

Thus the episode which began so abruptly ends in a similar fashion with the re-
sult that the intervening scene, in itself full of lively detail, is thrown
into even sharper relief as narrative. Shakespeare is satisfied with reducing
such material as this to mere exposition on the part of a messenger, and no-
where does the power of More in his role as narrator become more evident that
in a comparison of this episode in the two texts.

The section following this is the long one devoted to the Queen's
flight to Sanctuary, the arguments this action caused, and the final deliver-
ance of the Prince of York into Richard's hands. It is an important section
for our analysis in that it provides one of the clearest illustrations pos-
sible of the respective powers and limitations of the two literary methods of
presentation we are considering. For in constructing this remarkable digres-
sion and yet in keeping it integral to his total design, More effects a nar-
rative tour de force which Shakespeare tacitly acknowledges by his omissions.
That is to say, Shakespeare did not use the Sanctuary material dramatically,

---

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 409.

because he could not disengage it from its narrative form in More: everything

in the play, as we will see, has to be a direct function of Richard's power

and presence; in More, however, the scene is presented primarily through the

orations of the Queen and Buckingham and only indirectly through Richard. But

this indirect reference of Richard is nonetheless all important.

The scene begins with the Queen understanding the trend of events and

fleeing to Sanctuary with her children. This is an occasion of pathos, and as

a measure of the sympathy she has attracted More describes the Archbishop of

York taking the Great Seal to her in Westminster:

> About whom he found much heaviness, rumble, haste and business, carriage
> and conveyance of her stuff into Sanctuary, chests, coffers, packs,
> fardels, trusses, all on men's backs, no man unoccupied, some lading,
> some going, some discharging, some coming for more, some breaking down the
> walls to bring in the next way, and some yet drew to them that helped to
> carry a wrong way. The Queen herself sat alone, alow on the rushes, all
> desolate and dismayed,--whom the Archbishop comforted in the best manner
> he could.[1]

But barely has the Archbishop performed this loyal deed than he discovers on

his way home:

> . . . all the Thames full of boats of the Duke of Gloucester's servants,
> watching that no man should go to Sanctuary, nor none could pass un-
> searched.[2]

and anticipating that in the councils:

> . . . it would be ascribed (as it was indeed) to his overmuch lightness
> that he so suddenly had yielded up the Great Seal to the Queen, to whom
> the custody thereof nothing pertained, without especial commandment of the
> King, secretly sent for the Seal again, and brought it after the customable
> manner.[3]

This falling away from strongly expressed feelings into irony is the

pattern of narration generally in this episode. It is, however, a pattern

that is reinforced by intermittent references to Richard, here presented in

his most politic manner. His behavior until he is made Protector is extremely

---

[1]Ibid., p. 410.　　[2]Ibid.　　[3]Ibid., p. 411.

circumspect; and then his subsequent oration on the issue of the Prince in

Sanctuary has a dramatic propriety to it with More contriving that Richard

should reveal himself through his own tactics rather than through external

interpretation. To do this More makes effective use of indirect and direct

speech to avoid, respectively, the issue of Sanctuary, and to raise in its

place the specious one of the King needing his brother's company:

> . . . he proposed unto them that it was a heinous deed of the Queen, and
> proceeding of great malice towards the King's Councillors, that she should
> keep in sanctuary the King's brother, from him whose special pleasure and
> comfort were to have his brother with him.[1]

Hereafter all reference to Sanctuary is dropped and in direct speech Richard

turns the issue:

> "Wherefore with whom rather than with his own brother? . . . And if she
> be percase so obstinate and so precisely set upon her own will, that
> neither . . . wise and faithful advertisement can move her, nor any man's
> reason content her, then shall we, by mine advice, by the King's authority
> fetch him out of that prison. . . . This is my mind in this matter for
> this time, except any of your lordships anything perceive to the contrary.
> For never shall I, by God's grace, so wed myself to mine own will, but
> that I shall be ready to change it upon your better advice."[2]

More is here presenting Richard dramatically; and we may see how the

rest of this episode is similarly constructed in the way the general theme of

Sanctuary is approached by the several characters. The Archbishop of York,

deputed to speak to the Queen, overcomes his scruples on the issue of Sanctuary

by suggesting that the success of his mission depends entirely on the Queen's

feminine temperament, her "mother's dread and womanish fear"; Buckingham then

extends and intensifies this suggestion, elaborating generally on the kinds of

people who make use of Sanctuary:

> Now unthrifts riot and run in debt, upon the boldness of these places:
> yea, and rich men run thither with poor men's goods, there they build,
> there they spend, and bid their creditors go whistle them. Men's wives
> run thither with their husbands' plate, and they say dare not abide with
> their husbands for beating. Thieves bring thither their stolen goods,

---

[1] Ibid., p. 412.   [2] Ibid., pp. 412-13.

and there live thereon; there devise they new robberies, nightly they steal out, they rob and reive and kill, and come in again, as though those places gave them not only a safeguard for the harm they have done, but a licence also to do more.[1]

Thus, he argues, the Queen's action is part of the general abuse of Sanctuary and hence stands in need of correction. Only that man who is "by lawful means in peril . . . needeth the tuition of some special privilege, which is the only ground and cause of all sanctuaries."[2] The Prince, Buckingham continues, certainly does not merit protection on these grounds, and especially so when he is there not on his own will but on that of the Queen:

> ". . . he can be no sanctuary man that neither hath wisdom to desire it nor malice to deserve it, whose life or liberty can by no lawful process stand in jeopardy. And he that taketh one out of sanctuary to do him good, I say plainly that he breaketh no sanctuary."[3]

Thus we see how More has credibly made the argument come full circle. It began by way of avoiding the issue of breaking sanctuary and now has ended by justifying it. The Archbishop had sought an excuse for his role and Buckingham has converted it into an attack on the institution itself. Thus the dialectic answers both to character and action, and makes it surprising that Shakespeare should not find any use for such a nicely constructed scene; and even more so when the Queen's reply is taken into account.

Elizabeth and her temperament have become the focal point of the attack, and More rises to the occasion in giving her a sufficiently impassioned and argumentative oration in reply. There is a logical force to her speech that is generally absent from the more lyrical declamations of the women in Shakespeare's play. She attacks in a forthright manner Buckingham's linking her to the general abuse of Sanctuary:

> Forsooth, he hath found a goodly gloss by which that place that may defend a thief may not save an innocent.[4]

---

[1]Ibid., p. 416.   [2]Ibid.   [3]Ibid., p. 417.   [4]Ibid., p. 420.

and points unerringly at the question her opponents were begging:

> Troweth the Protector (I pray God he may prove a protector), troweth he
> that I perceive not whereunto his painted process draweth?[1]

Her conclusion revives the original terms of the argument:

> The cause of my fear hath no man to do to examine, and yet fear I no fur-
> ther than the law feareth, which as learned men tell me, forbiddeth every
> man the custody of them by whose death he may inherit less land than a
> kingdom. I can no more, but whosoever he be that breaketh this holy sanc-
> tuary, I pray God shortly send him need of sanctuary when he may not come
> to it. For taken out of sanctuary would I not my mortal enemy were.[2]

That is to say, her position is exactly what the Archbishop said it would be--

fear both personal and politic. Again the argument has come full circle and

it is at this point that the dramatic element disappears and the narrative

takes over. For there is no real resolution coming from either of the two

orations. The Prince is won by Richard's party not as a result of Buckingham's

attack on Sanctuary rights: nor is he kept by his mother for all her persua-

sion. The real issue that determines the outcome was simply the presence in

the background of Richard: to the gullible his faith was good; to the suspi-

cious his power was irresistible. Thus we see another instance of More's tech-

nique in digression: an elaborate dramatic superstructure is erected in oppo-

sition to or in ignorance of the reality of its foundations; only the narrator

can describe this reality, and again we see More writing his terse, sardonic

conclusion to the episode:

> When the Lord Cardinal and these other lords with him had received this
> young Duke, they brought him into the Star Chamber, where the Protector
> took him in his arms and kissed him, with these words: "Now welcome, my
> lord, even with all my very heart." And he said in that of likelihood as
> he thought. Thereupon forthwith they brought him to the King, his brother,
> unto the Bishop's Palace at Paul's, and from thence through the city hon-
> ourably into the Tower--out of which after that day they never came abroad.[3]

This falling tone is the final punctuation of an episode; and we see

---

[1] Ibid.   [2] Ibid., p. 421.   [3] Ibid., pp. 422-23.

More next taking advantage of the pause to underline in anticipation the cor-

relation of Richard's character to the rising events.

> When the Protector had both the children in his hands, he opened himself
> more boldly, both to certain other men and also to the Duke of Buckingham.[1]

This latter relationship is handled carefully by More and in such a way that

Buckingham is virtually, even though ambiguously, absolved of any blame. He

is more the unwilling accomplice who

> . . . to this wicked enterprise, which he believed could not be avoided,
> . . . bent himself and went through, and determined that, since the common
> mischief could not be amended, he would turn it as much as he might to his
> own commodity.[2]

Shakespeare, of course, clarifies the tone of this relationship considerably

by making it develop from close collusion through Buckingham's repugnance

towards his accomplice to the final and open breach in rebellion. The inci-

dent of the Princes' death, in spite of Buckingham's strong self-interest, is

the apparent crux in this change, and this is a measure of dramatic construc-

tion: for Shakespeare after having allowed Richard to dominate the scene up

to his coronation needed from this point on to build up the forces opposed to

Richard, and Buckingham's disaffection on a humanitarian issue is perhaps the

key turn of events in the plot. But More, on the other hand, was his own

antagonist to Richard and therefore needed little help from Buckingham to pre-

sent his point of view. Thus the character of Buckingham is left neutral in

the History, something of a dupe to both sides: for just as we see in the

present passage that he was won over to Richard's cause by cunning diplomacy

so we will also see him won over to the other side later on by the equally

subtle reasoning of Morton. Thus generally he is presented as the victim of

circumstances by More, a move that was doubtless as politic as it was formal

considering the presence and influence at Court of Buckingham's descendants.

---

[1]Ibid., p. 423.   [2]Ibid., p. 424.

The sense of an enlarging drama that underlies this description is carried further in the following scenes where More presents the divided councils of the nobles. The style reflects this gradual development of intrigue in all its confusion and expanding implications, and here we see the language of metaphor appearing in a situation that More is to intensify as this episode of Richard's appeal for support moves to a climax:

> To which council [at Crosby Place], albeit there were adhibited very few, and they very secret, yet began there, here and there about, some manner of muttering among the people, as though all should not long be well, though they neither wist what they feared nor wherefore: were it that before such great things, men's hearts of a secret instinct of nature misgiveth them,--as the sea without wind swelleth of himself sometimes before a tempest,--or were it that some one man haply somewhat perceiving, filled many men with suspicion though he showed few men what he knew.[1]

By supposition and simile the world of Crosby Place is enveloped in suspicion, and yet only to the degree needed for the narrative interest. A counterforce is intimated without being asserted, a force that takes on the diffuse form of a general sense of wrongdoing abroad in the land and of a passive obstacle to Richard's ambitions. Later in this episode we shall see how this counterforce is clarified in the figure of London and its people; but as we have also observed earlier this figure is essentially a persona allowing More in all the finesse of his irony to present his point of view in a seemingly detached and objective manner.

The first result of these rumors in the city was that Stanley approached Hastings with his suspicions, and, as More puts it, these were not "common people only, that wave with the wind, but wise men . . . and lords." Hastings is presented by More in the same manner as Buckingham, as the victim of circumstances and the dupe of Richard's agents. Catesby, on the other hand, is presented more forcefully as the agent responsible for deceiving Hastings and his

---

[1]Ibid.

role in this respect is considerably greater in More than in Shakespeare; and again the reason lies in the issue of formal choice, the dramatist downplaying the accomplice to develop the protagonist and the narrator developing the accomplice to distance the deceived party from the centre of guilt.

The following scene is that of Hastings' downfall, a scene that is presented with great dramatic immediacy of action and dialogue. Indeed, it has an even sharper effect in More than in Shakespeare; for the action in More precedes the analysis of the scene, whereas in Shakespeare the spectator is conditioned by the earlier portents and premonitions observed by Hastings and Stanley. More takes only some seventy-five lines to present the substance of Shakespeare's scene, and when the variety of detail is observed--from Richard's deceptive courtesy on his entry, "My lord, you have very good strawberries at your garden in Holborn"; to his later return "with a wonderful sour angry countenance, knitting the brows, frowning and frotting and gnawing on his lips," to his display of a "werish withered arm and small," to his ingenious leading of Hastings' replies, and then to the dramatic outburst, "'What!' quoth the Protector, 'thou servest me, I ween, with "ifs" and with "ands"? . . . I arrest thee, traitor.'"--when all this immediacy of detail is considered then More's literary gifts are most apparent.[1]

Shakespeare followed the material of this scene closely in terms of subject matter and language, and in doing so achieved one of the most striking moments of his play; but even at this point of close coincidence of material the formal difference is still marked. For the point of view is established in advance by Shakespeare and in retrospect by More, and this leads to two distinct effects in the two works. More gains a greater immediacy in the action and a more general and direct sententiousness in his reflections. Thus

---

[1]Ibid., pp. 426-27.

in place of the sustained tone of foreboding in Shakespeare there comes the

sharp surprise of the incident itself in More followed by these exclamations:

> Oh good God, the blindness of our mortal nature: when he most feared, he
> was in good surety; when he reckoned himself surest, he lost his life, and
> that within two hours after.[1]

Spoken in retrospect these sententiae become a quality rather than a cause of

the action; and similarly their medieval De Casibus connotations are less the

theme of an incident than the incidentals of a more general theme. Their ref-

erence applies to the particular situation of Hastings; a situation that is

only part of a whole the theme of which is a controlled moral principle. More

never reflects on the blindness of Richard's mortal nature; to him Richard is

by nature evil, and hence justifies the judgment directed against him.

Now this point merits attention in that it underlies a common error

among critics interested in theme: for both More and Shakespeare have been

denied a moral point of view in their treatments of Richard largely because

the amoral sententiae of minor characters have been used as the basis for gen-

eral statements about the themes of the total works. But these elegiac reflec-

tions have a particular and incidental reference and are only appropriate to a

given character at a given time and place. And the particularity in the ref-

erence of these sententiae becomes even more apparent in the change of tone

with which More rounds off his treatment of Hastings. The irony lessens in

emotional force, and the effect of the Council scene is expended in the bal-

anced, distancing technique of the final sentences.

> Thus ended this honourable man, a good knight and a gentle, of great au-
> thority with his Prince, of living somewhat dissolute, plain and open to
> his enemy, and secret to his friend; easy to beguile, as he that of good
> heart and courage forestudied no perils; a loving man, and passing well
> beloved; very faithful, and trusty enough, trusting too much.[2]

Hastings' death is an important step in the development of the

---

[1] Ibid., p. 429.   [2] Ibid.

narration, and to underline this fact More resorts to an intensification of metaphoric language and to the introduction of the London citizenry to effect his point of view. "Now flew the fame of this lord's death swiftly through the city," he writes, "and so forth farther about like a wind in every man's ear."[1] To counter this development Richard issues a Proclamation to defend his actions only to see it made irrelevant by the reception it met with among the people. More describes this anticlimax deftly by telling how the people ignored the matter of the Proclamation to focus on the manner of its presentation:

> Now was this Proclamation made within two hours after that he was beheaded, and it was so curiously indited and so fair written in parchment, in so well a set hand, and therewith of itself so long a process, that every child might well perceive that it was prepared before. For all the time between his death and the proclaiming could scant have sufficed unto the bare writing alone, all had it been but in paper and scribbled forth in haste at adventure. So that upon the proclaiming thereof one that was schoolmaster of Paul's, of chance standing by, and comparing the shortness of the time with the length of the matter, said unto them that stood about him, "Here is a gay goodly cast, foul cast away for haste." And a merchant answered him that it was written by prophesy.[2]

In Shakespeare this scene follows More's account in substance but with by no means so telling an effect. The change from the Council chambers to the streets of London is in the play an abrupt one and the people are all too obviously a point of view device. But even more important than this is the fact that Shakespeare has to present the people as certain given characters on stage: they have to have a real existence. In doing this, however, Shakespeare is forced into distorting the formal nature of More's context; for, and as we have previously argued, the people are essentially an extension of the narrator's point of view, a device for substituting an apparently objective and vividly narrative reaction for the more personal judgment of the narrator himself. The people exist metaphorically in More: their role is that of observers on the sidelines, careful to keep out of trouble, but nonetheless mocking and almost

---

[1] Ibid.

[2] Ibid., p. 430.

enjoying the fraudulence of people in high places. Thus they intensify the general tone of the narration while at the same time they deflect the invective of the narrator into seemingly descriptive detail.

They are then a foil for the narrator, and we see how flexibly More can make his play in the ensuing description of Mistress Shore: for here he moves through a series of scarcely, but nonetheless nicely, differentiated points of view ironically observing Richard's sudden onslaught of moral scruples over his brother's concubine. More projects his scorn through the people when he tells how "every man laughed" at Richard and at his posturing as:

> (a goodly continent Prince, clean and faultless of himself, sent out of heaven into this vicious world for the amendment of men's manners).[1]

Thus from two points of view Richard is made ridiculous in his hypocrisy. But a third element also enters this scene when More chooses to present Mistress Shore from a sympathetic point of view. Her shame and open penance are vividly pictured, and it is specifically the people who sense her misfortune most strongly. As she walks the streets of London naked, and as she sinks into the ignominy of her new life, and as the persons she had once befriended desert her, she becomes in herself a symbol of misfortune that More elaborates on, conscious as he does so of the several levels of society he is including under the single moral:

> I doubt not some shall think this woman too slight a thing to be written of and set among the remembrances of great matters: which they shall specially think, that haply shall esteem her only by that they now see her. But meseemeth the chance so much the more worthy to be remembered, in how much she is now in the more beggarly condition, unfriended and worn out of acquaintance, after good substance, after as good favour with the Prince, after as great suit and seeking to with all those that those days had business to speed, as many other men were in their times, which be now famous only by the infamy of their ill deeds.[2]

Mistress Shore, More relates, is still alive as he writes and is now a member

---

[1]Ibid., p. 431.   [2]Ibid., p. 432.

of, if not less than, the people she had once risen above. Thus he sees in
her a classic De Casibus example, but with the added twist of her being closely
related to the lower orders of society; she is therefore a focus for both
sympathy and satire, and offers altogether a striking illustration of the
social reference of More's point of view. For his centre of values is the
lowest common denominator of both Court and citizenry with Mistress Shore a
measure of the interaction of the two worlds.

We may see then that the uniqueness of More's formal point of view lies
in the duality of its reference, a proposition that the ensuing narration sup-
ports. For after this extensive and sympathetic excursion into the world of
the citizens More reverts back to the Court and to a tone of sardonic irony.
He tells how Rivers and his companions meet their fate at Pomfret, observing
briefly that their only guilt is "that they were good men, too true to the
King, and too high to the Queen."[1] And following on this we see the action
moving to the wider and more public arena in which Richard attempts to justify
his deeds and his claims to the crown. To do this he must establish the ille-
gitimacy not only of his nephews but of his brother Edward as well, and this
leads More into an elaborate digression on the courtship of Edward and
Elizabeth in which all the parties concerned feel the sharp edge of the nar-
rator's wit.

More's bite is indeed worse than his bark; for while his tone may be
mild his observations are shrewd and unsparing, as we see when he presents
Elizabeth Gray deftly failing to fend off the advances of the King:

> She showed him plain that as she wist herself too simple to be his wife,
> she thought herself too good to be his concubine.[2]

Her virtue was rewarded with a marriage in which, as Edward's mother observes,

---

[1]Ibid., p. 433.   [2]Ibid., p. 435.

"many more commend the maiden's fortune than the master's wisdom."[1] Edward,

for his part, is a projection of More's own facetiousness as when he defends

his actions to his mother by saying:

> "that she is a widow and hath already children, by God's blessed Lady, I
> am a bachelor and have some too: and so each of us hath a proof that
> neither of us is likely to be barren."[2]

Thus we see in Elizabeth a curve of good fortune the opposite of Mistress

Shore's: for from being the wife of a former enemy of Edward's, at which time

she must have "prayed full heartily" for his downfall, her fortune changed to

one in which, as More sardonically concludes, "God loved her better than to

grant her her boon."[3]

The devastating tone of this treatment of the Court is all the more

effective in being a digression. For it saves More from the role of contin-

ually attacking his central subject Richard, while at the same time it allows

him to envelop the entire context in an ethos of false values. Obliquely and

facetiously, he considers the world of kings and queens as a world which has

no understanding of itself, and which possesses _virtu_ without virtue.

But More can also put this position in a forthright manner when he

chooses, as he does at the conclusion of this digression in his portrait of

Warwick, the man who so seriously played at the game of making kings:

> . . . a wise man and a courageous warrior, and of such strength, what for
> his lands, his alliance, and favour with all the people, that he made kings
> and put down kings almost at his pleasure, and not impossible to have at-
> tained it himself, if he had not reckoned it a greater thing to make a king
> than to be a king.[4]

The total effect of this digression, which at first seems to break up the flow

of More's narrative, is therefore to enhance it. For in its very indirection

it establishes the bases of the world in which Richard moves and makes his

success seem all the more probable and credible. There can be no real

---

[1]_Ibid._   [2]_Ibid._, p. 436.   [3]_Ibid._, p. 437.   [4]_Ibid._

opposition to Richard in a world of such weak values: Richard has to be depicted in relation to the people of London to be seen in his true colors; and this is what happens next in the brilliant scenes of Paul's Cross, the Guildhall, and Baynard's Castle.

This is not to say, of course, that Richard meets with opposition on his own terms nor that the opposition of the people is in any sense successful. The opposition, on the contrary, is no more than an attitude and a moral sense, the essence of which lies in an inability to be deceived, and ultimately in an absence of assent. It defines values negatively, and includes within itself a range of attitudes from droll irony to passivity to pathos: but given this variety within such a consistency of attitude, Richard can find no escape from the relentless deflation to which More subjects him.

The well-known sermon of Doctor Shaw is a masterpiece of narrative and dramatic construction, for Richard casts himself as an actor here who waits in the wings until the audience has been adequately prepared for his entrance. It is Doctor Shaw who has to put forward the tedious argument of the Princes' bastardy and from it infers as the climax of his speech and to coincide with Richard's entrance:

> "This is . . . the father's own figure, this is his own countenance, the very print of his visage, the sure undoubted image, the plain, express likeness of that noble Duke."[1]

As if the irony of this alleged likeness were not enough, the whole situation collapses into grim farce when Richard misses his cue and when Doctor Shaw is left with his words hanging in the air. He repeats them and this only makes the situation worse. More does not have to add a single word to this scene to make his point. It is, in the strict sense, dramatic in itself and contains its own point of view: but why Shakespeare should have ignored this scene is

---

[1]Ibid., p. 439.

a measure of what is happening to Richard in it and of how far beyond the

dramatic More does eventually go in Richard's denigration. For here we have a

good example of the difference between the anti- and the ultra-heroic protag-

onists of More and Shakespeare: for how could Shakespeare after allowing

Richard the role of the overwhelming genius of the first three acts of his play

suddenly turn and destroy the credibility of his plot by showing him as a ver-

itable buffoon caught and embarrassed publicly on the streets of London among

his own subjects. What Shakespeare does on the other hand is to omit this

scene altogether and to concentrate on those scenes where Richard is still the

master and in these scenes to convert the irony at Richard's expense in More

into an irony on Richard's part. Thus we find the impressive introductory

scene of Act III, Scene v where Richard and Buckingham forestall the charge of

hypocrisy by deliberately assuming it within their role:

> Gloucester. Come, cousin, canst thou quake, and change thy colour,
>   Murder thy breath in middle of a word,
> And then again begin, and stop again,
> As if thou wert distraught and mad with terror?

> Buckingham. Tut, I can counterfeit the deep tragedian,
>   Speak and look back, and prey on every side,
> Tremble and start at wagging of a straw,
> Intending deep suspicion: ghastly looks
> Are at my service, like enforced smiles;
> And both are ready in their offices,
> At any time, to grace my stratagems.   III,i,1-11

This change from third person ironic observation to first person self-

revelation is therefore one of the central cruxes in the transformation

Shakespeare worked on More's material and in the elevation of an anti- to an

ultra-heroic Richard.

And that More's narrative method depresses Richard is nowhere more

strikingly apparent than in these scenes at Paul's Cross, the Guildhall, and

Baynard's Castle: and it is the people who are the index of this point of view;

for the anticlimax of Doctor Shaw's oration is thrown into sharp relief by
the climax of their feelings. The people were meant to cry out in acclamation
on Richard's entrance, but were

> . . . so far from crying "King Richard!" that they stood as they had been
> turned to stones, for wonder of this shameful sermon. After which once
> ended, the preacher got him home and never after durst look out for shame
> but keep him out of sight like an owl.[1]

And this climax is all the more effective in that More has up to this point
restricted his narration to the direct speech of the orator in which Shaw is
carried away with his own rhetoric until he discovers in the loss of his audi-
ence the crushing indictment of his own hypocrisy. The felt silence of the
spectators, the specious nature of the speech itself, and the maladroit han-
dling of Richard's entrance--all are part of a piece of unified narration that
in its sense of timing, in its simultaneous climax and anticlimax, and in its
interweaving of several points of view comprises an intense moment in More's
History.

This same "marvellous obstinate silence" is then repeated at the
Guildhall in spite of the efforts of that "marvellously well-spoken" orator
Buckingham. He meets almost the same fate as Doctor Shaw, finishing his speech
to find "all was hushed and mute and not one word answered thereunto."[2] He re-
peats his speech on the Mayor's advice that "percase they perceive you not
well." The City Recorder, Fitzwilliam, is then pressed into service, but so
"tempered his tale that he showed everything as the Duke's words and no part
as his own."[3] Everyone in the audience is concerned with detaching himself
from any responsibility for what is happening, and so Buckingham has to leave
with no more comfort than the sound of his own faction at the back of the hall
crying out the requested "King Richard! King Richard!"[4] The people generally,
however, do no more than:

---

[1]Ibid., p. 439.   [2]Ibid., p. 443.   [3]Ibid., p. 444.   [4]Ibid.

. . . whisper among themselves secretly, that the voice was neither loud nor distinct but as it were the sound of a swarm of bees, . . .[1]

and when the meeting breaks up, it is this same tone that pervades the whole

scene:

> . . . the company dissolved and departed, the more part all sad, some with glad semblance that were not very merry, and some of those that came thither with the Duke, not able to dissemble their sorrow, were fain at his back to turn their face to the wall while the dolour of their heart burst out at their eyes.[2]

The final scene in this episode of Richard's appeal to the people is

also a brilliant piece of narration, and all the more so for being constructed

along opposite lines from the incidents just described. For here it is Richard

who displays his "marvellous obstinate silence" from the walls of Baynard's

Castle in declining to be convinced: he demurs at the oratory and begs off

the offer of the crown. He allows himself however to be argued ultimately into

a position where he must accept the crown and when he does so:

> . . . there was a great shout, crying "King Richard! King Richard!" And then the lords went up to the King . . . and the people departed, talking diversely of the matter, every man as his fantasy gave him.[3]

Now the implication of this last sentence has been again concealed

throughout the preceding narration, and we see at this stage the way in which

More redresses the balance in his over-all view of the situation. For from

concentration on the action itself and the impassioned arguments of the speakers

the narrator now turns to an opposite manner suggesting diversity in place of

concentration, and low toned whispers in place of the rhetoric, and even more

significantly the honest hesitations of the people to act in place of the

hypocritical reluctance of Richard to usurp the throne. The people's only

power is that of their point of view; and even this is finally rationalized

into an acquiescence but an acquiescence that is presented through More's

---

[1] Ibid.   [2] Ibid., p. 445.   [3] Ibid., p. 447.

narration as an acquiescence without assent. For they know that what they have

just seen is no more than an illusion of public procedures; but they also know

that life (and their lives in particular) has to abide by its illusions. Thus

in answer to those who were outrightly declaring the procedures to be a sham:

> . . . some excused that again and said all must be done in good order though.
> And men must sometimes, for the manner sake, not be a-knowen what they know.
> For at the consecration of a bishop, every man wotteth well, by the paying
> for his bulls, that he purposeth to be one, an though he pay for nothing
> else. And yet must he be twice asked whether he will be bishop or no, and
> he must twice say nay, and at the third time take it as compelled thereunto
> by his own will. And in a stage play all the people know right well that
> he that playeth the Sultan is percase a souter. Yet if one should can so
> little good, to show out of season what acquaintance he hath with him, and
> call him by his own name while he standeth in his majesty, one of his tor-
> mentors might hap to break his head, and worthy, for marring of the play.
> And so they said that these matters be King's games, as it were stage plays,
> and for the more part played upon scaffolds. In which poor men be but the
> lookers-on. And they that wise be will meddle no farther. For they that
> sometime step up and play with them, when they cannot play their parts,
> they disorder the play and do themselves no good.[1]

Thus the narration neutralizes at the same time as it initiates every

possible point of view, and it is this principle which describes the essential

formal nature of More's History at its best: for while the tone of the narra-

tion sustains its focus on events it also sketches in the moral coloration of

these same events. It is in this principle that both the clarity and the depth

of effect of More's writing lie. It is also a point that needs to be stressed

at this stage, for what follows on this incident finds More reverting back to

the manner of his initial presentation of character and assuming until the end

of his work the prerogatives of a narrator over his subject. An explicit con-

demnation of Richard now reappears in the narration and in its reappearance it

brings a halt to the most brilliant section of the History; and the fact that

Shakespeare has less success in his handling of this central episode of Richard's

conspiracy is the best measure of More's accomplishment. For the narrator has

---

[1]Ibid.

made use of the formal techniques of his genre, particularly with respect to the issue of point of view, in such a way that the dramatist is unable to follow him without confounding the form in which he is working. Thus the citizens of London play a minor role in Shakespeare, while in More they constitute the crux of his presentation.

The change in More's tone after the Coronation is remarkable: for in contrast to his preceding manner of defining by implication the morality of the events he is describing he now becomes direct and inferential; he enters the scene himself and speaks in his own voice; he sets up a sense of logic for the events he is about to describe; he tightens and balances his sentence structure to the point of epigram; he develops, in all, a circumscribed context for Richard to move in. His transition from the Coronation to the subsequent reign is abrupt and in its conclusion decisive:

> Now fell there mischiefs thick. And as the thing evil got is never well kept, through all the time of his reign never ceased there cruel death and slaughter, till his own destruction ended it. But as he finished his time with the last death and the most righteous, that is to wit, his own: so began he with the most piteous and wicked, I mean the lamentable murder of his innocent nephews, the young King and his tender brother.[1]

His admission that sure knowledge of Richard's role in the Princes' death is lacking is of little account; in its place More has his own authorities:

> I shall rehearse you the dolorous end of those babes, not after every way that I have heard, but after that way that I have so heard by such men and such means as methinketh it were hard but it should be true.[2]

In the subsequent narration of the death of the Princes it is noteworthy that Buckingham is not connected in any way with what happened. This was to be the telling innovation Shakespeare made in More's plot for the purposes of a dramatic reversal; but More's account nonetheless has its own values. It fastens on Tyrell and the page as the chief agents of this crime, and

---

[1] Ibid., p. 448.   [2] Ibid., p. 449.

Richard is reduced to their level. The sordid nature of their intrigue is

underlined by More in his pointed description:

> For upon this page's words King Richard arose (for this communication had
> he sitting at the draught, a convenient carpet for such a counsel) . . .[1]

The attack on Richard is unceasing; in speaking, for example, of the place

where the Princes were buried, More has no real information to impart but turns

his lack of evidence into a further incrimination of Richard:

> . . . he allowed not, as I have heard, that burying in so vile a corner,
> saying he would have them buried in a better place because they were a
> King's sons. Lo, the honourable courage of a King![2]

The attack culminates in a portrait of Richard that anticipates his end in the

manner of the conventional ranting tyrant of the theatre. It is a portrait

that makes the unfinished History seem less unfinished than in actual fact it

is: it offers, in short, the principles, if not the full particulars, of what

is about to happen:

> King Richard himself, . . . slain in the field, hacked and hewn of his
> enemies' hands, harried on horseback dead, his hair in despite torn and
> tugged like a cur dog; and the mischief that he took within less than three
> years of the mischief that he did, and yet all the meantime spent in much
> pain and trouble outward, much fear, anguish and sorrow within. For I have
> heard by credible report, of such as were secret with his chamberers, that
> after this abominable deed done, he never had quiet in his mind, he never
> thought himself sure: where he went abroad, his eyes whirled about, his
> body privily fenced, his hand ever on his dagger, his countenance and man-
> ner like one always ready to strike again; he took ill rest o' nights, lay
> long waking and musing, sore wearied with care and watch, rather slumbered
> than slept, troubled with fearful dreams, suddenly sometime started up,
> leaped out of his bed and ran about the chamber, so was his restless heart
> continually tossed and tumbled with the tedious impression and stormy re-
> membrance of his abominable deed.[3]

It should also be noted that the above description complements the opening por-

trait of Richard and serves with it to define the general structure of More's

narration; for given such an aberration of moral and natural principles as is

to be found in the first portrait, the events of his career and his final ap-

pearance are the logical outcome. There is then this simple generality of

---

[1]Ibid., p. 450.   [2]Ibid., p. 451.   [3]Ibid., pp. 451-52.

character as the principle of·unity in the <u>History</u>, a generality that may be asserted at times and at other times subtly assumed.

What remains of the <u>History</u> is the incomplete narration of Buckingham's defection, and in its presentation we may finally detect the same formulae of plot, character, and theme construction so often noted throughout this analysis. For the whole action is seen as emanating from Richard's situation: he is now the guilt-ridden tyrant and rebellion is the logical outcome of his rule; and given such a classic situation little motivation is required of the two characters. Indeed, More goes to some length to deny that Richard and Buckingham were at odds with each other:

> . . . many right wise men think it unlikely (the deep dissimulating nature of those both men considered, and what need in that green world the Protector had of the Duke, and in what peril the Duke stood if he fell once in suspicion of that tyrant) that either the Protector would give the occasion of displeasure or the Duke the Protector occasion of mistrust.[1]

And given two such characters in such a generic relationship, there is the need of a middle character to bring them into a more specific relationship just as it was earlier observed that Richard in his appeal to the people worked through his several accomplices. And just as these earlier episodes displayed a fine subtlety in describing the relations between characters so too does this final episode contain evidence of More's mastery over characters in action.

Essentially the relationship concerned is that of Buckingham and Bishop Morton, and the conversation that takes place is a measure of their two characters. Each is interested in the other's real mind, but each is afraid of revealing his own. A gulf of reticence divides them and it is an instance of More's narrative skill that the interplay of the two minds should be caught in all their subtlety.

More doubtless had the story straight from Morton, his patron, but the

---

[1] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 453.

narration of it is obviously his own in that it consists of an interweaving of what is general and what is particular. For on one level Morton is a formalized character, one with "a deep insight in politic worldly drifts," able on the one hand to create dissension between Richard and Buckingham while able on the other hand ultimately to reconcile the two Houses of York and Lancaster through devising the marriage of Henry to the young Elizabeth. In this latter respect, More does not hesitate to generalize Morton's role in serving:

> . . . both his masters at once, with infinite benefit to the realm, by the conjunction of those two bloods in one, whose several titles had long unquieted the land, . . .[1]

a role which Edward Hall was later to ascribe to God himself.

But that More did see this role in the more specific terms of political history is integral with the structure of his entire narration, and the particular stratagems of Morton in his conversation with Buckingham lend strong support to this idea. For Morton undertakes to lead while seeming to be led, while his listener has to be led unwittingly into leading. Thus Morton rehearses for Buckingham his relations to the several kings of his time until in coming to Richard he stops in mid-sentence:

> "And so for the late Protector and now King . . ." And even there he left, saying that he had already meddled too much with the world, and would from that day meddle with his book and his beads and no farther. Then longed the Duke sore to hear what he would have said, because he ended with the King and there so suddenly stopped, . . .[2]

But Morton, even at this response, is not ready to declare himself and adroitly deflects the Duke's inquiry with the demurrer:

> "I love not to talk much of Princes, as thing not all out of peril, though the word be without fault, forasmuch as it shall not be taken as the party meant it, but as it pleaseth the Prince to construe it."[3]

To make the point even clearer, while at the same time delaying the climax, Morton digresses with the fable of Aesop concerning the beast who fled on hearing

---

[1]Ibid., p. 454.   [2]Ibid.   [3]Ibid., p. 455.

that the lion had made a decree against horned beasts in the forest, and who,

on being laughed at by the fox and being told that what he had on his forehead

was not a horn, replied, "But what an he call it an horn, where am I then?"

Buckingham takes the point and gives in turn that assurance of good faith and

secrecy that the Bishop has been seeking without stating; that is to say,

Morton has given nothing away but has got something in return. The final sen-

tences illustrate this principle further:

> The Duke laughed merrily at the tale, and said, "My lord, I warrant you,
> neither the lion nor the boar shall pick any matter at anything here
> spoken, for it shall never come near their ear." "In good faith, Sir,"
> said the Bishop, "if it did, the thing that I was about to say, taken as
> well afore God I meant it, could deserve but thank. And yet taken as I
> ween it would, might happen to turn me to little good and you to less."
> Then longed the Duke yet much more to wit what it was. Whereupon the
> Bishop said: "In good faith, my lord, as for the late Protector, since
> he is now King in possession, I purpose not to dispute his title. But for
> the weal of this realm whereof his Grace hath now the governance, and
> whereof I am myself one poor member, I was about to wish that to those
> good abilities whereof he hath already right many, little needing my
> praise, it might yet have pleased God for the better store, to have given
> him some of such other excellent virtues meet for the rule of a realm, as
> our Lord hath planted in the person of your Grace."[1]

Thus Buckingham finds the expected criticism turned into a compliment, and a

situation in which his ambition and his vanity coincide. The Bishop now has

him where he wants him, and here the History ends.

An interesting problem, however, arises when we consider the corre-

sponding material to this conclusion in Richard III and the degree to which

Shakespeare was indebted to his Chronicle sources for the denouement of his

play. For here not only does More cease to be the primary source, but even in

the material he did provide up to Buckingham's rebellion there is a greater

degree of change than has previously been true of Shakespeare's use of the

History: that is to say, it is firstly not More but Hall, Holinshed, and

ultimately Polydore Vergil who, in that they have completed the Richard story,

---

[1] Ibid., p. 455.

are Shakespeare's sources for the end of Richard's career; and then, secondly, in such details of Richard's fall as More does give, Shakespeare has changed the whole issue of certain elements such as Buckingham's motivation, simplifying More's extensive analysis by deleting Morton as the agent and presenting Buckingham as caught in the dilemma of his demands on Richard and his abhorrence at the proposed murder of the Princes. This dilemma, which Shakespeare introduced into this relationship, works in two ways: Richard uses it in an attempt to get further service from Buckingham by denying him the rewards for what he has already done; Buckingham, on the other hand, makes use of the dilemma by resolving it into a double grievance and hence a cause for defection and hence a reason for his changing sides. Thus in this simple change Shakespeare has created his point of dramatic reversal in terms of the characters themselves; the expectations of Richard and Buckingham one to the other have been both annulled and the action proceeds in an opposite direction from that which the two men had been anticipating. Thus Shakespeare has found dramatic propriety for his incident through his change, just as we have argued More has achieved a narrative propriety by his emphasis on the intermediary character of Morton.

But this acknowledgment that Shakespeare either did not use More or changed what he did use is only part of the story of the relation of the two denouements. For if we allow that the points described above relate to material particulars, it is possible to qualify our argument and say that in general and in a formal sense Shakespeare owes a great deal to More. And to argue in this way we need to revert to the portrait that More gives of Richard at the beginning of his reign, and see in this the essence of Shakespeare's final presentation of Richard.

The portrait, first of all, contains, with the exception of the

material dealing with the Richard-Elizabeth confrontation and the dream scene
on Bosworth Field, the essential elements of the final scenes of <u>Richard III</u>;
and, as we observed in our discussion, these elements are those of a given
kind of character, the conventional tyrant of classical literature and the
medieval stage; this means, in short, that Shakespeare, after the coronation,
is still structuring his plot around character, even though it is a different
kind of character from the Richard of the earlier acts. The second point to
note is that the abrupt change in Shakespeare's presentation of Richard mirrors
the abrupt transition in More from Richard's rise to his fall. No time is
wasted in either presentation showing Richard enjoying the fruits of kingship;
he is at once presented as the victim of his own devices. And this technique
of concentration becomes all the more relevant in contrast to the presentation
of the final events of Richard's life in the other narrative sources that
Shakespeare presumably used; for Vergil, Hall, and Holinshed lose the over-
whelming sense of logic that More and Shakespeare see in Richard's fall in
that their narratives wander away from their subject and describe in detail
the life of Henry in France. That is to say, their point of view depends upon
their historical material; and since the material at this stage changes rad-
ically, their narration of it also must observe the same change. But More's
method, being essentially deductive throughout, concentrates only on such
material as is necessary to complete the implicit argument of his narrative.

And to say finally that in More and Shakespeare the material of the
denouement is a function of the form, and that the assumed form is that of a
conventional theatric character, the prototypes of which abound on the native
English stage in the Devils, Herods, and Pilates of the Mystery plays, is
ultimately to anticipate the whole course of this study. For what is at stake
in this long preliminary analysis of the sources of <u>Richard III</u> is the simple

proposition that while Shakespeare found the material for his play in the Chronicles, he found the form of his protagonist and of his play's structure generally in the tradition of the native stage.

More's History therefore throws light on the argument in two quite distinct ways: for if, first of all, it is agreed from the above analysis that there is a describable literary form to his work, it must follow that Shakespeare did not and could not make use of it for his essential formal structure on the grounds that in principle a clear narrative form cannot be directly transformed into a clear dramatic form; and then, secondly, if it is also true that More and Shakespeare generally resemble each other in their respective denouements, it is because More found the form for his material by having Richard assume the theatrical persona of a falling tyrant. Thus both aspects ultimately resolve themselves into the one issue: that if the historical tradition of the Elizabethan villain-hero form is to be described, it has to be done in terms of its own genre, the native theatre.

But, as was mentioned above, this is to anticipate the total argument of this analysis of material sources, and before we can submit this conclusion with full confidence we need to consider the several other appearances that Richard makes in literature before his consummation in Shakespeare. These other points of reference consist essentially in the presentation of Richard in narrative poetry and then on the stage: and while none of them calls for as extensive treatment as that given More, they yet attain an importance in our argument through their very lack of importance. For they illustrate the simple point that a material source does not determine a literary form; that is, they all share More's History in common as their ultimate source, but to move from the ballad "The Song of Lady Bessy" to the Mirror for Magistrates to Legge's Richardus Tertius to The True Tragedie is to encounter a wide variety of

forms, none of which owes much to the formal elements of its source in More.

Why therefore it should be said that "Shakespeare's Richard is More's Richard" is a nice question in the light of this general deviation from More's pattern throughout the sixteenth century. But presumably what is really being said by Chambers is that both More and Shakespeare are eminently successful in their respective handlings of Richard. What is therefore really being compared in this statement is the common quality of genius. But, as the argument of this chapter must have made clear, the true object of literary history lies not in the comparison of effects but of causes; and to find the cause for Shakespeare's success in Richard III is to take the issue well beyond the material sources of the Chronicles and even beyond the exemplary History of Sir Thomas More to a world abstracted from the particulars of common material to the essentials of analogous forms.

We have proposed in the above discussion that a dramatic form cannot be directly inferred from a narrative form, and we may now take this process of differentiation a step further and propose that different kinds of narrative form need not necessarily be inferred even from one another. This is admittedly not an issue which will immediately appear to be relevant to our over-all inquiry into dramatic form, but in terms of the methodology of our approach to the subject through sources several issues will arise from a consideration of Richard in poetic narratives that will ultimately support our total argument.

The ballad "The Song of Lady Bessy" is a case in point in that it contains no material that Shakespeare was to use in his play, and as such bears no direct relation to the present subject; but it is relevant in the sense that it illustrates the principle of the formal choice of material in quite the opposite way to Shakespeare. For what happens in this simple ballad is that an element of the Richard story has been selected for especial emphasis, an

element that neither More nor Shakespeare paid any attention to and one that
assumes an entirely different approach to the subject.

For here the interest is directed towards the counterforce in the
Richard story, the young Princess Elizabeth primarily and then to a lesser de-
gree her husband-to-be Henry. For, as this ballad tells the story, it is
Elizabeth who stirs up the opposition to Richard much as Morton does in More's
History; and balancing her activity is that of Henry himself, who in a symbolic
gesture on Bosworth Field pleads to be the leader of the troops.[1]

Now this heightening of the counterforce is an entirely credible poetic
stratagem, despite its lack of sanction in the Chronicles. Indeed, it is a
more probable working-out of the so-called "Tudor myth" than either More or
Shakespeare's presentations of the issue, and its rationale seems simple and
obvious. It begins with the assumption of the successful establishment of the
Tudors in the marriage of Henry and Elizabeth, and then proceeds to reason
backwards to what must have been the appropriate causes for so blessed an ef-
fect. Thus the two principal characters are endowed with heroic qualities and
achievements while Richard is relegated to a quite secondary role in his own
story. That is to say, it illustrates the myth-making principle of poetry in
both its good and bad senses: it is, on the one hand, a more overt expression
of the great assumption of Tudor values; it is, on the other hand, an expres-
sion which in developing the "what might have happened" on the basis of this
assumption contradicts the "what happened" of historical record. We have,
therefore, in this slight ballad, besides the issue of form determining mate-
rial, an interesting point of reference for assessing the emphasis that needs
to be placed on the thematic influence of the "Tudor myth" in Richard III; and
the obvious conclusion is that this influence is not as direct as is often
thought.

---

[1]See Churchill, op. cit., pp. 231-34.

But yet another point also emerges from this ballad in that its plot bears a resemblance to that of The True Tragedie, a play that has received considerable attention in modern scholarship as a possible influence on Shakespeare's Richard III. Both ballad and play share this common interest in the counterforce, and its development through certain specific characters; and while The True Tragedie does not develop this element exclusively, it is still sufficiently developed to convert the play into a different formal pattern from the one Shakespeare followed.

"The Song of Lady Bessy" therefore shows how given a different formal principle a quite new body of material can be found to give this principle expression, thereby proving that while More's material may be the basis of most of the sixteenth century accounts of Richard it is not the determinant of the forms in which the story found expression. And even when we revert to the mainstream of this tradition leading from More to Shakespeare and consider such a narrative form as the Mirror for Magistrates this same principle holds true, even though it is here not so much an issue of a totally different principle determining the form as the intrinsic principles of presentation in the form itself.

For the Mirror for Magistrates differs from More, and especially from Shakespeare, in that it is constructed as a narrative within a narrative; that is, it consists of a group of men telling the story of civil war in England by letting their historical subjects describe their own lives. Thus it consists essentially of a series of autobiographical monologues told from a post-mortem point of view to one of a group of narrators who in turn tells it to the reader. In practice, this makes for a cumbersome form of presentation, but we need to set this issue of its effect aside for the moment in order to consider the interrelations of its complex mechanism of presentation. For the material

being presented is being given form in a most intricate way determined by these interrelationships of structure. In principle, then, there are four kinds of relationships to be taken into account: first is the relation of the historical subject to himself, then of the subject to the interlocutor, then of the interlocutor to himself and the group, then of the interlocutor to the reader. And each relationship exercises its own peculiar powers and limitations.

The first relationship is perhaps the most important in that it is the cause of the poetic element in the work as a whole. For the _Mirror_ is the double concentration of the material of history: first from the panoramic scope of the Chronicles to the limits of a single life; and then from the variety of this life to the focal point of consciousness of after-life introspection and reminiscence on the part of the subject. Now this concentration of particulars into a point of view is a poetic formula, and should succeed more often than it actually does in the _Mirror_; but instead of the sustained lyrical and elegiac tone that might be expected the point of view of after-life introspection in itself proves an excessive constriction. With death a _fait accompli_ for the subjects the main emotional attitudes that get developed are those of antipathy to Fortune or to an enemy if the subject thinks he has been unjustly dealt with, contrition if he thinks the opposite, and anguish if he is not sure. But death is so final that little emotional equivocation ever really does take place. If, however, we conceive of this formula without the factor of death as a thing of the past but of the present or impending future, we have the basic formula of the dramatic monologues of Clarence and Richard II in Shakespeare and of Faustus and Edward II in Marlowe. Post-mortem introspection therefore leads only to morals; pre-mortem introspection, however, leads to dramatic lyricism of the highest order.

Now this is a point that calls for analysis in its own right, but at

this stage it may simply be observed that the authors of the Mirror had morality as their intended effect, and as such this rendering of the De Casibus formula suited their purposes. And if this first relationship of the subject to himself does not achieve this end then the other three certainly do, so that by the time the effect of the narrative filters through the structure of the Mirror to the reader it is divested of any emotional coloration it might once have had and is converted into a colorless but clear ethic.

To revert, however, to the issue of how this form determines the material of the Richard story, we may find a pertinent illustration in the Clarence legend; for here we find the clear attribution of Clarence's death to Richard. This point, it should be noted, was for a long time assumed on the part of scholars to be a gratuitous addition on Shakespeare's part to the account of Richard's crimes; More's hint of Richard's guilt was not accepted as sufficient warrant for Shakespeare's assertions, and until G. B. Churchill's study the most charitable explanation of the issue was that of Gairdner who saw the problem in formal terms:

> . . . the dramatist, of course, had not the means of saying, like the biographer, "But of all this point there is no certainty." So what in the first writer was a mere surmise was represented as a fact upon the stage to reflect the character intended.[1]

What we may now see is that the Clarence legend of the Mirror played a part in this transition, and that, as Churchill and Dover Wilson have shown, since Shakespeare did make use of the Mirror for this particular incident, the business of Clarence's death came down to him as a material fact. This qualifies then the charge of gratuitous slander against Shakespeare in this respect, although in itself it is of little importance from the point of view of formal inquiry; for in all probability Shakespeare would have done the same even

---

[1]James Gairdner, History of the Life and Reign of Richard the Third (London, 1878). Quoted by Churchill, op. cit., p. 244.

without the material support of the _Mirror_, and for our present purposes,
Gairdner's theory is still the most satisfying explanation of the problem.

But how the _Mirror_ in its own right brings about this change is an in-
teresting measure of its own form: for Clarence offers a good illustration of
the way in which an after-life point of view leads to a simplification of ma-
terial and emotional issues. For since it was his own life Clarence would
hardly be credible if he were not omniscient, which means that his death must
be accounted for in no uncertain terms; and since Richard had been implicated
in the deed by More, the simplest solution would be to attribute it to him;
and since the approach of the _Mirror_ was primarily moral, and since, even more
generally, Richard had become the villain of Tudor thinking, there needed to
be no restraint in the allegations made against him. Thus in the _Mirror_
Clarence tells how "like a wulfe the tirant Richard came" to supervise the
deed in person.

In this way, then, the formal relation of subject to self shapes the
historical material. But there are also other formal effects resulting from
these several relationships in the _Mirror_'s structure. The point of view of
post-mortem omniscience, for example, also tends to fix the tone of the narra-
tion; the narrator is at all times conscious of his own death, and therefore
tells the events of his life with this in mind. The result is the small scope
of emotional development that was mentioned above as a characteristic of the
Mirror. This is, of course, in marked contrast to More's presentation, which,
while generally developing the narration from an omniscient point of view, at
certain times seems to surrender the narration to the characters themselves
when they can best portray More's point by their own actions and utterances:
thus, as we have seen, the beginning and the end of Richard's career are pre-
sented by More in moral terms, while the central section of his conspiracy is

presented obliquely and almost in terms of pure narration from a neutral point
of view.

But nowhere does this formal issue become more apparent than in the
two presentations of Richard himself to be found in the Mirror and in Shake-
speare; for in the one a Richard appears who knows everything; in the other a
Richard, as we will see, who essentially knows nothing. That is to say, the
Mirror Richard, looking at his career in the light of his own death, is pre-
sented as understanding his own evil and possessing a most moral conscience;
this is, of course, an impossible principle of narrative presentation in this
instance and presumably the author of the piece realized this himself in that
the analytic element in Richard is made subordinate to the simple narrative
one. The result is nevertheless the negation of virtually every quality that
Shakespeare was to endue his Richard with: for the central principle of
Shakespeare's Richard is that of a character who cannot for a moment consider
either conscience or death, a character whose life is lived, and whose effect
is derived from so doing, in spite of the laws of morality. The fact that it
cannot be shown that Shakespeare used the Mirror narrative of Richard is there-
fore not surprising.

What is of interest in this respect, however, is that another point of
view regarding Richard does find its way into the Mirror, and one for which we
can see parallels both in More and Shakespeare. For the relationship of the
several interlocutors among themselves is suggestive of the role that the
people of London play in More and of the problem of the point of view in
Richard III. This relationship of the interlocutors is developed in the pas-
sages of prose linking the various verse narrations, and in these passages
Baldwin and his fellows often comment on the preceding or subsequent narra-
tions, at times merely to enforce the moral but at other times to criticize

the presentation as being unfitted to the subject. When, for example, Jack

Cade finishes his tale, one of the group comments ironically on a peasant being

so knowledgeable in astrology; and a similar situation arises with regard to

Richard and serves to illustrate the general problem of this study, the issue

of his appropriate formal presentation. Thus Baldwin writes:

> When I had read this, we had much talke about it. For it was thought not
> vehement ynough for so violent a man as kyng Rychard had bene. The matter
> was wel ynough lyked of sum, but the meeter was mysliked almost of all.
> And when divers therefore would not allowe it, what (quoth one). You
> knowe not whereupon you sticke: elles you would not so much mislike this
> because of the uncertayne meter. The cumlynes called by the Rhetoricians
> decorum, is specially to be observed in al thinges. Seyng than that kyng
> Rychard never kept measure in any of his doings, seing also he speaketh
> in Hel, whereas is no order: it were agaynst the decorum of his person-
> age, to use eyther good Meter or order. And therfore, if his oracion were
> far wurse, in my opinion it were more fyt for him.[1]

Now this is a very moral approach to literature; it is certainly not a literary

or an aesthetic one: it means presumably that a bad man should be represented

badly, and that literature is, in short, a direct expression of life. But

Baldwin himself has for literary purposes just gone to the opposite extreme

and even beyond the bounds of credibility in presenting Richard as an after-

life moralist: More, with greater finesse, has been able to incorporate this

point of view on "vehemence" in his History by virtue of the special conditions

of his structure; he as narrator and the people as a point of view device can

infer or suggest the morality without its having to be directly or "decorously"

represented. With Shakespeare, however, the case is more complex in that

Richard III constitutes for its greater part a deliberate suspension of this

morality-representation equation only to offer in its denouement a remarkable

affirmation of it. And both these contraries stem from the fact that there

are relatively few point of view devices used by Shakespeare in this play: for

---

[1] L. B. Campbell (ed.), The Mirror for Magistrates (Cambridge, 1938), p. 371.

until his coronation it is Richard himself who turns to the audience and notes the immoral nature of the proceedings; and this, as we have proposed in chapter i, stifles the moral response of the spectator. After the coronation, however, and particularly towards the end of IV, iv, since Richard has no conscience to describe his own disintegration and confusion, and since no other character is consistently given this function, Richard is presented with all the decorum of vehemence that the _Mirror_ writers had in mind. And when, for example, he strikes the Messenger who brings him bad news, he is observing an ancient decorum of vehemence familiar to the primitive versions of villainy on the native stage.

Thus, formally speaking, Shakespeare owes little to the _Mirror_ for the essential structure of his play in terms of its plot, character, and theme. There are, however, certain elements in _Richard III_ of a secondary nature that find their best explanation against the formal background of these moral tales that Baldwin and his fellows made so popular. And they center, specifically, around the issue of Clarence.

It has been observed, in our earlier discussion, that the death of Clarence in _Richard III_ has the formal function of an induction to the several deeds of pathos that occur in the play, and that after his harrowing death the representation of the other deeds is progressively assumed until by the time the Princes die Shakespeare has wrought a complete change of emphasis with relation to his source in More's _History_ in terms of the nature and position of the climactic crime in his play. Clarence's death describes and dramatizes the pattern of dying so early and so effectively that the energy so generated is diffused and generalized throughout the entire play; he is, in short, the prototype of all Richard's victims.

Now this issue of formal function might be inferred purely from a

sensitive reading of the play itself; but it is doubly enforced when the correspondence of the structure of the scene itself with that of Sackville's "Induction" in the Mirror is noted. The two scenes share the common narrative of a journey to an underworld existence: Sackville presents his material descriptively, while Shakespeare presents his dramatically; both, however, are meant as symbolic prefigurations of all subsequent tales of pathos.

But what is even more interesting--and here we may add to the researches of Churchill, Law, and Dover Wilson--is that the details of the supposedly invented Channel crossing scene and its dramatic drowning are also to be found in the Mirror. Perhaps we should say "suggested" by the Mirror in that the incidents referred to do not specifically relate to Clarence. There is, first of all, the famous incident of Suffolk's death in "Dover roade" during the reign of Henry VI in which the victim himself sees an example of "howe vengeaunce wayteth upon vice." This incident bears mention only as a motif, relating in men's minds the murder of a traitor to some spot as famous as the Channel. But a far more suggestive piece of material comes from the preface to Clarence's own tragedy in which brief mention is made of the drowning of "a duke of Excester" in the Channel; and of this material perhaps the most significant issue is the way Baldwin and his fellows elaborate on it with their passing thoughts:

> I finde mencion here . . . of a duke of Excester found dead in the sea
> betwene Dover and Calays, but what he was, or by what adventure he died,
> master Fabian hath not shewed, and master Hall hath overskipped him: so
> that excepte we bee friendlier unto him, he is like to be double drowned,
> both in the sea, and in the gulfe of forgetfulnes. About this matter was
> much talke, but because one tooke uppon him to seeke out that story, that
> charge was committed to him. And to be occupied in the meane while, I
> found the storye of one drowned likewise, . . . the duke of Clarens . . .
> who altobewashed in wine, may bewayle his infortune after this maner.[1]

It seems highly probable that it was this passage that gave Shakespeare

---

[1]Ibid., p. 219.

his initial idea for sending the dreaming Clarence on his Channel crossing:

its proximity to the Mirror text on Clarence, its explicit statement of the

resemblance between the two incidents of Exeter and Clarence, and its witty

play on the idea of the double drowning--all these suggest that Shakespeare is

more indebted to Baldwin and company than has previously been recognized. But

if this is so, then it touches only the surface of the problem for formal anal-

ysis. For the "how" and the "why" are of equal importance to the "what."

The first question, therefore, that needs to be considered in this re-

spect relates to the reason why Shakespeare should have introduced the drown-

ing incident at all; and to this question there are two answers, the one re-

lating to the unity of the total scene of Clarence in prison, and the other to

the means of its dramatic presentation. On the issue of the unity of this

scene, first of all, it would seem that Shakespeare has approached it with two

basic but distinct ideas in mind, both of which have their source in the

Mirror; the one is Clarence's actual death and Richard's responsibility in it,

the other is a thematic development after the manner of Sackville's "Induc-

tion." Presumably, the process of presenting these ideas finds Shakespeare

needing on the one hand a scene to prefigure Clarence's actual death, a scene

of great power and of a propriety that would avoid the Mirror's depiction of

Richard coming "like a wulfe" to supervise the deed but one that nonetheless

would implicate Richard in the act, and on the other hand a scene to serve as

some means of transition into the world of Hades. In short, a scene was needed

to serve the purposes of both plot and theme, and if possible to unify the two

ideas. Without such a scene there would be a genuine problem of credibility

in presenting these ideas in that both the notion of the Underworld and the

notion of Richard as a base murderer would destroy, if abruptly introduced,

the basic assumptions about setting and character that Shakespeare had been

establishing in his first Act. The dream and the drowning within the dream overcome therefore these several problems: a credible chain of events takes Clarence into Hades to meet his nemesis in the horrid shape of Warwick and to see and feel the anguish of the damned, a motif that once introduced hovers incessantly over the remainder of the play; and this same chain of events implicates Richard in Clarence's death even more effectively than does the Mirror while preserving a decorum appropriate to character. The dream-drowning, developed from the brief mention of the Duke of Exeter, therefore becomes the solution and the credible cause of the two desired effects, the remarkable thing being that all is developed from such diverse and unrelated material in the Mirror.

This answers the question of why Shakespeare should have used this passage on the double drowning, but more may still be said as to how he reworked it. For the brief mention of the Duke of Exeter's fate would hardly have set in motion Shakespeare's imagination without the development of the other drowning, of Clarence in the Malmesey butt, in Baldwin's text itself. And that he did develop this idea is one of the remarkable, albeit inappropriate, poetic elements in the entire Mirror. Baldwin has obviously picked up the elements of irony and bathos that More associates with this incident only to overdo the issue entirely by making Clarence adopt a consistently humorous vein towards his own death, a fact which sits oddly with the other aspects of after-life reflection; thus Clarence is made at one point to defend his own veracity as a narrator with the old saw, "In vino veritas." What Shakespeare does in this respect is to transfer all of these comic elements to other characters such as Richard and the two murderers, thereby converting Baldwin's incongruity into a most telling congruity; every reference they make to being "new-christened" or to the Malmesey butt is charged with dramatic irony, an irony that is conscious

on their part; every reference that Clarence on the other hand makes to his drowning is also charged with dramatic irony, but an irony that is most articulate in being unconscious. It is this division of the Mirror's material according to character and situation that underlines Shakespeare's genius in reworking his sources, a genius that is most strikingly apparent in the conversion of Clarence from a position of omniscience to one of ignorance. Shakespeare has, so to speak, turned the Mirror inside out.

But an even more significant, although somewhat more hypothetical, issue arises over the business of the dream itself and in the contention that deserves to be advanced that it too may be accounted for in the Mirror. That is to say, it may be seen as an analogue-in-life to the whole manner of De Casibus-after-life presentation: for Clarence does essentially the same thing in both presentations; he tells of the climactic incident in his life, his betrayal of Warwick. And yet the effects of the two presentations are quite distinct: the Mirror's point of view is ethical; that of Shakespeare is dramatic, full of its own potential development as action. Here again, and if this hypothesis is valid, is the evidence of the distinctions that need to be made between the formal relationships of different kinds of literature.

But if Shakespeare succeeded in these respects in reworking his Mirror sources then it must also be conceded that in many other respects he made use of the Mirror in ways that give rise to genuine problems for the dramatic form of Richard III. For while it has been observed above that Clarence's death served as an Induction to the ones that followed, it needs now to be observed that these subsequent deaths are not presented with anything near the same effectiveness; for in place of the dramatic rhetoric of dying that Shakespeare infuses into the Clarence scenes are the very simple lyric developments of pathos afterwards. The point here is that these deaths are directly derived

from the manner of the <u>Mirror</u>: Hastings, Rivers, Vaughan, Gray, and Buckingham speak their last lines as though they are already dead; they look back in the De Casibus manner full of remorse and resignation and drawing the inevitable moral from their misfortunes. The reasons they put forward for their unhappy lots vary from their being deceived either by Fortune or Richard to their being confessedly wrong in their own ways.

This phenomenon of the quasi-dead would barely be worth mentioning if it were confined to these moments of catastrophe in the play; the problem, however, becomes genuinely significant when it is realized how pervasive throughout the play's general development is this tone and manner of lyric declamation. For apart from Richard, virtually none of the other characters ever says anything that has an influence on the action; it is invariably an expression of feeling that they give utterance to; their declamation is its own end. Margaret, indeed, resembles a <u>Mirror</u> subject even to the point of seeming to reappear from the dead: Shakespeare had no historical warrant for her presence; he has only his formal warrant. The roles of the other women characters also have little warrant in any of the sources Shakespeare used, and in them is the clearest development of all of this element of lyric pathos. The situation is therefore that Shakespeare has deliberately seen in the simple laments and complaints of the <u>Mirror</u> tradition an important ingredient of his play's structure.

But how to integrate this element within the concept of the total dramatic form of the play is the problem that criticism must face and the problem that in the past has bedevilled so many readings of the play. For the problem is that inferences drawn from these lyric declamations do not lead to any definition of the play's dramatic theme that is relevant to Richard; and, furthermore, once a critic begins to look for a theme in the dying utterances of a Clarence, a Hastings, or a Buckingham, he only ends in the same confusion as

he would in looking for some consistent philosophy in the <u>Mirror</u>. Notions of Nemesis, Fate, and Fortune are mere truisms in relation to the moral values that surround Richard's rise and fall.

What must therefore be done is to draw a clear distinction between the dramatic and the lyric elements of <u>Richard III</u> and to see its formal pattern as that of a dramatic action superimposed over a sequence of lyric situations self-contained in themselves but yet contained within the action. More specifically, this amounts to a Morality play encompassing a <u>Mirror for Magistrates</u>.

This makes, admittedly, for an unusual combination of formal elements, and one which cannot compare for dramatic consistency with the later tragedies Shakespeare was to write. But in this unusual combination there is also an unusual congruity in that Richard needs such a context to be what he is. Were he to be opposed by characters in the early part of the play other than these lyric declaimers, his credibility would be impaired; for the credibility of villains lies in their incredibility. Everything hinges on the essentials of the play residing in Richard's nature; and, given this dramatic problem so formed, pathos must be accepted as the necessary complement of power.

Such a pattern as this may well seem too ingenious at this stage of our argument and derived as it has been from our discussion of the influence of the <u>Mirror</u> on <u>Richard III</u>. But when the full perspective of the dramatic tradition behind this play is finally developed, it will be seen that this is one of the oldest formal patterns of the English stage. For <u>Richard III</u> is nowhere more primitive in its structure than in its clear presentation of the relation of villain to victim, the villain deriving his power from a long habituation to the stage and the victim his and her pathos also from dramatic tradition but in this instance intensified by the sanction of the <u>Mirror</u>.

CHAPTER III

RICHARD IN PRE-SHAKESPEAREAN DRAMA

Legge's Richardus Tertius and The True Tragedie of King Richard III
are of interest to this study in two important and general respects: the
first is that they dramatize the same material from the Chronicles as Shake-
speare was to use in Richard III, and hence provide a pertinent point for
formal comparison; the second is that the issue of Senecan influence on
Elizabethan drama comes to the fore in these plays, an issue that with too
little warrant is often considered to be the determining force behind the
form of Richard III. It is the latter question of Senecan influence that
needs to be considered first for the sake of its generality.

Few modern scholars would now go as far as did J. W. Cunliffe in de-
tecting Senecan influence in Richard III, but there still remains a signif-
icant residue of his thought in modern criticism to justify a re-examination
of his claims apropos this play. It is Cunliffe's belief that

. . . the personages of [this] drama move in the same atmosphere of blood,
and Richard above all sustains to the full his character of fiendish
cruelty. He has the vindictiveness, the intellectual force, the undaunted
spirit, the ruthless cruelty, the absolute lack of moral feeling of
Seneca's Medea, coupled with the haughtiness of Eteocles, and the bloody
hypocrisy of Atreus; as with Seneca's heroic criminals, his passions know
no bounds--he is not human, but praeternatural.[1]

In terms of the raw substance of Richard's career, much of what Cunliffe says
is true; but in terms of the formal presentation of Richard III this approach

---

[1]John W. Cunliffe, The Influence of Seneca on Elizabethan Tragedy
(London, 1893), pp. 73-74.

through "atmosphere" and broadly conceived "character" is quite misleading.
For in regard to the fundamental elements of form in Richard III, the plot,
the character, and the theme, it can be shown that Shakespeare has made a
number of choices that reveal a desire to escape from, or at least to refine
upon, the Senecan implication of his subject. Titus Andronicus is the play
where this influence is immediate; in Richard III it is apparent only in cer-
tain aspects of "diction," the "theatrical presentation" of character, and
the "thought."

The most obvious debt to Seneca in Richard III is also the least
organic. For the scenes of stichomythic dialogue between Richard and Anne,
and then later between Richard and Elizabeth have long presented a critical
problem for the total play. This latter scene (IV, iv) has universally been
condemned by critics of the play: it has a doubtful outcome; it retards the
dénouement; it disrupts the presentation of character; and it contrasts
stylistically with the preceding scenes. The scene between Richard and Anne
(I, ii) also strains credibility, but has won certain admirers for this very
reason in that at this early stage of the play credibility needs to be strained
in order to project Richard into the incredible dimension of a demonic charac-
ter.[1] Thus in these two instances the issue of Senecan influence is seen to
depend for its effect on more basic issues than the diction itself. Elsewhere
in the play stichomythia is apparent, but in a way that is indistinguishable
from the standard sharp interchanges of Shakespearean dialogue; and, as such,
this element in Shakespeare is more a re-creation of Seneca than a simple debt.

There are, however, certain situations in the highly formalized pres-
entation of characters in Richard III that can be plausibly explained in terms

_____

[1]See the opinions of Richardson, Boas, Hazlitt, and Moulton as quoted
in Variorum Shakespeare: Richard the Third, pp. 43-63.

of a Senecan influence. The scene in which Queen Margaret, Queen Elizabeth, and the Duchess of York sit on the ground to bewail their misfortunes suggests the scene in Seneca's Troades where Hecuba, Andromache, and Helen share their grief; Queen Elizabeth in herself also resembles Andromache, and Margaret seems to be definitely patterned after the Avenging Fury of Thyestes. There is furthermore a parallel between the scenes where Richard first woos Anne and then Elizabeth for her daughter and the scene in Hercules Furens where Lycus the tyrant woos Megaera, a parallel which finds support in the common diction of Seneca and Shakespeare.[1] And, finally, certain of the qualities of Richard himself are also to be found in Seneca in such characters as Atreus and to a lesser degree Ulysses.

A Senecan influence on the several themes in Richard III is also observable. Cunliffe notes such lines as:

Elizabeth: I fear our happiness is at the height.
I,iii,41

Margaret: They that stand high have many blasts to shake them.
I,iii,259

Richard: But shall we wear these glories for a day?
Or shall they last, and we rejoice in them?
IV,ii,5-6

Richard: All unavoided is the doom of destiny.
IV,iv,218

all of which are Senecan commonplaces.[2]

There is, however, a far more significant problem underlying this issue of parallelism than Cunliffe seems to allow. For while these Senecan parallels are to be found in Richard III with respect to diction, theatrical presentation of character, and thought, they are, in a formal sense, quite

---

[1] Churchill, op. cit., pp. 349-53.

[2] Cunliffe, op. cit., pp. 76-79.

un-Senecan in Shakespeare. For the crux of this problem lies not in *what* is borrowed from Seneca but in *why* it was borrowed and *how* it was used in Shakespeare.

The observation has already been made that the most notable scenes of stichomythic dialogue depend on their Shakespearean context for their effect. Later in this chapter it will be shown that the theatrical presentation of character in Shakespeare also belongs to, or at least assumes, the structural contexts of the native drama. At this point, it is therefore sufficient to enlarge on the way that moral sententiae are also determined in their meaning and effect by the way in which Shakespeare uses them.

First, it should be noted that while Senecan aphorisms do occur in *Richard III* they do so only to an extremely limited extent. There is virtually no sustained moral generalization in the play at all, and when it does appear it often has a quite specific reference to it. The first statement of Richard quoted above is a good example of this limitation of the meaning in terms of the dramatic situations: for it is not a generalization in the same sense as Macbeth or Richard II's generalizations; it relates to something specific in the action of the play.

Another particularly interesting instance of this need to make distinctions in the formal use of Senecan commonplaces is to be seen in the frequent Elizabethan adaptation of the line from Seneca's *Agamemnon*, "per scelera semper sceleribus tutum est iter." Cunliffe lists some seven versions of this line in Elizabethan dramatists other than Shakespeare.[1] But it also appears in *Richard III* and *Macbeth* at climactic moments of both plays, and here the difference in diction and context is more remarkable than the similarity. Richard exclaims shortly after his coronation,

---

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 24-25.

> Uncertain way of gain! But I am in
> So far in blood that sin will pluck on sin.
> Tear-falling pity dwells not in this eye.
>
> IV,ii,61-63

Now this is the first mention of the word "sin" by Richard in the play, but even here it is not a point of moral recognition on Richard's part. In itself the thought is a compromise of moral values, and here it is merely presented as the necessary opposite of an "uncertain way of gain." and then resolved by being repudiated in the line that follows. Thus it makes for a most illusory moment of morality in Richard's character. Macbeth's use of the idea, however, points in an opposite direction:

> I am in blood
> Stepped in so far that should I wade no more,
> Returning were as tedious as go o'er.[1]
>
> III,iv,136-138

The basic motif of amoral immorality in the statement here conveys the full measure of Macbeth's character and situation in that it describes the terrible enervation in him caused by a satiety of and an habituation to crime.

These then are the variations on a theme by Seneca for which the description "Senecan" is inadequate and irrelevant. And as a final indication of the perils that plague the approach of such critics as Cunliffe, there is the clear case of his false attribution to Seneca of the lines in Richard III:

> By a divine instinct men's minds mistrust
> Ensuing danger; as by proof we see
> The water swell before a boist'rous storm.
>
> II,iii,42-44

They resemble, of course, lines 957-960 in Thyestes:

> mittit luctus signa futuri
> mens, ante sui praesaga mali;
> instat nautis fera tempestas,
> cum sine vento tranquilla tument.

---

[1]See also Macbeth, III,ii,40-41: "Things bad begun make strong themselves by ill." The difference between the two statements on the same theme is a measure of the development in Macbeth's situation.

But this passage, as Churchill and other scholars have noted, is taken directly

from More's History:

> . . . men's hearts of a secret instinct of nature misgiveth them; as the
> sea without wind swelleth of himselfe sometime before a tempest.

and what is more the Latin version of these lines in the History bears no re-

semblance at all to Seneca.[1]

The point to be drawn from all this is that a reassessment of the re-

lation between Seneca and Shakespeare with respect to Richard III is needed,

one that will describe the different principles of each man's drama, one that

will take into account "difference" as well as "likeness" in particular par-

allels, and one that will accept a distinction between Seneca and Senecanism.

For while it is an undoubted truth that Seneca did generally influence

Shakespeare, on the particular problem of Richard III it is yet difficult to

say to what degree this influence manifests itself and to what degree this in-

fluence is direct and exclusive or indirect and part of the medieval heritage

of Senecanism.

The issue of Seneca and Senecanism is now a well-known fact of literary

history and one that has been developed by several scholars including Cunliffe

himself.[2] In essence, it proposes that Senecanism is not exclusive to Seneca

but rather a part of the medieval heritage. As Kastner and Charlton have de-

scribed it, Seneca was absorbed into the cultural traditions of Christendom

---

[1] Cunliffe, op. cit., pp. 77-78; Churchill, op. cit., pp. 126-27.

[2] J. W. Cunliffe, Early English Classical Tragedies (Oxford, 1912);
John M. Manly, "The influence of the tragedies of Seneca upon early English
drama," prefixed to Frank Miller (trans.), The Tragedies of Seneca (Chicago,
1907); Frank L. Lucas, Seneca and Elizabethan Tragedy (Cambridge, 1922); Leon
E. Kastner and Henry B. Charlton, introduction to their edition of The Poetical
Works of Sir William Alexander, Earl of Stirling (Manchester, 1921); T. S.
Eliot, "Seneca in Elizabethan translation" and "Shakespeare and the Stoicism
of Seneca" in Selected Essays 1917-1932 (London, 1932); Howard Baker, Induction
to Tragedy (Baton Rouge, 1939).

long before the specific Renaissance rediscovery of his works.[1] St. Jerome

and Boethius had discovered for themselves the sententious and moral virtues

of Senecanism, and this tradition was continually being rediscovered by medieval

and Renaissance authors. It is of equal importance at least to the dramatic and

theatrical legacy of Seneca. Thus in 1566 the first English translator of the

Medea reads this play as "a smal Pearle of yt pearlesse Poet and most Christian

Ethnicke Seneca, wherein no glutting but swete delectacion is offred unto ye

mind that doth hunger after vertue," while the first English book devoted en-

tirely to Seneca, Sir William Cornwallis' Discourses upon Seneca the Tragedian

(1601), makes "no mention whatever of things dramatic and theatrical, but is

solely concerned with abstract questions of morals and politics."[2]

But after 1300 there was also the rediscovery of Seneca the dramatist:

Petrarch observed of the tragedies that "apud poetas profecto vel primum vel

primo proximum locum tenent"; and Dante in speaking of the nature of tragedy

pointed to two essentially Senecan qualities, the distinctive ending ("in fine

sive exitu est foctida et horribilis") and the distinctive style ("in modo

loquendi . . . elatè et sublimè"). Thus, as Kastner and Charlton conclude,

"the medieval tradition created an atmosphere in which Seneca, when once dug

out of oblivion, would flourish."[3]

But what is more pertinent to the present argument is that the native

English tradition of the theatre also contains the elements of Senecanism,

naturalized to the new conditions of subject matter and rhetoric to be found

in the Mysteries and Moralities. Thus for each of the parallels that was ob-

served above between Richard III and Seneca a similar parallel may be found in

the native tradition: on the level of the Mysteries, there are respectively

---

[1] Kastner and Charlton, op. cit., p. xxiii.

[2] Ibid., p. xxiv.   [3] Ibid., p. xxv.

such analogues as the three Marys weeping over the crucified Christ, Mary her-
self in relation to her son, the avenging archangel Michael, Satan tempting
Eve, and then for Richard himself the legion of devils from Satan to the Anti-
christ to the Towneley Pilate; on the level of the Moralities, and to consider
only the single play Respublica, there is the ritual lamentation of the Widow
England, the figure of Nemesis, the Richardian Vice Avarice-Policie and many
other points of analogy that are not to be found in Seneca.

The result of this process of the absorption of Senecanism in the na-
tive tradition is therefore to qualify the thesis of the exclusivity of
Senecanism to Seneca. It need not be denied that following on the Elizabethan
translation of Seneca's plays a new vogue for the classical playwright devel-
oped and that the borrowing of dramatic elements from him was often times both
direct and crude: a catalogue of Senecan elements in Elizabethan drama can
easily be described; from the issue of the unities to the more specific matters
of presentation such as the limitation of characters on stage to three persons,
the observance of stage decencies, the five act division, the dumb show, the
messenger, the confidant, the ghost and the supernatural.[1] All of these ele-
ments may be detected in Elizabethan drama at some point or other, but what is
of greater importance is the degree in which other elements, often in complete
contrast, also are to be found and the way in which these other elements under-
line the continuity and exclusiveness of the native tradition in Elizabethan
drama.

This latter issue will be discussed at length in a subsequent chapter,
but it is pertinent at this stage to establish that the most general principles
of Elizabethan dramatic structures are not Senecan but, and specifically in
this particular genre of the villain-hero, definitely native in their origin.

---

[1]Cunliffe, The Influence of Seneca on Elizabethan Tragedy, op. cit.,
pp. 32-46.

That is to say, _Richard III_ in its total form and in its elements of plot, character, and theme rests on structural principles which Shakespeare could not have derived from Seneca for the simple reason that they do not occur in Seneca.

The most significant differences between the two playwrights have been aptly described by T. S. Eliot, who in his analysis of Seneca's plays observed that they were "for the stage, models of formlessness" wherein

> . . . plot . . . does not exist . . . at all. He took a story perfectly well known to everybody, and interested his auditors entirely by its embellishments of description and narrative and by smartness and pungency of dialogue; suspense and surprise are attached solely to verbal effects . . .

and where

> . . . the characters . . . have no subtlety and, strictly speaking, no "private life"

and where

> . . . the ethic . . . is a matter of postures among which the posture which gives the greatest opportunity for effect . . . is the posture of dying.[1]

Kastner and Charlton also observe in Seneca's plays this absence of what makes for a dramatic entity, describing them as "devoid of the informing spirit which is both the source and the life of the Greek type."

> Determined by ritual association, the presentation of Greek tragedy offers analogy with that of oratorio; it is a mimetic celebration in a liturgical sense more than an acting in the modern sense. But translated to words on paper, this can only be conveyed as a series of longer speeches, the libretto without the score: and this external form is all that can be imitated. Hence Senecan drama is largely a succession of long speeches. Lacking originally a fully secularised histrionic tradition, having lost its ritual tradition, such a drama becomes therefore at best capable of declamatory presentation, and is, in effect, most suitable for reading only as closet drama. It is an elegiac, not a dramatic, species.[2]

---

[1] T. S. Eliot, "Seneca in Elizabethan Translation," in the Introduction to _Seneca His Tenne Tragedies_ ("Tudor Translations"; London, 1927), p. xx.

[2] Kastner and Charlton, _op. cit._, pp. xix-xx.

Why Seneca should therefore have proved to be a fruitful model to the Elizabethans is that they could assume from their native tradition a basic sense of form, the very thing which Seneca could not give them. Apart from _Hippolytus_, and to a lesser degree _Medea_, none of Seneca's plays is built on a dramatic action in which moral causality is the complicating and resolving principle. Nor are the characters "types" in the Greek or Elizabethan sense but primarily particular persons with natures peculiar to a given time and place. Similarly with the themes or morals, there is no sense of universals as causes; through rhetorical amplification a character may inflate certain sententiae into universals as effects, but here there is all the difference between a premise and a predicate.

It seems therefore most unlikely that _Richard III_, which in its total structure is the direct opposite of all the above attributes, is in its principles of form indebted to Seneca: it possesses, if anything, too simple a structure; its action describes the causal sequence of a rise and fall pattern without a sub-plot, its characters are obviously "types," and its theme, at least on the most literal level, is one of the most topical of Elizabethan political commonplaces, the punishment of usurpation. There is, in short, the clarity of primitive art to its structure, a quality that can only be appreciated in terms of the formal tradition of the native theatre.

And assuming this priority of medieval theatrical principles, it is possible to understand more intelligently those Senecan elements that do occur in _Richard III_: thus, for example, while the Lycus-Megaera scene of _Hercules Furens_ may well have given Shakespeare his immediate inspiration, sanction, and rhetorical model for the Richard-Anne scene, certain assumptions from his native heritage determined for Shakespeare the way he was to present Richard and the way he was to resolve the scene. In Seneca this particular scene is

unresolved and amounts to no more than a rhetorical conflict of the passions of the two characters; in Shakespeare it is organic to the dramatic presentation of Richard's character. Similarly with the scene of the three women, a Senecan analogue may well be its immediate cause but this as an explanation does not exhaust the deeply religious and ritual significance that Shakespeare brings to this scene; an analogue to the three Marys of the Mysteries, on the other hand, magnifies its dramatic moment.

The issue of Seneca and Senecanism may therefore be described as a theoretic one, involving the relations of basic dramatic principles and traditions. But the level on which the problem was raised by Cunliffe was that of particular likenesses between elements of Elizabethan drama and Seneca. His criterion of "likeness" now seems rather arbitrary and random in the light of the above discussion, but since his terms are still part of the general critical vocabulary on Richard III and since a consideration of his propositions will lead to a specific frame of reference for comparing Richard III, Richardus Tertius, and The True Tragedie it will be useful now to take up his analysis.

The first criterion of Senecan influence in Elizabethan drama is, in Cunliffe's words, "introspectiveness."[1] He sees a similarity between Clytemnestra's doubts in such lines as

> quid, segnis anime, tuta consilia expetis?
> quid fluctuaris?[2]
>
> 11. 108-109

and those of Macbeth and Hamlet, an observation that is useful in the degree that it leads to the distinction of Richard from all three and from the Richard of The True Tragedie as well. For while "introspectiveness" is a dominant

---

[1]Cunliffe, The Influence of Seneca in Elizabethan Tragedy, op. cit., pp. 16-17.

[2]Seneca, "Agamemnon," Tragedies (The Loeb Classical Library; 2 vols.; London, 1938), II, 10. All quotations from Seneca are taken from this edition.

element of Shakespeare's Richard, it is however of its own distinctive kind and is, with the exception of the dream scene on Bosworth Field, more a means of exposition than of dramatic self-analysis; it is never subjective in terms of some moral choice, but rather objective in terms of the means which must be used to attain his ends. And even when Richard does display Cunliffe's "introspectiveness" it is never spontaneously so, but rather the result of some external stimulus.

Cunliffe next points to Seneca's "sensationalism,"[1] and here the nature of Shakespeare's material in connection with Richard would certainly seem to be an appropriate place for Senecan influence. On the contrary, however, the formal presentation of Richard III, with the exception of Clarence's death, eschews the sensational elements of its material. For, given a protagonist responsible for the death of his brother, nephews, wife, fellow conspirators, and sundry enemies, and given an historical period which received The Spanish Tragedy, The Jew of Malta, and Titus Andronicus, and given the way in which Richard was handled in the Mirror for Magistrates, Richardus Tertius, and The True Tragedie, the choice which Shakespeare made in his presentation of the Richard story was obviously in terms of avoiding the sensational. For not only are the number of murders on stage confined to the single one and not only are they presented either from the sententious point of view of the victims or from that of the deflating irony of Richard, but they are also none of them developed as ends in themselves in the Senecan manner but rather as an indirect means of developing Richard's character and as an index of the developing plot. A death scene in Richard III is not a posture but a logical expression of the total form, to which the presentation is at all times related.

---

[1]Cunliffe, The Influence of Seneca on Elizabethan Tragedy, op. cit., pp. 17-18.

The third point of Senecan influence, according to Cunliffe, is that of "rhetorical amplification," and by this he means that style Nick Bottom was to parody as "Ercles vein"[1] in <u>Hercules Furens</u>:

> arma nisi dantur mihi,
> aut omne Pindi thracis excidam nemus
> Bacchique lucos et Cithaeronis iuga
> mecum cremabo, aut tota cum domibus suis
> dominisque tecta, cum deis templa omnibus
> Thebana supra corpus excipiam meum
> atque urbe versa condar, et, si fortibus
> leve pondus umeris moenia immissa incident
> septemque opertus non satis portis premar,
> onus omne media parte quod mundi sedet
> dirimitque superos, in meum vertam caput.
> ll. 1284-1294

This Senecan element, although common on the Elizabethan stage, is however totally absent from Richard's character. In fact, Shakespeare goes to the length of parodying this very device of Seneca in <u>Richard III</u> in the passage from III,v already quoted in an earlier chapter, and which together with Hamlet's advice to the players points to an aversion on Shakespeare's part to "rhetorical amplification" of this kind. <u>The True Tragedie</u>, on the other hand, indulges in this device to excess.

Cunliffe notes for his fourth point Seneca's "descriptive tendency" and means by this the rhetorical embellishments in the elaborate descriptions, sententious dialogues, and reflective diatribes which occur mostly as ends in themselves. But <u>Richard III</u> is a remarkable play, even in the Shakespearean canon, for its relative lack of embellishment: the simple outlines of plot, character, and theme are never lost sight of, and the dialogue is invariably in terms of something, some person or some incident, quite specific; and this is even more remarkable when it is remembered that Shakespeare wrote this play shortly after his excursions into narrative poetry where he displayed this

---

[1] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 18.

device of rhetorical embellishment to a marked degree. It therefore represents a formal choice on his part in avoiding this "descriptive tendency" in Richard III.

This is not to say, however, that there are no rhetorical devices in this lengthy play; there is, in fact, a surfeit of a specific kind of rhetoric. Declamation, repetition, antiphony, and symmetry of statement abound. But these figures are used for intensity not for variety; they supplement the clarity and simplicity of the play's essential conception. It is therefore a highly individual kind of rhetoric that is found in Richard III, one which has been explained by Rossiter as an important sign of the influence of the native drama rather than of Seneca, as Cunliffe would have it.[1]

The same argument also holds true for the final Senecan influence, "the reflective tendency," that Cunliffe notes in Elizabethan drama.[2] In Richard III aphorisms and moral sententiae are noticeable only in their absence. As noted earlier, there are barely a dozen lines out of more than three thousand that display a "reflective tendency," and these are often used not for their thought content so much as for some specific relation to plot and character, and in Richard's mouth for irony, the opposite of sententiousness.

Cunliffe concludes his analysis of Senecan influence on Elizabethan drama with a quotation from the Induction to A Warning for Faire Women, in which a satiric catalogue of Senecan elements on the English stage is presented and by means of which it is possible to gauge how far removed Richard III is from the popularized Seneca. It reads:

---

[1] A. P. Rossiter, "The Structure of Richard the Third," Durham University Journal, XXXI (1938), 44-75.

[2] Cunliffe, The Influence of Seneca on Elizabethan Tragedy, op. cit., p. 20.

How some damn'd tyrant to obtain the crown
Stabs, hangs, impoisons, smothers, cutteth throats:
And then a Chorus, too, comes howling in
And tells us of the worrying of a cat:
Then, too, a filthy whining ghost
Lapt in some foul sheet, or a leather pilch,
Comes screaming like a pig half stick'd,
And cries, Vindicta! - Revenge, Revenge!
With that a little rosin flasheth forth,
Like smoke out of a tobacco pipe, or a boy's squib.
Then comes in two or three more like to drovers,
With tailors' bodkins, stabbing one another - [1]

Admittedly, this is the debased version of Seneca for the popular stage. But yet it should be remembered that Richard III was also a play of the popular kind and that the pressures of literary fashion and the audiences' taste must have been considerable at this early stage of Shakespeare's career. And all the more so when it is remembered that the two previous presentations of Richard on stage, Richardus Tertius and The True Tragedie, were deeply and explicitly indebted to Seneca in their dramatic structure. Richard III, therefore, gives rise to a paradox in terms of its relation to Seneca: it is Senecan in most things except its form; its subject matter, the prevailing popular taste, the stage versions of Richard previously presented, Shakespeare's knowledge of Seneca--all these would lead one to expect a play much closer to The True Tragedie than Richard III proved to be. What the differences are precisely and why the Shakespearean form should be so distinct are therefore the questions that must now be raised.

There is little evidence, apart from a single scene, that Shakespeare made use of Richardus Tertius, written in 1579 by Thomas Legge, the master of Caius College, Cambridge, and later Vice-Chancellor of the University. Indeed there is little evidence that Shakespeare even knew of it except for the facts that his fellow dramatists Marlowe, Lodge, Peele, and Greene most likely knew

---

[1]Ibid., p. 47.

of it as students and that it was a well-known play of its day in that such

contemporary references to it as we found in Harrington, Meres, and Fuller all

refer to its several successful presentations.[1]

According to Churchill, its most extensive explicator, the play

achieved its success and its place in literary history in that it was the

first Elizabethan play to use the Chronicles without introducing any of the

allegoric elements of the Moralities. If this was in itself a virtue then its

other virtue was that it capitalized upon the growing interest in Seneca and

borrowed directly and at great length from its classical model. Thus, while

Legge has certain claims for recognition historically, from a critical point

of view his play now reads as an incredible concoction, half-More half-Seneca.

Its structure is virtually devoid of formal pattern, and insofar as there is

a concept of character it is more the fortunate coincidence of the chroniclers'

conceptions of Richard and certain characters in Seneca than anything original

on Legge's part. As Churchill describes it,

> . . . the play itself leaves no doubt that Legge recognized in the Richard
> of the chronicles, not only in the purpose and result of his whole career,
> but in a multitude of its details as well, a wonderful resemblance to some
> of the characters of that Senecan drama which was the ideal and model upon
> which the University tragedies were formed. That aspect of Richard which
> had in some measure attracted the notice of Rous and especially of André
> was for Legge the chief thing: Richard as a Senecan tyrant was the object
> of his presentation.[2]

The result of this slavish subservience to his sources was therefore

a play of over five thousand lines in which all of the narrative elements of

More's _History_ and all of the lyric and elegiac elements of Senecan drama are

tediously presented without any principle of selection other than that of am-

plification and in which the notion of an organic dramatic form is almost

totally absent. Certain aspects of its structure, however, are of interest

---

[1]Churchill, _op. cit._, pp. 265-73.   [2]_Ibid._, p. 272.

in showing on particular issues the choices that Shakespeare either did not
make or perhaps did not consider making.

The first Actio covers the period from the death of Edward IV to the
condemnation of Mistress Shore. It begins, significantly enough, not with the
Shakespearean Richard discovering to the audience his own villainy but rather
with Elizabeth lamenting her loss and giving voice to her fears in a thoroughly
Senecan manner. Thus the opening lines read:

> Quicumque laetis credulus rebus nimis
> confidit, et magna potens aula cupit
> regnare, blandum quaerit is malum, . . .[1]

and after this generalized opening Elizabeth goes on to give a portrait of
Richard as "homo nimia ambitione elatus, cum nepotis adhuc tenerā aetatem
videret, facile ad regnū aditū sibi patere putat."[2] Shakespeare, on the other
hand, allows Richard to be his own expositor, and one result of this, apart
from the effect his direct address has on the audience, is that the issue of
ambition is hidden or at least assumed and all the interest focused on the
technique of villainy. Thus the essential difference between the dramatic
formulations of Richardus Tertius and Richard III is a difference of emphasis
respectively on the ends and the means of the protagonist. The effect of
Legge's opening scene is to create, as Churchill describes it, "an intense
feeling of anxious suspense. A tyrant and his tyranny are at hand."[3] The
subsequent action will either prove or disprove the generalization. Shake-
speare's opening, on the other hand, declines this melodramatic gambit: all
that can be anticipated here is the skill with which Richard is able to play
the roles he has assigned to himself, and when the role of Richard as King and

---

[1] Thomas Legge, "Richardus Tertius," Shakespeare's Library (London,
1875), p. 137.

[2] Ibid.   [3] Churchill, op. cit., p. 285.

tyrant comes to the fore in the latter part of the play it does so with an element of unexpectedness in it for the spectator.

The rest of the first Actio in Legge follows the chronicles closely and little formal pattern is seen shaping the plot other than the selection of those scenes for emphasis that may be expanded in the Senecan manner. It is for this reason that Legge portrays the Queen at some length as resembling Phaedra after her rejection by Hippolytus, the scene being described by an Ancilla in the manner of the Nutrix in Seneca. Similarly, the farewell scene between the Queen and her son in Sanctuary is pure Senecan amplification. These points draw further attention to the possibilities of dramatic presentation Shakespeare might have exploited if he had had the Senecan imagination of so many of his contemporaries. When Shakespeare does use the formal devices of lament and complaint, it is in so ritualistic a manner as to drain the subjective element from the speeches and thereby prevent the development of any other character in his play except Richard. It may be noted in this respect that the development of the secondary characters of both Richardus Tertius and The True Tragedie does detract from their presentation of Richard's character, an interesting illustration of which is to be found in Legge in the scene where Buckingham is won over to Richard's cause by Catesby, a scene that Shakespeare assumes without presentation.

Catesby, generally, is an important index of the relative deployment of characters in the three plays on Richard under consideration in that he raises the issue of the secondary villain. Shakespeare uses him mainly in the latter part of his play after having exhausted Buckingham in this function; thus there is a sharing and a general subordination of function to this role in Shakespeare. The True Tragedie uses Catesby much more and adds the Page's role, which, as we will see later, is developed almost to the degree of Mosca's

in Volpone. But in Richardus Tertius it is Catesby who is given the manipu-
lator's role, and in this particular scene Legge introduces overtones of the

Senecan Atreus. There is a long monologue given to Catesby which he uses for

exposition and the depiction of character just as Richard does in Shakespeare,

the analogue of which in Seneca bears quotation as the archetypal presentation

of this important element of stage villainy:

> Plagis tenetur clausa dispositis fera;
> et ipsum et una generis invisi indolem
> iunctam parenti cerno. iam tuto in loco
> versantur odia. venit in nostras manus
> tandem Thyestes, venit, et totus quidem
> vix tempero animo, vix dolor frenos capit.
> sic, cum feras vestigat et longo sagax
> loro tenetur Umber ac presso vias
> scrutatur ore, dum procul lento suem
> odore sentit, paret et tacito locum
> rostro pererrat; praeda cum propior fuit,
> cervice tota pugnat et gemitu vocat
> dominum morantem seque retinenti eripit.
> cum sperat ira sanguinem, nescit tegi;
> tamen tegatur. aspice, ut multo gravis
> squalore vultus obruat maestos coma.
> quam foeda iaceat barba. praestetur fides -
> fratrem iuvat videre. complexus mihi
> redde expetitos. quidquid irarum fuit
> transierit; ex hoc sanguis ac pietas die
> colantur, animis odia damnata excidant.[1]
>
> ll. 491-511

Two significant issues arise from this important passage: the first

is that in terms of substance Shakespeare differs from Seneca and Legge; the

second is that in terms of presentation Legge differs from Shakespeare and

Seneca in using a third-person point-of-view in Catesby. Concerning the first

point, Churchill observes that Legge found the parallel between Atreus and

Richard, each as the murderer of his nephews, a remarkable one and so under-

lined it as often as possible. Shakespeare, on the other hand, avoids this

parallel almost altogether and develops in its place the issue of fratricide;

---

[1]Seneca, "Thyestes," op. cit., II, 133-35.

the most extensive parallel to Seneca's scene is to be found in Act I of

Richard III where Richard gloats over the fate of Clarence. This choice on

Shakespeare's part has been discussed earlier in relation to More; in relation

to Seneca the choice becomes an issue not only of avoiding the gruesome sensa-

tionalism of Seneca but of attaining a more general level of dramatic repre-

sentation.

Seneca's Atreus is a figure of particular motivation, revenge on

Thyestes for the latter's seduction of his wife together with other crimes;

his nephews become the focal point of his obsession and the resulting banquet

scene particularizes the whole context beyond credibility. Shakespeare's

Richard, on the other hand, subsumes his fratricide (in itself a more universal

subject than that of the murder of nephews) within his wider political aims so

that the whole issue of Clarence's death is more an exercise of ingenuity on

Richard's part than an end in itself. Thus Richard is no Atreus in this re-

spect.

In the manner of presentation, however, there are many remarkable par-

allels between Shakespeare and Seneca. They both allow the villain his first

person exposition, a fact which in Seneca is shortly thereafter qualified by

the appearance of the Chorus but which in Shakespeare is sustained almost as

the exclusive form of presentation for the greater part of the play. Indeed,

the development of Richard III can be seen as a measure of the use of this de-

vice from its prominance in the first two acts to its virtual absence at the

end of the play where Richard is no longer the subject but the object of the

action. Exclusively first person exposition makes for a world of illusion

according to the terms of the expositor; its disintegration, on the other hand,

is a means of bringing this character out into an objective world of morality

where judgment may be passed on him.

The possibilities and subtleties of this structural principle as they are found in <u>Richard III</u> can only be fully appreciated in comparison with the inept approach of Legge in wasting this remarkable dramatic device on a secondary villain. For Catesby's monologue not only deprives Richard of the presence Shakespeare gives him in that Catesby's own role is inflated at the expense of Richard's but serves to consolidate and channel a strong moral feeling of antipathy on the part of the audience towards Richard. Again Legge lays Richard's ends naked to the view and the resulting revulsion is not an emotion that a spectator cares to sustain.

Legge continues with this manner of presenting Catesby even when Richard is present, and it is possible from this comparison to underline again the fallacy of considering Shakespeare's Richard as the typical Senecan tyrant. Legge puts into the mouth of Richard the lines of fear, hope, anxiety, and uncertainty that are to be found in such Senecan tyrants as Lycus, Nero, and Eteocles.

> Spes concutit mentem metusque turbidam,
> trepidumque gemino pectus eventu labat.
> Imago regni semper errat ante oculos mihi,
> Et usque dubium impellit ambitio gravis
> turbatque pectus:

and

> nescit timere quisquis audet magna; jam
> regnum petis, fortuna fortes adjuvat,
> . . . qui cives timet rebelles excitat.
> Audebit omnia quisquis imperio regit.
> et dura tractat sceptra regali manu.[1]

As Churchill neatly puts it, Richard's "ambition is master of him, not he of it."[2] The lines that are given to Catesby are those not of the tyrant but of the Senecan Ulysses in the <u>Troades</u>:

---

[1]Churchill, <u>op. cit.</u>, p. 303.   [2]<u>Ibid</u>.

nunc advoca actus, anime, nunc fraudus, dolos,
nunc totum Ulixen.

ll. 613-614

The Shakespearean lines, "Plots have I laid, inductions dangerous," and "I am myself alone," are, of course, among the most striking of all Richard's utterances, and it is important to be aware of their source in the politic Ulysses rather than in the more conventional Senecan tyrant. It is in Macbeth that Shakespeare uses the formula of the Senecan tyrant, only of course to transform it by developing the role of the accomplice, Lady Macbeth, and by working a remarkable change in their relationship and roles: before gaining the crown it is Macbeth who is distraught with conscience and Lady Macbeth whose will power sustains the enterprise; after the coronation these roles are reversed. Richard III, in comparison, is forced at the end of his play to assume both roles when from the beginning he has been only a creature of one. This makes for the basic weakness of Richard III as a play, but even with this weakness Shakespeare's conception of Richard is still a vast improvement on Legge's where Richard is a creature of passions and irresolute will throughout. It would seem therefore that the presence of the element of will power is what gives dramas of usurpation their strength rather than the more individualized and psychological issues of conscience and the passions.

One final point concerning the first Actio of Richardus Tertius arises from its last scene in which the penetential procession of Mistress Shore is represented with all the narrative material of More and all the sententious reflections that Legge can find in Seneca for the London crowd. Churchill observes apropos this scene that "this is one of the most striking of a hundred examples of the fundamental absurdity of Legge's method," the crowd acting as Chorus and voicing such sentiments with regard to Mistress Shore as does the

Chorus in Octavia on the subject of Poppaea's beauty.[1] This incongruity of
character and utterance is not altogether absent in Shakespeare but at least
the restraint with which Shakespeare handles these crowd scenes is a measure
of his competence as against Legge's crudity.

The second Actio of Richardus Tertius centers around Richard's appeal
to the people and is remarkable only for its subservience to the chronicle
sources. There is little dramatic development throughout. Richard suffers a
further diminution of his role while those of the accomplices are expanded;
the Council scenes, for example, are expanded beyond the lines laid down in
the chronicles in order to permit such characters as Lovell, Catesby, and
Ratcliffe further development.

The third Actio introduces in its opening argument the character
Furor, who is obviously patterned after the Thyestean Fury and who resembles
Margaret of Richard III. All three are alike in calling down retribution on
the protagonist and his accomplices, and all three are alike in their exits
from the scene to await the outcome of the action elsewhere. Thus Legge has
his Furor exclaim

> Actum est satis: parcam furor Britanniae
> posthac, novasque iam quaeram sedes[2]

and Shakespeare his Margaret

> These English woes shall make me smile in France
> IV,iv,115

both of which are suggestive of the retreat from the world of the Ghost of
Tantalus after the Senecan Fury has made him bring destruction on his house;
the Fury exclaims in line 105 "actum est abundere! gradere ad infernos specus,"
and this becomes a naturalized part of Elizabethan ghost rituals. The whole
pattern of this Thyestean visitation serves to explain to a large degree just

---

[1]Ibid., p. 308. [2]Legge, op. cit., p. 186.

why Shakespeare should have departed from his historical sources to introduce the figure of Margaret into the Richard story. In this respect also, Legge may well have been the source for Shakespeare's innovation.

The "English woes" of which Margaret speaks differ radically in Legge and Shakespeare: the one emphasizes almost exclusively the death of the Princes; the other is directed towards the fate of the Yorkist line generally and Richard specifically. In Legge the death of the Princes is the climax of the action, and it is part of the general formlessness of the play that Richard should not even appear on stage in this scene but be replaced by an expansive development of the roles of Tyrrel and Brackenbury. These two characters are presented in the manner of Nero and Seneca in Octavia debating over the moral issue of whether to obey a tyrant's unjust commands. Brackenbury is also permitted to enlarge on the infamy of the deed in a monologue after the manner of Thyestes at his banquet, and then with Tyrrel to describe Richard's rage as comparable to Orestes' madness. The scene closes with Brackenbury's lament on a theme developed by Hall from Polydore Vergil:

> To murther a man is much odious, to kyll a woman, is in manner unnatural, but to slaie and destroye innocent babes, and young enfantes, the whole world abhorreth, and the bloud from the earth crieth, for vengaunce to all mightie God.[1]

For all that there is some innovation here in the role of Brackenbury particularly the scene is quite artificial and undramatic simply because the speeches are pure declamation. Shakespeare, on the other hand, while generally downplaying this scene yet manages to inject the element of pathos, that Legge was striving after, by indirect representation through Tyrrel's description of the murderers' version of the deed; Dighton and Forrest, Tyrrel observes, are speechless from conscience and remorse and his own feelings are suggested in

---

[1] Quoted by Churchill, op. cit., p. 325.

his reference to "the bloody king." Thus Shakespeare makes the agents of the
villainy the evokers of its pathos, a turn in structural terms that again
points to the distance between the two dramatists. On Legge's failure in this
specific respect in comparison with Shakespeare, Churchill writes:

> The Senecan method acted differently. Here the sole embellishment is
> declamation. The murder is drily and hastily related, and its natural
> pathos is lost in the classic wail which runs the gamut from Procrustes
> to Nero. Add to this the absurdity of Tyrrel's long narration, destroy-
> ing all suspense on the part of the waiting listeners, and Legge's cli-
> mactic scene becomes his most conspicuous failure.[1]

Nor are the implications of this scene in Richardus Tertius even developed.
Richard is not informed in the play of the death of his nephews, and when the
time comes for his own death it is presented as purely an issue of external
circumstances.

Now this is all the more surprising in that Legge's several chronicle
sources had laid emphasis on the logical and moral nature of Richard's disin-
tegration and fall. Why Legge should then have ignored these suggestions is
a measure of the extent of Seneca's influence in his work. Churchill raises
this point and develops it into a cogent theory which bears quotation in full
for its formulation of the whole issue of Seneca.

> In Legge's refusal to make use of this part of the material furnished
> him by More is without doubt to be seen the influence of Seneca.
> The Senecan hero is, as Rudolf Fischer says (Zur Kunstentwicklung d.
> engl. Trag., p. 18), "in nature and will always one, possessed by one pas-
> sion, and looking toward one goal." So completely is this true that an
> Atreus, an Eteocles, a Lycus, a Nero, appear in Seneca rather as personifi-
> cations of certain passions than as individuals possessed of and governed
> by them. These passions are poured out in repeated monologue and dialogue.
> To their expression is added the expression of joy at the prospect or at-
> tainment of their satisfaction, of fear and anger at the prospect or arrival
> of failure. For as these passions strive towards satisfaction they meet
> with opposition. A faithful servant remonstrates against the purpose of
> Atreus, Jocasta endeavours to restrain Eteocles, the plans of Lycus are
> checked by Megaera. Seneca strives to restore Nero to reason and virtue.
> Thus the dramas are throughout dramas of emotion rather than action, dramas
> of which, to quote Fischer again, problems of feeling and processes of the

---

[1]Ibid., p. 326.

soul from the real kernel. Yet, though the soul of the Senecan tyrant is affected by joy, and by fear and anger, its ruling passion is never in the slightest altered by them; and though opposed it is never swerved from its direction. In other words, while the soul is always in conflict it is never in conflict with itself. Conscience is unknown in Seneca. Hence, there is no "poetic justice" in Seneca. The wicked passion is usually satisfied; and if not satisfied its punishment is wholly external. The outraged Universal is never shown to be unbroken.

Now the historical picture of Richard, both as colored by Polidore Vergil and as colored by More, presented Legge a Richard with a conscience and punished by his conscience. That Richard became the Richard of the True Tragedy, a Faust, whose conscience drives him toward a repentance to which he cannot attain, and it became the Richard of Shakespeare, on whom the universal Nemesis wreaks complete revenge through the coward conscience that so afflicts him. But it is not the Richard of Legge. Prominent as is the part of conscience in his historical model, it is put wholly aside. Richard's one passion is his from first to last, accompanied by joy, fear and anger, opposed by the passions and aims of others, but unchanging and unswerved. It knows no pity and no remorse. And punished as it is, it is punished only externally, that is, in truth, not punished at all. Legge's Richard is not only Senecan in conduct, but Senecan in essence.[1]

This long quotation is an apt description of the Senecan concept of

character, a concept that serves to explain the basic weakness in Richardus

Tertius. But a problem emerges from this argument of Churchill with respect

to its implications for Richard III: for Churchill seems to be assuming a

simple either/or situation; a character is either Senecan or a creature of con-

science. Now this does apply to The True Tragedie and to Doctor Faustus, but

when it comes to Richard III a third kind of character has to be considered, a

character not of passion or conscience but of will; a will, furthermore, that

can be assumed in the character for the greater part of the play, and in place

of which are substituted situations of skill. Thus until after the coronation

in IV,ii Shakespeare's Richard is devoid both of conscience and of passions;

and how passion and conscience enter the play from this point onwards and how

the will disintegrates is the real problem of the play's denouement. Shakespeare,

it will be seen, is inhibited in his "desis" by the very success of his "lusis";

that is to say, the tying and untying of the plot are not of equal caliber in

---

[1]Ibid., pp. 328-30.

Richard III mainly because the character of Richard used in the first three
acts, a creature of will refined into skill, cannot without loss of credibility
be made into a character of conscience and passion. Shakespeare seems to have
attempted a solution through compromise; Richard is presented as having pas-
sions and a conscience in the fourth and fifth acts but they have to be pre-
sented as having been stimulated by external agencies such as the messengers,
the supernatural visitation on Bosworth Field, and the invasion of Henry.
Needless to say, this compromise affects the dramatic quality of the presenta-
tion and it is in this regard specifically that Macbeth is more deeply moving
than Richard III.

To return to Richardus Tertius, however, it is only natural that we
should disagree with Dover Wilson's observation that this play is "of slight
interest to students of Shakespeare, since neither in plot nor in other re-
spects does it bear much resemblance to his play."[1] Difference, as we have
seen, is just as important as resemblance in evaluating formal dramatic struc-
tures based on common material; and given this wider perspective the issue of
Shakespeare's selectivity and dramatic emphasis is thrown into sharper relief.
Legge therefore stands between Shakespeare, his Chronicle sources, and Seneca,
and serves as a reminder that Shakespeare was ultimately independent of both.

In turning next to The True Tragedie we will find that ultimately its
most interesting relation to Richard III again is to be found in the issue of
character. But with this play there are several other issues that need to be
looked at first in that its relationship to Richard III has been the subject
of considerable scholarly discussion in recent years. This has taken the form
of some large claims on the part of Professor R. A. Law and J. Dover Wilson to
the effect that this play was a "certain" source of Richard III and that

---

[1]Wilson, op. cit., p. xxix.

Shakespeare was indebted to it for the "unity of action" it brought to the dramatic representation of the Richard story.[1]

This argument begins with certain definite parallels of diction between the two plays, the most notable of which are:

Richard: A horse, a horse, a fresh horse.
                                                                          1. 1985

as compared to

Richard: A horse, a horse, my kingdom for a horse!
                                                                          V,iv,13

and

Buckingham: Sound Trumpet in this parley, God save the King.
Richard: Richard.
                                                                          11. 785-786

as compared to

Margaret: Thou rag of honour! Thou detested -
Gloucester: Margaret.
                                                                          I,iii,233-234

and

For.: My Lord, it was one that was appointed by the King
       to be an ayde to sir Thomas Brackenbury.
King: Did the King, why Myles Forest, am not I King?
For.: I would have said my Lord your unckle the Protector.
King: Nay my kingly unckle I know he is now, but let him
       enjoy both Crowne and kingdome, so my brother and I
       may both enjoy our lives and libertie.
                                                                          11. 1271-1278

as compared to

Brak.: The king hath strictly charged the contrary.
Queen Eliz.: The king! who's that?
Brak.: I mean the Lord Protector.
Queen Eliz.: The Lord protect him from that kingly title!
                                                                          IV,i,17-20

Now it so happens that none of these parallels is absolutely conclusive of Shakespeare's indebtedness in that the first also occurs in The Battle of

---

[1]R. A. Law, "Richard III: Its Composition," PMLA, LX (1945), 689-96; Wilson, op. cit., pp. xxviii-xxxiii.

Alcazar, the second is Senecan in structure, and the third may be traced back to More's History.[1]

But these points, taken in conjunction with the possibility that the use of Clarence's Ghost in the prologue might have proved suggestive to Shakespeare together with the generally closer resemblance of The True Tragedie than Richardus Tertius to Richard III in such matters as the selection and ordering of events, the role of the protagonist, the deployment of the characters, and the reduced Senecanism--all these underline the high degree of probability in Shakespeare's knowing this play. This, however, would not be too significant in itself except for the emphasis that Law and Wilson have laid upon the similarity of the two plots. Wilson puts this case cogently in his Introduction to Richard III:

> Noting that the initial dramatic problem of Richard III was to impose at least the form of unity upon the miscellaneous jumble of events in the chronicles between the death of Henry VI and the accession of Henry VII, Law points out that one method pursued by the dramatist was, after a first act, which is mainly invented, to confine the action as far as possible to the happenings of a single year in the chronicles. Thus in Acts 2, 3, 4 and the first scene of Act 5 our attention is wholly directed to 1483, after which it is immediately switched to the Battle of Bosworth (22 August 1485), with which the play concludes. Now this is precisely the structure of The True Tragedy, which begins, after an Induction, with a scene at Edward's death-bed; and though dramatising some episodes in 1483 from the chronicles which Shakespeare either passes over or merely alludes to, those which it omits he omits also, notably the coronation of Richard III. It would seem, therefore, as if the framework of Richard III, at any rate in its main outline, may have been constructed by the dramatist responsible for the old play.[2]

This is, however, inconclusive reasoning. For what Law and Wilson have seen as the principle of selection in The True Tragedie is not and cannot be very much different from the principle of selection in the Chronicles themselves. More's History, for example, begins its narrative section with Edward's

---

[1] See Churchill's extensive discussion on this subject, op. cit., pp. 497-524.

[2] Wilson, op. cit., p. xxi.

death, deals mainly with 1483, and omits the Coronation. The leap to 1485 is also implicit in More's work. All therefore that ultimately gets excluded by Shakespeare are such details in the Chronicles as do not relate to Richard himself, and the outline of his career is substantially the same in Shakespeare as in More. Thus it becomes irrelevant to consider the principle that shapes the action as a temporal one; it is rather the simple principle of an overwhelmingly central character, and on these grounds The True Tragedie does not support the analogy.

There are furthermore such specific differences as (i) the absence of any parallel for Shakespeare's Act I; (ii) the use of the Mistress Shore episode as a subplot; (iii) the extensive epilogue; (iv) the Cardinal's appeal to the Queen in Sanctuary; (v) the murder of the Princes on stage; (vi) the general relationship of Buckingham and Richard and the causes for Buckingham's defection; and finally (vii) Shakespeare's use of ghosts as dramatic personages in the dream scene. The most that can be said with regard to parallelism between the two plays is that all the scenes that are deleted in The True Tragedie are also absent in Richard III. But this is not conclusive evidence in that Shakespeare carried the process of deletion even further. The only conclusion, as a result, that can be drawn with respect to the claims of Law and Wilson is one of "not proven."

The difference in the characters of the protagonists, however, is the most striking reason for scepticism concerning claims of relationship. For although the Richard of The True Tragedie is, as Churchill says, "strong, definite, and interesting"[1] in contrast to Legge's protagonist, the principles of his character are nonetheless quite distinct from those of Shakespeare's Richard. Churchill reads this character as being heavily indebted to Marlowe,

---

[1] Churchill, op. cit., p. 469.

combining the power of a Tamburlaine and the conscience of a Faustus: thus a

character emerges who is like Tamburlaine "unwavering of soul, fixed in purpose

from beginning to end, and [whose] drama was that of conflict with the external

world and with Fate"; and like Faustus in that his drama is "the conflict

within his own soul, the conflict within his own conscience."[1]

This argumentative separation of qualities, it may be observed, does

more justice to its subject than it deserves: two halves, it might be said,

do not necessarily make a whole in this regard; for, in reality, the Richard

of this play is more a confusion than a combination of qualities, a fact that

may be attested to by the way his lengthy monologues develop into harangues

on specific and distinct subjects going beyond the bounds of development of a

single and unified character. That is to say, the three speeches quoted below

tend to be ends in themselves; and as each one serves as the powerful develop-

ment of a dramatic commonplace on Richard, they may together serve as a cata-

logue of the ideas that Shakespeare avoided in presenting his version of

Richard.

Richard does not make an appearance until line 341, and there his long

soliloquy is prefaced by the remarks of Catesby, somewhat after the fashion of

a Lady Macbeth:[2]

> Casbie: Renowned and right worthie Protector,
> Whose excelency far deserves the name of king then protector,
> Sir William Casbie wisheth my Lord,
> That your grace may so governe the yoong Prince,
> That the Crowne of England may flourish in all happinesse.
> (Exit Casbie)
> ll. 344-348

The way in which Richard takes up this suggestion resembles the several

---

[1] Ibid., p. 470.

[2] W. W. Greg (ed.), The True Tragedy of Richard the Third, 1594 (Malone Society Reprints; London, 1924).

"ambition" speeches of the Henry VI plays of Shakespeare; <u>Richard III</u>, on the other hand, assumes these qualities from the Richard of the Henry VI plays, and uses them rather as the basis or the stage on which he is about to give his performance in villainy.[1]

> Rich.: Ah yoong Prince, and why not I?
> Or who shall inherit Plantagines but his sonne?
> And who the King deceased, but the brother?
> Shall law bridle nature, or authoritie hinder inheritance?
> No, I say no: Principalitie brookes no equalitie,
> Much lesse superioritie,
> And the title of a King, is next under the degree of a God,
> For if he be worthie to be called valiant,
> That in his life winnes honour, and by his sword winnes riches,
> Why now I with renowne of a souldier, which is never sold but
> By waight, nor changed but by losse of life,
> I reapt not the gaine but the glorie, and since it becommeth
> A sonne to maintaine the honor of his deceased father,
> Why should not I hazard his dignitie by my brothers sonnes?
> To be baser than a King I disdaine,
> And to be more than Protector, the law deny,
> Why my father got the Crowne, my brother won the Crowne,
> And I will weare the Crowne,
> Or ile make them hop without their crownes that denies me:
> Have I removed such logs out of my sight, as my brother Clarece
> And king Henry the sixt, to suffer a child to shadow me,
> Nay more, my nephew to disinherit me,
> Yet most of all, to be released from the yoke of my brother
> As I terme it, to become subiect to his sonne,
> No death nor hell shal not withhold me, but as I rule I wil raign,
> And so raign, that the proudest enemy shall not abide
> The sharpest shoure. Why what are the babes but a puffe of
> Gun-pouder? a marke for the soldiers, food for fishes,
> Or lining for beds, devices enough to make them away,
> Wherein I am resolute, and determining, needs no counsell,
> Ho, whose within?

ll. 350-380

In <u>Richard III</u> the word "ambitious" is used only once and then in an ironic context. There are furthermore no long soliloquies of the kind just quoted where Richard considers his real motivation and his real end: in their place are substituted statements that limit the reference of his world to the contingencies of the moment, particular hatreds and envies and particular designs

---

[1] Cf. <u>2Henry VI</u>, III,i,331-383; <u>3Henry VI</u>, I,ii,22-47.

to be carried out. Richard, when he does think beyond his present situation,

deliberately thinks or at least talks in the abstract; as, for example, when

he speaks of his reasons for marrying Anne:

> The which will I; not all so much for love
> As for another secret close intent
> By marrying her which I must reach unto.
> But yet I run before my horse to market:
> Clarence still breathes; Edward still lives and reigns:
> When they are gone, then must I count my gains.
>
> I,i,157-162

This deliberateness with which Shakespeare makes Richard conceal his ultimate

purpose is again to be noted in Richard's overly strong protestation to Rivers'

hypothetical remark:

> We follow then our lord, our sovereign king:
> So should we you, if you should be our king.
>   Gloucester: If I should be! I had rather be a peddlar:
> Far be it from my heart, the thought thereof!
>
> I,iii,157-160

And when Richard does finally allude to himself as king in the third act, it

is in an off-hand manner to Buckingham in which the point at issue is not

Richard's ambition but Buckingham's.

> Gloucester: And look when I am king, claim thou of me
> The earldom of Hereford . . .
>
> III,i,194-195

There is therefore a wonderful control and design to Shakespeare's presenta-

tion of Richard's motivation and purpose; the presentation is at one with its

subject in its general dissimulation of the real issues. The contrast between

Shakespeare's Richard and the other usurpers on the Elizabethan stage, who give

the game away to the audience as soon as they open their mouths, is therefore

remarkable and a cardinal principle of the Shakespearean form.

But if the protagonist of The True Tragedie is thus a more crude figure

in this respect, in another he has a certain fineness and flexibility to him

that Shakespeare could not or did not want to describe in his Richard. For

The True Tragedie gives to its protagonist a strong subjective element, a con-
science from beginning to end, and a realization of external forces, political,
moral, and supernatural, in terms of which he must manage his career. Thus in
the soliloquy that follows shortly after the one just quoted, Richard general-
izes his situation as being contingent on Fortune: this sense of a supernat-
ural agency is made to extend to his whole life, his beginnings, his rise, and
his possible fall; but even more than this The True Tragedie presents its
Richard as facing this hazard and, subjectively at least, overcoming it.

> Rich.: . . . I climbe Percivall, I regard more the glorie
> then the gaine, for the very name of a King redouble a mans
> life with fame, when death hath done his worst, and so commend
> me to thy Lord, and take thou this for thy paines.
> Per.: I thanke your grace, I humbly take my leave.
> <div align="right">Exit Percival.</div>
> Rich.: Why so, now Fortune make me a King, Fortune give
> me a kingdome, let the world report the Duke of Gloster was
> a King, therefore Fortune make me King, if I be but King for
> a yeare, nay but halfe a yeare, nay a moneth, a weeke, three
> dayes, one day, or halfe a day, nay an houre, swounes half
> an houre, nay sweete Fortune, clap but the Crowne on my head,
> that the vassals may but once say, God save King Richards life,
> it is inough.
> <div align="right">ll. 437-450</div>

Legge's Richard is so much a creature of passion that he can never see
beyond himself to the universals of the world; Shakespeare's, on the other
hand, is so much a creature of will that he ignores them until it is too late.
The True Tragedie therefore may be said to have taken a middle course between
these two positions and as such achieves greater consistency of characteriza-
tion in its beginning and in its end.

As a measure of this difference between these two latter plays, the
dream scenes on Bosworth Field offer many parallels and as many distinctions.
The onslaught of conscience is a consistent development of The True Tragedie's
protagonist, so much so that the whole scene is presented subjectively as tak-
ing place in Richard's imagination. In Shakespeare, however, the scene is

presented in the quasi-objective manner of a supernatural visitation, and Richard's speech on waking from the dream is at odds with virtually everything he has said or done previously.

In The True Tragedie all of the details that More stressed in Richard's disintegration--the sleepless nights, the dreadful dreams, the fear that keeps his hand upon his dagger--have been introduced and effectively dramatized long before this speech on Bosworth Field; the result is that this speech becomes not the discovery of conscience but rather the intensification of a tyrant's passion in the manner of Seneca:

> King: The hell of life that hangs upon the Crowne,
> The daily cares, the nightly dreames,
> The wretched crewes, the treason of the foe,
> And horror of my bloodie practise past,
> Strikes such a terror to my wounded conscience,
> That sleepe I, wake I, or whatsoever I do,
> Meethinkes their ghoasts comes gaping for revenge,
> Whom I have slaine in reaching for a Crowne.
> Clarence complaines, and crieth for revenge.
> My Nephues bloods, Revenge, revenge, doth crie.
> The headlesse Peeres comes preasing for revenge.
> And everyone cries, let the tyrant die.
> The Sunne by day shines hotely for revenge.
> The Moone by night eclipseth for revenge.
> The stars are turnd to Comets for revenge.
> The Planets chaunge their coursies for revenge.
> The birds sing not, but sorrow for revenge.
> The silly lambes sit bleating for revenge.
> The screeking Raven sits croking for revenge.
> Whole heads of beasts come bellowing for revenge.
> And all, yea all the world I thinke,
> Cries for revenge, and nothing but revenge.
> But to conclude, I have deserved revenge.
> In company I dare not trust my friend,
> Being alone, I dread the secret foe:
> I doubt my foode, least poyson lurke therein.
> My bed is uncoth, rest refrains my head.
> Then such a life I count far worse to be,
> Then thousand deaths unto a damned death:
> How wast death I said? Who dare attempt my death?
> Nay who dare so much as once to thinke my death?
> Though enemies there be that would my body kill,
> Yet shall they leave a never dying minde.
>   ll. 1874-1906

And then continuing some sixty lines later:

<u>Rich.</u>:   . . . God, what talke I of God, that have served the divell all this while. No, fortune and courage for mee, and ioyne England against mee with England, Ioyne Europe with Europe, come Christendome, and with Christendome the whole world, and yet I will never yeeld but by death onely. By death, no die, part not childishly from thy Crowne, but come the divell to claime it, strike him down, & tho that Fortune hath decreed, to set revenge with triumphs on my wretched head, yet death, sweete death, my latest friend, hath sworne to make a bargaine for my lasting fame, and this, I this verie day, I hope with this lame hand of mine, to rake out that hatefull heart of Richmond, and when I have it, to eate it panting hote with salt, and drinke his blood luke warme, tho I be sure twil poyson me. Sirs you that be resolute follow me, the rest go hang your selves.

ll. 1968-1981

In the Shakespearean scene there are admittedly many parallels to this speech, but yet the differences between them are even more important. As mentioned above, in <u>Richard III</u> this speech is something of an anomaly. It has been prepared for by only a minimal number of signs: Anne has mentioned Richard's dreams; Richard himself has given some brief indications of a conscience after his coronation; and there has been his frenzied behavior towards Catesby and the messenger. But these barely comprise a pattern of signs anticipating the ravages of conscience that Richard undergoes in this dream scene. Thus this fact, together with the need for the supernatural machinery, plus the fact that Richard after he recovers from his dream manages to shake off from his mind its most pertinent implications, all point to the radical break in characterization that Shakespeare was attempting at this stage.

Given then the extreme difficulty confronting Shakespeare in effecting this change, it is interesting to see the direction in which he moves to resolve it. Here a comparison with <u>The True Tragedie</u> speech is of great importance in discounting the charge of ranting that is often brought against Shakespeare in this instance. For the Senecan elements of passion, bombast, rhetorical amplification through description, and the possibility of a solution

through "fortune and courage" are all either absent or drastically curtailed,

and in their place the intensive and repetitive discovery on Richard's part of

himself and all that this means.

> Richard: Give me another horse, bind up my wounds!
> Have mercy, Jesu! - Soft, I did but dream.
> O coward conscience, how dost thou afflict me!
> The lights burn blue. It is now dead midnight.
> Cold fearful drops stand on my trembling flesh.
> What do I fear? myself? there's none else by.
> Richard loves Richard; that is, I am I.
> Is there a murderer here? No - yes, I am:
> Then fly. What, from myself? Great reason why -
> Lest I revenge. Myself upon myself?
> Alack, I love myself. For any good
> That I myself have done unto myself?
> O, no! Alas, I rather hate myself
> For hateful deeds committed by myself!
> I am a villain: yet I lie, I am not.
> Fool, of thyself speak well: fool, do not flatter.
> My conscience hath a thousand several tongues,
> And every tongue brings in a several tale,
> And every tale condemns me for a villain.
> Perjury, perjury, in the high'st degree;
> Murder, stern murder, in the dir'st degree;
> All several sins, all used in each degree,
> Throng to the bar, crying all "Guilty! guilty!"
> I shall despair. There is no creature loves me;
> And if I die, no soul will pity me:
> Nay, wherefore should they, since that I myself
> Find in myself no pity to myself?
> Methought the souls of all that I had murdered
> Came to my tent, and every one did threat
> Tomorrow's vengeance on the head of Richard.
>
> V,iii,177-206

Granted that this discovery of conscience is presented melodramatically,

it is nonetheless the appropriate complement of all that Richard has been up to

this point; a less highly formalized and more subtly individualized scene of

self-discovery as in Macbeth would be even less credible here than the present

scene. And in its general stylistic structure it picks up in its symmetry and

clarity of oppositions the general dramatic structure of the total play in

terms of character and moral issues. The frenetic dialogue that Richard holds

with himself, the declamatory accusation, the cumulative complaints--all have

been the staple of diction and situation earlier in the play when Richard was
so obviously the master of the situation and could ignore their implications;
now he is the object of his own imitation of this ritualistic pattern. Thus
in trying to dramatize effectively this scene of retribution Shakespeare
boldly concentrates on the moral element of conscience with its conventional
debate and final judgment, restricting as he does so any development of the
passions that are not germane to this issue; at the same time, however, as he
attempts this change in the substance of Richard's character he yet sustains
in the style, though with an ironic turn at Richard's expense, a continuity
in the basic structural pattern of his play.

Besides Richard's own character, however, the issue of the more general
deployment of characters in The True Tragedie and Richard III is of consider-
able interest. For what is notable in Shakespeare, the extensive role of the
women characters, is absent in The True Tragedie; and what is a dominating
element of The True Tragedie, the role of the Page, is missing in Shakespeare.
Admittedly the presence of Mistress Shore is to a degree an analogue of the
Shakespearean Queens, but the way she is developed in the subplot with a line
of action of her own is the very opposite of the static declamatory figures in
Richard III who serve, so to speak, as an "over-plot" developing chorally the
complaints, the laments, and the curses implicit in the action around Richard.
But a far more interesting difference in the use of characters is to be found
in the figure of the Page.

This particular character, of whom the Chronicles have almost nothing
to say, becomes by the end of The True Tragedie almost as important as Richard
himself: he is the general expositor of the play, its "point of view" charac-
ter; his comments after Richard's monologues underline the morality of the ac-
tion throughout; and then ultimately he gets drawn into the process of ambition

himself as it were by empathy. Now the equivalent of this character in

Richard III is Richard himself at least insofar as the expository functions

go. That is to say, Richard is his own actor and observer: no other charac-

ter, except for Buckingham and Catesby on isolated occasions, is able to pen-

etrate into Richard's psyche but himself; the abuse that the several Queens

hurl at him is more a measure of their own engagement than a point of view

which the audience can share. The absence of some specific person with the

Page's function in Richard III leaves the audience dependent on Richard him-

self for information and evaluation. Two examples of this Page's activity in

The True Tragedie, for which many parallels can be found in Richard's role in

Shakespeare, are the following:

> I see my Lord is fully resolved to climbe, but
> how hee climbes ile leave that to your judgments, but what
> his fall will be that's hard to say.
> 11. 475-477

and

> But I marvell that the Duke of Buckingham and
> he are now become such great friends, who had wont to
> love one another so well as the spider doth the flie:
> 11. 477-479

In the Shakespearean equivalent of the first passage Richard would complicate

the first proposition, spell out in detail the second, and exclude the third.

Concerning the second passage, there is an equivalent in Richard's own words,

when he says to and of Buckingham:

> My other self, my soul's consistory,
> My oracle, my prophet, my dear cousin,
> I, as a child, will go by thy direction.
> Towards Ludlow, then, for we'll not stay behind.
> II,ii,125-127

The two techniques of development contrast, the Page deflates while Richard

inflates, but the ends for the audience are much the same although Shakespeare's

is obviously the more dramatic of the two.

Besides these issues of expository function, however, there is also the issue of the Page's empathy to be considered. In literal terms, Buckingham is the equivalent in this regard in Richard III, but in another sense, a more thematic sense, it is Richard again who describes this issue of the observer being absorbed into the drama; for from his position of detachment at the beginning of the play he is caught up in the action himself and eventually destroyed. This is no less a device than that of a villain being "hoist with his own petard," a form of poetic justice that is a classic means of resolving an action in the genre of the villain-hero play.

Thus there is a general principle implicit in the role of the Page in The True Tragedie in that it illustrates the autonomy of dramatic structures. There was no warrant for the Page in the material of the Chronicles; the cause for his expansion in The True Tragedie was purely formal, and points to the lines along which the rest of this study into the genesis of form in Richard III must proceed. For it is possible by describing the history of a dramatic genre to detect what structural principles are essential to its nature as an artistic form, and to have a general frame of reference for the analysis of individual plays within the genre.

The Page, then, is a creature of a purely functional nature, and while in The True Tragedie he is something of an excrescence his role may ultimately be seen as the outcome of that strange meeting of Truth and Poetry in the prologue to this play.

```
Poetrie:   Truth well met.
Truth:     Thankes Poetrie, what makes thou upon a stage?
Poetrie:   Shadowes.
Truth:     Then will I adde bodies to the shadowes,
           Therefore depart and give Truth leave
           To shew her pageant.
Poetrie:   Why will Truth be a Player?
Truth:     No, but Tragedia like for to present
           A Tragedie in England done but late,
           That will revive the hearts of drooping mindes.
Poetrie:   Whereof?
Truth:     Marry thus.                              ll. 7-18
```

Truth then reveals herself to be History and goes on to give an outline of the Wars of the Roses. And generally it may be said that Truth has the upper hand in this particular play with the Page virtually the sole representative of Poetry's shadowy figures from the past. What must now be done, therefore, is to turn to these "shadowes" that lie behind the historical particularity of Richard III and see if an explanation of its form can be given in terms of a dramatic genre built around the numerous villain-heroes of the native stage in the Mysteries, Miracles, and Moralities.

CHAPTER IV

MEDIEVAL ANALOGUES OF VILLAINY IN THE MYSTERIES

In chapter ii of this study the problem was raised of the relation

between a material source in narrative form and its subsequent embodiment in

drama. It was observed at this point that the particular source of Richard

III gave rise to a special set of problems in that More's History was shown

to be an unusual kind of historical narrative since the author was as much

concerned with presenting his material in a peculiarly literary manner as with

the more narrowly literal function of being an historian. As a result, the

task of relating this History to Shakespeare's play was seen to involve not

merely the simple issue of how the dramatist selected, rearranged, and gave

shape to his historical facts but more significantly the complex problem of

how he translated the elements and principles of narrative form into dramatic

form. On this latter issue, it was the conclusion of our analysis that

Shakespeare found More to be both bane and blessing: it obviously inhibited

Shakespeare to have such excellent material at hand and yet to be incapable of

capturing its essence dramatically for want of those principles and freedoms

available to and exploited by More as the narrator; on the other hand, it

helped Shakespeare immeasurably to have More present the character of Richard

with such clarity and cogency and to have More bring a formal unity not only

to Richard's career but to the world in which he moved as well. And the secret

of More's success in this respect was observed to be the fact that he presented

Richard as though he were a theatrical character, a figure of undifferentiated

evil with such attributes of physique, mannerism, and operation as were consonant with his specific kind of nature. The result of all this for More's History and Richard III was that a circular relation was described whereby More drew from either dramatic or iconographical sources his basic formal elements for Shakespeare in turn to convert them into drama again. This is one way of arguing for the influence of the native drama on Richard III.

Another way of establishing this influence became evident from the analysis in chapter iii of the two versions of Richard on the stage prior to Shakespeare's. For what was observed here was that given the same historical material different dramatists could make of it quite distinct dramatic forms; and the difference in this regard was seen to be a measure of the intermediate influence of Seneca as a dramatic model. The comparison of the three Richard plays led to the conclusion that not only did Shakespeare show a far greater selectivity towards his material but also that he subsumed Seneca within a much more general dramatic structure, the elements of which, it was postulated, were native in origin.

What has therefore been argued by this study so far is a view of what is coming to be an important issue in the theory of modern criticism. In a study, for example, that is closely associated with the present one, Professor Spivack has observed:

> Narration, whether fiction or history, transferred to the theatre needs to be dramatized, which means a good deal more, of course, than simply turning it into dialogue and gesture. . . . the technical difference between relating an action and imitating it on the stage is enormous. In this task of dramatization the initial recourse of the dramatist, however much he may modify them by his ingenuity or transcend them by his inspiration, is inevitably to the successful conventions of his stage.[1]

Similarly, Professor Olson has in an even more recent study pointed to the importance of those "signs" which a dramatist has to provide in the external

---

[1]Spivack, op. cit., p. 415.

behavior of the actors from which the audience is to infer the inner and private conditions of a dramatic action.

> We come to know about characters in drama much as we come to know about persons in daily life. There are three ways in which we come to such knowledge: either we witness something directly, as, let us say, we know that Jones beats his wife because we see him doing it; or we infer it from what we observe, as we might from the fact that Mrs. Jones is seldom without a black eye; or we are told about it, by the Joneses themselves or by someone else. Everyone has an outer obvious life and a secret inner life. In the real world, we know the inner life of others chiefly from what we can observe or find out about the outer; in drama we are almost wholly dependent upon the observed outer life for information about the inner. In the real world our ignorance of the inner life of others may be lessened by an occasional confession; in drama, by an occasional soliloquy; but certainly E. M. Forster is right in saying that the inner life of other human beings can be fully known only in the novel and other narrative forms.[1]

Both of these statements formulate the same problems that must have faced Shakespeare when he came to the material of the Chronicles dealing with Richard. The first issue must surely have been that of making Richard totally evil, the second that of making a totally evil subject dramatically interesting. How and to what degree he succeeded in this second issue must await our subsequent analysis of the play by itself, for this is a measure of Shakespeare's artistry. What may, on the other hand, be taken up now is the first issue, since for its solution Shakespeare adopted a very traditional convention developed around the presentation of the Devils and the Vices of the native stage.

The issue of the medieval heritage in Elizabethan drama has come to the surface of this study so often by now that it becomes imperative to establish the validity of the claims upon which so much of the present study rests. To do this there are three ways open: the first is to consider the most recent scholarship in the field; the second is to consider whether Richard III responds to the findings of this scholarship; and the third is to go back into the native

---

[1] Elder Olson, Tragedy and the Theory of Drama (Detroit, 1961), p. 19.

drama itself and read it with an eye to characters, situations, and themes analogous to those found in Richard III.

That Shakespeare's play, first of all, reflects the medieval heritage of the native theatre is now so much a scholarly fact as to have become a cliché. As a sign of the wide and easy acceptance of the idea, there is the off-hand way in which Dover Wilson, the most recent editor of the play, raises and handles it in a short half-page of his Introduction; he spends, by way of contrast, several pages on the chronicle sources and several more on the disputed issue of the theme or philosophy of the play. His reason, furthermore, for introducing the issue at all is to qualify the statement of R. W. Chambers that Shakespeare was completely indebted to More for his protagonist's character. Without considering the difference in the formal principles of narrative and dramatic presentation as the possible answer to this problem, he briefly alludes to the native dramatic tradition of "Herod, the Vice, the Devil himself" inferring from this a traditional "two mindedness in the Elizabethan audience" only on the basis of which and by realizing that "Shakespeare expects us at once to enjoy and to detest the monstrous Richard can we fully appreciate the play he wrote about him."[1] In general, the present study will agree with this proposition and for the moment regards primarily as unfortunate that it should not have been considered worthy of further development; for, as it stands, the casual nature of this proposition suggests that while it may be a fundamental historical truth it is yet without much consequence for practical criticism.

The confidence underlying the assumption of the close relationship between the medieval and Elizabethan dramas is, of course, the result of more than a century of research on the part of such scholars as Eckhardt, Brandl,

---

[1] Wilson, op. cit., p. xvii.

E. K. Chambers, Craig, Gayley, Tillyard, Farnham, Dover Wilson, Rossiter and Spivack.[1] In such research, moreover, the wide range of interests is impressive, covering as it does issues of religion, philosophy, anthropology, politics, the history of the stage, and other allied arts such as painting, sculpture, and iconography. It is, however, in the work of Farnham and Rossiter that this research has been put to its best use as criticism, and in their criticism a specific concept plays a dominant role--that of Gothic art.[2]

It is this concept that underlies the notion of Elizabethan "two-mindedness" with its paradoxical Schadenfreude implications; and it is as a result of the formulation of this concept that modern criticism has been able to recapture the essence of this now alien medieval aesthetic. There is, however, one aspect to the theory that needs more careful consideration before the theory itself can be assumed in this present study. It arises from the fact that the kind of evidence Farnham and Rossiter use at crucial stages in their arguments is not evidence taken from literature but evidence from paintings, sculpture, emblem books, and iconography generally.[3]

Now the point at issue is that these parallels all involve static representation as against the sequential method in literature. Thus while it is a fact that a person confronting a painting by Bosch or Brueghel intuits the

---

[1]See A. Brandl, Quellen des weltlichen dramas in England vor Shakespeare (Strasburg, 1898); E. Eckhardt, Die lustige person im älteren englischen drama (Berlin, 1902); E. K. Chambers, The Medieval Stage (2 vols.; Oxford, 1903); Charles M. Gayley, Plays of Our Forefathers (New York, 1907); Farnham, op. cit.; Hardin Craig, English Religious Drama of the Middle Ages (Oxford, 1955); E. M. W. Tillyard, The Elizabethan World Picture (London, 1943); J. D. Wilson, The Fortunes of Falstaff (New York, 1944); Rossiter, op. cit.; Spivack, op. cit.

[2]See Rossiter, op. cit., chapter iv; Farnham, op. cit., chapter ii.

[3]The illustrations in Farnham's text are important elements of his argument. See, in particular, the illustrations of "Regulus tortured by the Carthaginians," "Pompey Beheaded," and "Oedipus blinded by himself."

whole at one glance and accepts the paradoxical effect of pleasure and pain

simultaneously, it is not a fact that the same process can take place with

such facility in literature. The pain in any sensational, melodramatic, or

grotesque representation on a stage tends to isolate itself and arouse imme-

diate antipathy and disgust in the spectator when properly the emotions should

be more tentative, expressing themselves as expectations, hopes, and fears,

and only resolved when the action itself is resolved.

Thus, to say that we enjoy and detest "the monstrous Richard" at the

same time is too simple a paradox; for while each proposition is in itself true,

together they tend to blur the lines between different kinds of aesthetic reac-

tions and to confuse the issue as it must have presented itself to Shakespeare

in his act of composition. More properly, and from the point of view of the

dramatist, it would be that Richard is to be made enjoyable because he is to be

made detestable. That is to say, Shakespeare is working on a base of antipathy

with an eye always on the justice and rightness of Richard's final punishment.

Given this base and all the assumed expectations that go with it, the problem

then becomes one of diverting the antagonism of the audience and of suspending

its expectations by means of a series of dramaturgic tricks that range from

making him, so to speak, the master of ceremonies, to having him assume a number

of masks, to letting him ring the changes of posture from pure effrontery to

mock self-deprecation. Versatility is the crux of villainy, its modus operandi;

the problem comes in this particular play when Shakespeare tries to induce

variety into his protagonist's nature as well.

Thus it is a considerably modified version of the principle of Gothic

art that is to be found in Richard III, one that tries to come to terms with

the sequential nature of a dramatic action. And saying that it is a modified

version, of course, does not mean that the general principles of the Gothic

aesthetic are not germane to the issue of this play's form; they merely have to be described with much greater care and particularity. Assumed carelessly as a general truth about the play, as in Dover Wilson's remarks, these principles becloud rather than throw light on Shakespeare's achievement.

But that the tradition can be usefully employed in the interests of Shakespearean criticism is ably attested to by the critique on Iago recently presented by Professor Spivack in Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil. For what is shown here is that the assumption of this native tradition and its generically conceived characters constitutes the first principle of Iago's nature; it constitutes, as Spivack observes,

> . . . a vague, pervasive, and in a sense, static condition of Iago's being. It is more like the enduring biological characteristics of a species than an aspect of the personality of a single man in reaction to particular events.[1]

Such an Iago is not individualized, but one whose actions are no more than illustrations of his self-proclaimed nature and whose relation to his victims is:

> . . . as abstract as a moral proposition, for it exists only in so far as they exemplify values he is bent on destroying--virtue, love, friendship. He has no emotion other than the pleasure of his work because he has no personal affinity to anyone or anything that could provoke him to any other emotion. . . . He existed before Othello was conceived, and is merely brought into it to do a job that is his traditional speciality.[2]

He functions moreover in the play in a way that is just as traditional as his nature; like the Morality Vice he stands between the play and the audience as:

> . . . the showman who produces it and the chorus that interprets it. . . . His monologues are intended to be unqualified public addresses and when properly delivered that is what they are, without any pretense at self-communion overheard by an eavesdropping auditory.[3]

---

[1]Spivack, op. cit., p. 16.   [2]Ibid., pp. 30-31.

[3]Ibid., p. 31. See also p. 456, n. 1, where Spivack mentions how John Barrymore, the actor, was startled at the effect he generated in the audience when he began to "throw the speech right out into the auditorium," the speech being in this case Richard III's soliloquy after the wooing of Lady Anne.

And given this generic cast of nature and function he can then be made partic-
ular--superfluously so. His thwarted ambition, his jealousy, his aspirations

after office, his hot-blooded revengeful Italianate sense of injury, his sol-

dierly irascibility--all lead to the illusion of individuality. And Iago

capitalizes on this complexity of situation with his manner of speech and

thought; he presents his motives with a frivolity, a lack of sincerity and

force, and as no more than hearsay or conjecture. There is no end to their

number and cynicism:

> They come crowding in frivolous profusion and jostle each other off into
> oblivion. They sound like parenthetical remarks, postscripts, marginalia
> --like a cluster of opportunisms for an action that was inevitable before
> they were ever thought of.[1]

His real cause is independent of his statements; he ignores, or rather assumes,

this equivocation and disjunction of mood between his ends and his means. His

style of speaking plays games with the syntax, as when he says:

> I hate the Moor,
> And it is thought abroad, that 'twixt my sheets
> Has done my office.
>
> I,iii,393-395

He does not subordinate the causal clause; that would make his hatred solely

contingent on his jealousy. Rather he conjoins a general statement with one

of hearsay particularity. The single word "and" lets the two observations re-

late one to the other, mutually supporting each other's credibility, and giv-

ing sanction as a result to an illusory motive.

There is therefore a partially concealed order of motivation to Iago,

an existence on different levels, a mask and a manner for each level, and a

general disjunction among all things to his make-up except the one essential

of his function--to effect the tragic action. When the function is completed,

---

[1]*Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

Iago is completed; until it is completed, however, Iago bustles in the world with a logic and an energy which elude the spectator who is not prepared for the convention of it all.

Now Iago is a much subtler character than Richard. Having a more limited dramatic function he demands a greater complexity to be credible: a simple Richard would fall back into an ambitious Richard; a simple Iago would fall back into a pure abstraction of malignity. Usurping a throne is an action of limited possible developments; the manipulating of people, on the other hand, opens out into as many possibilities as there are personalities involved. There is an in-built probability of action to Richard; Iago has to generate his own.

One example of Richard's less subtle technique is to be found in his opening speech:

> And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover,
> To entertain these fair well-spoken days,
> I am determined to prove a villain
> And hate the idle pleasures of these days.
> <div align="right">I,i,28-31.</div>

The third line is commonly quoted on its own, and few critics ever try to take it in its context and resolve the causal relation of frustrated love and villainy. If they were to do so and not appreciate the convention of the illusory cause as was seen in Iago they would at once be limiting Richard's nature to some particular literalism which would become irrelevant as soon as the next cause made its appearance. But if they did so in this particular instance they would be somewhat more excusable than in Iago's case: for the language used does support the causal relationship; "therefore" denotes a concluding argument, and "since" subordinates. The device behind these lines is, therefore, half-used and half-confused, and avoiding this problem is a measure of Iago's greater subtlety.

Thus it may be proposed that Richard belongs to the family of Iago and that as a member of that family he shares in its complex motivation, diverting an audience with particularity while concealing or assuming the absolute evil of his ends. And this is a quality of character in the Elizabethan stage that can only be explained in terms of the long tradition and experience of the native drama in presenting characters of this kind and function, most notably in the Morality Vice. The evidence that Spivack has brought together in this respect is conclusive.[1]

But the present study is interested in much wider issues than character presentation, and it now remains to show how many other elements in the total structure of <u>Richard III</u> can be explained by reference to the earlier drama. At this stage only the most significant of these elements need to be mentioned, as the occasion will arise in considering the Mysteries and Moralities to supplement these major issues with further detail.

First, it should be noted that most of the basic assumptions regarding structure in Elizabethan drama are medieval in origin; the remarkable freedoms in constructing plots, the ease with which chronology is manipulated, the sense of types behind individualized characters, and the concentration on death as the inevitable resolution of a serious action--these are so central to Elizabethan dramatic structure that they seem unremarkable to an English-speaking audience. It has traditionally taken the ridicule of a Voltaire to get the notion across that such principles of dramatic structure are not universally assumed and that such principles are peculiar to the history of the English theatre. And when that peculiarity is observed, it finds its best explanation in terms of the history of the native drama before Shakespeare in its liturtical and homiletic origins. In that source lies the explanation generally of

---

[1]See especially chapters i, ii, and v.

Elizabethan symbolism and structure, the sense in which particular characters and situations in Shakespeare attain their universality and the sense in which the multifarious incidents and chronological extent of a man's entire career can be brought "sub specie aeternitatis" through the control and unifying principles of theological and ethical concept implicit, and as often made explicit, in the resolution of the action. The general notion of the exemplum, in short, never loses its hold on the English stage even though by Shakespeare's time it has changed its grip considerably.

Richard III is, furthermore, the most striking illustration of such traditionalism in Shakespeare, and the villain-hero genre the closest approximation in terms of total structure to its analogues in the Mysteries and Moralities. Its simple pattern of a rise and fall, the protagonist conceived generically, his mode of operation through dissimulation, the symbolic act of sitting on the royal throne, the general lamentation and ineffectuality of the onlookers, the need for some greater counterforce to oppose the villain, and the appearance finally of the Nemesis figure to put down the usurper--these elements appear again and again in embryonic form in the Mysteries and in the somewhat more formal fashion of the Moralities. And the myths or biblical stories, such as the Lucifer and Antichrist legends, in which these villain-hero motifs are first found in the Mysteries, and then the themes and political applications of these themes in the Moralities are both so central, topical, and popular in the literature and general cultural life of the medieval and Elizabethan worlds that the probability of a playwright in Shakespeare's time assuming them in his thinking is high indeed. There is, therefore, no need to posit a specific historical relation between Richard III and its analogues of usurpation in the native drama. The analogues themselves in their number and formal nature should be sufficient to establish and support the argument for

the traditionalism of this play. And on this basis, furthermore, of both the autonomy and interrelationship of the several villain-hero species, criticism can move more freely towards its proper objective of describing the unique natures of Shakespeare's play and those of Marlowe and Jonson.

The specific features of Richard III that are the most remarkable signs of its genre are those mentioned in the paragraph above, but these may also be supplemented by such elements as the opening monologue, the protagonist as expositor directly addressing the audience in his prologues and epilogues to each incident, his general irony, and his physical appearance; the simple deployment of characters involving the villain himself, his accomplices, his dupes, his female victims, the People, and the Nemesis figures; the emblematic and iconographical imagery, the metaphorical pervasiveness of the Devil, and the ritualistic symmetry in description of likeness and difference of characters. There are, furthermore, Richard's own statements of his relation to the Devil and of his assumption of the Vice Iniquity's role.

But the most impressive of all these elements, and one that is shared by The Jew of Malta and Volpone, is the opening monologue. This monologue is in Elizabethan drama the simplest way to recognize the genre of the villain-hero play, or at least its influence. And nowhere is the relation to the old native drama more apparent than in that kind of self-discovery of character to the audience; for the number of characters in the Mysteries and Moralities who come out on stage and announce "I am 'So and So'" is legion.

Now such self-presentation is what Professor Olson would call an "artificial sign" in dramatic structures, one that is conventional and traditional. And what is "signified" is a character with a specific nature from which all the subsequent action of the play proceeds as logically as a deduction from a definition. The opening monologue or prologue is therefore the premise of its

play, describing and circumscribing the potential development of the action.

It takes the audience by surprise, almost by storm, and allows only an attitude

of irony in the spectator towards the actor, an attitude that slowly deepens

until it is resolved by the villain's own recognition that the real irony of

the play has been at his own expense. It is for that reason that when Richard

ultimately cries "Fool . . . fool" in his dream scene he is giving the audience

perhaps the only "natural sign" of his nature in the play and the highest dra-

matic moment of which the villain-hero genre is capable.

In turning now to the native drama itself, it should be noted that the

present study differs from many others, and from Spivack's in particular, in

postulating that the Mystery cycles are relevant to the issue at hand. Spivack,

for example, traces Iago's ancestry back to the Morality Vice and from there

to the patristic allegorical poem, the Psychomachia of Prudentius; and why he

does not include the Mystery devils in the tradition is that he denies any

historical relationship between Devil and Vice. In this he is joined by other

scholars such as Cushman, Gayley, and Chambers.[1] Gayley, for example, writes:

> The Vice is neither an ethical nor dramatic derivative of the Devil, nor
> is he a pendant to that personage, as foil or ironical decoy, or even an-
> tagonist. The Devil of the early drama is a mythical character, a fallen
> archangel, the anthropomorphic Adversary. The Vice, on the other hand, is
> allegorical,--typical of the moral frailty of mankind. Proceeding from
> the concept of the Deadly Sins, ultimately focussing them, he dramatizes
> the evil that springs from within.[2]

Or as Spivack himself argues:

> For this estrangement between the morality drama and the Devil the reasons
> are not far to seek. He is not a personification but an historical figure
> out of Christian theology and folklore, and an illogical intrusion, there-
> fore, into the drama of abstraction. He is too much the composite of

---

[1] L. W. Cushman, The Devil and the Vice in the English Dramatic Litera-
ture before Shakespeare (Halle, 1900); Charles M. Gayley (ed.), Representative
English Comedies (New York, 1903-1914); E. K. Chambers, op. cit., Vol. II.

[2] Gayley, Representative English Comedies, op. cit., pp. li-lii.

undifferentiated evil to be homiletically useful, his few appearances serving only to demonstrate the source of all evil, whereas the moralities were mainly concerned to analyze and illustrate the operation of the separate vices upon the human soul.[1]

Elbert N. S. Thompson, however, reviews the whole problem and comes to the opposite conclusion:

> The origin of the Vice as a dramatic character is more a matter of dispute. Cushman believes that the Devil and the Vice are related only as all influences for evil were supposed to emanate from one source; that the Devil was a theological mythological being, the antithesis of God, while the Vice was an ethical person, the summation of the deadly sins, the antithesis of piety and morality. Eckhardt, on the contrary, argues that the Devil was the immediate, though not the exclusive, source of the conception of the Vice. Between these two views the difference is but slight; for, since the deadly sins were regarded by churchmen as the children of the Devil, both postulate for the Vice, as well as for the Devil, an origin in theological literature. Chambers has supported an entirely different opinion, that relates the Vice to the court fool or jester, who would figure first in the farce; but to the present author the Vice seems more directly descendent from the Devil and the deadly sins.[2]

The debate, it is obvious, has as many different solutions as there are different principles of inquiry. The present study agrees with Eckhardt and Thompson but not necessarily for the same reasons in that it would not accept that common origins in theological literature need imply any specific kinds of subsequent form. It disagrees with Cushman, Gayley, and Spivack, on the other hand, but again not because it claims they are wrong. For it is quite possible to grant what Spivack says about historical derivation to be true in that the Psychomachia is the classic source of the allegorical representation of sins as characters.[3] There is the historical problem, however, of the gap of ten centuries between the source and its manifestations in the Moralities; but Spivack rationalizes this by pointing to the medieval assimilation of Prudentius,

---

[1] Spivack, op. cit., p. 132.

[2] Elbert N. S. Thompson, "The English Moral Plays," Transactions of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, XIV (1908-10), 396.

[3] Ibid., pp. 320ff.; Spivack, op. cit., pp. 60-95.

and it must be granted that the Psychomachia survived that period relatively intact. There is, however, the further problem, which was raised with regard to More and Shakespeare, of how material from one kind of literature gets translated into another kind; and the answer to which, as Spivack himself concedes, usually lies in the dramatist's reliance on earlier stage conventions. Thus it seems highly probable that when the authors of the Moralities considered how their villains would function on stage they would do so in terms of the conventions of their known genres.

What seems to lie at the root of this problem therefore appears to be the need for a distinction between substance and function. Historically, there is a difference in substance between the Mysteries and the Moralities, of the kind that Cushman, Gayley, and Spivack describe; and the new substance and kinds of characters in the Moralities have their sources furthermore in non-biblical writings, and hence are not derivative of the Mysteries in that regard. But it is nonetheless possible to propose that while different in substance the two kinds of drama yet have many elements which correspond in function. A villain is a villain in this sense no matter what context he finds himself in.

Thus the approach of the present study in postulating continuity between Mysteries and Moralities is based on the principle of formal function; and since this is an approach that differs from the traditional approach through historical derivation in terms of subject matter, it seems desirable to expand on the notion somewhat. We may note first of all that this approach solves certain specific problems for our study.

If, for example, Spivack's argument were to be rigorously applied to Richard III, it would mean that such lines as:

> Richard: Thus, like the formal Vice, Iniquity,
> I moralize two meanings in one word.
> III,i,82-83

constitute a literal statement of historical identity between Richard and his

iniquitous ancestor, while such lines as

> Richard: And I no friends to back my suit at all,
> But the plain devil and dissembling looks,
>
> I,ii,235-236

have only a metaphorical and descriptive function. The result would be to cut

the ground from beneath the feet not only of Richard, who more frequently as-

sociates himself with the Devil than with the Vice, but also of so many of the

other characters in the play, who have no doubts at all that he is "the devil

incarnate." In short, the Devil as a character of dramatic potency is just as

alive to the Elizabethans as the Vice.

A second and a more general problem also arises if historical continu-

ity is made dependent on substance and not function. For it is again ironic

that Spivack can deny the relationship between Mysteries and Moralities on the

issue of the villain and yet postulate a relationship between the Moralities

and Elizabethan drama in the same respect. The difference between Iago and the

Vice is surely as remarkable as that between the Vice and the Devil.

It is for that reason that the present study emphasizes the autonomy

of different forms and is in this respect non-historical in its approach, lim-

iting itself to observing analogies between the several forms and not trying

to argue for historical derivations. It is by the same token not un-historical

in its method in that it seeks to explain certain formal phenomena in terms of

an historical genre which in evolving through different contexts observes such

changes in form as the change in substance gives rise to. It therefore ad-

dresses itself to the problem of change within continuity; of observing, for

example, both the likeness and the difference of The Jew of Malta and Volpone,

explaining the former as a function of a continuing genre and the latter as a

function of the contexts of their respective subject matters.

Finally, this study presumes to be clearly historical in suggesting
that a principle of formal development is observable in the genre of the
villain-hero in terms of the different ontological references of the several
plays that comprise the genre. For, as Professor Manly has noted, the Myster-
ies, Miracles, and Moralities are respectively about God, saints, and man.
The Miracles, however, are so limited in number as to be inconsequential for
our specific purpose and will therefore concern us little. The Moralities,
on the other hand, are so numerous and different in themselves that they call
for several distinctions in terms of reference themselves; thus while they all
deal with the subject of man, in their development they progressively narrow
their reference from Everyman and his eschatological world down through ethical
and political matters to the Tom Tosspots and the issue of manners. After the
Moralities and when the allegorical formulation of man is displaced by that of
particular men, a similar pattern of decreasing reference may also be described,
particularly in the villain-hero genre.

Thus, if we take a number of plays which broadly describe the extent
of the villain-hero genre--the Lucifer or Antichrist plays of the Mysteries,
Respublica in the Moralities, The Jew of Malta, Richard III, and Volpone--it
may be seen that their history moves from an absolute context with characters
different in kind from men; to a universal context with personified abstrac-
tions as characters; to an international context with a protagonist who al-
though human exceeds the normal powers of humanity to the degree that the laws
of nature seem for a time to be suspended in his case; to a national context
where the protagonist is as a prince superior in degree to mankind generally
in his powers but yet decidedly subject to his environment; to a civic context
where the protagonist is subject to, or at least equal with, mankind in the
general social sense.

Given such a scheme as the above it is possible to predicate upon the principle of context many things about each individual play such as the kind of action, the kind of resolution, and the kind of dramatic effect possible; such distinctions and many others are possible on the basis of this principle. But the element of likeness between each of these plays is also intrinsic to their individual forms, and this leads to the phenomenon of paradoxical situations, so common in this genre, whereby an element usually found in serious drama is translated into comedy and vice versa. It is frequently observed of The Jew of Malta, for example, that the action of its final stages is farcical; on the other hand, the element of "hubris" is clearly to be seen in Volpone. This is frequently assumed to be a flaw in structure; from another point of view, however, it points to the chief virtue of the genre--its historical continuity and relative adaptability to different contexts and different forms.

In turning, then, from the issue of this tradition to the Mystery cycles themselves, we need to note that the religious element to their presentation complicates any analysis of them as dramatic forms. In recent years, several critics have seen fit to give this issue special emphasis, but without at the same time proposing how the problem should be overcome. Professor Craig, for example, has argued that "the origin of the religious drama must be thought of as a special act of invention in which impersonation, action, and dialogue happened to come together; it must not be thought of as something that emerged of itself by natural process from a complex of vividness, excitement, and human interest."[1] His argument,

---

[1]Craig, op. cit., p. 4.

based as it is on Manly's metaphors of "mutation" and "evolution,"[1] is an explicit appeal to read the religious cycles on their own merits and not as mere anticipations of the later and greater theatre of the Elizabethans. According to Craig's line of argument, a special kind of critical sophistication is needed to go beyond those elements, as in the Towneley Second Shepherd's Play, that seem to the modern reader to anticipate the subsequent course of English drama, and to concentrate on the canon proper of the Mysteries, accepting the world as they formulate it and submitting to the peculiar effect derived from their postulates of form.

In terms of Craig's approach it is therefore not possible to relate the Mysteries and Elizabethan drama one to the other; the two, according to Craig, have radically distinct ends to their formal natures. But at the very same time as he is asserting that the Mysteries are, as a species, "religious drama," Craig is also conceding that they are "drama" as a genus; and it is on this more generic level that the dramatic structures of Shakespeare and those of his medieval predecessors in the theatre may be related one with the other without at the same time being necessarily argued to be identical in form. For structure, as this study uses the term, is the abstract of form, the skeleton within the living body. And in the Mystery cycles as a whole there will appear a great number of individual forms whose structures resemble those of the Elizabethan villain-hero genre exemplified by Richard III.

To isolate, therefore, certain structures from within the total complex of the Mysteries is the necessary evil of the present method; and to isolate the Devil solely is a process that is especially hazardous, since, as in virtually all literary representations of the biblical story,

---

[1]See J. M. Manly, "Literary Forms and the New Theory of the Origin of Species," Modern Philology, IV (1907), 577-95.

it is always difficult to keep the Devil down to his secondary role in the total design. Thus it seems desirable to say that our present narrow interest in the Mystery plays is meant to have no wider implications than the analysis of one character's nature and function.

With this caveat in mind we may then turn to the issue of the medieval idea of character and at once agree with Craig that it was conceived generically with the result that "the criterion for recognition was sameness, each man's class being the essence of his existence."[1] Names are in this sense accidents, a fact that is highly pertinent to the issue of villainy in the Mysteries; for the Devil does not always appear under his own name and there seems little point in not considering all manifestations of his nature and function under the one category of "villainy."

Granted this, it may then be observed that the formula of villainy is worked out in the Mystery cycles both in terms of the total pattern and the individual parts.[2] Each cycle follows Satan's career from his fall to his role in the Crucifixion to his defeat on Judgment Day. He is presented as a figure of absolute evil who for being thwarted in his beginnings turns to deceit and dissimulation in order to destroy the divine scheme first through Eve then through God's chosen People until he attains a moment of triumph in the Crucifixion. But no sooner is he victorious than he falls, for his victim shows his symbolic superiority in harrowing hell to its very foundations. The Resurrection is an earnest of the new dispensation and the numbered days of Satan close with the Last Judgment. In his end, however, Satan makes one last desperate attempt to fulfill his nature through the Antichrist.

---

[1] Ibid., p. 17.

[2] The texts used are: York Mystery Plays, ed. L. C. Smith (Oxford, 1885); Ludus Coventriae, ed. K. S. Block (London, 1922); The Towneley Plays, ed. George England and A. W. Pollard (London, 1897); The Chester Plays, ed. H. Deimling (London, 1893); The Digby Plays, ed. F. J. Furnivall (London, 1882).

The general correspondence of the career of Shakespeare's Richard to
this pattern must be obvious; the Antichrist legend in itself is an epitome of
usurpation. But whether Shakespeare deliberately set out to repeat the pattern
or merely assumed it for his arch-villain is impossible to say. What is pos-
sible, however, is to appreciate the form of his reconstruction by comparing
it in detail with this its absolute analogue; and it is to this issue that we
must now turn.

Satan is on stage right from the beginning of each of the four princi-
pal cycles, making his entrance either in association with the pageant of the
Creation or by himself in the Fall of Lucifer. There is a general consistency
of presentation between the York, Towneley, Chester, and Coventry pageants in
this respect and because all four are short and simple the principles of stage
representation appear with extreme clarity. That is to say, in spite of, or
rather because of, their embryonic development the kind of action, the deline-
ation and deployment of character, and the thematic reference stand out in
sharp relief.

Essentially, Satan or Lucifer finds himself in a world completely
ordered by God. He smarts under the orthodoxy of this Establishment, finding
in himself powers and qualities that demand an outlet. This obsession with
his own strength or beauty then directs itself to the throne of God, and the
opportunity presents itself when God absents himself from his "sedes" for a
short while. Satan proceeds to sit on the throne to the dismay of his fellow
angels. The denouement simply awaits the return of God, who punishes the
usurper by casting him out of heaven.

In often less than fifty lines this outline is worked out. The char-
acter of Satan, for all his claims to individual motivation, is essentially a
functional character, representing the necessary antithesis of order in the

theocracy; and like the Elizabethan villain-hero his motives are not so much causes as effects in the total scheme of his function. The context is an Establishment in which contrary action is possible only in the absence of the ruler from his symbolic "sedes." And finally there is swift and simple retribution for the villain on the return of the rightful ruler.

Each of these elements of structure finds a parallel in Richard III. Of particular interest, however, is the issue of the absence of the ruler, for which the analogue in Shakespeare is the issue of the accession of a young ruler to the throne; that is to say, a young ruler is equivalent to an absent ruler, a notion that many an Elizabethan political commonplace would support. It is inconceivable that Shakespeare could have presented Richard in the way he did without this element bring present in the story.

But variations in this general pattern of the Fall of Lucifer are possible and present in the several Mystery cycles we are dealing with; and Shakespeare's presentation, in turn, depends on its own variations for some of its most telling effects. The Chester pageants, for example, present God as the expositor, anticipating the coming action and admonishing Lucifer, his "principall lord."

> Now, Lucifer and lightburne, lookes lowley you be attendinge!
> The blessinge of my benignitie I geue to my first aperacioun:
> for crafte ne for cunninge in no heighe exaltation.
> loke that you tende righte wislye, for hense I wilbe wendinge.
> ll. 45-49

Now this is essentially the deathbed oration of Edward IV in both More and Shakespeare, and it offers a useful illustration of the role of context in determining form, an issue that was raised earlier in this study. The general difference between an omniscient God and a dying Prince as expositor is that the substance of the one's remarks seems improbable while that of the other is charged with helplessness, premonition, and pathos--in short, with drama. The

problem of an omniscient God foreseeing and permitting evil is a classic stumbling block in theology; in <u>Richard III</u>, its analogue neatly fits into the dramatic whole in that it is used both for its immediate pathos and more generally to underline the excessive power and presence of the Adversary. In this sense, therefore, Shakespeare has made a telling variation in terms of this particular element which occurs in the Chester cycle.

When, as in the other cycles, Lucifer however is the main expositor, mixing his perspicacity with his ignorance, a closer approximation to <u>Richard III</u> can be found. The general irony which attaches itself to Richard also applies to Lucifer; he is essentially a creature of ignorance and for him to be the expositor makes for a double image in the spectator's mind. This in turn is given concrete form by the development of symmetrical oppositions in the action: the qualities he has at the beginning are converted to their opposites at the end; his beauty and brightness in heaven are replaced by black deformity in hell; his cunning in the rising action is changed to frenzied confusion when he falls. Now Shakespeare retains these elements generally, except for the one important change he makes in presenting Richard as deformed right from the beginning as an "artificial sign" or metaphor of Richard's hellish nature; the result is a far more sinister presence to Richard even than to Lucifer. And Shakespeare then proceeds to make a turn upon this turn by having Richard use his deformity as an apparent cause for his action, and then after the conquest of Anne having him descant ironically not on his deformity any longer but on the alleged beauty that he mockingly asserts was the cause of his conquest.

Concerning the other characters in the <u>Fall of Lucifer</u> pageant we may note the resemblance in nature and function between the secondary characters of the action. The host of angels who do not take part in the action but serve

as onlookers in the manner of a Chorus are similar to Shakespeare's women char-
acters in <u>Richard III</u>. They castigate and lament, but are ineffectual in terms
of changing the course of events except in the sense that their predictions of
punishment are ultimately proved true.

But perhaps the most interesting role of all in the Chester Lucifer
play is that of Lightburne; for here in this character is the mythical ancestor
of such characters as Mosca, the page of <u>The True Tragedie</u>, Ithamore, and to a
degree Buckingham. His signal function is, of course, to serve his master
first of all, but then to become absorbed himself in the dramatic action adopt-
ing his master's manner until the point is arrived at when he eventually chal-
lenges his master for the supremacy as villain. He is, in short, his master's
principal "petard," and in turning on his master this creature functions as an
in-built nemesis or a substitute for conscience in those plays where the pro-
tagonist has no conscience. The classic working out of this old device of
master- and servant-villain is in <u>Volpone</u> where the resolution of the plot
hangs on their final confrontation as adversaries. And certainly in the mono-
logues that Mosca utters to the audience there are elements of Lightburne, as
when he says:

> And I ame next of the same degree,
> repleat all by experience;
> me think if I might sit by the,
> all heaven shold doe me reverence.
> 11. 173-178

In <u>Richard III</u>, there is "high-reaching" Buckingham to correspond to Lightburne,
but it should also be noted that Richard himself includes within his own role
many of the traditional elements of the secondary villain from the native
drama. He is the evaluator of the action, the sardonic observer, and the humor-
ist towards the audience: as a result, Buckingham's role tends to be redundant
and is therefore a further irony at his expense; and by the same token Richard's

own role achieves an added intensity and complexity that makes him pre-eminent among the villains of his genre. Lucifer and Lightburne seem naive in comparison.

One final point to be considered from the Fall of Lucifer is the state of mind to be found in Lucifer and his companions after their fall; it is presented as a dialogue between the First and Second Demon in the Chester pageant, the latter observing their sad state and regretting their lost happiness in heaven, the former thinking of how he might reassert himself through villainy. An example of their conversation is as follows:

> **Secundus Demon**
> alas! that we did forfayt soe
> the Lordes Love, that did us make.
>
> **Primus Demon**
> And therefore I shall for his sake
> showe mankind great Envie;
> as sone as ever he can him make,
> I shall send him for to destroye.
> ll. 231-236

Now in these remarks we find the essential points of reference developed by Richard in his opening monologue. There is, on the one hand, the recognition of happiness, the "glorious summer" associated with the ruler and symbolized by victory, peace, conviviality, and love; Richard's attitude towards these pleasures, however, is not regret at their loss but frustration at his own inability to enjoy them because of his deformity, a fact that refers to his character more than to his situation. Thus while the "lost love" motif of the Second Demon is sustained in Richard's case it is at the same time turned so as to give rise not to regret but envy, which then combines with the traditional and natural envy of the First Demon to stimulate him to action. In this sense, therefore, Shakespeare has reworked this dual state of mind of the Demons in Hell to give his protagonist a unified and generalized motive for his action. But the motive, as we have observed before, is more illusory than

real; what is real is the very state of a mind in Hell itself, and this Shakespeare certainly conveys.

The York Fall of Lucifer does not add substantially to the Chester pageant except for the more vivid falling out among the devils in Hell, fore-shadowing in doing so the traditional treachery among the villains of each play in our genre. There is, however, in this pageant a neat opposition in imagery to depict the change of states of Lucifer: "My bryghtnes es blakkeste and blo nowe," he cries out, an opposition that underlies the change from Richard's observation of the "glorious summer" in his opening lines to his question on Bosworth Field, "Who saw the sun to-day?"

The Coventry and Towneley cycles also add little to this pageant, the latter being interesting in one respect, however, in that it allows Lucifer a few exulting moments on the throne. But that this pleasure is brief is the real issue, a fact which represents a convention that Shakespeare observes in downplaying the coronation scenes of Richard and Macbeth. The Coventry and Towneley cycles also present their Lucifers with the same impudent element to their characters as Richard displays whenever he speaks of God. But this, of course, is only one element to his personality, and being so it is a measure of the distance between the general naivety, and oftentimes crudity, of the Mysteries and what Shakespeare made of their conventions in Richard III.

If the Fall of Lucifer therefore offers many pertinent parallels not only to Richard's opening monologue but to the presentation of his entire career, the pageants that follow in the Mysteries are even more suggestive in that they comprise a plausible explanation of one of the central problems in Richard III, the material and structure of its first Act. It has already been observed in this study that quite likely sources can be found for the Richard-Anne and Clarence scenes, thereby qualifying the conventional notion among

scholars that this Act is largely invented. The theory of Professor Law has
also been noted to the effect that both scenes are really later scenes,
Richard's wooing of Elizabeth for her daughter in Legge and the death of the
Princes, transferred by Shakespeare to the beginning of the play. But neither
of these approaches is able to explain why Shakespeare did this.

When, however, we consider the three most striking pageants at the be-
ginning of the Mysteries--the Fall of Lucifer, the Temptation of Eve, and the
Cain and Abel story--a significant pattern appears that corresponds to the pat-
tern of Richard's opening monologue, his wooing of Anne, and the murder of
Clarence. Even the less important scene of Richard being harangued by
Elizabeth and her followers offers many points of resemblance to the way God
and his angels moralize over Satan's villainy after his Fall.

The analogy is, of course, most impressive in its general sequence
from the presentation of Satanic nature to the temptation of a woman to the
issue of fratricide; and on this general level it leads the spectator to as-
sume, even to infer, Richard's demonic nature. To an Elizabethan audience it
would surely have been an elaborate and sustained "sign" of Richard as "the
devil incarnate."

But granted the effectiveness of this general analogy, the full sig-
nificance of Act I is to be found as much in the particular variations
Shakespeare worked into the pattern as in its over-all structure. The temp-
tation of the woman, for example, is the classic first move of the Devil, and
Richard follows him not only in this respect but also in his method of proce-
dure. Satan and Richard use dissimulation to achieve their ends; Seneca's
Lycus, on the other hand, moves in an open blustering manner, his whole pur-
pose being a defensive one and ultimately unsuccessful.

But if Richard resembles Satan in his timing, method, and ultimate

success, he yet finds himself in a quite different situation in that Anne unlike Eve is fully aware of the nature of her adversary. Richard therefore has to overcome a far greater obstacle than Satan, and in doing so is made all the more impressive as a demon. Another point which arises from the context that Shakespeare is working in is that the technique of dissimulation is far more restricted for Richard than it is for Satan: the context of myth allows its characters to change identities, and this Satan does in becoming a serpent; in an historical context dealing with the real actions of men, this metamorphosis has to be impersonated by the dissembling character within the limits and powers of his own nature. Therefore when Richard succeeds in this respect it is a dramatic triumph on Shakespeare's part of a far more intense kind than its equivalent moment in the Mysteries. But at the same time that Shakespeare achieves this success in his more naturalistic world he also takes pains to underline the mythical connotations of what is happening. "What black magician conjures up this fiend," Anne at first exclaims, and then cries out "Avaunt, thou dreadful minister of hell!" As well as by these direct metaphors Richard's nature is further developed in this scene and then in a rising crescendo throughout the play by the animal analogies that are hung on him by his enemies, all with their specific iconographical implications of the damned. The total picture of Shakespeare's success in this scene is therefore one of his accepting a basic analogy between Satan and Richard and then converting the differences and difficulties of context into likenesses and greater virtues as drama.

One other and less important point of analogy is that stichomythic dialogue is often to be found in this particular Mystery pageant. The Anglo-Norman play of <u>Adam</u>, for example, uses the pattern of serried interchange in dialogue. But here it is Adam himself who faces the Devil; and besides this

we would have to posit an actual historical relation between Shakespeare and these plays to argue for their influence over that of Seneca in this respect. This is, of course, not possible on the basis of the historical evidence available; it is, by the same token, not improbable. But for the purposes of the present study it is merely interesting to note this device as perhaps a good illustration of the Senecanism discussed in the previous chapter.

One final point concerning the Mystery presentation of this pageant is the vivid manner in which the serpent addresses the audience. The Coventry serpent is extremely explicit in this regard:

> I xal þe sey where ffore and why
> I dede hem all þis velony
> ffor I am ful of gret envy
> Of wreth and wycked hate
> That man xulde leve above þe sky
> where as seen tyme devellyd I
> and now I am cast to helle sty
> strete out of hevyn gate.
>
> ll. 317-324

There is also another more dubious distinction to the Coventry devils generally in that they introduce the symbolic "fart" to the English stage to signify their insouciance towards the Deity: the Vice, Barabas, and Richard also observe this convention though in a progressively more sophisticated way; in Shakespeare it is more a thing of spirit than anything else, although it seems to come dangerously close to the surface of Richard's pun, "the butt-end of a mother's blessing."

In turning next to the Clarence scenes we need to keep in mind the several possible sources already suggested in this study for them but yet at the same time remember the principle that also has been stressed with regard to the strong probability of a dramatist finding his sense of form within the traditional conventions of his genre. The story of Cain and Abel, both for its universal repute in itself and for its position and development in the

Mystery cycles, therefore is suggestive as an analogue that Shakespeare may
well have had in mind in intensifying Richard's demonic nature. It continues
and expands the pattern of the earlier analogues.

The Towneley and Coventry pageants develop this Cain and Abel story
furthest, but the York pageant in its greater simplicity points to the essen-
tial elements of its dramatic presentation most clearly. The principal char-
acters are three in number--a supervising angel, Cain, and Abel. Brewbarret,
Cain's knavish servant, also appears but to a lesser degree than in the other
cycles. It is useful, however, to concentrate on the basic triple relation of
characters in that Shakespeare also has developed his situation in an analogous
way through Edward, Richard, and Clarence. The basic difference is, of course,
that Edward is no angel and Clarence no Abel; but Richard certainly is a Cain
and it is this point that lies at the heart of the analogy. The general com-
promising of Edward and Clarence's moral natures in Shakespeare may moreover
be seen as a dramatic virtue in that they intensify the sense of the sinister
that Shakespeare is developing at this early stage of his play and do not de-
lay the emotional sequence of the action as they would if they were to be pre-
sented as purely virtuous and at the same time victims.

Richard has one moment that is clearly Cain's in origin when at the
death-bed of Edward he obtrudes the rhetorical and disingenuous question, "Who
knows not that the gentle duke is dead?" This is, of course, infinitely
subtler than Cain's reply to the angel:

> What asks thowe me that taill to tell?
> For yit his keper was I never.
>
> ll. 84-85

to which the angel responds in a manner similar to Margaret or the ghosts of
Richard's dream:

> þe voice of his blood cryeth vengeaunce
> . . . .
> þou shall be curssed uppon þe grounde.
>
> ll. 100, 106

On being cursed in this fashion Cain has his remorse scene which is another

instance of the traditional overtones of Richard's own fearful monologue after

the visitation: as an example of the Mystery version of this speech we find

Cain crying:

> Allas! for syte, so may I saye,
> My synne it passis al mercie
> For ask it þe, lord, I ne maye,
> To have it am I nought worthy.
> Fro þe shallbe I be hidde in hye
> Þou castis me, lorde, oute of my kyth
>   In lande
> Both here and there out-caste am I,
> For ilke a man þat metis me with,
> They wille slee me, be ffenne of ffrith
>   with dynte of hande.
>
> ll. 117-127

Similarly, we may note the symbolic stigma by means of which Cain is to be

known in the world: in the Mysteries such signs commonly are the effects of

actions; in Shakespeare Richard's stigmata are at the one time both effect and

cause, sign and stimulus. The fact that Shakespeare does this is a measure of

his need to postulate as well as infer Richard's nature for the purposes of

constructing a drama in an historical context. He postulates and has Richard

explain his own stigmata in 3 Henry VI, V,v,74-79:

> The midwife wondered, and the women cried,
> O Jesus bless us, he is born with teeth.
> And so I was, which plainly signified,
> That I should snarl, and bite, and play the dog.
> Then since the heavens have shaped my body so,
> Let hell make crooked my mind to answer it.

This kind of symbolism would be useless solely as the effect in an historical

action; it was, on the other hand, excellent as introductory exposition for a

character whose nature and actions needed such demonic amplification to be

made credible on stage. It answers therefore the need of cause and credibility

in the historical context of _Richard III_ where it is assumed and acted out.

The Chester pageant of _Cain and Abel_ adds little to this account except for a more extensive lament on Cain's part in which Adam and Eve join. But the essential deployment of the relationship between characters is still there in the murderer, the victim, and the supervising and punishing Deity. The Coventry and Towneley plays are remarkable, however, for the vigor and crudity they bring to this pageant. The Towneley play is 473 lines in length and is notable not only for the development of Cain but of Pikeharness as well; this rascally offsider to Cain introduces very broad humor into the play together with a pattern of asides to the audience that finds expression again and again in later drama. In lines 385-438, for example, he parodies his master's speech for the benefit of the audience, twisting the original statements for comic effect; Richard does this with the Princes, and Mosca with Volpone. As for the Towneley Cain, he is sharply individualized but not in a way that strengthens any analogy to Richard. Indeed, many of the parallel elements noted in the York play are almost lost here in the welter of a low life context. Cain does, however, have the memorable line in response to God's reproof, "Whi, who is that hob-over-the-wall?" His final lines, furthermore, are reminiscent of Richard's opening ones:

> ffor I must nedis weynd
> And to the devill be thrall
> world withoutten end
> Ordand ther' is my stall,
> with sathanas the feynd.
> ll. 463-467

But to return to the triple relationship of characters in _Richard III_, the change Shakespeare has introduced into this issue is impressive in that the functions of Richard and Edward are the reverse of those in their Mystery counterparts. For Richard ultimately assumes the role of the supervisory Nemesis figure of the angel in blaming Edward for Clarence's death; Edward, in

turn, accepts the guilt, and like Cain ends the scene lamenting his deed. The

total pattern therefore is fraught with an irony that, approached from any

angle, points to the sinister credit of Richard.

The issue of Clarence, however, is best understood in terms of another

pageant of the Mystery cycles, Abraham and Isaac. Murder scenes in Shakespeare

tend to follow the one pattern, an excellent pattern to be sure but one whose

elements are simple and traditional and again in triangular relationship: the

king, the agents, and the victim, these are the ingredients; but given this

simple formula an amazing degree of intense pathos can be generated. This is

also true of the Abraham and Isaac pageant.

The York and Chester plays offer the simplest analogue. Abraham has

been ordered by God to sacrifice his son Isaac and piously proceeds to do so

until, confronted by the helplessness of his victim, his own fundamental un-

willingness, and the eloquence of the victim, he almost baulks. God inter-

venes just in time to save Isaac, and this together with the way God sets up

the problem in the first place are elements that cannot be repeated by humans.

For, commonly, kings give orders to have someone murdered not to test the

faith of the agent appointed to carry out the deed, but simply to have the

man murdered. Hence the possibility of their intervening to save the victim

is slight and the probability even slighter; this issue is nonetheless germane

to the situation in Richard III where the irony of it all is that when the

king does attempt to exercise his power to prevent the murder it proves im-

possible.

But in the Mystery pageant, while God determines the entire pattern,

the presentation concerns specifically the relation of agent to victim; here,

as mentioned above, the irresolution and pity of the one combine with the help-

lessness and desperate eloquence of the other to develop a genuinely dramatic

situation. This is especially true of the Brome play of <u>Abraham and Isaac</u>
where a fine control manifests itself in the gradual development of the ac-
tion; Isaac is at first eager to join his father, and this draws from Abraham
an immediate response:

> A! Lord, my hart brekyth on tweyne,
> Thys chyldes wordes, they be so tender.
> <div align="right">ll. 127-128</div>

But then Isaac begins to understand the situation from his father's somber
looks and from the sword in his hand. Even this, however, is presented with
naivety:

> ʒa, fader, but my hart begynnyth to quake
> To se that scharpe sword in ʒowr hond.
> <div align="right">ll. 147-148</div>

This leads to the climax of Abraham's admission of his task and Isaac's reply:

> <u>Abr.</u>   A! Ysaac, Ysaac, I must kyll the!
> <u>Ysaac</u>. Kyll me, fader? alasse! wat have I done?
> <div align="right">ll. 167-168</div>

Then following this climax Isaac sustains the drama by his eloquent and pathetic
thoughts of and for his mother:

> But, good fader, tell ʒe my moder no-thyng,
> Say that I am in a-nother cuntrie dwellyng.
> <div align="right">ll. 205-206</div>

Then follows the binding of the hands and the blindfolding of the eyes, both
of which are the occasion of dramatic moments, with the boy appealing to his
father's mercy and then acquiescing in the role.

In Elizabethan drama this pattern finds expression in <u>Edward II</u>,
<u>Richard III</u>, and <u>King John</u>. Shakespeare develops his closest analogy to the
Mystery form of presentation in the scene between Hubert and Arthur of <u>King</u>
<u>John</u>. Here there is the same unwilling agent acting out of duty, but, for
realizing the ignominy of his role, more susceptible to the boy's entreaties
than was Abraham; Arthur, on the other hand, begins with the pathetic igno-
rance of Isaac, observing in all innocence:

> Is it my fault, that I was Geffrey's son?
> No indeed is't not; and I would to heaven
> I were your son, so you would love me, Hubert.
> <div align="right">IV,i,22-24</div>

On learning what is to happen he pleads for his life, making the issues of the binding, the blinding, and the fire unbearably intense until Hubert desists from his intended action.

In King John, it may be added, Shakespeare carries the "punishment of Cain" element further than in Richard III. John, like Edward IV, laments as soon as Hubert makes his report of the boy's alleged death. "Hadst thou but shook thy head," he exclaims. Hubert then tells of the boy's safety, only to have his own words proved untrue in the very next scene when Arthur dies in leaping from the castle walls. Thus there are several turns within the old formula, each one being highly dramatic with both John and Hubert suffering their share of Cain's guilt.

In Richard III and Edward II, however, the murder scene is carried to its intended conclusion, and it is in the harrowing process of its accomplishment that the old Mystery formula is primarily to be seen. But the fact that the agents, unlike Abraham, are not acting out of piety in Richard III gives rise to a new way of representing his ambivalence of attitude. For two murderers are used, one possessing a strong will and the other a conscience; this offers the victim a chance to appeal to a listener who can respond to his pleas; it also is a way of representing Cain's punishment in that one of the murderers at the end is fully aware of the evil he has committed and hence filled with remorse.

These murder scenes, in short, are deeply embedded in the dramaturgy of the Mysteries following the pattern of the two pageants as described above. They are faced, however, with the general problem of a different context in which God can no longer intervene. But given this difference, they turn it to

their own ends; and, especially in Shakespeare, these ends involve the im-
plication, with its attendant irony, of the King himself as Cain. This,
then, is the full measure of the "change within continuity" principle that
lies at the heart of the medieval heritage in Elizabethan drama.

The next group of relevant pageants are those involving Pharoah
and Herod and present the figure of the panic-stricken tyrant. Herod, in
particular, becomes the prototype of the raging tyrant on the English
stage, and Shakespeare, when he wishes to present Richard desperately try-
ing to defend his kingdom, relies on the convention. When Richard, for
example, exclaims "Out on you, owls! nothing but songs of death?" (IV,iv,
508), and when he strikes the Messenger, he is at his closest to this fig-
ure. But even more significantly both Richard and Herod are the murderers
of children. The parallel, however, is one of general situation rather
than characterization.

In Shakespeare, the situation is presented in three stages: first in
the exchange between Richard and Buckingham; second in Tyrrell's role; and
third in the anguish of the women in the subsequent scene. These stages are
clearly distinct one from the other with the result that three different
emphases find expression--the plan, the operation, and the pathos. Now in
the Mystery presentation the second and third stages become a single situa-
tion with the soldiers killing the children in the presence of their mothers,
a situation which Shakespeare cannot present since the Princes are in the
Tower. However, the intense lamentation of the scene that follows the murder
(IV,iv), where the Duchess of York, Elizabeth, and Margaret sit bewailing on
the ground, brings the whole episode in Shakespeare to a conclusion similar
to that of the Mystery pageants.

Next, Tyrrell's role allows Shakespeare to do two things, both of
which, although not consistently for all Cycles, have their parallels in the

medieval presentation of the soldiers who carry out the slaying. For Tyrrell changes from a willing accomplice to a remorse-stricken figure after the deed is done. In the Coventry Shearmen and Taylors' Pageant, for example, the first soldier, after some initial scruples, proceeds to carry out his orders from Herod, but then, like Tyrrell, becomes overwhelmed at the thought of what he has done. It should also be noted in this respect that Shakespeare has deepened the effect of this scene even further by having Tyrrell also describe the remorse of the actual murderers, Dighton and Forest.

But in the initial scruples of the soldiers in the Shearmen and Taylors' Pageant lies the crux of what Shakespeare has so brilliantly expanded into the scene between Richard and Buckingham. For while Buckingham does not say to Richard, as does the first soldier to Herod, "Thy wordis agenst my wyll schalbe," nor propose as does the second soldier that "Soo grett a murder . . . / Wyll make a rysyng in thi noone cuntrey," his actions both at this time and after imply both ideas. His deft avoiding of Richard's point describes in its reticence his abhorrence towards Richard's suggestion, and when he subsequently does raise a rebellicn his action in doing so is given a moral coloration by his refusal in this present scene to obey Richard's veiled command to kill the Princes.

Thus Shakespeare has both used and at the same time concealed the medieval motif of the soldiers' scruples. Buckingham has no general reflections to offer on the issue of a subject's obedience to a tyrant such as the Senecan Legge put into the mouth of Brackenbury in Richardus Tertius. Nor does Richard, for that matter, have the manner of a tyrant; his characterization at this particular moment of the play is almost totally devoid of Herod's passion. Only the single observation of Catesby, "The king looks angry, see, he gnaws his lip," suggests the medieval stage tyrant. Both Buckingham and

Richard are therefore still playing their roles of the earlier acts of <u>Richard</u> <u>III</u>, but now the one is pitting his policy against the other's in a last desperate battle of wits. Thus it is in this way that Shakespeare integrates the situation of <u>The Slaying of the Innocents</u> within the framework and according to the different principles of characterization of his own play.

The Pharoahs and the Herods of the above pageants are, however, superceded by the villains who rose up in the central and most famous section of the Mystery cycles dealing with the Crucifixion. Here the action, while essentially focused on Christ, moves in a social context and is peopled with characters who the creators and performers of the cycles must surely have felt were more like themselves; for here there are some remarkable innovations in characterization and incident, not the least being the appearance of the exemplary villain of the entire cycles, the Towneley Pilate, who subsumes the composite villainy of the other cycles within himself and brings a high degree of unity to the several pageants in which he plays out his role. The Pilate of this cycle is analogous to the historical Richard in the fate he suffered of being unjustifiably damned beyond redemption, and is perhaps an even more striking example than Richard of the way in which drama may approach its material sources with clearly preconceived notions as to the kinds of characters it wishes to find and the functions they are to perform on stage. But granted this, it is the actual formal presentation of the Towneley Pilate that is of particular relevance to the issue of Richard.

The basic analogy between these two characters is in terms of their function, for they both hold the stage from their first entrances and control the proceedings up to and beyond the climactic scene of pathos. To bring this unity of function about, the Towneley Pilate observes, as Professor Arnold Williams has shown, the same narrowing of focus towards its sources as

Shakespeare observed towards More; only those issues that relate to the dramatically preconceived function are admitted.[1] The result of this concentration on evil is yet another element of analogy between the Towneley plays and Richard III as a whole; for a pervasive sense of injustice and cruelty brings a grim unity of tone to both plays. Admittedly, this Pilate lacks the finesse and subtlety that Shakespeare brings to Richard; but he reflects in himself what Williams has described as "the careful compounding of . . . character from a variety of compatible evil traits,"[2] and as such is a radical sophistication on the blustering egotistical villains of the standard Mystery.

The first specific point of analogy is to be found in the dramatic entrances Pilate makes in each pageant. He stalks to the front of the stage, calls for quiet in the audience, and announces in no uncertain way his villainous nature and his plans. Concerning the latter, it is important to note his variety of means; in the pageant of The Scourging, for example, he develops this with considerable histrionic ability. It is his nature, he exclaims, to be:

> full of sotelty,
> ffalshed, gyll, and trechery
> Therfor am I namyd by clergy
> As mali actoris.
>   ll. 10-13

Equivocation is also one of his delights:

> The right side to socoure, certys, I am full bayn,
> If I may get therby a vantage or wynyng;
> Then to the fals parte I turne me agayn,
> ffor I se more Vayll will to me be risyng;
>   ll. 16-19

and dissimulation also:

---

[1]Arnold Williams, The Characterization of Pilate in the Towneley Plays (East Lansing, 1950), pp. 17-35.

[2]Ibid., p. 35.

> I shall fownde to be his freynd utward, in certayn,
> And shaw hym fare countenance and wordys of vanyte;
> Bot or this day at nyght on crosse shall he be slayn,
> Thus agans hym in my hart I bere great enmyte fful sore.
>
> ll. 31-35

The dramaturgic principles of character laid down here are then developed with forceful consistency just as in Richard III; scenes that are found in other cycles such as the trial before Herod, Pilate's wife's dream, and the denial of Peter are all absent here. And even when Pilate has to step out of his Towneley persona to defend the inscription on the Cross, there is a slight but significant turn on the biblical convention:

> Pilatus.   Boys, I say, what mell ye you?
>   As it is writen shall it be now,
>   I say certaine;
>   Quod scriptum scripsi,
>   That same wrote I,
>   What gadlyng gruches ther agane?
>
> quartus tortor: Sen that he is man of law
>   he must nedys have his will;
>   I trow he had not writen that saw
>   without som propre skyll.   ll. 552-560

To the degree that this observation is sardonic, it recalls the reception that the proclamation on Hastings' death met with among the London citizens in More and Shakespeare. It offers the little man a chance for a wry laugh at the expense of the villain.

One other addition to the traditional Pilate material is that in the Towneley cycle he commends the soldiers who accompany Judas to arrest Jesus; Richard, it will be remembered, leads the delegation to the young Prince, and the "kiss and kill" motif that is explicit in More and implicit in Shakespeare is surely derivative of the Judas story in which Pilate here plays a role.

The analogy of tone is, however, the most significant parallel between this cycle and Shakespeare's Richard III; for it is from these plays specifically that Farnham and Rossiter derive their evidence for the existence of a

Gothic aesthetic in English drama.[1] The Towneley _Buffeting, Scourging,_ and

Crucifixion take on the form, as Rossiter puts it, of a "grotesque nightmare

comedy" in which an irreconcilable doubleness of tone and attitude works it-

self out through the absolute, solemn, and naive pathos of the victim on the

one hand and the sadism or "zest for unholiness" spirit of his persecutors on

the other. The Torturers, for example, exact the last ounce of horror out of

their roles in nailing Christ to the Cross. They revel in the immediacy and

detail of their action: the auger-holes for the hands are too far apart, so

they hitch a rope and stretch and rack the body until the body fits the holes;

they repeat the process with the feet, shouting all the while. Then they

raise the cross and agree to let it fall with a bang into the mortice, to jar

the hanging body. The Fourth Torturer then opens their chorus of pure malice:

> So, Sir, gape against the sun,   1. 226

Interestingly enough however, all of the Torturers are not of the same dis-

position; some are more committed to villainy than others, and this ambivalence

of cruelty and conscience is the principle of Shakespeare's murderers.

The Towneley Passion plays with their juxtaposition of devilish gusto

and human agony are expressions of, as Rossiter says, "the uncombinable antin-

omies of the medieval mind" in confronting which we are brought face to face

with "the presence of two rituals at once, of which the one is the negation of

the faith to which the piece is ostensibly devoted."[2] Nor is this phenomenon

exclusive to these plays; they are merely an expression of a mysterious anthro-

pology known throughout all medieval Europe in which, to quote Rossiter,

> . . . the legacy of Joculator and Jougler has become one with the spirit
> of the comic rejoicing of the folk, as a kind of opposite to or negation
> of their nominal religion. A ritual of defamation, sometimes reaching an
> adumbration of the undermining negatives which threaten all human values
> and respects, regards and venerations, is the true basis in the English

---

[1]See especially Rossiter, _op. cit._, pp. 69-75.   [2]_Ibid._, p. 70.

legacy of the clashing comic contrasts of Gothic drama; and this comes down to later times as the most important part of the medieval heritage.[1]

The principle underlying the medieval Feast of Fools also seems pertinent to this issue, consisting as it does in the temporary suspension of order in the Church: from the point of view of the hierarchy it was intended to be an homily for themselves in piously impersonating the mighty put down from high places; from the point of view of the clerks who ran riot and who ate "black pudding at the altar" it was their day for the liberation of, and at the same time purgation of, every instinctive desire to their natures. In its intended form, this festival was a radical experiment in and experience of the negation of an Establishment, with its ends determining and controlling its means. But in time the means overwhelmed the ends just as the analogous issue of the Vice's role in the Moralities was to overwhelm its dramatic structures; the result was that both lapsed into horseplay and buffoonery and then oblivion.

Now whether this tradition is of relevance to <u>Richard III</u> is an issue that takes some careful determination. There is, of course, a basic difference in context not only with respect to subject matter but with respect to the authors themselves. Shakespeare was capable of matching the folk-ways of his native tradition--indeed, he made exemplary use of it in <u>King Lear</u> where the blinding of Gloucester and then the idioms of the heath are in a sense more medieval than their models in the Mysteries. But in <u>Richard III</u> there is a restrictive decorum that holds the reference of the play close to the confines of the Court and the several London courtyards until the final act when as part of the symbolism of retribution Richard has to leave this world over which he has established mastery for the more open and adverse world of Bosworth Field. Generally, however, his context is one of historical personnages, and, with the

---

[1]<u>Ibid.</u>, p. 74.

exception of the Clarence scenes, solely with their conversation. There is

therefore only a limited area in <u>Richard III</u> for medieval analogues to be de-

veloped in.

But, given this concentration of force, the theory of this tradition

does describe the most general structural relation of the characters of

<u>Richard III</u>: for, on the one hand, there is the figure of Richard with all

his a priori malice exercising itself through causing death and enjoying the

process in detail, living out, in short, his own festival of fools; while, on

the other hand, there are the figures of pathos, his victims. Between these

two points of character reference there is therefore a basic antinomy; they do

not relate as cause to effect, but are merely linked in a conventional and il-

lusory relationship that suggests they were dramaturgic types before they were

given particular names and context by Shakespeare. And granted the tradition-

alism of this formula of character deployment, the same thing happens delib-

erately in Shakespeare that happened unconsciously in the Mysteries--the vil-

lain becomes pre-eminent on the stage.

In his pre-eminence, however, Richard is nonetheless different from

the Towneley Pilate, an issue that underlines once again the possible changes

within continuity of genre. It was observed earlier how both Pilate and

Richard make impressive entrances and discover themselves to the audience in a

generally analogous way. But the relation to the audience itself is yet quite

different; for Pilate is quite literally the master of ceremonies both in the

house and in the play; he shouts at the top of his voice for silence, boasting

of his strength, and daring anyone to disbelieve him. This overt approach be-

comes, of course, inverted in Shakespeare; Richard may have implications as a

silencer and threatener but these effects derive more from the intensity of

his own introspection and the greater credibility as a villain he establishes.

A groundling might well want to try shouting Pilate down; with Richard, however, he would wait for him to turn his back before he hissed. This difference, furthermore, carries over into the way in which the two villains control the action; for, while they are alike in making it proceed deductively, in Richard's case the credibility established requires far less suspension of disbelief than with Pilate.

To return, however, to the issue of the other characters in Richard III and their debt to the Towneley Mysteries, we may note the striking analogue that is to be found between the ritual lamentation of the three women in IV,iv and the scene from the Towneley pageant at the sepulcher. There are differences of course; Shakespeare's women are bitterly divided among themselves, but he accepts this issue only to transcend it by placing their grief on a higher level than their personalities. "If sorrow can admit society" is Margaret's way of becoming at one with the other two; the nouns are abstract alliterations just as the women are universalized and identical. In this the three Mary's of the Mystery pageant are their prototypes.[1]

In other of the Towneley pageants further analogues are to be found for certain aspects of Richard III. The play of The Talents, for example, offers a classic presentation of the way the villains of the piece fall out over the disposal of the spoils. Pilate is called in by the Torturers to decide on the division of Christ's clothes; he prevaricates and tries to claim them for himself; eventually he gives the gown to them to divide among themselves. But then they find that the gown is seamless and indivisible. The issue is finally decided by the throw of the dice; but when Pilate loses he begins to rage and demands the gown. The Torturers therefore ultimately lose everything and leave the scene bewailing the evils of dicing.

---

[1]A similar scene is also to be found in the pageant of "Christ's Burial and Resurrection" in the Digby plays.

Now with certain qualifications this incident is essentially parallel to that which takes place between Richard and Buckingham when the latter comes for his reward. Shakespeare adopts the intricate pattern of the Towneley incident enhancing it further however by letting Richard make the division of spoils contingent on another act of villainy by Buckingham, the death of the Princes. The total result is that Richard like Pilate keeps all, while Buckingham has to leave as empty handed as the Torturers. When Buckingham is moreover captured after his defection, his lament, like that of the Torturers, is concerned with the fate of those who play with chance. Besides therefore having made a brilliant scene out of this formula with the reversal in Buckingham's fortunes being presented in a dramatically credible way, Shakespeare also seems to have assumed the symbolic issue of the seamless gown as the equivalent of the nation, also an ideally indivisible symbol; as a result he has deepened the connotations of a scene that on the literal level is already good drama. The fact that it is Richard who decides the "gown" should be "seamless" in Shakespeare is not so much a difference in the presentation as an added irony at Richard's expense; for the time is not far distant when the sacred quality of the "gown" will be the source of his retribution.

The Towneley cycle is however alone in developing this incident; commonly, the first sign of disaster for the Devil in the other Mysteries occurs in the <u>Harrowing of Hell</u>. For this incident the most suggestive analogue in Shakespeare is to be found in <u>Macbeth</u> where, in II,ii and iii, Macduff, ultimately to be Macbeth's nemesis, comes knocking on the castle door in the dead of night thereby intensifying Macbeth's guilt and confusion after his murder of Duncan. The York and Towneley pageants offer the best development of this scene with the Towneley presentation naming its devil Rybald, a significant name in that the Porter is for the most part his analogue in <u>Macbeth</u>. And

again it would be interesting to know whether Hellmouth was used in the staging of this scene.

In _Richard III_ the analogue for this scene is generalized into the melodramatic confusion that begins to afflict Richard as soon as he sits on the throne, and then in its sharpest form after the murder of the Princes. This sudden change of fortune and these sharp transitions of mood are all externalized in _Richard III_ and are certainly less effective than those in _Macbeth_; nonetheless the formula should be noted for the way it becomes a staple device in dramatizing Richard's fall. At the beginning of the play, the closing lines to his monologues were followed by an impressive silence; but, at the end, we note the following:

> _Richard:_ To her go I, a jolly thriving wooer.
>   _Enter Catesby._
> _Catesby:_ My Lord -
> _Richard:_ Good or bad news, that thou com'st in so bluntly?
> _Catesby:_ Bad news my lord.
> <div align="right">IV,iii,25-28</div>

and similarly in IV,iv,432-433:

> _Richard:_ Relenting fool, and shallow-changing woman!
>   _Enter Ratcliffe; Catesby following._
> _Richard:_ How now! what news?

upon which Ratcliffe tells of Richmond's arrival, and again Richard is thrown into confusion.

One final point to note is the conventional way Satan makes his last exit in this pageant. A demonic character always dies with an exclamation on his lips. The York Satan is condemned to the pit of Hell by Christ and falls crying:

> Owt, ay! herrowe! helpe mahounde!
> <div align="right">l. 343</div>

Marlowe's Barabas comes closest to the old formula in both word and deed, but Shakespeare's Richard and Macbeth also observe the convention and do so in

lines in which we see the convention almost refined out of existence.

The York and Towneley versions of The Last Judgment also offer some interesting parallels for the denouement of Richard III, concerning which the pattern has already been described as the supernatural visitation, the villain's remorse, and then his desperate bravado in opposing his nemesis. How traditional this pattern was may be seen from the York pageant. The Judgment play opens with the visitation of God, who first rehearses the history of mankind, then summons the angels to blow their trumpets, and then places all the blessed on his right and the wicked on his left. Lined up in this way, the devils begin an extensive lament for their past lives. When this is finished, Jesus comes down to earth to sit in judgment. At this the good rejoice, but the devils for all their remorse now prepare to fight for their property:

> i Diab. Felas, arraye us for to fight,
> And go we faste oure fee to fange,
> Þe dredefull dome þis day is dight,
> I drede me þat we dwelle full longe.
> ll. 217-220

The similarity between the Elizabethan and the medieval play is absolute at this point. What is therefore pertinent to remember is that Shakespeare all this while was following the account in Hall's chronicle, a fact which can only be explained in terms of Hall's subscribing to the mythic pattern of retribution also. How far the imagination of an historian assumes a sense of form for characters and situations from the arts generally is an interesting issue. In all events, and whether direct or indirect, the medieval heritage is evident in Richard's retribution in Shakespeare, a fact which an Elizabethan audience would have appreciated as soon as it saw the lining up of Richard and Richmond's forces on the left and right sides of the stage and the symbolic visitation of the ghosts.

There is but one final analogue to be considered in the Mystery cycles,

one which for its special significance, but one which for its special problem also, deserves more extensive attention. This is the play of The Coming of the Antichrist. It is of special significance in that in theory at least it offers the most highly developed presentation of usurpation in the Mysteries; it presents special problems, however, in that in practice it offers relatively little that can justifiably be considered an analogue of the characters and action of Richard III.

Why one might justifiably look for signs of the Antichrist in Richard III is that there are some remarkable likenesses between the two legends: firstly, the Antichrist pageant is presented in the divine story traced by the Mysteries as the last desperate attempt of the Devil to usurp the kingdom of God and comes just before the Last Judgment; Richard III, on the other hand, comes just before the establishment of the Tudor order, and insofar as the poets and dramatists of the Elizabethan age saw in this new order a divine dispensation they might with some warrant have developed the analogy in this sense. Secondly, there is the correspondence of the shortness of their reigns--three and one-half years for the Antichrist and two and one-half for Richard. And thirdly, the conventional image of Richard that More fixed in the memory of the sixteenth century had emphasized certain aspects of Richard--his beast-like nature and his powers of dissimulation--that were among the cardinal features of the Antichrist legend.

In spite of these parallels, however, there is no explicit reference to the Antichrist in any of the sixteenth century versions of Richard's life except for a single line in the epilogue of The True Tragedie where praise is given Elizabeth for having put the proud Antichrist to flight. This particular reference is indeed typical of most Tudor developments of the idea; for the metaphor was used most in the polemics between Protestantism and Catholicism

with the Pope and Phillip of Spain its commonest referents. This also points

to the reason why in all probability the legend never became associated with

Richard in that essentially it retained its theological and ecclesiastical im-

plications far more strictly than did the other legends of the biblical story.

"The devil incarnate" was a widespread metaphor in Elizabethan literature; the

authors of the Mirror for Magistrates, for example, use it for virtually every

villain in their book, and for Richard especially.

Thus in the two principal medieval plays on the subject, the Tergensee

Antichristus and the Chester The Coming of the Antichrist, the contexts are

primarily religious and not political.[1] There is furthermore little dramaturgic

development of the Antichrist figure as a villain in these plays, at least not

in the sense of the earlier Satans and the Towneley Pilate. One reason for

this is that there is no representation of a God- or ruler-figure against whom

the Antichrist might use his wiles. In the Chester pageant, for example, he

merely has to perform certain miracles to win over his opponents, feats which

are then overturned when the prophets Enoch and Elias call his bluff over his

claim to have raised men from the dead. The Tergensee representation, in

spite of its great historical significance, has an action that is even more

specifically religious in context than this, and characters as well that are

flat abstractions. There is, in short, little analogy possible between the

Antichrist play and Richard III owing to the radical difference of context.

With this in mind, we may proceed to note what resemblances there are.

It was observed above that Richard was portrayed by More with many an

implication of the beast to him; and this is an issue that Shakespeare takes

considerably further, to the point where certain suggestions of the beast meta-

phors associated with the Antichrist creep in. For example, when the Antichrist

---

[1]See L. U. Lucken, Antichrist and the Prophets of Antichrist in the
Chester Cycle (Washington, 1940).

was described in the Chester pageant by Daniel as "That Beast . . . of Teeth and neiles sharp and longe," an image is suggested that both More and Shakespeare make use of in their presentations of Richard. Another element that finds expression in More and Shakespeare to an especial degree is the natural portent; and for this device the Antichrist legend is undoubtedly one of the classic sources of all time, but, for being so comprehensive and elemental in the fifteen signs that it gives of Doomsday, it cannot be placed in any exclusive relation with Richard III in this respect.

Of the characters in the Chester pageant itself, one parallelism occurs when the Antichrist, like Richard, tries to have himself accepted by the people as the rightful ruler. The Antichrist defames Christ in much the same way as Richard suggests the illegitimacy of his brother and nephews. But perhaps the two best parallels are to be found first in the function of the prophets and second in the death of the Antichrist. For both Enoch and Elias bear a general resemblance to Margaret; when Elias, for example, cries out, "I warne you, all men, . . . He is the Devyll, you to anoy," he finds a hundred echoes in the dialogue of Richard III.

The death of the Antichrist is very simply presented; Michael overthrows him and two demons hale him off to Hell. The speech of the Antichrist may be quoted for its vivid exclamations and for its suggestions of what was not said in Shakespeare but nonetheless implied:

> Helpe, Sathanes and Lucifer!
> Belzebub, bould Bachler!
> Ragnell, Ragnell! thou art my deere!
> now fare I wonder evill!
> Alas! Alas! wher is my power!
> Alas! my witt is in a weer;
> now body and Soule, both in feer,
> and all goeth to the Devill.
>
> ll. 653-660

Richard, for his part, is heard crying out, "A horse, a horse, my kingdom for

a horse!" and the relation of these two exclamations is a measure of the difference and the likeness of Shakespeare to the native religious drama.

In a single line Shakespeare has found the essential and unique statement for his protagonist. It is first of all a literal statement expressing the desperate bravado of a man who will not give up the fight; it is next a dramatic statement juxtaposing the two essential elements of Richard's career, his ends and his means, here presented with a marvellous irony at Richard's expense as he offers his kingdom for a horse; and finally it is a religious and universalized statement implicating in its rhetorical form the death of all the devils of the native tradition. The Mysteries could not help Shakespeare be literal or dramatic; they were primitive in comparison. But in this very fact they gave to Shakespeare the essential quality he needed for a masterpiece.

CHAPTER V

MIRACLE AND MORALITY ANALOGUES

When villainy manifests itself again on the English stage after the
Mystery cycles, it does so within a new context of reality; for between the
context of absolute or mythic being assumed in the Mysteries and the context
of universal or human being in the Moralities the change is a radical one with
many important implications for the dramatic structures of the plays to which
we must now turn. But perhaps the best way to differentiate the two worlds of
the Mysteries and Moralities is to consider the intermediate context of the
Miracle play, and observe the effect on character and action of the intermin-
gling of the two kinds of probability, the divine and the human, of prior and
subsequent tradition respectively.[1]

The crux of the Miracle play is that it presents a human character in
ε divine action. Commonly this involved the dramatization of a saint's life,
and of the few plays of this kind now extant undoubtedly the most interesting
is the Digby version of the Mary Magdalene legend.[2] In this play there are
two parts, of which the first generally carries on the tradition of the Mys-
teries, while the second departs altogether from Scripture to describe the way
Mary Magdalene brings about the conversion of the King and Queen of Marseilles
through recourse to miracles.

Part I may be further subdivided into three sections in which the

---

[1] See Farnham, op. cit., chapters v-vi.

[2] The Digby Plays, ed. F. S. Furnivall, op. cit., pp. 53-136.

193

third presents the incident of Jesus pardoning Mary for her sins and raising Lazarus from the grave; this incident is clearly the climax of the play and represents its closest tie to the material of the Scriptures. It is interesting, however, to see how the author has introduced a conception of dramatic plotting into the stages that lead up to this biblical climax and to see both how he improvises on hints from scriptural tradition in the first section and then how he innovates in the second section by presenting the Magdalene's fall from virtue in the manner of a Morality.

The first section centers around the fortunes of Mary Magdalene's family at a time when the tyrants of the world, Tiberius in Rome and Herod and Pilate in Jerusalem, were becoming afraid of the implications of Jesus for their rule. Against this background of persecution and panic, the play develops the family relationships of Mary Magdalene, her sister Martha, her brother Lazarus, and her rich father Syrus whose death in Scene 6 is the highly rhetorical conclusion of this section.

In Scene 7, however, there enter such allegorical figures as the two Kings of the World and of the Flesh, the Devil and the Seven Deadly Sins, a Good and a Bad Angel. They plan, under the Devil's guidance, to destroy Mary Magdalene's virtue, and Lechery undertakes the task with such success that she is soon living a degraded life. But the Good Angel then causes her to repent and at Simon's feast she is pardoned by Christ for her sins. From this point on the play follows its biblical sources until the third section concludes with the raising of Lazarus.

This outline points to the presence of convention and innovation side by side; and most notable among the innovations are such elements as the representation of the Magdalene's family within a social and historical context; the use of the Morality techniques to represent her inner change of nature;

the fellowship of the Devil and Angels with the personified abstractions for the World, Flesh, and Sins; the symbolic use of the Castle of Maudelyn and its opposites the Tavern and the Arbor. All these reflect an attempt to bring credibility in human terms to the action before Christ enters it with the power of action peculiar to a divine figure.

Part II of the play presents Mary Magdalene as a saint, which means she has access to supernatural power and hence can change the kind of probability implicit in the general tenour of the action. But this second Part in itself is remarkable for the inventiveness to the action and in this sense marks a radical move away from the premises of the Mystery cycles. On the other hand, however, in its bringing a character of this kind and an action of this kind together it may be said to be a precursor of the genre of Elizabethan romantic drama; many of the essential elements of Shakespeare's Tempest, for example, are anticipated here in this representation of the Magdalene in the real world but at the same time not of it.

Granted, then, that the Digby Mary Magdalene play illustrates the general movement of the drama from one conceptual level to another, an even more specific and relevant example of this shift is to be found in the Croxton Play of the Sacrament.[1] For here a figure appears who is for the greater part of his play a villain-hero, but who, because it is a Miracle play, then undergoes a conversion at the end and is saved.

The essential action concerns the attempt of Jonathas the Jew and his companions to destroy the symbol of Christ's body, the Host. When it comes into their hands they take their daggers and stab it only to find that it bleeds profusely. Jonathas at once cries out:

---

[1] J. M. Manly (ed.), "The Play of the Sacrament," Specimens of the Pre-Shakespearean Drama (Boston, 1897), I, 239-76.

> Ah! owt! owt! harrow! what deuylle ys thys?
>   Of thys work I am in were;
> Yt bledyth as yt were woode, i-wys;
>   But yf ye helpe, I shall dyspayre.
>
> <div align="right">ll. 401-404</div>

They heat a cauldron of oil, but Jonathas on attempting to throw the Host in makes a further discovery:

> And I shall bryng that ylke cake
> And throw yt in, I undertake.
> Out! out! yt werketh me wrake!
>   I may not awoyd yt owt of my hond!
> I wylle goo drenche me in a lake, --
> And in woodnesse I gynne to wake!
>   I rene, I lepe, ouer this lond.
>
> <div align="right">ll. 417-423</div>

The stage directions indicate: "Her he renneth wood, with the Ost in hys hond." His companions, since they cannot remove the Host, then resort to the grotesque expedient of removing the hand; they bind Jonathas to a post, nail his hands to it, and then proceed to pull until the hand comes off. But this still does not get rid of the bleeding Host. Jonathas finally decides the four of them must hide until he can get help:

> Ther ys no more; I must enduer!
> Now hastely to ower chamber lete us go,
> Tylle I may get me sum recuer;
> And ther-for I charge yow every-choon
> That yt be conselle that we have doon.
>
> <div align="right">ll. 440-444</div>

The cures they attempt in seclusion are no better. They place the hand and Host in a boiling cauldron again, but the oil turns to blood and runs over. Next they throw it in an oven and close the door on it. But as the stage directions again describe the result: "Here the owyn must ryue asunder, & blede owt at the cranys, & an image appere owt with woundis bledyng." The image is that of Jesus, who, as soon as he addresses them, causes instant remorse and conversion to Christianity.

The resolution is, of course, peculiar to the Miracle form; the

symbolism and dramaturgy of the preceding action, however, are not. For while
in this play the scene is primarily a theatrical spectacle of the bleeding
Host clinging ineradicably to the hand of the villain together with the gro-
tesqueries of the attempts to remove it, and while in Macbeth, on the other
hand, this same element of the spectacular is translated into the language of
soliloquy and dialogue, the essential symbolic dramaturgy of the two plays is
the same.

For the essence of this scene is that the victim, be it Host or Duncan,
is a symbol of divine being and has intrinsic powers of retribution for those
that harm it. Then around this symbolic center are grouped the attendant
images of the dagger, the bloody indelibly stained hands, the useless water,
the madness, the rhetoric of remorse, amazement and despair, the attention to
grotesque detail, and the subsequent presence of a physician on the scene. All
these make for a striking parallelism between the Croxton play and Shakespeare's;
at the same time, however, they do not necessarily prove anything beyond a
striking parallelism, for the symbolic situation of the retributive nature of
the victim is common throughout classical and medieval literature. It occurs
also in Richard III in a more generalized way when Clarence is confronted by
Warwick's ghost, and Richard by those of all his victims during his dream.

The most that can be inferred from this parallelism is, as was observed
at the end of the previous chapter, the substratum of primitivism that lies be-
neath and gives support to many unique moments of Shakespearean drama. His
presentation of this particular motif is so powerful and so deeply intrinsic
to the structure in which it occurs as to seem wholly original when, indeed,
in its essential points and terms of reference it is not. One might therefore
assume that the distance between primitivism and genius is slight and easy to
cross; but this seems true only when a man of genius has already crossed it.

That is to say, Shakespeare was as necessary to the native theatre as it to him.

But the fact that Macbeth dies for his crime, while Jonathas is saved in spite of his, points to the principle that is of most relevance in this brief consideration of the Miracle plays. For the fact that a god or some supernatural agency can enter into the human world as a redemptor figure is the crucial point of differentiation between religious and tragic drama. And this is also true of the earliest and greatest Moralities as well as many later ones. Death as the retribution for sins does not become established on the English stage until well into Elizabeth's reign.[1]

This observation also underlies an issue that has been referred to in a previous chapter and one that is to determine the present approach to the relation of <u>Richard III</u> to the Moralities--that is, the variety of contextual levels in this tradition itself. For it is surely an irony of literary history that these plays whose nature it is to simplify human situations to their abstract essentials should have in their turn been simplified into one basic situation themselves. That is to say, the Morality play is almost universally conceived of by modern critics as the representation of the struggle of Good and Evil for Man's soul.

Now that this situation does arise in the Moralities is undeniable: the Good and the Bad Angels are standard features of the early Moralities; and even in the later and more secular plays their equivalents can readily be found. Their mere presence, however, is not the point at issue. What is at issue is the inference that their relationship determines Morality structure generally.

In one sense, indeed, the presence of these radically opposed extremes must have been the cause of the very variety of structures to be found in this

---

[1]Farnham, <u>op. cit.</u>, pp. 232-46.

tradition; for with the points of moral reference so clear and categorical the only possibility of originality and development must have been in terms of the kinds of characters and action--that is, the situations. And that the situations, in terms of their ontological contexts, the shape of their actions, and the kind and arrangement of characters, do change in the Morality tradition is a simple and well-known fact. There is, therefore, a degree of particularity to each structure in this tradition, and it becomes an issue of critical judgment to find those Morality plays to which Richard III may be justifiably compared in terms of its own basic structural elements. With the reminder, therefore, that these elements consist of a theme and action involving the matter of political usurpation and the major character of villain-hero, we may now turn to certain specific plays and note how this situation was given dramatic structure in the Moralities.

The year 1500 serves as a useful line of demarcation between the religious and the secular Moralities: before this date there had been the famous full-scale representations of man's moral life, encyclopedic in their ethics and eschatological in their dramatic focus; after this date the contextual reference became limited to the more limited worlds of political and social issues. And in this latter stage of development there are to be found several representations of the Vices leading the "body politic" or its ruler into evil ways, but insofar as these Vices can hardly be called the protagonists of their plays, they offer very limited kinds of analogy to Richard III. However, it is worth noting such plays as Skelton's Magnificence, Lyndsay's Satire of the Three Estates, and Bale's Three Laws and King John for their development in part of some of the motifs and devices to be found in Shakespeare's play.

The pattern of the action generally describes a ruler or the representatives of the state being deceived and degraded by the dissimulating Vices

but then being redeemed by the visitation of some supernatural figure representing Correction. King John is the only protagonist who dies before retribution can be worked on the Vices, and in doing so he underlines again the different kinds of probability of action that derive from different ontological contexts. Marlowe's Edward II and Shakespeare's Richard II also bear resemblance to this general pattern of dramatic structure: their protagonists too are led into bad rule by their companions; but unlike their Morality analogues they inhabit a world where their error causes catastrophe, and where redemption is improbable if not impossible.

In these political Morality plays, however, there occur certain scenes where the Vices are presented working out their conspiracy, and in these scenes their methods are worth noting. Skelton's Magnyfycence[1] presents most of the essential elements: in Scene 8, for example, there begins the ritualistic grouping of the several minor Vices around their leader Fancy; their names are alike in reference and in kind--Counterfet, Countenance, Crafty Conveyance, Cloked Colusyon--and their actions are merely illustrations of these names; and this being so their first move is to assume the more honorific ones of Sure Surveyance, Good Demeanance, and Sober Sadness. Cloked Colusyon is particularly suggestive of Richard's stage presence, as when he enters "cum elato aspectu, deorsum et sursum ambulando" and tells the audience:

> To passe the tyme and order whyle a man may talke
> Of one thynge and other to occupy the place,
> Then for the season that I here shall walke
> As good to be occupied as up and downe to trace
> And do nothynge.   *ll. 689-693*

Here we have that same radical boredom and frustration that underlies Richard's opening monologue; in Shakespeare it is worked out in more specific terms of reference, but the connection between the "tyme and order" of the court and

---

[1] M. L. Ramsay (ed.), Magnyfycence (London, 1906).

Richard's decision to "prove a villain" is, as was argued earlier in this study, essentially illusory and grounded in this old device, more nakedly revealed here, of the Morality tradition. Richard's relation to his accomplices is also generally parallel to that of Fancy and his assistants; but the fact that the Morality deployment of the characters is represented comically raises an interesting point.

For the Vice and his assistants were traditionally comic and derived from the medieval satiric representation of sins. Jonson's Volpone and his comic theatre generally are the direct inheritors of this tradition, but the fact remains that in Richard III these figures become the agents of a serious and particular action of heroic and not satiric proportions. That is to say, viewed from the perspective of the Morality tradition Richard III is a comedy attempting to be a tragedy, a proposition that will explain the basic merits and demerits of its form. And to develop this idea further we need to turn to the most suggestive and sustained analogue to Richard III in the Morality tradition, Respublica.[1] In many senses this play is the ideal center of reference for all three Elizabethan villain-hero dramas we are considering in this study.

The points of analogy to Richard III may be taken up first. In this respect, the extent of the parallelism in terms of basic, and therefore abstract, structure is surprising. The terms "abstract" and "structure" are, of course, the essence of this assertion in that in terms of "particulars" and "form" the two plays are widely divergent. But how they differ can only be described in terms of how primarily they are alike.

The two plays, first of all, have many elements in common purely from the point of view of their respective historical subjects. For, although it

---

[1]Leonard A. Magnus (ed.), Respublica (London, 1905).

is usually hazardous to translate allegorical figures into historical figures, there is sufficient warrant in the text of Respublica to infer that it deals with the Protectorates of Somerset and Northumberland under Edward VI and that the Nemesis figure at the play's conclusion is Mary Tudor. It tells the story, in short, of England under a boy king and of how the realm, in fact if not in name, was usurped by those appointed to the office of the Protectorate.[1]

The play itself describes how Avarice and his three accomplices Insolence, Adulation, and Oppression conspire to deceive the helpless widow Respublica. They do so by assuming the names of Policie, Authoritie, Honestie, and Reformation, and are successful in duping her but not in silencing the complaints of People. Respublica's state is one of perplexed ignorance as to what is wrong with her ailing nation and she has to be shown the truth by a supernatural visitation on the part of the four daughters of God, Mercy, Truth, Peace, and Justice. They reveal the true natures of the Vices but it is left for the figure of Nemesis to resolve the play by punishing the Vices each according to his degree of villainy.

In turning then to the relation of the two plays we need first of all to keep two caveats in mind: the first is that no claim is being made from historical evidence to the effect that Shakespeare used or even knew this old Morality play; the second is that we do not mean to read Richard III allegorically and translate the characters and situations of Shakespeare into the terms of Respublica. All that is being proposed is that given relatively similar subjects two dramatists have developed generally analogous forms of presentation.

But the problem does arise as to whether the similarity is only mere coincidence; and on this issue we cannot venture beyond the hypothetical.

---

[1] Ibid., pp. xxii-xxix.

From chapters ii and iii of this study the principle was developed to the effect that material does not determine form; that is to say, _Richardus Tertius_ and _The True Tragedie_ represented two stage versions of More's _History_ and in their differences demonstrated that the formal elements of Shakespeare's play were not necessarily inferrable from its source. Where Shakespeare therefore derived these elements (and the general theatricality of the play suggests they were derived and not his original invention) became an open question.

One illustration at this stage will point to the importance of _Respublica_ in this regard. In _Richard III_ the development that Shakespeare gives to the women characters is quite at odds with all previous tradition: More had indeed described Elizabeth and her flight to Sanctuary but this is material that Shakespeare ignores; _The True Tragedie_ has no Queens at all in its presentation but only Mistress Shore, and this is again something that Shakespeare ignores. Furthermore, the intensive development in _Richard III_ of Margaret, Elizabeth, Anne, and the Duchess of York is essentially all of the one kind: they perform no actions; they are all widows who in history were or almost were Queens; they think admittedly in the particular terms of their own fortunes and families regarding the Crown but yet by the end of the play all their individual situations are at one in their common society of sorrow. To conclude therefore from all this that they are a composite weeping widow _Respublica_ or England is surely not an improbable inference; and if it is allegorical then it is because Shakespeare has meant it to be so by virtue of his intensive presentation of their static declamatory role.

The figure of the Widow England is, of course, not exclusive to _Respublica_: Bale's _King John_ has a similar figure; and one may assume that it was also an iconographical convention. But the coincidence of this figure and its composite counterpart in _Richard III_ takes on its special significance when

the other parallelisms between the two plays are also taken into account.

These parallels may now be proposed. The theme of punishment for usurpation is identical and constitutes the principle of formal unity in both plays. The action describes the rising fortunes of the villains well into the fourth act of both: the equivalent of Richard's coronation would be the lengthy soliloquy at the end of the third Act when Avarice addresses his collection of stolen treasure; from this point onwards, while there is in Respublica no sudden fall, there is the development of a vocal counterforce in People who describes with great stress the parlous state of the nation in a way that suggests the disorderly nation that throws Richard into such confusion. The fifth Act immediately begins with the visitation of Misericordia followed by Truth, Peace, and Justice who promise aid to Respublica and punishment on Avarice and Insolence. Here Richard III is different with respect to the nature of the visitants but in terms of the dramatic spectacle and their retributive and redemptive functions the ghosts of Richard's dream support an analogy. And then finally the coup de grace is administered by the Nemesis figure, Henry in Richard III and as the Prologue of Respublica says of Mary:

> She is oure most wise and most worthy Nemesis
> Of whome our plaie Meneth, tamende that is amysse.
>
> ll. 53-54

In this abstract of the action, therefore, the two plays are generally parallel in their pattern and over-all pace of development.

It is, however, on the issue of character that Respublica is of most significance as an analogue of Richard III. For while on specific points Shakespeare's play is quite different, it is different only within the referential framework of characterization that the Morality play has established. These variations, furthermore, point to the issue raised earlier as to why Richard III can be a serious play when so many of its elements are traditionally comic.

Respublica has in its simplicity only four points of reference to the way it structures its characterization: they are the Vice and his accomplices, the helpless Respublica, the protesting People, and the counterforce group of the four daughters and Nemesis. Now the same holds true of Richard III but is less easy to see owing to the particularity of character and incident. There is, however, basically the grouping into usurper and accomplices, the members of the royal Establishment, the London citizens, and the retributive figures of the fifth Act.

Continuing first on this general level of analogy, we may note the fact that the character People, who plays a large role both in Respublica and in More's History, retains his function only to a slight degree as a point-of-view character in Shakespeare and loses all the moral force with which More and Respublica had endowed him. Now this is in turn complemented in Shakespeare by having all the force of protest transferred to the Queens, the Respublica figure. In the Morality play, Respublica is not only helpless but a dupe as well; in Shakespeare, on the other hand, this simplicity becomes distinguished into several different characters, who while they are helpless in terms of action yet have all the fierce antagonism for Richard that the Morality gave to People.

Thus the level of conflict of characters has been lifted in Richard III in relation to Respublica: Richard has Queens for his enemies, not a brawling comic spokesman from the west country; the result is that the modus operandi of Shakespeare's play is sustained on an heroic level when without such antagonists it would surely lapse into farce, as indeed it does in More's History when Richard goes before the people of London. And what is more, Richard not only is made heroic by this context of conflict but is even made ultra-heroic by overcoming these same opponents and converting them into dupes. His scene

with Anne projects him into an heroic level and one that is sustained in his battle of wits with Elizabeth and Margaret. These forensic combats in Richard III are, as we shall see, the substitute for the farce of the plays of Marlowe and Jonson.

This leads necessarily back to the character of Richard himself and its analogue in Respublica, and on this issue we come to the crux of the present study. For in the dual formulation of this Morality character there is to be found not only the germinal ideas worked out by Marlowe in The Jew of Malta and by Jonson in Volpone, but also, although in a more abstract and subtle sense, the central issue of form in Richard III.

This should not be surprising in that in chapter i it was proposed that a specific kind of character was the distinctive element of the villain-hero genre, one whose nature was the unifying premise of the actions of each play, and one whose explanation lay in the dramaturgic conventions of the native theatre. What is of especial interest, therefore, is that this whole issue should take on such specific focus in relation to this particular play, Respublica.

The duality of Avarice-Policie is at the heart of this problem. It is first of all a character of a generic and a specific kind; the one is a deadly sin and the other an equivocal quality at this point in Tudor history but one that with the fashion of the stage Machiavel is to become for the Elizabethan theater its most popular vice. As it appears in Respublica, however, Policie is honorific in name if not in nature, and as such is adequate to disguise the radical ends of Avarice. The functional essence of this duality lies moreover in the fact that it provides the means of accomplishing the ends without the ends having to appear on the surface of the play.

With this duality the dramatist can therefore bring both an internal

and an external fiction to the presentation of his play. Jonson offers the clearest formulation of this issue when he has Volpone declare in his opening speech:

> Yet I glory
> More in the cunning purchase of my wealth,
> Than in the glad possession.
>
> I,i,29-31

This allows Jonson the rationale for the escapades of his villains in a way that is consistent with character; it also forces the audience's attention away from the ends to these same means, the "cunning purchase." But that both of these relations constitute fictions is the ultimate issue; for the audience cannot forget the opening monologue. Moreover, in Volpone, there are the clearly defined episodes involving the legacy hunters, Celia, and the law court; and at the end of each episode, as though in the form of punctuation, either Volpone or Mosca points to the principle underlying and anchoring the skirmishing of the action--that is to say, Avarice. It becomes therefore a beautiful form of poetic justice for the final resolution to have the two villains at the zenith of their Policie roles forced by the dramatic situation to reveal themselves as Avarice. We may therefore point to a third and even more fundamental fiction to this duality as residing in Volpone himself. For the "glad possession" is what in reality counts most for him; and the other fictions he constructs in terms of the action and the audience ultimately can be seen as ironies at Volpone's expense.

The issue of this duality is by no means as explicit in the other two dramatists as it is in Jonson. In The Jew of Malta it is indeed quite complex and unstable in spite of the clear duality of the Jew-Machiavel elements to the protagonist's nature. For this reason we may defer until the next chapter the analysis of, essentially, what goes wrong in terms of Marlowe's attempt to handle this genre.

In Shakespeare, on the other hand, the issue of the protagonist's duality is central to <u>Richard III</u> but not nearly so explicit or allegorical. For it is only in terms of a more abstract reference--of the ends and the means--that this duality of character can be made to apply. The problem lies not so much with the element of Policie in the play; for Richard uses the Protectorship both as his honorific disguise in the Morality manner and as his Machiavellian means in the Elizabethan manner. It lies rather in the issue of what his ends can be.

One could go, of course, to the Richard of the <u>Henry VI</u> plays and point to his ambition as the source of all his action. But this would be a literalism that does not by any means exhaust his nature. It also ignores the fact that, strictly and quite literally speaking, <u>Richard III</u> assumes the presentation of the <u>Henry VI</u> Richard and goes on to build another kind of character both upon and around him. As mentioned at an earlier point in this study, there is no reference at all in <u>Richard III</u> to "ambition" in such a way as to be a dramatic sign of Richard's motivation and nature: nor is there any direct and concrete reflection on his part with regard to the crown; his intentions are made deliberately abstract and oblique. Then finally there is the intensive introspection, begun in <u>Henry VI</u>, relating to his ends as lying in his very "being." His physique and its significance obsess him as absolutes.

Thus insofar as we can formulate what Shakespeare has done with Richard it is to point to three stages in his conception: first, he has taken the material of More's <u>History</u> which in itself is highly formalized in a specific but narrative manner; then he has translated this into the theatrical terms of the Vice and his allegorical duality of presentation; then he has gone beyond even this stage to return to an apparent concreteness and particularity--but one that is elusive literally and allusive absolutely. In short, Shakespeare's Richard

is a symbolic character of the theatre. And just as particularity and univer-
sality are both implicit at such a symbolic moment of dramatic action as
Duncan's murder in Macbeth so too do both historical and absolute references
inhere simultaneously in the figure of Richard. "The devill incarnate" is, as
the Elizabethans understood ethically and as only Shakespeare could realize
artistically, his true name.

This much is true of Richard. But it is also true that he is a less
complex figure than Iago in Shakespeare's catalogue of symbolic villainy: for
Richard's is a specific context and in spite of his dramaturgic subtlety a
specific end; he is a political usurper and the crown is his goal. In this
sense, therefore, the allegorical elements of the Morality Respublica provide
an invaluable point of reference for describing the structural elements of
Richard III with respect to the issue of likeness and difference in detail be-
tween the two plays. It is to this issue that we must finally turn.

Respublica begins with a Prologue in which the author states clearly
the meaning of the play:

> To shewe that all commen weales Ruin and decaye
> from tyme to tyme hath been, ys, and shalbe alwaie,
> whan Insolence, Flaterie, Opression,
> and Avarice have the Rewle in their possession.
> But thoughe these vices by cloked collusyon
> And by counterfaicte Names, hidden theire abusion,
> Do Reigne for a while to comon weeles preiudice,
> pervertinge all right and order of true Iustice,
> yet tyme trieth all and tyme bringeth truth to lyght,
> that wronge may not ever still reigne in place of right.
>
> ll. 19-28

Now the theme does not lie on the surface of Shakespearean drama in so patent
a way as this. For Shakespeare is not thinking in terms of moral abstractions
but of particular human characters in action, and in this sense the theme is
assumed in his presentation as a commonplace principle of unity in terms of
which the characters and the action are brought into a dramatic whole. But

that this theme in Respublica is pertinent to Richard III is a point that has

frequently been stressed in this study: for it posits a moral cause to the

plot and this is Shakespeare's basic assumption also; notions of a more deter-

ministic or fatalistic reference that are suggested by Margaret, Elizabeth,

Hastings, Buckingham, and the other victims are secondary and essentially

figures of metaphorical amplification and characterization. That is to say,

they suggest a supernatural dimension that envelops and intensifies the moral

dimension of the action: the play would be less forceful without Margaret's

curse, but it would still end in the same way; the philosophic reference is

therefore an issue of credibility rather than cause. And there is also the

sense in which this element is a figure of characterization in that it implies

a lack of perspicacity on the part of Richard's victims in terms of the real-

istic issues of morality and politics in the play; and here the figure of

Respublica herself is of considerable relevance.

For when she enters the play at the beginning of Act II it is with a

long monologue on a motif frequently to be found in Richard III; as such it

bears quotation in full:

> Respublica. Lorde, what yearethlye thinge is permanent or stable,
>   or what is all this worlde, but a lumpe Mutable?
> Who woulde have thought that I, from so florent estate,
> coulde have been brought so base, as I am made of Late?
> But as the waving seas doe flowe & ebbe by course,
> So all things else do chaunge to better and to wurse.
> Great Cyties, & their fame, in tyme dooe fade and passe;
> Nowe is a Champion fielde, where Noble Troie was.
> Where is the greate Empire of the Medes & Persans?
> Where bee tholde conquestes of the puissant Grecians?
> Where Babilon? where Athennes? where Corinth so wyde?
> are thei not consumed, with all their pompe & pryde?
> what is the cause heareof, mannes wytte cannot discusse,
> but of Long contynnuance the thinge is founde thus.
> Yet by all experience, thus much is well seen,
> that in Comon weales while goode governors have been,
> All thing hath prospered; and where such men dooe lacke,
> Comonweales decaye and all thinges do goe backe.
> what marvaile than yf I, wanting a perfecte staigh

> From mooste flourishing welth bee falen in decaye?
> But, lyke as by default, quike ruine dothe befalle,
> So maie good governemente att ons recover all.
>   11. 439-460

This is, of course, the same ambivalence of theme as is found in <u>The Mirror</u>

<u>for Magistrates</u>, this unstable antinomy of Fortune and Morality; and as such

it points to that widespread phenomenon of Renaissance political theory whereby

such theory was trying to get out from under the supernatural schemes of the

past. The mixed success with which this venture met is to be seen in the fate

of Machiavelli; for in his realistic postulation of an autonomous world for

politics with the issue of power as its essence he was to the more orthodox

minds of his century destroying the ordained order of things. He became there-

fore the great adversary of political order, and in the form of the Machiavel

displaced the Devils and the Vices on the Elizabethan stage. What should be

remembered, however, is that the native theatre had prepared his role for him;

he had only to step into the traditional demonic guise with his new name and

his more topical and sinister connotations, and the Elizabethan theatre had

recreated one of its most primitive associations with the past.

But what is of most relevance at the moment is that in <u>Richard III</u>

there is a vacuum in place of the issue of good government that finds expres-

sion in <u>Respublica</u>; all of the women are absorbed in their personal fortunes.

Now this is not a matter of theme but of character: for it is on the one hand

appropriate in a play dealing with human characters to develop their individ-

uality of circumstance initially as far as possible, particularly in view of

the fact that they are eventually to rise above their individual circumstances

to become at one in sorrow; but, on the other hand, and because of this initial

moral vacuum, Shakespeare has established exactly the right milieu for his pro-

tagonist's operations. Power abhors a vacuum, and it is almost as if Richard

were being drawn to the center of the action in spite of himself. Of course,

this is an illusion, but it is nonetheless a significant element of dramatic credibility that Shakespeare has introduced by his redeployment of the conventional elements of Morality characterization as exemplified by Respublica.

These issues arise out of the explicit development of the theme in the Prologue of Respublica. Parallels of other structural elements immediately appear as soon as the play begins. The Vice, for example, has one of the best opening monologues in the whole Morality tradition. He greets the audience "Goddiggod to yowe all" and excuses himself from further pleasantries owing to his own preoccupations: "I have a hive of humble bees swarminge in my braine." He breaks off, however, from this suggestive intimation of his plans to observe a stage propriety, "But nowe, what my name is and what is my purpose," both of which he announces in tones of great intimacy towards the audience:

> For who is so foolishe that the evell he hath wrought
> for his owen behouff he wolde to light sholde be brought?
> ll. 75-76

The question is rhetorical of course and part of the Vice's traditional process of ingratiating himself with his listeners. Presumably having accomplished this, he next tells why he must disguise himself, and does this in a manner that has definite parallels to Richard's self-discovery:

> Therefore, to worke my feate, I will my name disguise,
> And call my Name "policie" in stede of Covetise.
> The Name of "policie" ys praised of eche one,
> But, to rake grumle sede, Avarice ys a Lone.
> ll. 79-82

Richard has far more disguises than just one, but his essential points of reference are described by his _Henry VI_ assertion "I am myself alone" and his role as Protector to the Princes in _Richard III_.

From this Avarice turns to the issue of the moment; for now his time has come for action, "A tyme that I have wayted for, a greate Long space," his chance to despoil the Noble Dame Respublica of her possessions. His manner in

this regard is one of overweening and facetious self-confidence; for just as

Richard concludes:

> And if King Edward be as true and just
> As I am subtle, false and treacherous
> This day should Clarence closely be mewed up.
>
> I,i,36-38

Avarice observes:

> That if I maie have the grace & happe to blynde her,
> I doubte not a shewete Ladye I shall fynde her.
>
> I,i,107-108

Both monologues also end in a parallel manner with some intrusion from the

outside world to disturb the equanimity of the villain: Clarence appears and

Richard cries, "Dive, thoughts, down to my soul--here Clarence comes"; it is,

however, merely the memory of his money that erupts in Avarice:

> owte alas, I feare, I left my Cofer open.
> I am surelye vndoone alas where be my Cayes?
> It ys gone that I have swette for all my lyve daies.
>
> ll. 118-120

In their general structure, therefore, the two opening monologues offer many

parallels. Where they differ is in terms of the indirect way in which Richard

discovers himself to the audience, not in the allegorical fashion of equating

his name to his nature but in the dramatic and poetic manner of setting up a

contrast and a conflict between himself and his context. The audience infers

his nature from his deformity, an issue which the context of the Court defines

by way of contrast.

But in the parallelism of the conclusions to the two monologues there

is also a significant difference, and one that underlies the issue of the comic

elements in the two plays. Essentially, this difference amounts to the way the

two protagonists react to the intrusion of external circumstance. In comic

structures, as will be most clearly seen in Volpone, the suddenly induced panic

is a means of cutting the villain down to comic size; it is particularly

apparent in the case of figures such as Avarice and Volpone who have to their

natures the radical vulnerability of being misers. Such characters therefore

cannot be heroic; the actions of their plays furthermore tend to be episodic,

with the protagonist's falling back into his Avarice role punctuating the sev-

eral episodes and serving as a sign to the audience of the real values that

have become lost in the acrobatic spectacle of Policie in operation.

But so far from allowing this comic tendency to deflate Richard,

Shakespeare takes over these very devices from the Morality tradition and turns

them in an opposite direction. For Richard is presented up to his Coronation

as the master and artist of intruding circumstance; his function as expositor

or presenter in the play is the principal means by which Shakespeare brings

off this feat, for in making Richard, as in Act I, announce the entrances and

exits he gives him the chance to forestall circumstance if it is about to hap-

pen or to color it if it has already happened. Thus Richard, as the expositor,

is placed above the events of his fast moving world.

There are, however, many situations towards the center of the play

when Richard barely escapes from the comic formulas that Shakespeare has as-

sumed from the old theatrical traditions. An interesting way of illustrating

this is to quote some lines from III,v by themselves and out of context:

>Buckingham. Lord Mayor,-- [he starts
>Gloucester. Look to the drawbridge there!
>Buckingham. Hark! a drum.
>Gloucester. Catesby, o'erlook the walls.
>Buckingham. Lord Mayor, the reason we have sent--
>Gloucester. Look back, defend thee, here are enemies!
>Buckingham. God and our innocence defend and guard us.
>
>   III,v,14-20

Now taken by themselves and in their literal form these lines follow the pat-

tern of the panic motif of the Mystery and Morality tradition. But of course

they are not meant literally in Richard III and the total context determines

their effect; for immediately preceding this scene is the one where Richard

and Buckingham set the stage for this little play: "Come, cousin, canst thou quake, and change thy colour," Richard asks, and Buckingham replies, "Tut, I can counterfeit the deep tragedian." Their purpose is to convince the Lord Mayor that the execution of Hastings was justified, and hence they have to dramatize a non-existent crisis as the seeming cause for their action.

Both elements, the rehersal and the panic, are traditional dramaturgic devices in the Moralities but never as a sequence one to the other. For the one is a motif of dissimulation, the other of discovery. But Shakespeare makes them consecutive and in doing so he is achieving three ends: first he is sustaining the dramatic line of his action; second he is burlesquing the very conventions he has adopted to present this action; and third he is raising Richard above the situation by making him the author of the burlesque.

Now that Shakespeare needed to do this so explicitly at this stage is a measure of the situation; for the issue of the People, as was observed in Respublica, makes for a point of reference in terms of which a comic rather than an heroic action must develop. Avarice and his accomplices are essentially comic characters in that the context of Respublica is a predominantly social and economic one with People the real spokesman for the nation and the antagonist of the Vices. Generally, as has already been noted, Shakespeare reduces the social reference of Richard III to a minimum in comparison with More's History and Respublica, and concentrates on the personages of the Court. When he does allow Richard to go outside this context, it is only in terms of an artificial situation that sets Richard off to advantage. But the fact that he can play this role at all is an indication of his own historical and dramaturgic origins.

One other way of approaching this issue is to turn to the relation of the villain to his accomplices. Respublica develops this point extensively;

Shakespeare on the other hand keeps it to a minimum. But the several parallels between the two plays in this regard indicate the common tradition underlying both.

The three minor vices in Respublica, for example, appeal to Avarice to be their leader in a way that is strongly suggestive of Buckingham's appeal to Richard to accept the Crown. Avarice like Richard at first spurns their pleas decrying "such gredinesse of Money" and complaining "whi troublest thowe me then in my contemplacioun?" Richard has this same mock morality and piety together with a dozen other ironies. Avarice also knows the way to treat his principal offsider Insolence: "ye shalbe our leader, our Captaine, & our guyde," he asserts, and only in subtlety are Richard's words to Buckingham different:

> My other self, my counsel's consistory
> My oracle, my prophet, my dear cousin!
> I, as a child, will go by thy direction.
>   II,ii,151-153

But while there is this comic base to the relation of Richard and his accomplices the relation itself is mostly on Richard's terms. The following monologue indicates the difference:

> I do the wrong, and first begin to brawl.
> The secret mischiefs that I set abroach
> I lay unto the grievous charge of others.
> Clarence, whom I, indeed, have cast in darkness,
> I do beweep to many simple gulls;
> Namely to Derby, Hastings, Buckingham;
> And tell them 'tis the queen and her allies
> That stir the king against the duke my brother.
> Now, they believe it; and withal whet me
> To be revenged on Rivers, Dorset, Grey.
> But then I sigh; and, with a piece of Scripture,
> Tell them that God bids us do good for evil:
> And thus I clothe my naked villany
> With odd old ends stol'n forth of Holy Writ;
> And seem a saint, when most I play the devil.
>   I,iii,324-338

This is a long way from Avarice using and, at the same time, fearing

his accomplices. But that there is a comic base to this relationship in
Richard III is the real issue. The final confrontation of Richard and
Buckingham, for example, is in many ways the heroic analogue of the Volpone-
Mosca confrontation; in both scenes the issue of "possession" is being con-
tested and in both scenes the origins lie in the traditional falling out of
the Vices over the division of the spoils. And Richard himself is essentially
an heroic comedian forcing a farcical mould upon tragedy. That he succeeds
in this for three and one-half acts and that the effect he generates in doing
so is a mixture of both pleasure and pain are undeniable truths about the
play. But that this pattern fails him for the most part in the final acts
when he needs most to be impressive as a tragic figure is also true: the
comic device of the villain's panic, so well deferred by Shakespeare in this
play, now comes into effect with a vengeance; the little scene that Richard
has burlesqued for the benefit of the Lord Mayor in III,v he now plays in
reality. It is, in short, the role of the "deep tragedian."

Shakespeare, we may therefore conclude, is indebted to the native
theatre both for the degree of success and the degree of failure he met with
in Richard III. For the villain-hero of the native stage was essentially a
figure who could convincingly rise in the world but not fall. It was there-
fore this problem that Shakespeare had to face and overcome when he took up
again the issue of usurpation in Macbeth.

CHAPTER VI

THE VILLAIN-HERO IN MARLOWE, SHAKESPEARE, AND JONSON

In the preceding four chapters of this study two general propositions
have been advanced regarding the issue of dramatic form in Richard III. The
first was that the analysis of the subject-matter through historical sources
not only leaves unexplained significant elements of the play's structure--such
as the reason for the long first Act, and the reason for the intense develop-
ment of the women characters throughout the play according to a general pat-
tern--but that these analyses also ignore the basic problem of how the princi-
ple of narration is different from that of drama. These issues became apparent
from our reading of More's History in chapter ii. They were then carried
further in chapter iii where two points emerged from the discussion of Richardus
Tertius and The True Tragedie: the one was that these plays attempted to pro-
ject directly a narrative pattern of events on the stage for the most part and
hence failed to achieve an organic unity of dramatic action; the other was
that in trying to induce the formal manner of drama into their presentation
they relied heavily on structural devices from Seneca and in this regard served
to reveal the restricted Senecan element in Richard III.

The second general proposition, taken up in chapters iv and v, arose
out of the inadequacy of the first as described above. It took the form of an
hypothesis to the effect that the formal pattern of the villain-hero in the
Elizabethan theatre had long been established on the English stage in the pres-
entation of the villains generally of the Mysteries and the Vices of the Moral-
ities. To adduce support for this hypothesis, and using Richard III as a point

218

of reference, we therefore described in chapters iv and v the formal elements in the dramatic presentation of villainy on the native stage and in doing so observed many parallels and many variations within these parallels between the medieval and Elizabethan forms of presentation in this respect.

Now it should be stressed that the points of reference to this latter method are purely formal in nature and that the method itself is of value essentially only insofar as it subsequently leads to insights with regard to the formal nature of Elizabethan dramatic structures. In this sense it is a non-historical method even though it does bring together evidence that supports the hypothesis of historical continuity between the medieval and Elizabethan stage. At the same time, however, it would be wrong to describe it as unhistorical and to say that any analogy between an Elizabethan genre and any other dramatic or literary tradition would be equally valid.

There is historical evidence, for instance, that Shakespeare and his contemporaries knew the Morality tradition. The Book of Sir Thomas More, a play in which Shakespeare's own hand (hand D) has been detected, contains as a "play within a play" a presentation of the Morality The Marriage of Wit and Wisdom in the banquet scene.[1] This is not the Morality play that is still extant under this name but is, as W. W. Greg has observed, a "somewhat altered version of a scene from Lusty Juventus, to which is prefixed a prologue of which the first eight lines are taken from that to the Disobedient Child."[2] This "play within a play" is not only notable for the fact that More himself improvises the part of "good Councell," but also for the fact that the players, when

---

[1] W. W. Greg (ed.), The Book of Sir Thomas More (Oxford, 1911). See also the use of the Morality play in Marston's Histrio-Mastix; here there are introduced, at irregular intervals throughout the play, scenes from The Prodigal Son plays, and characters such as the Devil, the Vice and Juventus, Pride, Vaine-Glory, Hypocrisie, Contempt, and many others.

[2] Ibid., p. xix.

they first meet More, list several other Moralities that they would be willing to present at the banquet. Among these is one called The Cradle of Security which is of interest since there exists a description of a play under this name left by one R. Willis, who, in 1639, recalls having seen it as a child. He was seventy-five at the time of writing and this would make him an exact contemporary of Shakespeare's. He observes, after describing the action of the play,

> This prince did personate in the morrall the Wicked of the World; the three ladies, Pride, Covetousness and Luxury; the two old men, the End of the World and the Last Judgment. This sight tooke such impression in me that, when I came towards mans estate, it was as fresh in my memory as if I had seen it newly acted.[1]

But Willis is obviously not alone in his appreciation of the Moralities; for it is known that as late as 1600 a quite traditional Morality, The Contention of Liberality and Prodigality, was presented at Court before Elizabeth.[2]

The presence and influence of the Morality is also clear in much Elizabethan drama; such plays as A Knack To Know a Knave, Dekker's Old Fortunatus, Green's A Looking-Glass for London and England, Jonson's A Staple of News, and Beaumont and Fletcher's "The Triumph of Time" in Four Plays or Moral Representations in One are only a few of the number that might be listed to illustrate the continuity of the techniques of the allegorical tradition up to and beyond 1600.[3] In Shakespeare's plays, the old tradition of the Vice appears several times in allusions: the song of the clown in Twelfth Night (IV,ii,130-141) describes the standard chaffing of the Devil by the Vice;

---

[1] Quoted by Craig, op. cit., p. 380.

[2] See Rossiter, op. cit., p. 101.

[3] See ibid., pp. 148-63; Spivack, op. cit., pp. 130-31; Craig, op. cit., pp. 383-89; see also for one of the most stimulating modern studies of Shakespeare's relation to the Morality drama, J. Dover Wilson, The Fortunes of Falstaff (Cambridge, 1944), especially chapter ii.

Speed and Launce in The Two Gentlemen of Verona (III,i,279-284) have an ex-
change of words which Speed concludes with "Well, your old vice still--mistake
the word" which is the same device Richard III alludes to when he compares him-
self to "the formal Vice Iniquity" in moralizing two meanings in one word
(III,i,82); Hamlet speaks of Claudius as "a vice of kings" (III,iv,96-99); and
last but not least Falstaff is described by Hal impersonating his father as
"that reverend vice, that grey iniquity" (II,iv,494-504). Marlowe's Doctor
Faustus has a veritable range of characters from the medieval theatre: Good
Angel, Bad Angel, Evil Angel, Mephistophilis, Lucifer, Belzebub, Devils, the
Seven Deadly Sins are all present; and the scene at the end of the play when
Faustus is carried off to hell by the Devils is an obvious inheritance from the
past. Then some forty years later than Marlowe, Jonson in The Staple of News
has Gossip Tattle observe: "My husband . . . was wont to say, there was no
Play, without a Foole, and a Divell in't: he was for the Divell still, God
blesse him. The Divell for his money, would he say, I would fain see the
Divell." But that this tradition of the Vice was no more than a memory (albeit
a picturesque one) is also evidenced in Jonson's The Devil Is an Ass when Satan
himself reminisces:

> That's fifty yeares agone, and six
> (When every great man had his Vice stand by him,
> In his long coat, shaking his wooden dagger).
>
> I,i,83-85

The conclusion Satan then proceeds to draw from this observation is equally
interesting:

> We must therefore ayme
> At extraordinary subtill ones [Vices], now,
> When we doe send to keepe us up in credit.
> Not old Iniquities.
>
> I,i,115-118

In short, there was continuity within the change from medieval to Elizabethan
theatre; and while the later attitude towards the old traditions and characters

was generally one of condescension, yet the difference between the two is commonly a question of degree rather than of kind. Indeed, Shakespeare, Marlowe, and Jonson achieved some of their most memorable dramatic moments by manipulating the old conventions of the native theatre.

Concerning the knowledge that the Elizabethans had of the Mystery plays, it cannot be demonstrated that the playwrights of the 1590's were acquainted with this tradition--but it is not impossible that they were. When Shakespeare has Hamlet warn the players against ranting and noise, he uses Termagant and Herod as examples; and presumably this was an allusion that both Shakespeare and his audience could enjoy. The Mystery cycles, however, generally suffered a demise shortly after Shakespeare was born, owing to the Protestant suspicions of the Papist elements in them.[1] But whether Shakespeare ever saw an actual presentation of them as a youth is not known. The fact, however, that there were revivals of parts of the Cycles late into the sixteenth century and that some five manuscripts of the Chester cycle were copied out between 1591 and 1607 points to some degree of interest at least in this tradition in Shakespeare's time.[2]

But neither these points of historical evidence nor these instances of dramatic allusions within the plays nor these speculations on Shakespeare's knowledge of the Mystery tradition can lead very far in terms of formal inferences for Elizabethan drama. That is to say, for want of "causes" "effects" cannot be inferred; and the present study declines to commit itself to such

[1]For an extensive discussion of the way in which the Mystery cycles came to an end not for want of popularity among their audiences but from the antagonism of the Protestant Establishment in the sixteenth century, see Harold C. Gardner, Mysteries' End: An Investigation of the Last Days of the Medieval Stage (New Haven, 1946).

[2]See Craig, op. cit., pp. 354-64; see also Chambers, op. cit., Vol. II, Appendix W, for a valuable survey of the extent and duration of medieval pageants in the towns of England.

quasi-factual causes as the notions of Zeitgeist, race memory and other philo-
sophical and anthropological concepts of cultural continuity. The truth of
the situation is, however, that "effects" are there as common elements of
structure and texture in both medieval and Elizabethan plays. When, for ex-
ample, an Elizabethan playwright presents a tyrant on the wane he will as often
as not show him either striking or abusing a messenger in the manner of the
medieval Herod. This is, of course, a crude example, but it does serve to il-
lustrate the continuity of a dramatic convention.

What we have therefore attempted to do is merely to identify those
structural elements in the Mysteries and Moralities for which parallel elements
can be found in Richard III. Now that this took the preceding two chapters to
do is a measure of the fact that villains are perhaps the most conventional of
all theatrical characters and that the villain-hero genre is the most primitive
of all Elizabethan dramatic genres. And the term "primitive" here is not being
used qualitatively but in its formal and aesthetic sense of "generically con-
ceived representation."

In the course of describing these parallels we have come across some
elements of structure that are clearly analogous and others that are suggestive
of analogy. This latter issue gives rise to the problem of variations on a
theme and the problem of what criteria control the analogy in such situations.
Such criteria are basically two in number: the first concerns the nature of
the elements involved in the analogy; the second concerns the value or prac-
tical use of those critical inferences drawn from this analogy and its varia-
tions. From the point of view of the present study, for example, analogies
drawn between such plays as King Lear and Hamlet and Moralities such as
Everyman abuse the first criterion in that the elements of characterization
involved in the analogy have totally different references, and to press the

analogy is only to allegorize plays which derive their power essentially from a unique individuality in the protagonist. The villain-hero, on the other hand, retains his generic nature in whatever particular context he may be placed and to construct an analogy in this situation becomes a means of measuring his degree of variation or particularity as a character. Ultimately, therefore, the validity of the present study will rest upon the insights it can bring to this reading of these Elizabethan villain-hero plays in terms of this native tradition, and it is to this issue that we must now turn.

The problem may be taken up in two stages: the first is to bring together the evidence from within the plays themselves of such parallelism between them as can be identified as native in origin; the second is to take the hypothesis so established by this evidence and to use it as the basis of our critique. Now in this second regard we will take Respublica as our center of reference for the native tradition in that it offers the most relevant and best developed structural analogues to the three major plays we are concerned with. As noted in chapter v, there are other political Moralities in the native tradition; but since these Moralities permit the Vice only a secondary role, for the sake of clarity and as a test of the method assumed in this study it seems desirable to focus our attention primarily on the points of structural reference arising from Respublica.

To begin then with the similarities between The Jew of Malta, Richard III, and Volpone, similarities which take the form of a relative parallelism between major structural elements and of some even more concrete parallelism in terms of diction and theatrical presentation. The Jew of Malta and Volpone, first of all, offer the most explicit parallels in their basic structures of action and character. They both have a protagonist who begins the play as Avarice and then changes to Policie. They also have a generally similar

pattern in the development of the action: the first Act of both plays presents a single episode in which representatives of society come to the Avarice figure to get at his wealth; Acts II, III, and IV then represent the protagonist or his accomplice beginning to move out into society as Policie, with a pathetic woman figure as the principal victim; Act V in both plays brings the villain right out into the open, with Barabas for the moment in control of Malta and Volpone also for the moment in control of the Venetian court of law. It is on this open stage that they both meet disaster, and this movement from the private world of the first Act to the public world of the fifth Act is the basic principle to the development of plot in each play.

Now given these parallels it is next possible to describe the differences between the two plays with respect to action and character. This issue must wait for its full development until the whole question of structure can be taken up for each play; but at this stage it is pertinent to observe some of the principal reasons why Volpone is successful and The Jew of Malta unsuccessful in their respective plots. For Jonson sustains the dramatic relevance of Avarice right throughout the play making its implications the principle of unity both for the several episodes and the many characters involved. At the same time, he appreciates the limitations to the development of his protagonist and so has three quite clearly separate (though not unrelated) episodes to his plot to give it variety. Marlowe, on the other hand, does not conceive of Avarice as the unifying principle of his play; he barely conceives of Avarice at all, in that his opening Act equivocates between Barabas as a generic and as an individualized figure. Thus the initial situation developed in this first Act is exhausted by the middle of the next Act and all that Marlowe is left with is a Machiavel figure pure and simple. Without this sustained duality of reference to the protagonist the issue of plot degenerates into the

mere spectacle of fortuitously linked incidents, an inherent danger in the development of all Policie characters. But more of this at a later stage.

We need now to consider some of the issues of detail common to the three plays, and in this respect we may begin with a notable parallelism on a particular point of diction. It concerns an issue already mentioned in the previous chapter where it was shown that Avarice addresses his chief accomplice in the same manner and almost in the same words as Richard addresses Buckingham. This parallelism is sustained in The Jew of Malta and Volpone, and to demonstrate the likeness in all four cases we need to take these statements together:

> Respublica: ye shalbe our leader, our Captaine, & our guyde,
> I,iii,275

> The Jew of Malta: Come near, my love; come near, thy master's life
> My trusty servant, nay, my second self:
> III,iv,14-15

> Richard III: My other self, my counsel's consistory,
> My oracle, my prophet, my dear cousin!
> II,ii,151-152

> Volpone: Thou are my friend, my fellow, my companion,
> My partner, . . .
> I,v,80-81

These parallels would seem to suggest an historical relation between the plays, but this is by no means conclusive since the device used here is one that is a traditional part of the villain's language in all dramatic literature. But what is more significant is the formal nature of this parallelism in that it is so obviously a comic device. As such it illustrates a central concern of this present study, the facility with which the dramaturgical devices of the villain-hero genre can take on both serious and comic aspects. We have quoted only one example from Volpone when several others might easily have been used; the comic form, in other words, develops this device most extensively. But

even in the example quoted from <u>Volpone</u> we see an illustration of the adaptability of this device to a specific end: for it is not Volpone himself who bestows this item of praise on Mosca but Corvino, one of the legacy hunters; the effect is therefore deepened immeasurably when we find the conspiratorial unction being expressed by a dupe. Similarly in <u>The Jew of Malta</u>, although here it is less a dramatic virtue, the device is used to describe such dissimilar relationships as those of Barabas to Abigail, Calymath to Barabas, and Barabas to Ferneze at particular stages of the play's development. And in <u>Richard III</u>, it was observed that this device together with other elements in the relation of villain to accomplices is one of the principal means by which we can see a comic substructure beneath the serious action.

To take further this issue of the comic elements in villain-hero drama we might briefly describe the catalogue of such devices to be found in Act I of <u>Respublica</u>. We have previously drawn attention to the use of the monologue as an occasion of intimacy between the Vice and the audience and the use of rhetorical questions to articulate and to anticipate the thoughts of the spectators and by this effrontery to deflect any direct moral animosity away from the speaker: these have already been mentioned in the previous chapter. But as reworked motifs they are strewn throughout the Elizabethan plays:

> <u>Ithamore</u>. Why, was there ever seen such villainy,
> So neatly plotted, and so well perform'd?
> Both held in hand, and flatly both beguild?
> <div align="right">III,iii,1-3</div>

> <u>Gloucester</u>. Was ever woman in this humour wooed?
> Was ever woman in this humour won?
> I'll have her; but I will not keep her long.
> <div align="right">I,ii,227-229</div>

> <u>Volpone</u>. (<u>leaping from his couch</u>) O, I shall burst!
> Let out my sides, let out my sides--
> <u>Mosca</u>. Contain
> Your flux of laughter, sir: you know this hope
> Is such a bait, it covers any hook.

> Volpone. O, but thy working, and thy placing it!
>   I cannot hold; good rascal, let me kiss thee:
>   I never knew thee in so rare a humour.
>
>   I,iv,131-138

The next comic device of Respublica finds expression in the three minor vices: they enter singing, and then break into self-congratulatory patter and back-chat, elements for which the best parallels are to be found in the three zanies of Volpone; indeed, minor comic characters grouping themselves in threes is a common feature of the whole Morality tradition, and we may note how Jonson has developed this situation further by balancing his zanies and his legacy hunters with deliberate symmetry.

The three Vices find they need the "Counsaile of our founder Avaryce" and appeal to him to be their leader in a scene for which the parallel in Richard III has already been mentioned and for which a parallel, though less comic, occurs in The Jew of Malta when the three Jews come to Barabas for "counsel . . . in these affairs." In Volpone, however, this device is more implicit than explicit; Volpone presides over the little play the zanies present in Act I on the subject of the universality of fools but when it comes to real action he has to run to Mosca for his counsel. Again, Jonson may be seen reworking an old motif.

When Avarice in Respublica does agree to be their leader and after his obsequious flattery of his chief accomplice, Insolence, he proceeds to set before their eyes the rewards he will bestow on them for their help; and his promise "I will make Insolence a lorde of highe estate" is the motif in terms of which all its Elizabethan analogues should be measured:

> Barabas. O trusty Ithamore, no servant, but my friend:
>   I here adopt thee for mine only heir,
>   All that I have is thine when I am dead,
>   And whilst I live use half;
>
>   III,iv,39-42

Richard [to Buckingham] And look when I am king, claim thou of me
   The earldom of Hereford, and all the movables
   Whereof the king my brother was possessed.
                                        III,i,184-186

This device appears in Volpone less as a statement than as the whole issue of

the Volpone-Mosca relationship. Thus it is fraught with subtle ironies when-

ever it appears:

   Mosca. You know the use of riches, and dare give now
      From that bright heap, to me, your poor observer,
   . . . .
   Volpone. Hold thee, Mosca,   [Gives him money]
      Take of my hand; thou strik'st on truth with all.
                                        I,i,62-63,66-67

It is also the central motif of Mosca's relation with the legacy hunters, each

one of them making him a promise of reward for his help with the high point of

irony coming when, through Mosca's arguments, Corbaccio disinherits his son

Bonario to make Volpone his heir.

The fourth scene of Act I in Respublica is of great importance to the

issue of the Elizabethan villain-hero in that it presents the Vices rehearsing

the roles they are about to play in the later Acts. Here, the stage business

of dissimulation is revealed with great simplicity and clarity of presentation;

the issues of the changing of names and the changing of costumes are shown to

be the principal devices at their disposal. Such devices are admittedly common

to all comic drama, but it is especially significant that they receive so much

explicit attention here; for in the Elizabethan villain-hero drama there is

this same delight not merely in using new names and new costumes but in prepar-

ing for their use in scenes of rehearsal.

In Richard III it is noteworthy that the only time the villains put on

physical disguise is when they are about to go before the people of London;

and in this scene, as has already been noted, there may be found one of the

clearest links in Shakespeare's play with the Morality convention of the Vice.

But generally Shakespeare avoids the overtly comic approach to dissimulation and makes Richard observe an heroic decorum. Thus the issue becomes less one of theatrical spectacle than one of metaphorical identification of character. Richard, for example, prepares for his final scene with Elizabeth by exclaiming "To her go I a jolly thriving wooer." Thus his disguise is internal and not external.

But context also qualifies the Shakespearean use of disguise; this wooing persona, for example, has many ironic overtones since Richard at this point is on the decline, and since the role he does play when he confronts Elizabeth is far less "jolly" and "thriving" than the one he had earlier played with Anne. Furthermore, and in the first Act particularly, this disguise device is also qualified by the way in which it takes the form not of a rehearsal but of a recapitulation of a role already played. As a result Richard is presented heroically <u>before</u> he is presented comically. That is to say, it is only after his intense and triumphant encounter with Anne that he relaxes into the jocular spirit of the dissembling Vices, and even then in a most sophisticated way:

> <u>Richard</u>. I do mistake my person all this while:
> Upon my life, she finds, although I cannot,
> Myself to be a marv'llous proper man.
> I'll be at charges for a looking-glass,
> And entertain a score or two of tailors,
> To study fashions to adorn my body:
> Since I am crept in favour with myself,
> I will maintain it with some little cost.
> > I,ii,252-259

Barabas and Ithamore also have one of their most memorable scenes in using this device as when they vie with each other over the villainy of their past lives:

> <u>Barabas</u>. As for myself, I walk abroad o' nights
> And kill sick people groaning under walls:
> Sometimes I go about and poison wells;
> . . . .

> But tell me now, how hast thou spent thy time?
> Ithamore. 'Faith, master,
> In setting Christian villages on fire,
> Chaining of eunuchs, binding galley-slaves.
>   II,iii,175-177,202-205

Now both of these declarations in Marlowe, even though they are in the spirit

of the dissimulating villain, strain the audience's credibility; but when

Richard observes that he seems "a saint, when most I play the devil" he is

generalizing his villainy in a most credible way since the audience has seen

him actually performing such roles. The issue of dissimulation in Volpone is,

of course, the basic device of presentation in each act, and as such may well

wait until a full analysis of the play can be offered.

One point of diction needs also to be noted on this topic of comic

dissimulation. In Respublica the Vices have decided that they must not go out

into society under their true names and this leads Oppression to say to

Avarice, "Thowe must newe christen us." Now this same phrase appears again in

Volpone when Corvino, obsessed with fears of being cuckolded, exclaims, after

chasing away the disguised Volpone from beneath his wife's window, "ere tomor-

row I shall be new christened." Both of these references would suggest that

the phrase was a conventional idiom of the comic theatre. Thus when Richard

uses it so beautifully to describe for Clarence the possible reason why he is

being sent to the Tower, the audience most probably would have appreciated not

only the facetious literalism of the phrase and not only the ironic anticipa-

tion of the Channel drowning and the Malmesey butt, but also the comic connota-

tion of dissimulation ironically wrenched almost beyond recognition. That is

to say, the audience would hear Richard, who shortly afterwards is to describe

his brother as "simple, plain Clarence," suggesting at this point that Clarence

is about to assume a disguise and a role of dissimulation in dying.

These then are the major comic devices brought together in Act I of

Respublica which are to reappear so often in the Elizabethan villain-hero
plays as variations on an old comic theme. But there is also a special de-
vice that appears not when the villains are by themselves but when they are
with their intended victims. This is the device of the comic and ironic
aside, a notable element in the relation of these Elizabethan plays to the
Morality tradition; for Richard specifically identifies himself with the Vice
in this regard.

In Respublica the device becomes the staple pattern of conversation
among the Vices when they are in the presence of Respublica herself. They
either take some literal statement made by Respublica and turning to the audi-
ence point out a more sinister meaning to the statement or they make some
ironic remark themselves which Respublica partly overhears and which they then
correct when they turn to her. Now Barabas carries this use of the aside to
the furthest extent of all the characters we are considering, but it is in
Shakespeare and Jonson that the aside is used with most subtlety.

The scene where Richard is in the presence of the Princes is worth
noting in this respect for the way in which Shakespeare gives certain "signs"
to the audience as to what is really happening. Richard addresses the elder
Prince first of all and suggests the Tower as the best place of residence; the
Prince then takes up this issue and uses it as the basis for a somewhat elab-
orate discourse on truth, history, and fame which Richard ironically punctuates
for the audience in his asides:

<pre>
(Gloucester. So wise so young, they say, do ne'er live long.
 Prince.   What say you, uncle?
 Gloucester. I say, without characters, fame lives long.
     [aside] Thus, like the formal Vice, Iniquity,
              I moralize two meanings in one word.
     . . . .
(Gloucester. Short summers lightly have a forward spring.
</pre>
                                            III,1,79-83,94

Thus the scene is represented with Richard holding the initiative on stage.
However, when the younger Prince of York appears, Shakespeare makes a neat
turn in his presentation and lets the little boy get the advantage of Richard,
something that rarely happens elsewhere in the play and certainly not in the
rising action. For York begins to "lead" Richard, and the direction in which
he does so is a significant one in the way it tends to unmask Richard's true
nature. He asks Richard, for example, to give him his dagger, and in the
interchange that follows two associations seem to come to the surface of the
drama: the first is the traditional association of the Vice with his stage
dagger; the second is that Richard's relationship to his nephews is symbolized
in the offer he makes to them of his sword instead. Thus Richard is discov-
ered in both a real and a theatrical sense. But this is taken even further by
the younger Prince when he picks up his brother's conciliatory observation to
Richard to "bear with" the little boy. It is then York's turn to "moralize
two meanings in one word":

> York. You mean, to bear me, not to bear with me:
> Uncle, my brother mocks both you and me;
> Because that I am little, like an ape,
> He thinks that you should bear me on your shoulders.
> III,i,128-131

The vulnerability of Richard to this attack is revealed in the lines that fol-
low, which are presented as an aside not from Richard, who is speechless with
anger, but from Buckingham:

> (Buckingham. With what a sharp-provided wit he reasons!
> To mitigate the scorn he gives his uncle,
> He prettily and aptly taunts himself;
> So cunning and so young is wonderful.
> III,i,132-135

This use of a detached observer to let the audience know the inner state of
mind of the principal characters is among the commonest of all devices on the
stage; but why it should be significant here is that it represents one of the

two times in this lengthy play that Richard does not play the role of presenter himself. The other time comes later in the play when Buckingham fails to take up Richard's hint about getting rid of his nephews. Catesby observes the exchange of words and says very briefly and in an aside, "The king is angry: see, he gnaws his lip."

What is therefore significant in the Shakespearean use of the aside is that it is so generally a device peculiar to Richard throughout the play and that Shakespeare, when he decides to work a change in his general formula, does so at both times in connection with the issue of the Princes and thus heightens the poignancy of their relation to their uncle. Jonson, on the other hand, can parallel this subtlety in Shakespeare and achieve the opposite effects of farce. Generally the aside and the deliberate ambiguity in meaning are reserved for Volpone, Mosca, and Peregrine; but in the first Act the character of Corbaccio is portrayed by the way he fumbles around, unintentionally of course, for the meaning of Mosca's words and frequently reverses into sense what had been on Mosca's part an irony:

> Mosca. His face drawn longer than 'twas wont.
> Corbaccio. How! how!
> Stronger than he was wont.
> Mosca. No, sir; his face
> Drawn longer than 'twas wont.
>
> I,iv,39-41

To conclude this discussion of the devices of presentation that Marlowe, Shakespeare, and Jonson shared alike among themselves and with the earlier Morality tradition as exemplified by Respublica, we need to revert to the issue of the opening monologues. This will serve three purposes: one, to illustrate the general principle underlying the above discussion of the way in which the dramatic structure of the Morality may be of use to criticism in its analysis of Elizabethan structure; two, to describe the degree and the effect of variations upon a common theme or device; and three, to provide a highly pertinent

means of transition into our analysis of the three Elizabethan plays.

Why this opening monologue should be so pertinent lies in the fact that, as in Respublica, the initial presentation of the protagonist's character constitutes the premise of the subsequent action and serves therefore as an epitome of the entire play in each instance. Now in the case of Marlowe special problems will arise in that the character of Barabas as it is initially presented loses its relevance by the end of the second Act, but since this is the central problem to the play's total structure, a discussion of the opening monologue will be useful in describing how this structural weakness develops.

We need to remember, to begin with, that the opening monologue of Respublica served the basic functions of establishing the nature and purpose of the protagonist. His nature, first of all, was established as soon as he announced his name; and, as it has already been observed, this allegorical technique of the Moralities becomes a symbolic technique in the Elizabethan theatre. Both Barabas and Volpone make their first appearances in the symbolic contexts of their gold. Thus the Elizabethan significant situation has replaced the old Morality use of the significant name. There is nonetheless a degree of similarity between Respublica, Marlowe, and Jonson in this respect. All three, however, are sharply distinct from Shakespeare's symbolic presentation.

For the structure of Richard's opening monologue is not built upon a single, symbolic situation but on a contrast and a conflict of two situations and an inference which arises out of this total context. Now in this sense Shakespeare's is the most complex of all three monologues, and therefore provides in its complexity a useful frame of reference for the consideration of the other two.

How this complexity arises is a measure of the way in which the final inference regarding purpose relates to what has been established earlier regarding Richard's nature; for when he declares:

> And, therefore, since I cannot prove a lover,
> To entertain these fair well-spoken days,
> I am determined to prove a villain
> And hate the idle pleasures of these days.
>
> <div align="right">I,i,26-29</div>

he is presenting an "effect" that is too strong for its stated "cause." That is to say, it is not <u>literally</u> credible that his frustration as a lover should lead to his desire to be a villain. Nor is this "cause" sustained in the development of the subsequent action, for Richard very soon afterwards becomes remarkably successful as a "lover."

But the crux of the matter is that <u>dramatically</u> the inference is credible; and the reason why this should be so goes back to the way in which Shakespeare has established Richard's nature in terms of the conflicting points of reference of the Court and his physical being. For what will be revealed by a close analysis of these two points of reference is that only one of them is essential--his physical being. This in itself is sufficient cause for his decision to "prove a villain."

At the conclusion of <u>3 Henry VI</u> Shakespeare left Richard obsessed with the significance of his physical being. His deformity since birth means for Richard that he will "snarl, and bite, and play the dog." And since "the heavens have shaped my body so," he concludes, "Let hell make crooked my mind to answer it." It is this same obsession with the significance of his deformity that is taken up again as soon as <u>Richard III</u> begins:

> But I, that am not shaped for sportive tricks,
> Nor made to court an amorous looking-glass;
> I, that am rudely stamped, and want love's majesty,
> To strut before a wanton ambling nymph;
> I, that am curtailed of this fair proportion,
> Cheated of feature by dissembling Nature,
> Deformed, unfinished, sent before my time
> Into this breathing world, scarce half made up,
> And that so lamely and unfashionable
> That dogs bark at me as I halt by them--
>
> <div align="right">I,i,14-23</div>

He begins with images of the Court and ends with the dogs upon the street; that is to say, he is rejected by all society from the highest to the meanest. His alienation as a human being is entire. But while the beginning and the ending of this self-portrait are conceived in terms of social reference, the central section throws off this reference altogether and plunges into a savage accusation against Nature and the very destiny that sent him into the world. It is in these lines that the essential Richard lies, one whose grievance is in universal and absolute terms; it is also in these lines that the tremendous motivation of his life finds its source. He is at all times in the play larger than his particular motives and actions. In this sense, he is larger than his ambitions to be king; in this sense also it is really accidental that he is Richard at all.

But yet Richard is Richard; he is in the material sense the historical figure that More bequeathed to Shakespeare; and Shakespeare was writing a play about this particular figure and not about some creature of evil abstracted out of time and space. He therefore had to bring into a credible relationship these two points of reference, Richard's essential nature and his historical context; and in the way he did this, we may see the principle to the complex structure of the opening monologue.

For the issue of the historical context which is developed in the opening lines of the play serves both the purpose of exposition and the purpose of conditioning the character of Richard in a credible way. Had these lines not been there that tell of the "glorious summer" of "this sun of York" and describe how peace, festivity, and love had descended on England after Tewkesbury, Richard would become a purely melodramatic figure; as it is, these lines give his character a tangible point of reference and, since this point of reference conflicts with his nature, a motive. At the same time, however, they do not

comprise in any way the absoluteness of his being. The complexity of Shake-
speare's opening monologue is therefore a measure of the way in which he has
created an illusion of historical reality around a demonic being.

Neither Marlowe nor Jonson had need of such complexity since the char-
acters they were presenting were conceived of essentially as human types and
not as some demonic incarnation. The opening monologue therefore needs first
to present them in the kind of action that makes them types and to draw from
this presentation some plan for future action.

Now Marlowe's opening monologue presents Barabas "in his counting
house with heaps of gold before him," but it does not go on from this to draw
any inference regarding any special villainy he is contemplating. He is de-
picted essentially as a wealthy man becoming wealthier every day according to
his normal routine of business. It is only when the other three Jews burst in
upon him with the news that the Turks have come to Malta and that all Jews are
required to attend a meeting of the council that the play really starts. Thus
it is external action rather than self-generated villainy that sets Barabas in
motion; and it is his response to the subsequent demands made on his wealth
that determines the development of the plot.

In this sense, therefore, The Jew of Malta would not seem to belong to
the villain-hero genre as this genre has been described in Respublica and
Richard III. The genre of the "revenge" play, as exemplified in Kyd's The
Spanish Tragedy, would seem equally relevant to the structure of the opening
Acts of Marlowe's play. Admittedly, the grievance of Barabas is not as radical
as that of Hieronymo; but in constructing a play solely around the issue of
Barabas recovering his wealth, Marlowe would have had a more unified and more
probable central action.

The problem, however, lies in the figure of the Machiavel. For, in

one sense, his prologue is really the true opening monologue of The Jew of
Malta in that it is in terms of his character that the play proceeds from mid-
way through the second Act until its catastrophic resolution. Barabas as a
creature of Avarice becomes secondary to Barabas as a creature of Policie once
the initial situation of regaining his wealth has been resolved. There is, in
short, less a duality of characterization to Marlowe's protagonist than a
dualism. Barabas as Avarice is essentially conservative in his relations to
society; Barabas as Policie is just the opposite, being virtually unconditioned
in his actions. The initial Barabas belongs to one dramatic genre and the
later Barabas to another. Thus the analysis of this play which we will pres-
ently submit will be found to have the limitations of its confused subject.

To turn, however, to the opening monologue of Volpone is to see an
artist in absolute control of his genre. Jonson is writing a satiric comedy,
and his characters present, as Nano says of himself, a "pleasing imitation /
Of greater men's actions, in a ridiculous fashion." Volpone is not meant to
be heroic as Barabas and Richard were; he must always be provoking the audi-
ence to laugh at him and say "Fool, fool" in a much sharper sense than the
audience for Shakespeare's Richard does. But at the same time as Volpone must
be made ridiculous he must also be made credible as the protagonist. This is
the problem that confronted Jonson, and, as we will show in our subsequent
analysis of the play, he solves this problem by deliberately limiting the ex-
tent of each episode and by sharing the villainy among the other characters
of the play from Mosca to the legacy hunters to Sir Politic Would-be.

The opening monologue is, therefore, Volpone's only really great scene
as protagonist. His later moment of drama with Celia has been so artfully
contrived for him by Mosca that when Volpone leaps up from his bed the sudden
change in his characterization is one of the reasons why the effect of this

scene is so disquieting. But in his opening monologue he is an impressive protagonist in his ridiculous way.

His nature is established in the very first line: "Good morning to the day; and next, my gold!" He is depicted observing a religious ritual to Avarice: "Open the shrine, that I may see my saint." He then ventures on an elaborate apostrophe with magniloquent metaphor and sustained intricate syntax as his manner of address. He is a priest of the cult and his ecstasy is about to grow unbearable when Mosca interrupts:

> Volpone.   Thou art virtue, fame,
>   Honour, and all things else. Who can get thee,
>   He shall be noble, valiant, honest, wise--
> Mosca. And what he will, sir.
>
> I,i,25-28

The terse irony of this statement brings the edifice of Volpone's ritual tumbling down into ridicule for the audience if not for the two characters involved, particularly Volpone himself. But the very presence of a second character in the opening monologue is a device to keep the presentation within comic bounds. When Volpone in his scene with Celia indulges in a similar ritual amplification, this time on the subject of love, there is no Mosca there to bring him down to earth for the audience; and, as it has been observed with regard to Richard's confrontation with the Queens, this clash of villain and victim only serves to elevate the villain.

But at this early stage of the opening monologue, Mosca is there; and we see in the way in which he gradually takes over control of the scene an epitome of the whole play. Furthermore, to see this whole scene as a single monologue is to appreciate its subtlety. For while Mosca is guiding Volpone from a position of avarice to one of largesse he is doing so with such a close identification of viewpoint to Volpone's own as to seem a fellow celebrant in the ritual--as indeed he ultimately is to become.

The nature of the protagonist is therefore established with absolute clarity by Jonson in this opening monologue. So clearly, in fact, as to be incapable of further development, and this gives rise to the special form the "purpose" takes in Volpone. For since nothing can be added to Volpone's situation (except more money) the purpose is proposed as a game. It is "the cunning purchase" not "the glad possession" that Volpone declares is his intent; and while this is a Jonsonian irony, it is also the only possible development of the initial situation that can keep the play within the limits of comedy. For just as we have observed the difficulty Shakespeare encountered in bringing his villain down after his overwhelming rise, we need also to appreciate the difficulty that Jonson faced in trying to restrain his villains from rising. The element of play, the "quick fictions" of the episodes, and the limitations in the episodes themselves are therefore central to Jonson's reworking of the villain-hero in a comic form.

This discussion of the opening monologues in terms of a basic pattern established in the opening monologue of Respublica must now be extended to the issue of the complete structures of the three plays we are concerned with. In doing so, we need to be mindful of the hypothetical nature of this procedure since the structure of Respublica is not being proposed as an ideal form for these plays, but merely the best that is available in the native tradition. The value of Respublica is essentially that it is a simple dramatic structure beginning with the same postulates of character as the Elizabethan villain-hero plays and then proceeding to develop these postulates in an extremely regular and logical manner. It has no incidents that are superfluous in terms of its basic principles of organization; only such incidents as are extensions of character and integral to the development of plot find their way into its structure. Thus it presents in a very clear fashion the essential points of reference of a villain-hero dramatic structure.

Marlowe's <u>The Jew of Malta</u> is the least responsive of all three
Elizabethan plays to the outlines of structure described in <u>Respublica</u>. The
only impressive parallel is that between the protagonists, and this parallel
itself assumes that Marlowe was attempting to write his play in the villain-
hero genre. But insofar as he was working within this genre and inasmuch as
his protagonist is an Avarice-Policie figure it will be useful to compare the
structure that Marlowe built on the basis of this character to that of the
Morality play.

The relation of the protagonist to his society is the cardinal differ-
ence between the two plays. For while Barabas begins his play as a figure of
Avarice his attitude towards the state is the very opposite to that of the
protagonist of <u>Respublica</u>. Barabas does not want to usurp power to get wealth;
he is quite satisfied with the status quo and his own self-contained manner of
getting rich. He is, in fact, indifferent to society even to the point of ig-
noring the approach of the Turks; he derides the concern of his fellow Jews:

> Why, let 'em come, so they come not to war;
> Or let 'em war, so we be conquerors--

but then in an aside to the audience he changes his point of view:

> Nay, let 'em combat, conquer, and kill all!
> So they spare me, my daughter, and my wealth.
> I,i,148-151

But the action that Ferneze, the Governor of Malta, takes disrupts
this private world of Barabas. The other Jews lose only half their wealth,
but Barabas for his opposition to the Governor's demands is deprived of every-
thing he possesses. Thus the state itself, rather than the Avarice figure,
has initiated the action of the play and in such a way and to such a person as
to precipitate an intense reaction on Barabas' part.

In <u>Respublica</u> the motive for the action is an expression of the pro-
tagonist's character; in <u>The Jew of Malta</u> it is induced in the protagonist by

events external to himself against which he had been sedulously guarding him-
self all his life. But given this motive Barabas reacts to his society, and
by making use of his daughter Abigail he recoups his losses in a surprisingly
short time. Thus by the middle of the second act he has exhausted this initial
situation and his primary motivation. It is here (II,iii) that his character
takes on the nature of the Machiavel and exercises itself solely for reasons
of pure hatred and revenge. He now has an animus against society, but only of
a gratuitous kind; he is now as so many other villains were subsequently to be-
come on the Elizabethan and Jacobean stage "nothing else but murder," and the
action proceeds from this point on through a series of fortuitously linked in-
cidents each one of which involves him in a new set of murders. Only the first
pair of deaths, those of Lodowick and Matthias, can be considered as the log-
ical outcome of his desire for revenge; the others are all measures of self-
defense.

Thus it is possible to describe the structural weakness of Marlowe's
play, in comparison with Respublica, as a failure on the dramatist's part to
conceive of the dual role of the protagonist in terms of the ends and the means
of a total action. For Barabas is essentially two persons, both ends in them-
selves and contrary ends at that: Barabas in his first role is intent on keep-
ing to himself; in his second role he is intent on wreaking revenge on society
itself. It is this dualism that explains his improbable desire to relinquish
the Governorship as soon as he obtains it; his Machiavellian instincts lead
him to betray the state, but his instincts as an Avarice figure impel him to
avoid the dangers of ruling it.

There is, however, another difference in Marlowe's use of this dual
character; for besides radically altering the relative functions of the two
roles he has introduced innovations into the very nature of the roles

themselves. The Machiavellian Barabas is a creature of theatrical spectacle who delights in the sensations of physical melodrama: he stirs the poison that is to kill his daughter, enlarging on its potency in a highly rhetorical manner; he helps Ithamore strangle Friar Barnardine and revels in prosecuting the case against Friar Jacomo; he puts on a disguise to trick Ithamore and his companions; he feigns death when caught; and then last of all he busies him- self with the erection of the scaffold upon which he will have his most melo- dramatic moment. No figure of such spectacular presence had appeared on the Elizabethan stage before Barabas; and it was essentially this side of his na- ture that caught and held the attention of the audiences for fifty years after its first performance.[1]

But at the same time as Marlowe was breathing this new life into the character of Policie he was also working an equally remarkable change in the nature of Avarice. For in place of the personified abstraction of the Morality character with its single universal reference, Marlowe was constructing a fig- ure of three references. Barabas has in the first place the generic reference of Avarice, then the religious reference of the Jew, then the individualized reference of a particular man.

Now this complexity of characterization seems an even more remarkable innovation in terms of the history of the theatre than the issue of the Machiavel. But it was in this very innovation of complexity that Marlowe came to grief in The Jew of Malta. For the different references to Barabas' nature prove to be contradictory among themselves. In Respublica Avarice is conceived of as the principal enemy of the state; in The Jew of Malta, this generic ref- erence is compromised by Barabas' situation as a Jew and as a private citizen.

---

[1]See the Prologues and Epilogues that Thomas Heywood wrote for the presentations of The Jew of Malta as late as 1633. Quoted by H. S. Bennett (ed.), Marlowe The Jew of Malta and The Massacre at Paris (London, 1931), pp. 24-30.

For Barabas has learned as a Jew to accommodate himself within the state, and he has furthermore a deeply human attachment to his daughter Abigail. These two latter references prevent the issue of Avarice from being the foundation of the plot as it is in Respublica.

What therefore constitutes the essence of Barabas' character for Marlowe is difficult to say. Tradition has elevated the individualized Barabas--the affectionate father, and the man who reacts to the extreme demands of the state in a recognizable human way--as the essential Barabas. But on this basis the effect becomes all the more incredible and repulsive when Abigail is poisoned. In this sense, therefore, what seems to be Marlowe's signal achievement in the play becomes his greatest error. Another playwright with lesser talents for the individualization of character might easily have made a better total structure of the play by retaining more of the allegorical and intense moral significance to Barabas as a figure of Avarice. This is, in essence, what Jonson has done in Volpone, but only by virtue of reducing the heroic scale that Marlowe worked in to the dimension of the ridiculous where the intrinsic moral issue of the villain-hero may be more strictly controlled.

Two other structural problems, however, need to be mentioned with respect to The Jew of Malta. The first is the role of Ferneze as the representative of the state, and the second is the relationship of the several contexts in which the action of this play takes place. The Jew of Malta, in the first respect, offers an interesting example of what happens in a villain-hero play when the representative of the body politic, the Respublica figure, is not a weeping widow but a forceful antagonist of the villain.

The severe demands that Ferneze makes on Barabas, although they may be rationalized away in terms of the historical context of the play, yet cause Barabas to have a particular and a genuine sense of grievance towards the state.

A modern audience may well be more sympathetic to Barabas in this regard than an Elizabethan audience, but the peremptory quality to the formal presentation of Ferneze's demands in the play certainly makes Barabas' response to the order a credible and general one. In this sense, therefore, the relation of the villain to the state in The Jew of Malta creates an effect in the first Act that only has to be annulled at a later stage.

A second result of this relation in Marlowe's play is that Barabas in seeking his revenge is forced to move circuitously and to approach the center of power in the state indirectly. This leads him into crimes in which the victims not only do not merit their misfortune but are also not highly pertinent to the issue of Barabas' revenge. And being forced to move circuitously Barabas becomes a creature of the back streets of the city, and this involves him in a context of low-life characters from which he never really escapes. When in the final Act he is operating on the level of the state itself, he resorts to the same kind of stratagem which had been in its grim way appropriate to the subterranean context of the preceding three acts.

This confusion of contexts in The Jew of Malta is one of the most obvious flaws to its structure. The range in itself is impressive, but like the issue of the references of Barabas' character ultimately a problem that Marlowe was incapable of solving. For while the play as a whole is set in the symbolic context of the international struggle between Infidel and Christian, with the Turks and the Spaniards sailing into Malta's harbor with the ease of the Bad and Good Angels of the Morality plays descending from the skies, most of the action takes place on the level and in the manner of low-life villainy. If it is recalled that in Respublica it takes the visitation of the Four Daughters of God to unmask the villains, and if it is also recalled that it requires the ghosts on Bosworth eve to penetrate to Richard's conscience, then the comparison

with the parallel mechanism in The Jew of Malta points to the generally con-
fused decorum of the play: for it is Bellamira and her bully Pilia-Borsa who
reveal the truth to the authorities about Barabas and Ithamore. And when
Ferneze, as the Nemesis figure, cuts the rope that sends Barabas plunging into
the cauldron, although he may wish that "due praise be given / Neither to Fate
nor Fortune, but to Heaven," his real debt is to Barabas and ultimately to the
Machiavel himself.

In general, therefore, The Jew of Malta appears as an impossible play
for critical theory to handle. No critic ever has argued for its virtues as a
total structure, and presumably none ever will. Nor has the present approach
done any more than point to certain well-known flaws in its construction. But
by relating Marlowe's play to the kind of dramatic structure that exemplifies
the genre to which The Jew of Malta partly belongs, certain concrete observa-
tions have been made possible regarding its degree of success and failure in
achieving a dramatic form.

To relate Volpone, on the other hand, to the structure of Respublica
presents a new way of approaching Jonson's play in terms of its total form.
Suggestions have been put forward in modern criticism to the effect that
Volpone possesses the qualities of Morality drama: L. C. Knights, for example,
has raised the point whether Jonson may not have meant the native drama rather
than classical drama when he used the phrase "vetus comoedia";[1] and Miss
Bradbrook, in a short footnote, simply asserts that Volpone has a Morality
structure.[2] Both suggestions are, however, quite inconclusive for want of any
specific frame of reference within which Jonson's play might usefully be

---

[1]L. C. Knights, Drama and Society in the Age of Jonson (London, 1937),
p. 188.

[2]M. C. Bradbrook, The Growth and Structure of Elizabethan Comedy
(London, 1955), p. 227.

analyzed for its Morality elements. But by taking Respublica as a point of structural reference and by appreciating the deep reflection that Jonson brought to the issue of the relation of Avarice and Policie, it is possible not only to describe the formal nature of Volpone with a new kind of critical comprehension but also to appreciate Jonson's artistry in reworking the genre in terms of comedy and the non-allegorical techniques of the Jacobean stage.

We need therefore to begin with the issue of likeness and difference in characterization between the two plays. The first point to note in this regard is that Jonson has, on the most literal level of the names of his characters, split up the Avarice-Policie duality into two distinct roles, the one (Volpone) being the principal figure of the main plot and the other (Sir Politic Would-be) the principal figure of the sub-plot. That is to say, this old duality of character in the Morality tradition has been translated by Jonson into two distinct worlds of contexts that are linked together for purposes of satire, and with the actions of Lady Would-be excepted, in an essentially thematic relationship. Now this division of the protagonist's role is suggestive of its opposite in The Jew of Malta where in terms of the total structure it is the Policie figure who through the Prologue and the last three acts seems to assume control over the main plot and relegate the Avarice figure to a minor context. The structural confusion of The Jew of Malta, however, prevents this parallel between Marlowe and Jonson from being of much significance; but that this division of the Avarice-Policie character has a wider relevance to Elizabethan drama than merely by its existence in Volpone is to be seen in another of Jonson's plays, The Alchemist. Here, and in a more consistent way than Marlowe's, those rascals of Policie, Face and Subtle, hold the center of the stage throughout the play whilst an Avarice figure Sir Epicure Mammon comes into the play as a secondary character. Thus Jonson

presents two opposite variations on the pattern of the Morality character and we need to ask in relation to _Volpone_ why this should happen.

Two reasons may be given for this radical division of character in Jonson, both of which relate to his masterly sense of the comic form he was constructing. In the first place, Jonson by excluding Policie in any literal sense from the main plot limits the context of the action to an appropriately comic dimension. For Policie has a political reference and to allow the main plot to move on this level would introduce a seriousness to the action inappropriate to comic decorum. The second reason lies in the fact that Jonson, throughout his drama generally, displays a consistently satirical attitude to the issue of Policie. Marlowe seems to have been swept away by his interest in the Machiavel; Shakespeare accepts Policie as a literal and truly serious element of Richard's character: but Jonson brings a trenchant moral attitude to Policie. It is, however, only in _Volpone_ that he discovers that the best method of attack lies in satire.

In _Sejanus_, for example, this moral attitude is explicit as direct moral statement and as such prevents a dramatically heroic protagonist from being developed. The first act opens with a group of characters discussing Sejanus; they damn him so successfully that when he does appear on stage the audience cannot but be antagonistic towards him. There is generally therefore a basic ambivalence in _Sejanus_ between seriousness and satire, a fact that appears quite clearly in the way the Livia-Eudemus scene is so close in substance and tone to the overtly satiric scene in _Volpone_ of Lady Would-be fussing over her appearance on her visit to Volpone. In both scenes the vanity of the women is being ridiculed, but it is only in _Volpone_ that the tone is really secure.

The same reduction to the level of ridicule holds true for Sir Politic

also. His name itself, his timid status as a husband, his gullibility towards
Volpone as the mountebank—all these would in themselves make him ridiculous.
But it is through the presence of Peregrine that Jonson really drives home his
satiric point. And it is no accident that both of them are Englishmen, nor
that they appear only in the subplot, nor that indeed the issue of Policie is
being represented through them. For it is through the subplot and through the
topical issue of Policie and through Sir Politic and Peregrine being Englishmen
that Jonson relates his play to the reality of contemporary London. Without
these elements <u>Volpone</u> would lose its pertinence for a London audience: the
setting would be distant and the episodes to the main plot not strikingly ap-
plicable to the London of Jonson's day. But with the "point of view" that the
subplot brings into the play the main plot is released into comedy of situation
for its own sake and yet made relevant to the audience through the thematic im-
plications of the relation Jonson establishes between main plot and subplot,
between Avarice and Policie. For what Jonson is essentially doing with Sir
Politic is unmasking the Renaissance theatrical figure of the Machiavel and
showing how it is a lesser form, and a ridiculously lesser form at that, of
the universal figure of the medieval Avarice.

But to return to Volpone himself, and to take up the idea of his uni-
versality just mentioned, we need to observe the difference that lies between
the allegorical figure of Avarice in <u>Respublica</u> and the appearance of partic-
ularity that Jonson brings to his characterization. Now the subplot is again
of significance in suggesting that the particular action of the play might
have happened in Venice to these particular people. Yet it takes very little
critical acumen to see that the situation has a wider reference than the action
suggests; and it is on this issue of the way in which Jonson has brought sev-
eral references into his play and made a formal comic unity of them all that
the power of <u>Volpone</u> depends.

We may begin with the material references of the action and the context, for in these two references two classic historical examples of folly are being introduced into the play--the world of the Roman captator and the world of Italian Renaissance intrigue. The first Act of Volpone, as is well known, is derived ultimately from Jonson's reading of the first and second century Roman satirists: Horace, Juvenal, and Pliny all derided the legacy-hunter; but it is in Lucian's Dialogues of the Dead and Petronius' Satiricon that Jonson would have found, if not the exact situation for his first Act, at least the basic situation of the legator making game of the legacy-hunters.[1] Jonson, of course, could not transfer this Roman situation to England since the institution of the captator would have little relevance there; nor would it be of much relevance to a London audience if the mise en scène were set in Rome, a fact which Jonson may well have learned from the reception his Poetaster and Sejanus had earlier met with. To transfer the story then to the Venice of modern Italy was to be for Jonson the solution to both problems. That Venice, no more than London, had the institution of the captator is irrelevant. For to an Elizabethan and Jacobean audience virtually all manner of crimes were plausible if set in an Italian city such as Venice or Florence. The context of the situation in Volpone is therefore as universal as it is particular, and brings into one concentrated focus past, present, and future time and the morality of Rome, Venice, and London. But granted this, we still need to examine just how Jonson could bring this kind of reference into his play and yet not make it allegorical.

The answer lies in his use of the elements of fable. For in endowing his characters with the names of animals and by adopting the particular fable

---

[1]For an extensive description of Jonson's debt to the Roman satirists, see C. H. Herford and Percy Simpson (eds.), Ben Jonson (Oxford, 1925), II, 50-53.

of the fox and the birds Jonson was bringing the abstract issue of Avarice

down into concrete and particular terms without at the same time losing any of

the universal implications of the situation. But Jonson was doing even more

than this with his elements of fable: he was satirically contrasting two

kinds of being, man and beast. The Politic Would-bes enter the scene as human

representatives, but as the plot develops their names are shortened to Sir Pol

and Lady Pol as the imitative and haranguing aspects of a parrot become evi-

dent in them respectively. Sir Pol ends his career, furthermore, hiding under

the shell of a tortoise, a peculiarly appropriate form of poetic justice for a

would-be Machiavellian.

The use of fable in Volpone is therefore both a device of plot and of

characterization primarily, and then ultimately an issue of theme. The First

Magistrate draws the moral of the play when he concludes, "Mischiefs feed /

Like beasts, till they be fat, and then they bleed." Before this point is

reached, however, Jonson takes the opportunity to develop this animal imagery

beyond the strict limits of the fable and for its own sake as dramatic poetry.

The monologue of Mosca at the beginning of Act III is perhaps the best example

of how Jonson can bring into a satiric unity the several elements of plot,

character, and theme through his development of the animalesque; this mono-

logue, it should also be noted, is also the best example in Volpone of the

aspiring villain's speech that we have met with so often in this study:

> Mosca. I fear I shall begin to grow in love
> With my dear self, and my most prosperous parts,
> They do so spring and burgeon; I can feel
> A whimsy in my blood: I know not how,
> Success hath made me wanton. I could skip
> Out of my skin now, like a subtle snake,
> I am so limber. O! your parasite
> Is a most precious thing, dropt from above,
> Not bred 'mongst clods and clodpoles, here on earth.
> . . . .
> But your fine elegant rascal, that can rise

> And stoop, almost together, like an arrow;
> Shoot through the air as nimbly as a star;
> Turn short as a swallow; and be here,
> And there, and here, and yonder, all at once;
> Present to any humour, all occasion;
> And change a visor swifter than a thought!
> This is the creature had the art born with him;
> Toils not to learn it, but doth practise it
> Out of most excellent nature:
>
> <div align="right">III,i,1-9,23-32</div>

Thus the metamorphosis of the animals in <u>Volpone</u>, and of the humans into animals, is presented through statement and spectacle. But an even more significant kind of change enters the play by implication through the presence and function of the three zanies--Nano, Androgyno, and Castrone. Their presence symbolizes Volpone's possessions: when they are in their place at his feet his world is in all its perversity complete; but when Volpone finds them running out in the street, he knows he has lost all. It is, however, the play they present and the song they sing in the first Act that give rise to their special significance. For they are a kind of comic Chorus with the theme of the universality of fools to impart; they furthermore describe in their little play the process of historical metempsychosis, a principle of metaphor that once injected into <u>Volpone</u> underlies the several metamorphoses. The soul of Volpone or of Avarice enters one after another of the characters who come in contact with his world. It is in this way that the principle of Avarice unifies the play.

In this sense, therefore, Jonson may very well be compared with the Morality tradition and especially <u>Respublica</u> for the way in which a central concept organizes the total structure of his play. But in the details of Jonson's structure there is a great deal of difference from the Morality pattern, difference that determines the degree of success and failure in the full form of <u>Volpone</u>.

The absence of a world of reality outside the world of the villains is

one marked difference in Jonson's play from Respublica. Admittedly, there is
Celia as the pathetic female victim, and Bonario who suddenly descends to res-
cue her, and the Court of Law as the ultimate Nemesis for the villains; but
none of these has any real existence or power except what the villains let them
have. And just as it was observed of The Jew of Malta that too strong a
Respublica figure depressed the villain into a mode of operation beneath him-
self, so too may the opposite be observed in Volpone. For where the figure of
the state or of the city should be in a play of this genre, there is a vacuum
in Volpone, and, as in Richard III, the villain gets drawn into it. This
proved an excellent resource on Shakespeare's part but it is less so on Jon-
son's; for it gives rise to that perturbing quality of seriousness in Volpone
that is so simple to name and yet so difficult to understand.

Comparison with other plays of the villain-hero genre serves therefore
to explain the overly strong effect of Volpone. For it is the effect of force
without an object for the force to operate against. But had Jonson introduced
some such object of real existence and power into his play, Volpone would then
undoubtedly not have been a comedy. His choice to exclude this other reality
from his play left him therefore with essentially no more than his villains to
build a dramatic structure around. And that he managed to keep them going
round in circles and to keep the circles growing larger act by act; and that
he managed to make this circular movement of villain outwitting villain the
central device of his first and final acts with opposite results in each case--
all this is the measure of Jonson's success within the limits he set himself,
the limits of a villain-hero in a comic form.

In turning finally to Shakespeare's Richard III, and to bring together
the several principal lines of inquiry developed by this study, we need first
to emphasize that in comparison with the plays of Marlowe and Jonson the issue

of historical material poses a different set of problems for a critical analysis of the Shakespearean form. For the subject matter of <u>Richard III</u> was to a substantial degree established before Shakespeare took it up; and implicit in the Richard story as it came down from More through Hall and Holinshed were certain principles of characterization, plot, and theme that Shakespeare could not ignore. Thus in this sense <u>Richard III</u> is the least radical of the three major plays we have been discussing. Its obligation to serve the purposes of History stamped it with a particularity of material that the more conceptual forms of Marlowe and Jonson did not have to take into consideration.

But at the same time as Shakespeare was committed to his historical material he was not confined by it; and there is no better way of observing his movement towards achieving a dramatic form for <u>Richard III</u> than by noting again the important changes he made in terms of his material. For had Shakespeare slavishly followed the material of the Chronicles there would have been no Act I to <u>Richard III</u>, a single female figure in Elizabeth, and a great deal more of London. If it is possible to conceive of <u>Richard III</u> beginning with the deathbed scene of Edward IV, without Margaret, Anne, and the Duchess of York, and with several crowd scenes in which Richard and Buckingham receive a cold and at times humiliating reception from the London citizens, then that would be the play produced by the most literal dramatization of the historical material.

It is quite obvious that Shakespeare does not consider his commitment to History as literally and as naively as this; indeed, the freedom and purpose with which Shakespeare approached the material of the Richard story is ultimately of the greatest moment for the dramatic form of the play. For the first Act simply cannot be passed over with the one word "invented" to describe it. The length of this "invention" is almost one-third of the entire play, and

its function within the play is to lay the foundation for the dramatic development of plot and character that makes Richard III the most overtly theatrical of all Shakespeare's History plays. Without this opening act Richard III would be very close in substance to Richardus Tertius and The True Tragedie.

But it is the reason why Shakespeare has introduced this material change into the Richard story that is the crucial issue for formal criticism. And in attempting to answer this question the present study has argued that Shakespeare has a preconceived dramatic genre in mind for his play, a genre whose principal element lay in a specific kind of theatrical character and whose formal principles are to be found in the history of the native theatre before Shakespeare and in the other versions of the villain-hero on the Elizabethan stage. By bringing together the most notable examples of this genre from the medieval stage and by describing the formal conventions to be found in the Mystery and Morality plays of this genre, the present study has sought to establish a framework of reference in terms of which the choices that Shakespeare made in his formal presentation of the Richard story might be better understood both for their subscription to and variation from the historical conventions of the earlier theatre in England.

But this framework of formal reference has been limited in the final two chapters to a specific consideration of three other plays besides Shakespeare's, plays which in their individual variations on the villain-hero pattern throw into sharp relief the form of Shakespeare's play. It therefore remains to state with regard to Richard III what conclusions can be drawn from the comparison and contrast of these related forms within the villain-hero genre.

Some four observations have been offered by this study that point to the central issues of form in Shakespeare's play. The first is the duality implicit in Richard's character, a duality in terms of two qualities to his

nature--his demonism, and his policy. It is his demonic nature that defines

his beginning and his end; it is his policy that makes the process in between

seem an issue of artistry rather than of morality. Then allied to this mode

of operation is his manner of operation, to be seen in the comic reference of

his character. This appears primarily in his monologues and in his relation

to his accomplices: he disarms the audience by deflating himself; he is, un-

like Jonson's Sejanus, able to write his own morality by being the presenter

of the play in its opening scenes.

Given these two aspects to his protagonist's character Shakespeare

then introduces an opposing element in his play, his women characters, to pro-

vide a foil for Richard's role. It is their opposition that stabilizes the

heroic nature of the action: without them Richard's policy and comedy would

be nakedly exposed and left to find expression through simple incident which

would come close to farce; with them Richard finds a worthy object for his

power to exercise itself against, and yet one that in being ineffectual can

only make him seem the more heroic.

These three elements of structure therefore underlie the success

Shakespeare achieved in making a totally evil character credible on the stage.

But this success is at the same time a limited one in that it pertains primar-

ily to the rising action of the play. Once Richard is crowned he has nowhere

else to go and without an object worthy of his opposition his peculiar quali-

ties as a dramatic character are useless. There are only two points in the

falling action that allow him to retrieve his heroic stature, and these arise

when he finds himself face to face again with an enemy in the visitation of

the Ghosts and in the final confrontation with his Nemesis, Henry.

Marlowe and Jonson avoid this flaw in the Shakespearean structure by

delaying the villain's fall until the very last moment. But by the same

token neither of them can equal the merits of the Shakespearean rising action. And while Jonson must be praised for his controlled translation of the villain-hero genre into comedy, Shakespeare still has the advantage in having presented the only character on the Elizabethan stage who having set out to "prove a villain" proved himself a hero.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Texts

Adams, J. Q. (ed.) Chief Pre-Shakespearean Dramas. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1924.

The Book of Sir Thomas More. Edited by W. W. Greg. Oxford: The Malone Society Reprints, 1911.

Brandl, A. (ed.) Quellen des weltlichen Dramas in England vor Shakespeare. Strassburg: K. J. Trübner, 1898.

The Chester Plays. Edited by Hermann Deimling. London: Early English Text Society ("Extra Series," Vol. LXII), 1892.

The Digby Mysteries. Edited by F. J. Furnivall. London: The New Shakspere Society, 1882.

Dodsley, R. (ed.) A Select Collection of Old English Plays. 15 vols. 4th ed. revised by W. C. Hazlitt. London: Reeves and Turner, 1874-1876.

Farmer, John S. (ed.) Recently Discovered "Lost" Tudor Plays. London: Early English Drama Society, 1907.

_____ . Six Anonymous Plays. London: Early English Drama Society, 1905.

Jonson (Three Plays). Edited by Brinsley Nicholson and C. H. Herford. New York: Hill and Wang, 1954.

Legge, Thomas. "Richardus Tertius," Shakespeare's Library. Edited by J. P. Collier. Vol. V. London: Reeves and Turner, 1875.

Ludus Coventriae. Edited by K. S. Block. London: Early English Text Society ("Extra Series," Vol. CXX), 1922.

Magnyfycence. Edited by M. L. Ramsay. London: Early English Text Society ("Extra Series," Vol. XCVIII), 1908.

Manly, J. M. (ed.) Specimens of the Pre-Shakespearean Drama. 2 vols. Boston: Ginn & Co., 1897.

Marlowe (Five Plays). Edited by Havelock Ellis. New York: Hill and Wang, 1956.

The Mirror for Magistrates. Edited by L. B. Campbell. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1938.

259

More, Sir Thomas. The English Works of Sir Thomas More. Edited by W. E. Campbell. London: Eyre & Spottiswood, 1931.

Respublica. Edited by Leonard A. Magnus. London: Early English Text Society ("Extra Series," Vol. XCIV), 1905.

Seneca, Lucius. Seneca's Tragedies. 2 vols. London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1938.

Shakespeare, William. The Complete Works. Edited by C. J. Sisson. New York: Harper & Sons, 1953.

_____. Richard III. Edited by J. Dover Wilson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1954.

The True Tragedie of Richard the Third, 1594. Edited by W. W. Greg. London: The Malone Society Reprints, 1924.

The Towneley Plays. Edited by George England and A. W. Pollard. London: Early English Text Society ("Extra Series," Vol. LXXI), 1897.

Variorum Shakespeare: Richard the Third. Edited by H. H. Furness. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1908.

York Mystery Plays. Edited by L. C. Smith. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1885.

Critical Works

Armstrong, W. A. "The Influence of Seneca and Machiavelli on the Elizabethan Tyrant," Review of English Studies, XXIV (1948), 19-35.

Baker, Howard. Induction to Tragedy. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1939.

Begg, Edleen. "Shakespeare's Debt to Hall and Holinshed in Richard III," Studies in Philology, XXXII (1935), 189-97.

Bethell, S. L. Shakespeare and the Popular Dramatic Tradition. Westminster: P. S. King and Staples limited, 1944.

Boyer, C. V. The Villain as Hero in Elizabethan Tragedy. London: George Routledge and Sons, 1914.

Bradbrook, M. C. The Growth and Structure of Elizabethan Comedy. London: Chatto & Windus, 1955.

Brandl, A. Quellen des weltlichen dramas in England vor Shakespeare. Strassburg: K. J. Trübner, 1898.

Chambers, E. K. The Medieval Stage. 2 vols. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1903.

Chambers, R. W. _Thomas More_. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1935.

Churchill, G. B. _Richard the Third up to Shakespeare_. Berlin: Mayer & Müller, 1900.

Clemen, W. _Development of Shakespeare's Imagery_. London: Methuen, 1951.

_____. _Kommentar zu Shakespeares Richard III_. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1957.

_____. "Tradition and Originality in Shakespeare's _Richard III_," _Shakespeare Quarterly_, IV (1954), 247-59.

Coghill, N. "The Basis of Shakespearean Comedy; A Study in Medieval Affinities," _Essays and Studies_, III (1950), 1-28.

Craig, Hardin. _English Religious Drama of the Middle Ages_. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955.

Cunliffe, John W. _The Influence of Seneca on Elizabethan Tragedy_. London: Macmillan and Co., 1893.

_____. _Early English Classical Tragedies_. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1912.

Doran, Madelaine. _Endeavors of Art_. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1954.

Eckhardt, E. _Die lustige person im älteren englischen drama_. Berlin: Mayer & Müller, 1912.

Eliot, T. S. _Selected Essays 1917-1932_. London: Faber and Faber, 1932.

Enck, J. J. _Jonson and the Comic Truth_. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1957.

Farnham, Willard. _The Medieval Heritage of Elizabethan Tragedy_. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1936.

Ferguson, Wallace K. _The Renaissance in Historical Thought_. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1948.

Gayley, Charles M. _Plays of Our Forefathers_. New York: Duffield and Company, 1907.

Gardner, Harold C. _Mysteries End: An Investigation of the Last Days of the Medieval Stage_. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1946.

Hay, Denys. _Polydore Vergil_. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952.

Kastner, Leon E., and Henry B. Charlton (eds.). _The Poetical Works of Sir William Alexander, Earl of Stirling_. Manchester: The University Press, 1921.

Knights, L. C. Drama and Society in the Age of Jonson. London: Chatto & Windus, 1937.

Law, R. A. "Richard III: Its Composition," Publications of the Modern Language Association, LX (1945), 689-96.

Levin, R. L. "The Punitive Plot in Elizabethan Drama." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1957.

Lucas, Frank L. Seneca and Elizabethan Tragedy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922.

Lucken, L. V. Antichrist and the Prophets of Antichrist in the Chester Cycle. Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1940.

Manly, J. M. "Literary Forms and the New Theory of the Origin of Species," Modern Philology, IV (1907), 577-95.

Meyer, E. S. Machiavelli and the Elizabethan Drama. Weimar: E. Felber, 1897.

Michelson, H. The Jew in Early English Literature. Amsterdam: H. J. Paris, 1926.

Moulton, R. G. Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1901.

Olson, Elder. Tragedy and the Theory of Drama. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1961.

Praz, M. Machiavelli and the Elizabethans. London: H. Milford, 1928.

Puttenham, George. The Arte of English Poesie. Edited by Gladys Willcock and Alice Walker. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1936.

Ribner, Irving. The English History Play in the Age of Shakespeare. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957.

Rossiter, A. P. "The Structure of Richard III," Durham University Journal, XXI (1938), 44-75.

_____. English Drama from Early Times to the Elizabethans. London: Hutchinson & Co., 1950.

Sedgwick, G. Of Irony Especially in Drama. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1948.

Smith, G. Gregory (ed.). Elizabethan Critical Essays. 2 vols. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1937.

Spivack, Bernard. Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil. New York: Columbia University Press, 1958.

Thompson, Elbert N. S. "The English Moral Plays," Transactions of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, XIV (1908-1910), 291-413.

Tillyard, E. M. W. Shakespeare's History Plays. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1947.

Williams, Arnold. The Characterization of Pilate in the Towneley Plays. East Lansing: Michigan State College Press, 1950.

Wilson, F. P. Marlowe and the Early Shakespeare. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953.

Wilson, J. Dover. The Fortunes of Falstaff. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1944.

_____. "Shakespeare's Richard III and The True Tragedie of Richard III, 1594," Shakespeare Quarterly, III (1952), 299-307.

Yoder, A. Animal Analogy in Shakespeare's Character Portrayal. New York: King's Crown Press, 1947.