

THE OCCULT TRADITION IN ENGLISH RENAISSANCE DRAMA

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Dissertation presented to the
Department of English and the
School of Graduate Studies,
University of Ottawa, as
partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy.



Ottawa, Ontario
July, 1971

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PREFACE

The purpose of this dissertation is to demonstrate an occult tradition in the drama of the English Renaissance. This occult tradition functions to develop character, provide mood and atmosphere, foreshadow dramatic events, and supply a deus ex machina in Elizabethan and Jacobean plays. Other critics have explored certain aspects of the occult in English literature: e.g., Don Cameron Allen in his Star-Crossed Renaissance; Johnstone Parr in Tamburlaine's Malady and Other Essays on Astrology in Elizabethan Drama; Robert R. Reed, Jr., in The Occult on the Tudor and Stuart Stage; Walter Clyde Curry in Chaucer and the Mediaeval Sciences and The Demonic Metaphysics of Macbeth; and Katherine Briggs in Pale Hecate's Team. These critics have examined certain separate occult aspects in English literature; however, there has been little attempt to reveal an occult tradition in English Renaissance drama. The present work is an attempt to synthesize some of these scattered occult influences into a tradition that the Renaissance dramatist consciously employed in his plays.

There is no attempt here to explain every star image or wrinkled brow as part of the occult traditions of astrology or physiognomy. Such an attempt would be foolish and unwarranted. Some references which clearly lend themselves to occult interpretation are examined in this study,

and this examination reveals that these occult allusions are not mere ornament, but that they fulfill definite dramatic functions. This dissertation is concerned with two specific occult arts: astrology and physiognomy; and with two specific Renaissance occult characters: the sorcerer and the witch. Selected plays in which these occult subjects appear are examined to determine their function in Renaissance drama.

I wish to thank Prof. Hazel M. Batzer and Prof. Richard N. Pollard, whose academic advice has aided me in the research and composition of this dissertation. I also want to thank the following people for their help: Mrs. Mary Pasqua, Miss Mary Whelan, Mrs. Sylvia Carrière, and my wife, Lynda, whose patience and perseverance were a guiding light in this "dark hour of the soul." I am indebted to the Henry Huntington Library, San Marino, California; the Clark Library, University of California at Los Angeles; the Arents Rare Book Room at Syracuse University; the Cornell University Library, which contains a vast amount of witchcraft material in the White Collection; the University of Ottawa Library for its STC microfilm collection; and the Sedes Sapientiae Library, Ottawa, Ontario.

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CHAPTER I

ASTROLOGICAL IMAGERY IN ENGLISH RENAISSANCE DRAMA

A curious paradox emerges in the English Renaissance. The growing knowledge of emerging science mingles mysteriously with occult belief. Science, still an infant to the world of knowledge, could not shake off the black cloak of its penumbral origin--magic. The strong lines existing today between science and the occult were not strongly delineated in the "new dawn" of the English Renaissance. Astronomy struggled to moult its occult nature, and astrology began to decline slowly, but ever so reluctantly, since it is difficult to overthrow an old order for a new one. The Copernican universe finds no more expression in Edmund Spenser's Cantos of Mutability (1609) than it finds in Robert Henryson's The Testament of Cresseid (1532) despite the publication of Niklas Copernicus' monumental work, De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium (1543).

Astrology provided an intimate paradigm for the Renaissance stock correspondence--the macrocosm of the universe and the microcosm of man. The desire for order in the cosmos and order in man based upon some rational principle impelled Renaissance man to seek a pattern for universal order in the celestial spheres. Greece searched the heavens; Rome queried the stars; and Renaissance England either scorned astrology or venerated it, but few Englishmen

denied its presence.

While the new science and the old pseudo-sciences were fighting it out in Renaissance England, the Renaissance dramatist found in astrological lore and practice, dramatically viable material for character delineation and motivation. Astrology provided personality archetypes for character portrayal on the stage. Whether astrology is or is not a valid science is not the concern of this study. It is the purpose here to examine astrology as a dramatic convention in Renaissance drama. Astrology is present in many Renaissance plays. These astrological allusions are not mere ornaments or sheer embellishments like so many yuletide bulbs hanging on a poetic Christmas tree. When major Renaissance dramatists deliberately describe characters as under the auspices of certain stars or when lovers are depicted as star-crossed lovers, the present-day reader must attempt to go beyond mere imagistic ornament and determine the meaning of such celestial allusion in relation to its literary context and contemporary meaning. Astrology, with its subtle and specialized meanings, provided the Renaissance dramatists with a workable contemporary psychology. There is little artistic difference between explaining the motivations of a literary character in a modern novel, in terms of Freudian, Jungian, or even Maslovian psychology, and coming to the conclusion that Edmund is what he is because he was born under Ursa Major. The fault of interpreting Renaissance literary astrology lies not in the work

but in ourselves.

It is necessary, before examining some of the astrological allusions in various Renaissance plays, to understand some of the basic principles behind astrology itself. If astrology is understood as it is, without prejudice and biased academia, it can be seen to provide Renaissance dramatists with a contemporary psychology of action. One such basic principle found in astrology is the relationship noted between the celestial movements above the earth and the terrestrial events on earth itself.

This influential relationship between celestial events above and terrestrial affairs below is strongly illustrated by a series of Medieval and Renaissance books dealing with the movement of the moon and the effect of that movement on daily events in men's lives. Such books were called "Lunationes." First published in Latin and then in English, these books reveal the favorable and unfavorable days for various undertakings such as days on which to let blood; critical days to judge illnesses by; days to judge the nativity of children by phases of the moon; and some included dream lore in relation to lunar phases. Professor M. Förster treats the manuscript history of the "Lunationes" from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries down through the Middle Ages. The first concise, orderly appearance in British literature of an English adaptation of the Latin "Lunationes" is John Metham's "Days of the Moon" written in

the middle of the fifteenth century.¹ Metham clearly points out the "frame of mind" which is behind astrological thought in Medieval and Renaissance times:

As Haly wyttnessyth, the gret astrolegere, off days namyd cretyk, the qwyche he calkylllyd, and drof owte be gret conclusyonnyys off astronomye, qwyche schuld be moste fortunate to the vse off man, as the days off yche mone; for he concludyth be sundry resunnys, that the mone schuld, for her propynqwyte, sundry in-dysposycion off nature werkyngys, cause; schuld also in ther regyon haue more strength, qwere sche hath domyny, than in an odyr, off werkyng. And this tretys ys compylyd to yeff knowlech to the lysterys, qwyche days be moste expedyent to begynne ony werk vp-on, to take vyage ouer the see, to blede for ony sekeneys, to knowe qwat schuld be-falle off hym that sekenyth in ony day off the mone, and off odyr thingys yt tretyth, as the rederrys schal fynde:--fyrste asay this tretys and so appreue yt, quod Jon Metham.²

Metham goes on to enumerate specific days which are considered fortunate for particular activities:

The fyrste day off the mone ys fortunat to begynne euery god werk vpon; in qwyche wordys ye schal conseyue alle wor[l]dely occupacionnyys excepte the excepcionys here foluyng, the qwyche ben expressyd in the chapetrys here foluyng:

That persone that ys born the fyrste day off the mone schuld be dysposyd to be wyse and dyscrete and longe lyffyd, dysposyd to haue gret vexacion and gret labour; but he schuld be gret labour owercome yt at the laste; that persone the qwyche takyth ony actual sekeneys that day schuld long be vexyd ther-with, but at the laste he schuld with gret hardedes skape yt; qwat that a man dreme that nyght, but yff yt were off dede bodyis

¹John Metham in The Works of John Metham, ed. Hardin Craig, Early English Text Society, No. 132 (London, 1916), Introduction, pp. xxviii-xlii. Craig outlines the influences of the Latin "Lunationes" on Metham's work. He also gives an account of Förster's treatment of early "Lunationes."

²Metham, p. 148.

or off cartys, yt schuld turne to gode; but this day, for no nede, a man schuld blede; but yff so a body were take with a pestylens agwe, a body schuld nocht blede for none odyr infyrmyte.

.
 The .vj. day off the mone ys lukky for hem that wul go an-huntyng and haukyng, yff the wedyr be temperat; he that ys born that day schuld be happy, to, goode, bolde, hardy, and wyse; yff a woman were born that day, sche schuld be fortunat to haue goode husbondys; yff a man falle in-to sekenes that day, yt schuld contynw longe tyme, but at the laste, in a coniuncion off the sunne and the mone, he schuld skape yt; and qwat that a man or a woman dreme, yt schuld be-falle with-in that yere; that day ys gode to begynne edyfyng of placys, and to begynne alle odyr werkys, and eke to blede.

.
 The .x. day ys gode to begynne alle werkys, to make cunnauntys, to pase with marchaundyse the see, and to wedde a wyffe; he that ys born that day schuld neuer be stedfast, but alwey wandryng fro one cuntre to a-nodyr, neuer that persone schuld haue prosperyte; he that takyth sekenes vp-on that day, with-in .viij. dayis schuld recure or ellys dey; yt ys gode bledyng vp-on that dey; qwat that a man dremyth that nyght schuld turne to vanyte.³

Metham illustrates a principle which is extremely important to an adequate understanding of astrology in English Renaissance drama. Richard Cavendish cites as an adequate example the same lunar paradigm Metham employed in the fifteenth century:

The moon travels through the entire zodiac in a little over twenty-seven days. The Mansions of the Moon mark the section of the zodiac traversed by the moon each day The second Mansion, . . . is favourable for finding buried treasure . . . the twentieth day of the moon is good for curing warts The moon is important for day-to-day matters, because it changes its position in the zodiac more rapidly than the sun or the planets,

³Metham, pp. 148-149.

If you are buying or selling an animal, the sixth house in the chart is important, because it governs four-footed animals. A moment when the moon is in Capricorn and the sixth house should certainly be a good time to buy a goat.⁴

The point is that astrology was an operable psychology to the pre-scientific mentality of the Renaissance. Although no one dares deny the birth pains of infant science as it became a viable Renaissance stream of thought, the very men who acted as midwives to the "New Science" were still under the influence of the old pseudo-sciences. Copernicus and Tycho Brahae studied the heavens both as modern scientists, and as astrologers interested in the effects of eclipses and planetary influences on illnesses and human events here on earth. Brahae vehemently defended astrology and he influenced his pupil, Johannes Kepler, in the same direction.

The moon is illustrative of the entire system of correspondences found in astrological lore. Other planets exerted their celestial influences and the behavior, or the psychology, of creatures on earth corresponded to celestial behavior. The psychology of celestial influence differs sharply from twentieth-century psychology. Celestial or astrological influences operate outside the mind of man, exerting their influences through planetary rays. It is a psychology alien to the twentieth-century mind. Modern

⁴Richard Cavendish, The Black Arts (New York, 1967), p. 215.

psychology is intrinsic in its approach. The reasons for a person's psychological make-up are attributed to intangible mental attitudes and predispositions found in the emotional make-up of the individual. Although these mental attitudes and predispositions are influenced by heredity and environment, the operable determinants of individual behavior are intrinsic; no extra-terrestrial force outside of the individual's mind exerts a behavioral force on his psychology.

These tenets of modern psychology, general as they are, do not apply to Renaissance celestial psychology. The modern reader must cast off his twentieth-century karma and he must make a sincere effort to understand the extra-terrestrial nature of Renaissance psychology without falling into the trap of absolute determinism. Renaissance man turned to the principle of celestial correspondence to explain the patterns of his own behavior. Behavior, humours, and complexions changed with the angular position of the planets. The planets' influences upon an individual's behavior fluctuated every hour because each hour was ruled by a different planet. A man's very fortune could change from hour to hour. His death or illness often depended on the constantly changing aspects of the moon.

No Elizabethan or Jacobean Englishman needed to be an expert astrologer. The abundance of annual almanacs and prognostications supplied the information necessary to conduct terrestrial affairs coincidentally with celestial affairs. The principle of correspondences helps to solve

certain problems in textual readings of the Renaissance plays. One such case is Tamburlaine's malady. Tamburlaine chooses a day to engage in battle which his physician discourages: ". . . my Lord, this day is Criticall, / Dangerous to those, whose Chrisis is as yours."⁵ The meaning of this line is aptly explained by Carroll Camden, Jr., as standard astro-medical practice in Renaissance medicine. When a patient becomes sick the doctor erects a horoscope at the hour of decumbiture. He divides the chart into eight equal houses and places the moon at the proper degree of decumbiture, on the cusp, of the house:

Add forty-five degrees to this to make the cusp of the second house. Forty-five degrees more brings us to the third house which is the quartile of the place of decumbiture, and this is the first crisis If the moon be afflicted in a critical sign [Hence, the physician's remark: "this day is Criticall"] by the evil aspects . . . then the disease will increase.⁶

This explanation verifies the text completely. Tamburlaine ignores the physician's warning and his illness increases to the point of death. It can be said astrologically that the

⁵Christopher Marlowe, Tamburlaine the Greate: The Second Part, in The Works of Christopher Marlowe, ed. C. F. Tucker Brooke (1910; rpt. Oxford, 1966), V.iii.4483-4484. All citations from Marlowe's plays are from this edition unless otherwise noted.

⁶Carroll Camden, Jr., "Elizabethan Astrological Medicine," Annals of Medical History, NS., II (1930), 222. This detailed article gives an excellent insight into astrology as employed in Renaissance medicine. Camden's citations are from primary medical treatises of the period and the information Camden supplies is valuable for the Renaissance scholar.

moon was not right for Tamburlaine to act and that the very heavens Tamburlaine strove to conquer laid him low through the "Crisis" of his malady.⁷ When this one line is examined for its astrological significance, it is seen as central to the outcome of Marlowe's tragedy.

Another astrological example of the principle of celestial correspondence is the solar eclipse. The effect of a solar eclipse is felt specifically by those in high office: kings, queens, ecclesiastics, and magistrates. In Renaissance England a solar eclipse portended disaster for kingdoms, defeats for armies, and other ill-fated outcomes of human affairs. This celestial correspondence provided Renaissance dramatists with a basis for a cause-and-effect relationship useful in foreshadowing events in a play; e.g., particularly, the "late eclipses" in King Lear (I.ii.112).⁸ Is not King Lear literally eclipsed out of his own kingdom, overshadowed by his greedy daughters, and do not the king's passions blot out the light of his reason? This is true if Kent be an honest man: "All the power of his wits has given

⁷For a further consideration of the astrological causes of Tamburlaine's death see Johnstone Parr, Tamburlaine's Malady and Other Essays on Astrology in Elizabethan Drama (Alabama, 1953). Parr's approach is lacking in astrological detail, but he sheds some light on Tamburlaine's nature.

⁸William Shakespeare, King Lear, in Shakespeare: The Complete Works, ed. G. B. Harrison (New York, 1952), I.ii.112. All citations from Shakespeare are from this edition unless otherwise noted.

way to his impatience" (III.vi.5-6). The "late eclipses" of the sun or the moon in King Lear represent a disruption of the natural cosmic order. This celestial correspondence provides an adequate metaphor for foreshadowing the disruption of Lear's kingdom.

Another astrological principle which is necessary for understanding astrology, as the Renaissance mind comprehended it, is the influence of the natal horoscope upon the individual. The exact position of the planets at the time of a nativity provides that person with a unique set of planetary aspects and house arrangements that prescribe the character-type the person will be. All through the life of the native, planets transit the original natal degrees these planets occupied at his birth. This does not mean that there is a static or deterministic psychology of character as some critics who scream determinism might claim, but it reveals a dynamic system of malefic and benefic influences totally affecting the character of an individual. Even the hours of the day and night are given to planetary rule. Each planet is in its power at the time it rules. Certain magical activities such as conjuring spirits, making talismans, casting spells, or seeking buried treasure were performed during a favorable hour when fortunate planetary aspects were in force. The constantly changing aspects of the planets, especially the moon and the planet governing the hour in which an action is performed, determined whether it would

be successful or not.⁹

Once these two basic principles of astrology are understood, the principle of celestial correspondences and the natal horoscope's effect on character, the role astrology plays in Renaissance drama is more clear. These two principles provide the material for creating characterization, for motivating character action, and for justifying dramatic events. An examination of some of the astrological allusions found in various Renaissance plays proves this thesis. By analyzing the astrological imagery employed by Marlowe, Webster, Shakespeare, and others, it becomes quite clear that the function of astrological imagery is not mere embellishment; but rather, the purpose of most astrological allusions is to delineate character, to justify dramatic action, or to foreshadow events in the play.

An example of astrology utilized in characterization is found in Christopher Marlowe's Tamburlaine the Great, part 1. In the opening scene Mycetes, Cosroe, and other members of the Persian court are discussing the unfortunate decline of the Persian empire, ". . . that in former age / Hast bene the seat of mightie Conquerors" (I.i.14-15). The

⁹Faustus, before he begins his conjuration, circumscribes the "characters of signes and erring starres" (l. 246) about this magic circle. This is to insure the aid of the planets governing the hour of conjuration.

inept monarch, Mycetes, finds himself

. . . agreeu'd,
 Yet insufficient to expresse the same:
 For it requires a great and thundring speech:
 (I.i.9-11)

Incompetent to speak to his Council, the Emperor asks his brother, Cosroe, to speak for him. Cosroe welcomes the opportunity, and he proceeds to blame the decline of the empire's greatness on Mycetes' weakness. His speech contains specific astrological allusions that shed light on the character of Mycetes:

Vnhappie Persea, that in former age
 Hast bene the seat of mightie Conquerors,
 That in their prowesse and their pollicies,
 Haue triumpht ouer Affrike, and the bounds
 Of Europe, wher the Sun dares scarce appeare,
 For freezing meteors and coniealed colde:
 Now to be rulde and gouerned by a man,
 At whose byrth-day Cynthia with Saturne ioinde,
 And Ioue, the Sun and Mercurie denied
 To shed their influence in his fickle braine,
 (I.i.14-23)

This astrological image creates the impression of an incompetent man. A natal chart of "Cynthia with Saturne ioinde" indicates a conjunction between Saturn and the Moon, called Cynthia after the birthplace of Artemis on Mount Cynthus in Delos. A conjunction is a planetary aspect which is formed when two or more planets occupy the same degree of longitude in the heavens at the same time. A conjunction may be either benefic or malefic, depending on the nature of the planets forming the conjunction. In this case Saturn is generally regarded as a malefic planet, and the moon tends to act as a magnifier of the planet to which it is applying.

This is not to deny the moon its own influence, but Saturn is a strong influence and the moon generally represents feminine qualities. Exactly how this planetary conjunction displays the character of Mycetes can be revealed by an examination of the separate and combined astrological influence of each planet.

Astrologers label Saturn the Greater Infortune. It restricts ambition and power and it generally allows little room for expansion, especially the expansion of the Persian empire. Astrologers are in agreement as to the qualities of various planets, although they may disagree as to the direct application of those qualities. Saturn is generally considered to bring malefic attributes to a horoscope. Agrippa states: ". . . all things under Saturne conduce to sadness, and melancholly."¹⁰ John Maplet, an English astrologer of the late 1500's, describes Saturn's qualities in detail:

SATVRNE is a Planet cold and dry, masculine, . . . hurtful in many such Effectes as hee worketh: for when he Raygneth, . . . those that bee borne under him, either dye shortely, liuing no longe time to accoupt of, or els if they liue any long time, they haue for the most part an heauy and hard fortune.

¹⁰Henry Cornelius Agrippa, Three Books of Occult Philosophy, trans. J. Freake (London, 1651), I.xxii, p. 50, hereafter cited as Agrippa, Three Books. However, the Latin version was published in 1531. Agrippa's reputation as an occult personality was known to Renaissance England. Cf. Reginald Scot, The discoverie of witchcraft (1584). Scot's work on witchcraft also contains occult information. See William Lilly, Christian Astrology modestly treated in Three Books (London, 1647), pp. 57, 532, and 539.

.
 Saturnites also are giuen to great sadnes, because
 that being withoute hope of good sucesse: . . .
 they doe descende into a certayne kinde of desper-
 ation thereof, within themselves.¹¹

Fabian Wither's translation of Claude Dariot's astrological treatise points out the same negative attributes of Saturn's influence on individuals born under the saturnine nature:

"Saturne is cold and drye, Melancholick, an enemy and destroyer of the nature and life of man."¹²

The qualities ascribed to the planets by the ancients have not changed with time. Only the discovery of maiden planets has added new qualities to the traditional astrological system. Llewellyn George, a modern astrologer, cites the following qualities of the planet Saturn:

The influence of Saturn is commonly called evil,
 . . . Saturn acts as a deterrent and because he
 brings denial and necessity into some lives, has
 been considered an oppressor Saturn will
 bring him [the native] to his knees, humble his
 nature, . . . by means of restrictions, limita-
 tions and adversities,

.
 When adversely aspected in a chart, Saturn does
 indeed produce a train of adversities, for delays,
 restrictions, disappointments and sorrow are
 plentiful and usually lead to misery, poverty and

¹¹John Maplet, The diall of destiny (1581), pp. 59 and 62. Maplet's work typifies the common availability of astrological literature in the Renaissance era. No education beyond basic language and arithmetic is required to erect a horoscope figure.

¹²Claude Dariot, A breefe introduction to the astrological iudgement of the starres, trans. F. Wither (London, Entered Stationer's Register, March 11, 1583), sig. B₃.

ill-health.¹³

Mycetes' character as the monarch of the Persian empire darkens more when the moon's influence is taken into account. A person born with the moon in an unfavorable aspect to Saturn is "a hard worker but generally receives little gain; usually fails in business though careful and persevering; unlooked-for obstacles, delays, disappointments, rebuffs and reversals constantly arise, coupled with lack of opportunities and unfavorable circumstances at the critical or needed times."¹⁴ Such a personality is not fit for kingship, as Cosroe emphasizes to the Persian Council.

A modern astrologer's interpretation of the qualities ascribed to planets is valid for interpretation of planetary matters of the Renaissance period. The basic qualities given to the planets in the Renaissance period, with the exception of Neptune, Uranus, and Pluto, are the same as the attributes modern-day astrologers ascribe to the celestial spheres. One example of a sixteenth century astrologer's appraisal of Saturn's qualities is as follows:

The twelfth house [the house Saturn rules] signifieth hidden enemies, prison, captivity, bondage, sadness, torment, complaint, lamentation, teares and hate, treasons, villanies, . . . and is called, The house cadent of the angle Meridionall, and otherwise an evill spirit,

¹³Llewellyn George, A to Z Horoscope Maker and Delin-eator: A Textbook of Astrology, 26th ed. (St. Paul, Minn., 1970), p. 302. George is one of many experts in this field.

¹⁴George, pp. 428-429.

in the first house, Saturne out of his principall dignities, signifieth that the child shall have short life, unfortunate, deformed, evill favoured: and shall die because of other lands and possessions: nevertheless he shall be first of his brethren.¹⁵

Mycetes is the "first of his brethren," and he does die as a result of his lands and possessions because Persia is in decline. This passage parallels a twentieth century interpretation of Saturn's effects, and rightly so, because modern-day astrology is the direct descendant of Renaissance astrology which itself was derived from ancient Greece, through Ptolemy and Roman sources. More examples could be cited, but for the sake of brevity the above example from Oger Ferrier, a French astrologist of some repute in England, should be sufficient to prove this point.¹⁶

¹⁵ Oger Ferrier, A learned astronomicall discoverse of the iudgement of natiuities . . ., trans. Thomas Kelway, Gentleman (London, 1642), pp. 78-80.

¹⁶ Additional specific doctrines of Renaissance astrology can be found in the following works: Agrippa, Three Books; Joseph Blagrave, Blagrave's Introduction to Astrology (London, 1682); John Gaule, The Mag-astromancer, or the Magicall Astrologicall Diviner . . ., (London, 1652); and Claudius Ptolemy, Here begynneth the compost of Ptholomeus . . ., trans. R. Wyer (1532?). Ptolemy's works were available earlier in Latin translations by Antonius Gogava (Louvain, 1543) and Philip Melancthon (1553). The Tetrabiblos was available in Arabian translation as early as the ninth century, and it was translated into Latin by Plato Tiburtinus (1138). See Tetrabiblos, ed. and trans. F. E. Robbins (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1956), Introduction. See also Lynn Thorndike, History of Magic and Experimental Science, 8 vols. (New York, 1964). This particular work traces the development of astrological

Saturn is an unfavorable planet. It is heavy, cold, and melancholic. It governs diseases, misfortunes, and particularly falls from power. It is this aspect of the planet which Marlowe develops in Tamburlaine, and such a fall from power does occur to Mycetes. This fall is suggested by Marlowe in the astrological reference cited above. Mycetes, who is an emperor, should not be cursed with the unfavorable aspects of Saturn, and Marlowe certainly knew what he was doing when handling astrological data.

Critical examination of the astrological data Marlowe employs reveals a subtle contemporary psychology operating, namely astrology, with which he creates the impression of the cowardly, indecisive character of the Persian emperor. Thus, Mycetes may have been born an emperor, but the astrological aspects of his Saturn-Moon conjunction nullify any regal qualities in him. He would have been a better farmer or shepherd than a king, for Saturn governs things pertaining to the earth.

Marlowe stresses the negative nature of Mycetes' Saturn-Moon conjunction by deliberately denying Mycetes the influence of favorable planets in his horoscope: "And Ioue, the Sun and Mercurie denied / To shed their influence in

thought up to and including the Renaissance period quite accurately. It is an invaluable tool in the study of the occult arts in the Renaissance period, and I am indebted to Professor Thorndike for the material he presents. Additional sources required may be found in the bibliography.

his fickle braine" (I.i.22-23). Jove, or Jupiter, is the planet of good fortune, expansion, and generally favorable influences for a monarch.¹⁷ Having this planet favorably aspected in a native's chart, especially a monarch's, is a sign of a prosperous kingdom, great expansion in all fields, and long life.

Marlowe denies any favorable planetary influences to Mycetes and he also disallows the ruling planet of all monarchs, the sun, to influence this "insufficient" king. To deny the favorable Leonine Sun influence to a monarch is astrologically to deny him the innate qualities of sovereignty. This is an effective dramatic move on Marlowe's part, and even more so with the distinct absence of Mercury, the planetary agent of intelligence and communication; the resultant character is either born a loser or miscast as an emperor. With Saturn and the Moon ruling his personality, Mycetes possesses the astrological qualification to be a good shepherd, i.e., work with the earth and earth's creatures, especially during the moon's influence, at night. What this amounts to is that Marlowe casts Mycetes in the dramatic role of an emperor but he gives him an astrological background that negates that role and ironically implies

¹⁷On basic astrological principles I refer the reader to any one of the textbooks on astrology written in the Renaissance or any authoritative textbook written by a competent modern astrologer. For the Renaissance astrological authorities see the preceding footnote and the bibliography.

Mycetes' incompetence and downfall.

Marlowe reveals his understanding of the dramatic functionality of astrology and other occult subjects in other plays as well. In The Tragicall History of Doctor Faustus (1604) Marlowe displays insight into the dramatic persuasion of the occult. This play is a lyceum of occult subjects and it is impossible to examine all of them. It is Marlowe's astrological material which occupies this chapter. Cornelius tells Faustus:

He that is grounded in Astrologie,
Inricht with tongues, well seene in minerals,
Hath all the principles Magicke doth require,
(ll. 167-169)

Faustus takes Cornelius at his word, and the learned doctor pursues the study of occult subjects to gain knowledge.

Marlowe's accurate application of astrology is revealed in the conjuration episode. Faustus chooses a precise celestial time to sojourn into the world of the occult:

Enter Faustus to coniure.
Now that the gloomy shadow of the earth,
Longing to view Orions drisling looke,
Leapes from th' antartike world vnto the skie,
And dimmes the welkin with her pitchy breath:
Faustus, begin thine incantations,
And trie if diuels will obey thy hest,
Seeing thou hast prayde and sacrific'd to them.
(ll. 235-241)

If the passage is examined closely, Faustus is seen in his speech to evoke a specific astrological season--the autumnal equinox.

If the "shadow of the earth, / Longing to view" the

constellation of Orion, is leaping from the Antarctic world, then the sidereal time must be somewhere around the occurrence of the autumnal equinox, a time of definite astrological significance because the sun is entering the sign of Libra, or the Scales. It is a time of great astrological importance to the annual course of the sun, the source of all light, and hence of all knowledge. The sun, now in its Detriment, declines toward the southern hemisphere and it "dies," just as Faustus will die without the light of grace from God. The sun is in the balance sign of Libra, and all things are equal, symbolized by the equal length of night and day. Faustus, too, is hung in the balance of his salvation in this scene. Marlowe is suggesting dramatically, through this specific astrological season, that a time of moral suspension is approaching Faustus in which he weighs his soul in the scales of good and evil. It is an appropriate astrological time of the year in which to set the scene, and Marlowe works this sidereal allusion into the overall dramatic theme of Faustus' salvation. Faustus teeters between the balance of salvation and damnation until he is carried off to the "southern hemisphere" of hell, just as the sun retires from the autumnal equinox suggested here and declines to winter's ritual death.

The time of the autumnal equinox is a time of astrological equilibrium, and Faustus, as sorcerer, is trying to manipulate that celestial balance in his favor. The astrological "characters of signes and erring starres" (1. 246)

arranged in Faustus' magic circle disclose once again Marlowe's intricate astrological knowledge. Marlowe employs that knowledge to set this powerful conjuration scene. Marlowe creates a small replica of the universe with Faustus at the center. Around the circumference of the circle, the planetary hieroglyphs of astrology encircle the ambitious sorcerer. The astrological season and the cosmic setting of the magic circle, circumscribed with the various planets, dictate unmistakable astrological meaning. They remind the audience that Faustus is tampering with delicately balanced cosmic forces. In the middle of the magic circle Marlowe places Faustus; the sorcerer is in the center of the replica universe, and the play's theme deals with his accelerated fall from that center. The forces of Faustus' moral nature, and of the universe, at the time of the suggested autumnal equinox, are poised in equilibrium. The dramatic effect created by Marlowe's celestial concept is one of suspension and poise, before the tumultuous plunge of Faustus into hell.

Later in the play, Faustus, after signing the pact with the devil, asks:

Now would I haue a booke where I might see al
characters and planets of the heauens, that I
might knowe their motions and dispositions.

(ll. 602-604)

Here Faustus not only wishes to observe the motions of the planets, as is the practice in astrology, but he also wants to know the exact disposition of the planets whereby he may add more power to his already growing compendium of

knowledge. It is one thing to observe the motion of the planets and their respective signs, but to desire to know "all characters and planets of the heavens" is to approach omniscience. Inasmuch as the Christian Church looked with deprecation upon all forms of prophecy and divination, Faustus places his soul in jeopardy with such an ambition. Marlowe employs astrology as dramatic motivation for Faustus' pursuit of power. The equilibrium of the suggested equinox setting is now disrupted, and Faustus hurls himself toward the occult mysteries of the universe itself. Such mysteries were God's, not man's domain.

Further evidence of Faustus' yearning for astrological knowledge is demonstrated when Faustus is visited by the Good and Evil Angels. The soul of the aspiring sage is torn between salvation and damnation. Yet Faustus cannot resist to "dispute againe [with Mephastophilis], / And argue of diuine Astrologie" (ll. 644-645). Faustus' discourse with Satan's legate is highly inquisitive in nature. Faustus inquires about specific astrological phenomena: "coniunctions, oppositions, aspects, eclipsis" (l. 675). These astrological terms are important in determining the effect of the planetary motions on the events of earth. Depending upon the planets' relative positions to the natal chart and to earth, their influences can be either good or bad. Faustus wants to know why certain celestial events occur more in one year than in another. His reason for wanting to know this cannot be determined exactly. Possibly

Marlowe is revealing to his audience that Faustus' pursuit of knowledge might not be mere academic pursuit, or idle curiosity, but might be the relentless pursuit of a man who covets knowledge for its own sake. The exact nature of Faustus' inquiries reveals that there are specific kinds of knowledge Faustus wants to obtain. Most of these are concerned with the operation of the universe. Faustus wants to know the inner makings of the cosmos; this is a realm of knowledge the Christian Church reserved for God, not man.

Faustus pursues astrology or astronomy (the two were not clearly separated in Renaissance England as they are at the present time) as the ultimate knowledge toward which he ascends. This occult science is the dramatic symbol of universal knowledge in Marlowe's play. Wagner [as Chorus] reveals that

Learned Faustus to find the secrets of Astronomy,
Grauen in the booke of Ioves high firmament,
Did mount him vp to scale Olimpus top.¹⁸
(ll. 826-828)

from which position Faustus viewed

. . . the cloudes, the Planets, and the Starres,
The Tropick Zones, and quarters of the skye,
From the bright circle of the horned Moone,
Euen to the height of Primum Mobile:
(Qq. ll. 831-834)

Faustus does this magnificent feat, so Wagner relates, by "sitting in a Chariot burning bright, / Drawne by the

¹⁸Taken from Qq. 1616-63. See Brooke edition, p. 197. Hereafter cited in the text as "Qq."

strength of yoked Dragons neckes" (Qq. ll. 829-830). The image evolved by Marlowe in Wagner's Choric interlude is astrologically engrossing. Up until this passage Marlowe has kept the astrological imagery divorced from Faustus' action. Such imagery functions as an emblematic representation of the Doctor's fervor for total knowledge. In this chariot passage the celestial symbolism, while not directly relating to specific astrological facts, is artfully synthesized with Faustus' character through dramatic action. The symbol of Faustus' goal and the man's action are artistically conjunct in this passage. Faustus goes "whirling round . . . From East to West" (Qq. ll. 835-837), through the heavens in a dragon-yoked chariot like an erring star.

This chariot image, while at first appearing difficult to understand, is really a stock description of the god Mars riding in his war-chariot and acting as the ruler of the zodiac sign of Scorpio. Faustus has become part of the universe, and he whirls around it in Mars' chariot. This would be an appropriate astrological symbol for Marlowe to use, as Scorpio is the sign ruled by Mars. Scorpio is the most volatile and ambivalent of the zodiac signs. It rules the Eighth House, the House of Death.¹⁹ Support for this suggestion may be found in the line, "And in eight daies did bring him home againe" (Qq. l. 838). Marlowe

¹⁹See Lilly, p. 408.

is drawing the Scorpio image out further. In astrology, the Eighth House is traditionally the House of Death, Legacy, and Legal Commitments. Ironically, all of these matters relating to Scorpio's house are of primary concern to Faustus. He will "die" a violent death in hell's fire, Mars' symbol, and that death will be the result of a "legal" contract made with the devil in the form of a legacy.

Marlowe's flawless blending of astrological symbolism and the Faustian character here gives the play a cogent cosmic significance when that symbology is appreciated in its context. With each celestial reference Marlowe develops the cosmic dimension of this tragedy until the learned Doctor and the universe are one in knowledge. Once this unitive condition is attained, Faustus, like a burned-out meteor, is propelled hellward to infernal anguish.

Faustus' acquired skill in astrology is verified by the academic Chorus:

They put forth questions of Astrologie,
Which Faustus answerd with such learned skill,
As they admirde and wondred at his wit.
(ll. 913-915)

Faustus now knows the secrets of the universe. His knowledge is such that even his academic colleagues are awed. He is omniscient, but at such a grave price. Faustus is slowly removed from the sphere of mundane affairs. His academic colleagues fear for his soul and at the end of the play Faustus "is growne into some sicknesse by being ouer solitary" (l. 1363).

In the play's last scene Marlowe culminates the tremendous dramatic force he has built up. The astrological images in the scenes previous to the last convey a feeling of either inertia or motion. The equilibrium of the equinocturnal conjunction accelerates into the imagery of Faustus whirling through the heavenly spheres in his Martian chariot in Act III. Now, in a magnificent piece of dramatic irony on Marlowe's part, Faustus tries to re-establish the cosmic equilibrium of that equinox:

The clocke strikes eleauen.

Ah, Faustus,
 Now hast thou but one bare hower to liue,
 And then thou must be damnd perpetually:
 Stand stil you euer moouing spheres of heauen,
 That time may cease, and midnight neuer come:
 Faire Natures eie, rise, rise againe, and make
 Perpetuall day, or let this houre be but
 A yeere, a moneth, a weeke, a naturall day,
 That Faustus may repent, and saue his soule,
O lente, lente curite noctis equi:
 The starres mooue stil, time runs, the clocke wil
 strike,
 The diuel wil come, and Faustus must be damnd.
 O Ile leape vp to my God: who pulles me downe?
 See see where Christs blood streames in the firma-
 ment.
 One drop would saue my soule, halfe a drop, ah my
 Christ.
 Ah rend not my heart for naming of my Christ,
 Yet wil I call on him: oh spare me Lucifer!
 (ll. 1419-1435)

Faustus is trying to stop time, to halt the hour, that he may cease the advance of his impending damnation. The tone of the passage is much stronger than that of a plea. It has the timbre of an insistent command, an imperative to the cosmos from a creature that presumes governance of the universe. Curiously the time situation parallels Faustus'

equinocturnal conjuration in the cove. In both scenes it is late at night, and the aspiring necromancer is alone. The chanting of Latin phrases in both speeches adds mystery to the incantation. Parallel references to astrological images are found in the two speeches. Yet there is a prominent difference between the two scenes which reveals Faustus' tragic plight. The equinocturnal conjuration is surrounded by resolute desire to gain knowledge, and the last scene is permeated with a desperation for salvation. Faustus' speech is so powerful it might be suggested that perhaps Faustus, for one small moment, feels that he actually possesses the power to halt the motions of the heavens. Such power to halt the motions of the heavens would make him God. If he is God at this moment, and he cannot forgive himself, then he is truly damned.

Of particular interest in this last scene is the change in the function of the astrological allusion in lines 102-108. Previously Faustus imagined the cosmos to be a place manifesting total freedom of knowledge; he now finds that the cosmos is deterministic in nature and it denies free-will to human creatures. Marlowe changes astrology from a motif of aspiring freedom through knowledge to a symbol of predestination demonstrating human helplessness. This is a curious transition, and one which Marlowe handles well through effective use of dialogue filled with celestial imagery:

You starres that raignd at my natiuitie,

Whose influence hath allotted death and hel,
 Now draw vp Faustus like a foggy mist,
 Into the intrailles of yon labring cloude,
 That when you vomite foorth into the ayre,
 My limbes may issue from your smoaky mouthes,
 So that my soule may but ascend to heauen:
 (ll. 1443-1449)

Faustus now wishes to become diffused into that universe over which he had wished to rule. Yet he chooses to abnegate the responsibilities for his human actions. He elects to blame his negotiated human situation, the satanic compact, on the stars which ruled his horoscope at his nativity. He does not accept the consequences of his satanic commitment as a direct result of his free choice. He cannot accept the fact that he, not the stars, caused his own damnation.

In this passage there is a parallel reference to the Martian image suggested at the beginning of Act III: "Whose influence hath allotted death and hel" (l. 1444). These two areas are the province of the Eighth House of the zodiac. This sign is ruled by the planet Mars, the significator or ruler of Scorpio. Smoke, entrails, and vomit suggest Martian violence or repugnance, and by using these images Marlowe is further suggesting the Martian personality type well-known during the Medieval and Renaissance periods. Characteristics of the Martian personality are driving ambition, overwhelming energy, aggressive nature, and hunger for power. Ironically though, when Mars is ruling the nativity in the sign of Scorpio, a strong self-destructive

characteristic manifests itself.²⁰ The good and bad possibilities of a Martian nativity are explained by William Lilly:

	<u>When potent & fortunate, he renders</u>	Generous men, valiant, full of courage, irefull, fierce and violent, apt with their hands, open in their speech, with a kind of temerity; fearing no bodily dangers, apt for government, boasters or crackers, ayning at revenge, impatient of servitude, or of receiving injuries or affronts.
Mars		
<u>♂ signi- ficator of Manners</u>	<u>When imbecil and cadent or otherwayes unfortunate, he declares</u>	Cruel men, quarrelsome and tyrannical, rash and head-strong, bloody minded, unshameface't, sumtuous, braggers, impious, unjust, shedders of blood, impudent in provoking, but timerous when it comes to action, Theeves, authors of dissensions, tumults, sedition, &c.

It is important to notice the categorical nature of the personality-types Lilly lists under the Martian influence. This categorical nature provides the basis on which to build dramatic character. No attempt here is made to prove one particular astrologer influenced one specific playwright. The occult tradition which pervaded the Renaissance is the

²⁰Lilly, p. 466. Most astrologers generally agree on Martian qualities. See George, p. 288.

focal point here. Obviously, Marlowe was no professional astrologer, but it would be foolish to affirm that the personality types which astrology provided were ignored by Renaissance dramatists. Lilly displays traditional characteristics of each planetary influence supplying the firm foundation on which to build many of the conventional Renaissance characters: the melancholic is depicted under Saturn's planetary influence; the malcontent is a product of what Lilly describes as the Martian personality cited above; the Elizabethan "whore" is the lower octave of the Venus personality; the higher octave of Venus is reflected in the paradoxical relationship between Venus and Adonis in Shakespeare's poem of the same name.

The point is not to claim that every character in Renaissance drama is a product of astrological "type-casting," but rather it is the purpose here to demonstrate that this lucrative field provided a contemporary psychology for Renaissance dramatic characterization. Just as "modern psychology" provides twentieth century dramatists with dramatic character-types, e.g., the alienated existential man, the nymphomaniac, the homosexual, the domineering mother, the monomaniac, the psychopathic killer, the accomplished neurotic, the alcoholic, the paranoid schizophrenic, ad infinitum, so astrology, the contemporary psychology of the Renaissance, provided a dramatist like Marlowe with a category of personality-types on which to build dramatic characterization. The Mercurian, the Martian,

the Venerian, the Jupiterian, the Saturnian, the Lunarian, and Solarian, furnished a spine for character delineation.

These planetary types projected themselves, either in a good or an ill manner, through a zodiac sign: Aries, Taurus, Gemini, etc. Each sign afforded a different personality from the others. This allowed for the possibility of many different stage characters.

The astrological allusion in the plays of Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher does not have the gravity of cosmic power or the potentiality for tragedy that there is in Tamburlaine or Doctor Faustus. Astrological allusions in Philaster; or, Love Lies A-Bleeding create impressions of pathos. Philaster declares to the king in the opening scene of the play:

I am dead sir, y'are my Fate: It was not I
Said I was wrong'd: I carry all about me
My weake starres leade me too; all my weake for-
tunes.²¹

The astrological allusion here is not as cosmic as that of Cosroe commenting on Tamburlaine's over-powering strength, not weakness, following Menaphon's description of the Persian opponent: "Nature doth striue with Fortune and his stars / To make him famous in accomplisht woorth" (Tamburlaine II.i.487-488). Philaster's stars convey weakness, not

²¹Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, Philaster; or, Love Lies A-Bleeding, The Dramatic Works in the Beaumont and Fletcher Canon, ed. Fredson Bowers (London, 1966), I.i.261-263. All citations from Beaumont and Fletcher are taken from this standard edition.

strength. This employment of astrological imagery on a lower octave of dramatic intensity is characteristic of Beaumont and Fletcher's play. A feeling far less than tragic, tantamount perhaps to sentiment, is the dramatic effect.

The astrological imagery in Philaster; or, Love Lies A-Bleeding is light and contributes to the over-all interpretation some critics have of this play as a form of romantic tragi-comedy. In Arathusa's speech to her Lady in Act I, scene i, the theme of star-crossed or ill-fated lovers is developed:

. . . Alas, thy ignorance
 Lets thee not see the crosses of our births:
 Nature, that loves not to be questioned
 Why she did this, or that, but has her ends,
 And knows she does well, never gave the world
 Two things so opposite, so contrary,
 As he [Philaster] and I am:
 (I.ii.21-27)

Here the astrological allusion is to the unfortunate oppositions that occurred in the heavens at the time of Arathusa's and Philaster's births. These planetary oppositions, or "crosses," give Arathusa and Philaster ill fortunes that influence the events of their lives. They cannot love or marry because of the planetary oppositions in their paths. The attitude of the speech is that nature knows what is best, and again the emphasis upon the stars is that they are responsible for a weakness and ineffectuality, not a strength. Powerful natal planetary oppositions pervade this play. The usurping King of Sicily speaks to Cleremont of his progeny:

[Aside]

You gods, I see that who unrighteously
 Holds wealth, or state from others, shall be curst,
 In that, which meaner men are blest withall:
 Ages to come, shall know no male of him
 Left to inherit: and his name shall be
 Blotted from earth: If he have any child,
 It shall be crossely match'd:
 (II.iv.54-60)

The king's child, Arathusa, senses that she is "crossely match'd." She indeed is fated to oppositions in her life. In an astrological sense, most oppositions occurring in a horoscope, i.e., two planets 180 degrees from each other, are malefic in their influence.²² Certainly in this play there is a certain amount of ill luck over which Arathusa seems to have no control. Allusion to a star-crossed condition is also found in Romeo and Juliet and may cast shades upon Philaster and Arathusa. Shakespeare's Chorus refers to Romeo and Juliet as "a pair of star-crossed lovers" who are fated to "take their life" (Prologue, l. 6). Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet appears some ten to twelve years before the Beaumont and Fletcher play. The astrological theme of star-crossed lovers, although certainly not originated by Shakespeare, could have exerted some influence on Beaumont and Fletcher's "crossely match'd" lovers.

Megra, wishing to degrade Arathusa, is given the

²² Usually the effects of a planetary opposition are dependent upon the nature of the planets involved, but generally when this astrological aspect is compared to other more favorable planetary relationships it is considered unfavorable.

best developed astrological simile in the play. In the presence of the King, Megra defames the relationship between Arathusa and Bellario, Philaster's devoted servant:

Alas, good minded Prince, you know not these things;
 I am loath to reveale um. Keepe this fault
 As you would keepe your health from the hot aire
 Of the corrupted people, or by heaven,
 I will not fall alone: what I have knowne,
 Shall be as publique as a print: all tongues
 Shall speake it as they doe the language they
 Are borne in, as free and commonly; I'le set it
 Like a prodigious starre for all to gaze at,
 And so high and glowing, that other Kingdomes far
 and forraigne,
 Shall reade it there; nay travaile with it, till
 they finde
 No tongue to make it more, nor no more people;
 And then behold the fall of your faire Princesse.
 (II.iv.164-177)

The dramatic force of Megra's viperous comment upon the reputation of Arathusa is permeated by the image of a "prodigious starre" developed as a celestial simile. People will follow Arathusa's high and glowing ill reputation like a guiding star until it leads them to the fallen princess. The simile is developed around a stellar image, combined with enough seriousness in tone, to give the whole passage a dramatic force not found in other astrological allusions of the play.

Beaumont and Fletcher do quite well with one astrological personality-type--Bellario. Bellario resembles a Mercurian personality and he assumes the celestial attributes astrologers have given to the planet Mercury. Philaster comments to Arathusa following their exchange of love: "I have a boy, / Sent by the gods" (I.ii.111-112). This "boy" is the maiden Euphrasia, disguised as the page

Bellarion, who must fill the role of intelligencer between Arathusa and Philaster. The phrase "Sent by the gods" links Bellario with Mercury since Mercury is the messenger of the gods. Bellario also resembles Mercury's hermaphroditic nature by the dramatic role she plays. Bellario is masculine in her assumed disguise and feminine in her real nature. This hermaphroditic characteristic is one of the alchemical properties of the metal mercury or quicksilver, a metal governed by the planet Mercury.

Bellarion possesses a spiritual quality or form which is referred to by Pharamond as "angell-like" (II.iv.20). Bellario has a conventional pastoral origin which is somewhat sentimentalized by its flowered garlands, clear-water springs, and fair nymphs (I.ii.111-140). Bellario tells Philaster, after the latter reveals his hatred of Bellario:

I will flie as farre
As there is morning, ere I give distaste
To that most honor'd mind. . . .
(III.i.282-284)

Mercury, the Morning Star, ever close to the sun just as Bellario is to Philaster, is the image suggested here. Mercury strays never more than twenty-eight degrees from the sun, and Bellario never strays from Philaster. Her function as messenger in the play is mentioned by Arathusa after the king demands that the princess dismiss her boy-page.

Arathusa says to Philaster:

Oh cruell,
Are you hard hearted too? Who shall now tell you,
How much I love you? Who shall sweare it to you,
And weepe the teares I send? Who shall now bring

you
 Letters, rings, bracelets? Loose his health in
 service?
 Wake tedious nights in stories of your praise?
 Who shall sing your crying Elegies?
 And strike a sad soule into senselesse pictures,
 And make them mourne? Who shall take up his Lute,
 And touch it, till he crowne a silent sleepe
 Upon my eye-lids, making me dreame, and cry,
 Oh my deere, deare Philaster?

(III.ii.59-70)

The dramatic function Bellario performs in the play is analogous to that of a Mercurian. Putting Arathusa to sleep requires a mythological power associated with the Caduceus, Mercury's potent wand. The particular astrological sign Bellario suggests is Virgo, and Mercury rules this sign. Bellario is not familiar with sex, and eventually is revealed to be a virgin handmaiden. Bellario is loyal and finds happiness in the service of others. Bellario attempts to talk out problems rather than fight them out as would the Martian. She is exceptionally adept in conversation, since Mercury governs communication; Arathusa indicates:

O, y'are a cunning boy, and taught to lie,
 For your Lords credit; but thou knowest, a lie
 That beares this sound, is welcomer to me,
 Then any truth that saies he loves me not.

(II.iii.63-66)

A strong trait of the Mercurian is the desire to learn.²³
 Bellario indicates this desire in her attempt to remain with
 Philaster despite her master's designs to send her to
 Arathusa:

²³For these Mercurian traits see Lilly, pp. 539-545.

Sir, if I have made
 A fault of ignorance, instruct my youth:
 I shall be willing, if not apt to learne,
 Age and experience will adorne my mind,
 With larger knowledge:
 (II.i.29-33)

Bellarion's loyalty in her service to Philaster and Arathusa is impeccable. She offers her life to save the cowardly Philaster from the king's hunters, even after Philaster wounds the sleeping Bellario. The spiritual quality of Mercury manifests itself in the "heaviness neere death" (IV. vi.1) which settles on her as she falls asleep as if in a trance. Sleep is one of Mercury's powers. Although the astrological allusions in Philaster; or, Love Lies A-Bleeding lack the cosmic dimension of Marlowe and therefore lack tragic seriousness, Beaumont and Fletcher do succeed in creating a fanciful, spiritual Mercurial archetype in Bellario. The double dramatic role of Bellario-Euphrasia suggests the Geminarian, who is also under the influence of Mercury.

In The Maid's Tragedy, Beaumont and Fletcher present a masque revolving around astrology and classical mythology. As the masque begins, Night asks Cynthia, the Moon, no longer to hide herself, but to give light to the darkened heavens. Cynthia is pictured in her horned phase:

Bright Cynthia, hear my voice. I am the Night,
 For whom thou bear'st about thy borrowed light.
 Appear! no longer thy pale visage shroud,
 But strike thy silver horns quite through a cloud
 And send a beam upon my swarthy face.

(The Masque I.ii.3-7)

In ancient societies the horned phase of the moon was

associated with the horns of the bull, a pagan fertility symbol. It is fitting for Cynthia to be pictured in the horned phase for a wedding song. Night and Cynthia consider the possible prolongation of night to let the newly married couple have

. . . one contented hour,
 With such unwonted solemn grace and state
 As may forever after force them hate
 Our brother's glorious beams, and wi[s]h the Night.
 (The Masque I.ii.30-33)

The main purpose of the masque is celebration. The marriage of Amintor and Evadne is celebrated by the heavens; an air of fantasy or illusion surrounds the Masque just as it surrounds Amintor's misconception of Evadne's virginity. There is a quality of enamorment surrounding both the masque and the relationship between Amintor and Evadne. Although the marriage is consummated in the masque's fantasy, in reality it fails to attain Amintor's expectations. Mythology and astrology are blended in a dramatic fantasy that foreshadows the eventual outcome of the fated marriage. The Masque is successful because the astrological imagery is manipulated in a fanciful manner.

Renaissance playwrights, particularly Jonson, Beaumont, Fletcher, and Webster, are fond of allusions to dog days. Melantius and Evadne ardently discuss the circumstances surrounding the pre-marital loss of her chaste honor. Melantius swells with anger:

Let all mine honors perish but I'll find him
 Though he lie lock'd up in thy blood! Be sudden;
 There is no facing it; and be not flattered.

The burnt air, when the Dog reigns, is not fouler
 Then thy contagious name, till thy repentance
 (If the gods grant thee any) purge thy sickness.
 (IV.i.52-56)

Dog days occur when the constellation Canis Major, containing Sirius, the Dog Star, moves high in the sky in the first two weeks of August, bringing with it, as was commonly believed in the Renaissance, hot and humid days. The air was so hot that it seemed burnt and foul at this time. Classical writers, such as Hesiod and Ptolemy, also alluded to the dog days. They regarded the rising of the Dog Star, Sirius, as a time associated with heat, anger, or any other violent disposition, condition, or action.²⁴ In John Ford's The Broken Heart,²⁵ astrology functions not merely as dramatic machinery to foreshadow events, but imagistically and thematically it is equated with Fate. It is an amoral Fate against which Orgilus struggles, and eventually Fate, symbolized by the stoic stars, crushes him. Tecnicus warns Orgilus outright: "Tempt not the stars, young man, thou canst not play / With the severity of Fate . . ." (I.iii, p. 228). Stellar images dominate Prophilus' accolade of Ithocles:

²⁴ See Hesiod's Works and Days, The Works of Hesiod, Callimachus, and Theoginis, trans. Rev. J. Banks (London, 1889), ll. 783-806; Ptolemy, Tetrabiblos, II.8, 10; Lilly, pp. 648-649 and 666.

²⁵ John Ford, The Broken Heart, The Works of John Ford, ed. William Gifford, 3 vols. (New York, 1965), I, I.i.1. All citations from Ford's play are taken from this standard edition.

He, [Ithocles] in this firmament of honour, stands
 Like a star fix'd, not mov'd with any thunder
 Of popular applause or sudden lightning
 Of self-opinion;

(I.ii, p. 223)

Ironically, Orgilus slays "star fix'd" Ithocles, and is sentenced to death. Orgilus tempts the stars and Tecnicus' warning comes true.

Euphranea and Prophilus meet in a grove where Prophilus professes his affection for Euphranea. She has pledged not to give her hand in marriage without her brother Orgilus' consent. Euphranea alludes to astrology as she speaks to Prophilus:

. . . it had been
 A fault of judgment in me, and a dullness
 In my affections, not to weigh and thank
 My better stars that offer'd me the grace
 Of so much blissfulness. . . .

(I.iii, p. 231)

The astrological allusion creates the impression that the stars, as Fate, gave her the love Prophilus professes.

Pentheia, angry at Orgilus' visit to her private chamber, excoriates her lover for betraying her frailty. She will not dishonor her marriage to the jealous lecher Bassanes. In her chastisement of Orgilus, she casts imprecations upon her stars:

. . . Unworthy man,
 If ever henceforth thou appear in language,
 Message, or letter, to betray my frailty,
 I'll call thy former protestations lust,
 And curse my stars for forfeit of my judgement.

(II.iii, p. 253)

Ford again equates Fate with the stars as a form of dramatic predestination. Pentheia shows herself firm in her

resistance and curses her stars for her lack of judgement.

The eclipse, a traditional symbol of death and misfortune, pervades the response Bassanes gives to Penthea's intuitive feelings that she is about to die:

Let the sun first
Be wrapp'd up in an everlasting darkness,
Before the light of nature, chiefly form'd
For the whole world's delight, feel an eclipse
So universal!

(IV.ii, p. 290)

The sun, traditional symbol of royalty, in eclipse foreshadows the imminent death of Penthea, and it equates the "death" of the sun with Penthea's death, adding a cosmic dimension to Penthea, thus displaying the poetic power of Ford's verse.

The "star fix'd" image of Ithocles mentioned earlier is reinforced by another astrological image in Nearchus' comment to Amelus concerning Calantha's love for the returning hero: ". . . young Ithocles, / . . . is lord ascendant / Of her devotions" (IV.ii, p. 295). This allusion is to the ruling planet of a native's horoscope. It determines the character of the native because it is the lord, or ruling planet, of the ascendant. The ascendant is the cusp of the First House of the horoscope, or the Eastern horizon of the sky. The First House rules the self, and the planet which is on the horizon, or aspecting it at the time of the native's birth, rules the native's life. If Ithocles is the lord ascendant of Calantha's devotions, she is ruled by him. Ford develops the theme of spiritual love. The commitment

to spiritual love is a powerful dramatic force in The Broken Heart. Ford equates his astrological images with Fate, a Fate which is severe yet, at the same time, committed to the preservation of spiritual love.

In the plays of William Shakespeare the astrological imagery is blended with the theme of sympathetic Nature. Nature in Shakespeare's plays is not a static character. On the contrary, Nature foreshadows or reacts to the events of the play, and in this sense Nature is sympathetic to the play. The storm scene in King Lear mirrors the internal conflict in Lear's soul. Often the disposition of Nature in Shakespeare reflects the condition of the body politic. Thus the cold, windy night of Marcellus' watch echoes the cold, sterile state of Denmark's kingdom steeped in the blood of regicide and the sins of adultery, incest, and murder. Denmark is as cold as a tomb, compared to Nature's warm midsummer night setting in A Midsummer Night's Dream. In accordance with the theme of sympathetic Nature, Shakespeare employs astrological images to foreshadow events. He demonstrates Nature's sympathy to dramatic events through astrological images. Eclipses, unfortunate conjunctions, and meteor storms are favorite dramatic devices used by Shakespeare to set the mood of his plays. These celestial events are integrated into the mundane affairs of the play. An examination of Shakespeare's four major tragedies reveals Shakespeare's artistic development of the astrological image.

In Hamlet, Horatio is relating to Bernardo the political situation in Denmark, after the first appearance of the ghost. Horatio compares the natural events in Denmark with similar natural events that preceded the fall of Julius Caesar in Rome:

In the most high and palmy state of Rome,
 A little ere the mightiest Julius fell,
 The graves stood tenantless, and the sheeted dead
 Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets.
 As stars with trains of fire and dews of blood,
 Disasters in the sun, and the moist star
 Upon whose influence Neptune's empire stands
 Was sick almost to doomsday with eclipse.
 And even the like precurse of fierce events,
 As harbingers preceding still the fates
 And prologue to the omen coming on,
 Have Heaven and earth together demonstrated
 Unto our climatures and countrymen.

(I.i.113-125)

Shakespeare sets Nature up as a sympathetic character in the play, reacting to the assassination of Hamlet's father.

Nature's disruptive occurrences parallel Denmark's political disruption. The eclipse of the moist star, the moon, is an unnatural celestial event. The moon astrologically governs the welfare of the public. An eclipse of the moon portends civil disorder and disruption. "Disasters in the sun" are signs of disaster to royalty, kings, and queens. The "stars with trains of fire and dews of blood" refer to meteor showers which astrologically are interpreted as a sign of ill omen--of bloodshed.²⁶ Nature is depicted as reacting to

²⁶These "standard" interpretations of eclipses can be found in Renaissance almanacs and astrological manuals. See "A prognostication for the yeare 1572" by Thomas Hill

the unnatural acts of Claudius' usurpation. Hamlet is an eclipsed prince. His rightful ascension to the throne is prevented by Claudius' quick usurpation of the throne. The "dews of blood" which Horatio saw in the sky portend the bloodshed of the last scene. These celestial events with their ominous astrological undertones help to set the mood of the play and to make eventual tragic consequences seem inevitable.

A similar situation is created in Macbeth when Duncan comes to visit Macbeth at his castle. Macbeth has seen the three witches. They have planted the seed of ambition in Macbeth's mind. His wife has nurtured that seed, and the plan to assassinate the king germinates in Act II, scene i. Banquo and Fleance are discussing the night of Duncan's assassination:

BAN. How goes the night, boy?
 FLE. The moon is down, I have not heard the
 clock.
 BAN. And she goes down at twelve.
 FLE. I take't 'tis later, sir.
 BAN. Hold, take my sword. There's husbandry in
 Heaven,
 Their candles are all out. Take thee that too.
 A heavy summons lies like lead upon me,
 And yet I would not sleep. Merciful powers,
 Restrain in me the cursèd thoughts that nature
 Gives way to in repose!

(II.i.1-9)

(1572). Hill describes the eclipse of the moon which took place in June of 1572. Hill claims that the ill effect of the moon's eclipse will manifest itself in "the Harvest quarter" of the year. See also The compost of Ptholomeus (1532). It is chiefly Ptolemy's instructions on the method of eclipse divination that the Renaissance astrologer followed: Ptolemy, Tetrabiblos, II.3.

This night there is no moon. There are no stars. The normal celestial cycle is inoperative. When the moon is not out, the powers of evil are at their height around twelve midnight. The scene is adequately set for Macbeth's atrocious act.

Shakespeare later reinforces this unnatural night with Lennox's comment to Macbeth the following morning:

The night has been unruly. Where we lay,
Our chimneys were blown down, and, as they say,
Lamentings heard i' the air, strange screams of
death,
And prophesying with accents terrible
Of dire combustion and confused events
New-hatched to the woeful time. The obscure bird
Clamored the livelong night. Some say the earth
Was feverous and did shake.

(II.iii.59-66)

After this discourse Macduff enters with the news of Duncan's assassination, and Macbeth's long fall to hell is on its way. Ross, while discussing the night with an old man, comments on the sympathetic response of Nature:

OLD MAN. Threescore and ten I can remember well.
Within the volume of which time I have seen
Hours dreadful and things strange, but this sore
night

Hath trifled former knowings.

ROSS. Ah, good Father,
Thou seest the heavens, as troubled with man's
act,
Threaten his bloody stage. By the clock 'tis day,
And yet dark night strangles the traveling lamp.
Is't night's predominance, or the day's shame,
That darkness does the face of earth entomb
When living light should kiss it?

(II.iv.1-10)

In these passages Shakespeare again demonstrates Nature's dramatic tropism or responsiveness to events in the play. It is the "heavens, troubled with man's act," which conveys

nature's "sore night."

In Julius Caesar, Shakespeare displays another example of nature's aesthetic tropism. Caesar, upon his triumphant return to Rome, is told by a soothsayer to "Beware the ides of March" (I.ii.18). Coincident with the warning, Nature, as a "character" in the play, starts to react against the unnatural situation with empathic concern which is manifested in a tremendous outburst of unnatural occurrences. There is thunder and lightning; nature is dis-tempered and Casca comments:

Are not you moved, when all the sway of earth
Shakes like a thing unfirm? O Cicero,
I have seen tempests when the scolding winds
Have rived the knotty oaks, and I have seen
The ambitious ocean swell and rage and foam,
To be exalted with the threatening clouds.
But never till tonight, never till now,
Did I go through a tempest dropping fire.
Either there is a civil strife in Heaven,
Or else the world too saucy with the gods
Incenses them to send destruction.
(I.iii.3-13)

Just as astrological images in Macbeth portend Duncan's death, Caesar's death is prophesied by meteor showers portending bloodshed, civil discontent, and death. The world suffers the destruction heaped upon it by the gods. A tempest rages. Things in the natural order become disordered and disruptive, in correspondence to the unnatural, disruptive social condition in the empire. Again Nature is consonant with Shakespeare's dramatic events.

In Act II, scene ii, there is thunder and lightning. Caesar looks out at the ominous heavens and declares:

Nor Heaven nor earth have been at peace tonight.
 Thrice hath Calpurnia in her sleep cried out,
 "Help, ho! They murder Caesar!"
 (II.ii.1-3)

Nature enhances the dramatic tension which builds up to Caesar's assassination. Calpurnia comes to Caesar and pleads:

Caesar, I never stood on ceremonies,
 Yet now they fright me. There is one within,
 Besides the things that we have heard and seen,
 Recounts most horrid sights seen by the watch.
 A lioness hath whelpèd in the streets.
 And graves have yawned and yielded up their dead.
 Fierce fiery warriors fight upon the clouds,
 In ranks and squadrons and right form of war,
 Which drizzled blood upon the Capitol.
 The noise of battle hurtled in the air,
 Horses did neigh and dying men did groan,
 And ghosts did shriek and squeal about the streets.
 O Caesar! these things are beyond all use,
 And I do fear them.

(II.ii.13-26)

Caesar maintains that the predictions may apply to anyone, not just to him, but Calpurnia argues: "When beggars die, there are no comets seen. / The heavens themselves blaze forth the death of princes" (II.ii.30-31). Caesar replies:

Cowards die many times before their deaths,
 The valiant never taste of death but once.
 Of all the wonders that I yet have heard,
 It seems to me most strange that men should fear,
 Seeing that death, a necessary end,
 Will come when it will come.

(II.ii.32-37)

Caesar either has no fear of the portents or he feels himself above or beyond them. Shakespeare takes advantage of common superstitions in Julius Caesar. Among these superstitions are the fear of unusual celestial events such as those described in the passages quoted above. Eclipses,

comets, and shooting meteors all combine to paint a foreboding scene of Caesar's death at the hands of his assassins.

Another example of Shakespeare's penchant for astrological imagery is found in King Lear. The theme of sympathetic Nature is retained through astrological allusions. Gloucester and Edmund are talking together and Gloucester comments:

These late eclipses in the sun and moon portend no good to us. Though the wisdom of nature can reason it thus and thus, yet nature finds itself scourged by the sequent effects. Love cools, friendship falls off, brothers divide. In cities, mutinies; in countries, discord; in palaces, treason; and the bond cracked 'twixt son and father. This villain of mine comes under the prediction, there's son against father. The King falls from bias of nature, there's father against child. We have seen the best of our time. Machinations, hollowness, treachery, and all ruinous disorders follow us disquietly to our graves. Find out this villain, Edmund, it shall lose thee nothing. Do it carefully. And the noble and true-hearted Kent banished! His offense, honesty! 'Tis strange.

(I.ii.112-127)

The astrological allusion here is to the mundane effects of the "late eclipses in the sun and moon." The ominous portents Gloucester draws from the "late eclipses" can be found in many of the standard almanacs of the Tudor period. Eustace F. Bosanquet's work in this field is excellent.²⁷

²⁷ Eustace F. Bosanquet, English Printed Almanacks and Prognostications: A Bibliographical History to the year 1600 (London, 1917), p. 109. This work is a competent study of the commonality of plebian astrology minus its academic and sophisticated intricate procedures. The almanacs provided immediate knowledge for days favorable to mundane activities and cautioned against malefic celestial occurrences.

No one need be a scholar or astrologer to read and understand the predictions made about solar and lunar eclipses by men such as John Securis, Elias Bomelius, Gabriel Frende, and Robert Watson. An example of the ominous tone of these predictions can be seen in the title of Bomelius' almanac for 1567: A neue Almanacke and Prognostication for the yere of our Lord. 1567 . . . with a prediction of such thinges as shall follow the terrible Eclypse of the Sunne this yere appearing, by the example of the like Eclypse seene in the yere. 1540.²⁸ The ominous tone of Gloucester's passage is quite understandable when the almanac tradition in England is taken into account.

Johnstone Parr has commented that

It is not unreasonable to suppose, of course, that Shakespeare might have referred in King Lear to the eclipse of the sun in 1601 and any one of the many eclipses of the moon from 1598 onward.

²⁸ Bosanquet elaborates on the author's recollection of the ill effects of the solar eclipse of 1540:

The effect of the eclipse of the sun in the year 1540 is set out in full detail on A ii, and iii, and because of the terrible things which happened after that eclipse, the Author enjoynes prayer to God that 'he will take the like punishment from us for his mercie sake, but also feare us from sin,' etc. Amongst other things attributed to the 1540 eclipse appear to have been that the citie of 'Gaunt' lost great privileges and several citizens were beheaded; a Parliament was held in Wormes on certain articles of Religion, and another in 1541 at 'Regensbergh,' but nothing came of them; there was a plague of 'straunge beastes like unto grasshoppers,' with four winges which eat up all the grass and trees in Polonia; the Emperour Charles lost 150 ships on a voyage to Algiers, and the weather appears to have been as bad as it could be.

Since other evidence, however, seems to limit the date of composition of the play as between 1603 and the end of 1606, it is highly probable that the topical passage in King Lear alludes to the eclipses of 1605.²⁹

Shakespeare is familiar with such astrological belief and he utilizes superstition about eclipses to depict the condition and to dramatically foreshadow the events of King Lear.

"Love cools" describes the impatient Lear's feelings toward Cordelia; "friendship falls off" illustrates Lear's severed friendship with Kent; "brothers divide" pictures the relationship between Edmund, the bastard, and Edgar. "The bond cracked 'twixt son and father" reveals Gloucester's affiliation with Edgar after Edmund's evil plans begin to work.

Edmund's comment following Gloucester's remark presents an antithetical perspective on astrology. Edmund, the bastard, mocks and ridicules the belief that any outside fortune can exert influence in human affairs. He professes that eclipses and any other celestial occurrences believed to be of astrological significance are nothing but the "excellent foppery of the world" (I.ii.128). He insists, as Cassius does, that the fault lies not in the stars but in men themselves:

. . . when we are sick in fortune--often the surfeit of our own behavior--we make guilty of our disasters the sun, the moon, and the stars, as if we were villains by necessity, fools by heavenly complusion; knaves, thieves, and treachers by spherical predominance; drunkards, liars, and

²⁹Parr, pp. 73-74.

adulterers by an enforced obedience of planetary influence; and all that we are evil in, by a divine thrusting on--an admirable evasion of whoremaster man, to lay his goatish disposition to the charge of a star!

(I.ii.129-138)

Edmund argues that astrology is a rationalization of man's behavior. Men blame the stars for events for which they themselves are responsible. Not only is Edmund disclaiming astrology in this passage, he is also indirectly asserting that he, and he alone, is the master of his fate. By doing this Edmund, the bastard, the unnatural progeny in this play, is placing himself outside Nature's dominion. He is setting himself up as the maker and master of his own fortune, asserting that he will be what he is, and he will answer for it.

Shakespeare gives Edmund one of the most specific astrological images of the play:

My father compounded with my mother under the dragon's tail, and my nativity was under Ursa Major, so that it follows I am rough and lecherous. Tut, I should have been that I am had the maidenliest star in the firmament twinkled on my bastardizing.

(I.ii.139-145)

This allusion is divided into two sections. The first section deals with the lunar time of conception, Edmund having been conceived under the dragon's tail. This means that Edmund was conceived while the moon was in its descending node. The exact time of conception is impossible to discern. Yet it was common belief among Renaissance astrologers that any event occurring, especially an event beginning, while the moon was in a descending node, under

the dragon's tail, was destined to have an unfavorable outcome. A birth at this time was considered under the influences of malefic forces. Blagrave lists the astrological effects of a birth during the ascending and descending lunar nodes:

Dragons Head.

The Dragons Head is of the nature of the Fortunes, yet convertable; for being with good Planets it increaseth their good, but with evil Planets it increaseth their Evil, &c.

Dragons Tail.

The Dragons Tail is by nature inimical and contrary to the Head in quality, for it diminisheth the good or evil of the Planet with whom it is joyned, &c.³⁰

Essentially what Shakespeare is doing is casting a malevolent hue around Edmund's birth. The second section of the allusion deals with the exact nativity of Edmund. Ursa Major is a constellation that is outside of the zodiac. It is not part of the normal scheme of astrology. Not enough work has been done to ascertain the effect of extra-zodiacal constellations upon the individual. Vivian E. Robson, in her work The Fixed Stars and Constellations in Astrology studies this problem. She notes that the tropical system disregards the effects of extra-zodiacal signs while the sidereal system gives a prominent role to such

³⁰Blagrave, p. 80. Also see Lilly, p. 700, and Ferrier, p. 80. Ferrier cites the effect of the dragon's tail in the First House of the natal horoscope. This is the house which rules the physical qualities and determines character.

constellations.³¹ Exactly which system Shakespeare was familiar with cannot be discerned with certainty.

Johnstone Parr named Claudius Ptolemy as undoubtedly the supreme authority in astrological matters in the Renaissance.³² However, Henry Cornelius Agrippa's influence on English Renaissance astrologists cannot be underrated. The influence of the Cabala and the tradition of Hermes Trismegistus must also be taken into account. This particular period of English literature is a mixture of Jewish, Arabian, continental, classical, and even some Oriental astrology. To maintain that Ptolemy exerted sole influence upon a person such as William Shakespeare is to deny the Bard his noted versatility. Ptolemy, and the Ptolemaic system of astrology, were products of the universities and taught to the learned. Whether or not Shakespeare fell under the influence of Ptolemy may be difficult to determine.³³

Citing Ptolemy, Parr suggests that Venus and Mars are the predominant influences on the character of

³¹Vivian E. Robson, The Fixed Stars and Constellations in Astrology (London, 1969). Her entire book deals with this problem.

³²Parr, p. 80. See, also, p. 113.

³³See Lilly, "To the Reader." In this introduction to his work, Lilly points out that he intentionally ignores Ptolemy. He lists twenty other authors he has studied. Lilly claims to "have made more Schollers in this Profession [Astrology], than all that professe this art in England" (sig. B2). Lilly states: "I have refused the Methods of all former authors" (sig. B2).

Edmund.³⁴ This combination of Venus and Mars, according to Parr, could produce a character comparable to Edmund. Yet Edmund specifically states: "Tut, I should have been that I am had the maidenliest star in the firmament twinkled on my bastardizing" (I.ii.143-145). It would seem that this statement should rule out any possible influence of Venus, the planet most associated with beauty, harmony, and other maidenly qualities. Perhaps all that Shakespeare is suggesting here is that Edmund is as rough and lecherous as a big bear--Ursa Major. Parr may be mistaken in transferring Venus' influence, which occurred at conception, over into Edmund's nativity, which occurred "under Ursa Major." Conception and birth are two separate astrological events, and Parr fails to make the distinction.

Following the discourse on his nativity, Edmund hears his brother coming in. Edmund reinforces his father's feelings concerning the effect of the eclipses which have occurred lately. It is particularly important to note the exact words Edmund uses when speaking of the eclipses to Edgar: "I am thinking, Brother, of a prediction I read this other day, what should follow these eclipses" (I.ii.152-153). Edgar responds, asking his brother if he busies himself with such things. Edmund replies:

I promise you the effects he writes of succeed unhappily, as of unnaturalness between the child

³⁴Parr, p. 81.

and the parent; death, dearth, dissolutions of
ancient amities; divisions in state, menaces and
maledictions against King and nobles; needless
diffidences, banishment of friends, dissipation of
cohorts, nuptial breaches, and I know not what.

(I.ii.156-163)

The material for Edmund's speech could have been taken out of any of the innumerable Renaissance prognostication pamphlets popular in Shakespeare's time.³⁵ Therefore, to say that Shakespeare is influenced here by any one source may be injudicious. What is important is that Shakespeare employs this eclipse imagery to foreshadow the events which occur in King Lear and he carefully blends this eclipse allusion into the dramatic structure of the play.

At the beginning of scene ii, Edmund resents his own bastard status and covets Edgar's legitimacy. Edmund defies hierarchy and order. Nature is Edmund's goddess and he will not be left out of nobility because he was "some twelve or fourteen moonshines / Lag of a brother" (I.ii.5-6).

Gloucester enters, questioning the banishment of Kent from King Lear's realm. Edmund hands him the forged letter containing the fake murder conspiracy against Gloucester. This most unnatural act of treachery comes from a character whom Shakespeare places outside of the natural and social order-- a bastard. However, the natural order and the social order of the play are out of joint. Gloucester's speech on eclipses enhances the feeling of disorder and bastardization

³⁵See Bosanquet's work cited in fn. 27.

found in Edmund's speech. The mood Shakespeare builds in this scene is one of disorder--social and natural: bastards and eclipses rule the day.

Shakespeare seems particularly fond of the eclipse image. He resorts to it also in Othello. In Act V, scene ii, following the murder of the innocent Desdemona, Emilia comes into her lady's chamber and sees Othello's heinous act. Othello responds to his wife's murder in the following manner:

My wife! My wife! What wife? I have no wife.
Oh, insupportable! Oh, heavy hour!
Methinks it should be now a huge eclipse
Of sun and moon, and that the affrighted globe
Should yawn at alteration.

(V.ii.97-101)

Here Shakespeare equates the eclipse imagery to Desdemona's death. Othello, after Emilia has discovered Desdemona's murder, exclaims: "It is the very error of the moon" (V. ii.109). This is a reference to moon madness caused when the moon comes too near the earth.

In Antony and Cleopatra the eclipse image occurs following the whipping of Thyreus. Antony remarks:

Alack, our terrene moon
Is now eclipsed, and it portends alone
The fall of Antony.

(III.xiii.153-155)

Just before this exclamation, Antony claims:

. . . my good stars that were my former guides
Have empty left their orbs and shot their fires
Into the abysm of Hell. . . .

(III.xiii.145-147)

The eclipse portends his downfall later in the play. It is

fitting here that Shakespeare should use imagery centering around a lunar rather than a solar eclipse, for the moon is the female symbol for the queen in astrology and surely it is Queen Cleopatra who causes Antony to fall.

In Troilus and Cressida Shakespeare, using astrological imagery, depicts the natural order of the universe as the Elizabethans viewed it, Ulysses is conferring with Agamemnon's council of war in the Grecian camp when the famed Greek warrior delivers his speech on natural order:

The heavens themselves, the planets and this
center,
Observe degree, priority, and place,
Insisture, course, proportion, season, form,
Office, and custom, in all line of order.
And therefore is the glorious planet Sol
In noble eminence enthroned and sphered
Amidst the other, whose medicinable eye
Corrects the ill aspects of planets evil,
And posts like the commandment of a king,
Sans check to good and bad. But when the planets
In evil mixture to disorder wander,
What plagues and what portents, what mutiny,
What raging of the sea, shaking of earth,
Commotion in the winds, frights, changes, horrors,
Divert and crack, rend and deracinate,
The unity and married calm of states
Quite from their fixure! . . .

(I.iii.85-101)

Shakespeare regards the order and the harmony of the planets as principles governing harmony and order on earth below. This is astrology. Astrology's correspondence principle underlies Ulysses' speech. The speech reveals that when the planets go astray, or "ill aspects of planets evil" affect the cosmic order, harmony, degree, and office are dethroned. When chaos occurs in the heavens it affects the earth.

Shakespeare's fondness for the astrological image is

not limited to stock celestial images functioning as apostrophes or dramatic similes. In Ulysses' speech on order it is the macrocosm which observes degree, harmony, and order. If there are ill aspects in the macrocosm, the microcosm reflects these defects or disorders through discord. Shakespeare develops a dramatic conceit which expresses the Elizabethan concept of universal order.

Another example of an astrological allusion expanded into a dramatic conceit is found in Hamlet's explanation of the "vicious mole of nature." In it Shakespeare develops a dramatic conceit of imperfect man, by elevating an Elizabethan astro-medical theory to the artistic level of metaphor. The microcosm of man, not the macrocosm of the universe, is the focal point of the conceit, but the former sphere corresponds to the latter cosmic empyrean by direct analogy. Therefore, they were inseparable in Elizabethan thought. Hamlet says to Horatio:

So oft it chanceth in particular men,
 That for some vicious mole of nature in them,
 As in their birth--wherein they are not guilty,
 Since nature cannot choose his origin--
 By the o'ergrowth of some complexion,
 Oft breaking down the pales and forts of reason,
 Or by some habit that too much o'erleavens
 The form of plausible manners, that these men--
 Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect,
 Being Nature's livery, or Fortune's star--
 Their virtues else--be they as pure as grace,
 As infinite as man may undergo--
 Shall in the general censure take corruption
 From that particular fault. . . .

(I.iv.23-36)

Some critics view the "vicious mole of nature" as a distinct

reference to the classical concept of the tragic flaw.³⁶ This flaw in the protagonist leads to the eventual downfall of the tragic character. No doubt such an astute classic theory can be imposed on this passage. Yet it is possible that the same human-flaw theme can be extracted from an astrological interpretation of the passage, without classical imposition.

Don Cameron Allen points out in his examination of the Renaissance period that sixteenth century physicians relied on astrology.³⁷ Allen lists Henry Law, Thomas Twyne, John Dee, and John Securis as astro-physicians. Dr. Richard Foster, President of the College of Physicians, defends the use of astrology as a diagnostic tool "in the preface to his Ephemerides for 1575 and called the art the handmaid of medicine."³⁸ Part of the astro-physic belief was the birthmark theory. The best statement of this astrological theory and the effect it had on medical belief can be seen in Joseph Blagrave's Blagrave's Introduction to Astrology. Although it is written later than Hamlet, Blagrave reveals the Renaissance physician's concern for the birthmark theory:

³⁶Lily Bess Campbell holds this critical position. See Lily Bess Campbell, Shakespeare's Tragic Heroes: Slaves of Passion (New York, 1960), p. 22.

³⁷Don Cameron Allen, The Star-Crossed Renaissance (New York, 1966), pp. 104-105.

³⁸Allen, p. 104.

In Nativities . . . if the Ascendant . . . or the Moon be afflicted in any of the Signs . . . look in what sign the Significator is in: in that Limb or Member of the Body signified thereby shall the grief or infirmity be accordingly: as instance, if Saturn be Significator . . . and in Cancer, then the grief will be in the reins or belly, or both: In a Nativity it showeth some mark or defect in those parts;³⁹

Based on Ptolemy's Tetrabiblos, the theory points out that the sign of the zodiac which is on the ascendant, the eastern horizon, will imprint a birthmark, mole, or some other physical mark on one part of the body at birth. The part of the body thus marked is determined by the sign itself. For example, if Aries, or Mars, its ruling planet, is on the ascendant at the time of a native's birth, as revealed by his natal horoscope, then there will be on that person a mole or birthmark in the region of the head. The head is governed by the zodiac sign of Aries. If the person is born with the sign of Scorpio on the ascendant, then the mole, or imperfection, will appear in the genital area. The same can be said for the other signs and respective areas of the body which they rule.

William Lilly also illustrates this astrological mole or birthmark theory. In a lengthy passage from his Christian Astrology modestly treated in Three Books, he elaborates on this mole theory in relation to horary astrology:

³⁹Blagrave, p. 34.

What Marke, Mole or Scarre the Querent
hath in any Member of his Body.

I have many times admired at the verity hereof, and it hath been one maine argument of my engaging so farre in all the parts of Astrology, for very rarely you shall find these rules faile.

When you have upon any demand erected the querents Figure, consider the Signe ascending, what member of mans body it represents, and tell the querent he hath a Mole, Scar or marke on that part of his body represented by that Signe; as if the Signe ascending be ♃, it's on the Neck: if in ♋, on the Arms, &c. Se also in which of the twelve Signes of the Zodiack the Lord of the Ascendant is in, and in that member represented by that Signe, he or she hath another.

Then observe the Signe descending on the Cusp of the sixt house, and what part of mans body it personates, for in that member shall you find another; so shall you discover another in that member which is signified by the Signe wherein the Lord the sixt is.

Last of all, consider what Signe the Moon is in, and what member of mans body it denotes, therein shall you also find a Mark, Mole or Scarre: if ♁ signifie the Mark, it's a darkish, obscure, black one; if ♃, then it's usually some Scarre or Cut if he be in a fiery Signe, or else in any other Signe, a red mole; and you must alwayes know, that if either the Signe, or the Planet signifying the Mole, Marke or Scarre, be much afflicted, the Mark or Scarre is the greater and more eminent.

If the Signe be Masculine, and the Planet Masculine, the Mole or Scar is on the right side of the body.

The contrary judge, if the Signe be Feminine, and the Lord thereof in a Feminine Signe,

If the Significator of the Scarre or Mole be above the earth, (that is, from the Cusp of the Ascendant to the Cusp of the seventh, as either in the twelfth, eleventh, tenth, ninth, eighth or seventh) the Mark is on the fore part of the body, or visible to the eye, or on the out-side of the member; but if the Significator be under the earth, viz. in the first, second, third, fourth, fift, sixt, the Mole or Scarre is on the back part of the body, not visible, but on the inside of the member.⁴⁰

⁴⁰Lilly, p. 148.

As can be seen, Lilly explains a sophisticated method of determining the querent's mole, and he also describes the exact position of the birthmark or mole in relation to correlating zodiacal degrees in the horoscopes of the querent and the horary figure:

If few degrees of a Signe doe ascend, or if the Lord of the Signe be in few degrees, the Mole, Mark or Scarre is in the upper part of the member; if the middle of the Signe ascend, or the Lord thereof in the middle, or neer the middle of the Signe, the Mole or Mark is so in the member, viz. in the middle: If the latter degrees ascend, or the Moon, or Lord of the first or sixth house be neer the last degrees of the Sign, the Mole, Mark or Scar is neere the lower part of the member.

If your Question be radical, the time rightly taken, and the party enquiring be of sufficient age, or no Infant, you shall rarely find error in this rule: I have many times upon a sudden in company, tried this experiment upon some of the company, and ever found it true, as many in this City well know. In November and December, when Signes of short ascensions are in the Ascendant, you must be wary, for in regard many times the ☉ is not then visible, and Clocks may faile, it's possible you may be deceived, and misse of a right Ascendant, for ♀ and ♃ doe each of them ascend in the space of three quarters of an hour, and some few minutes; ♄ and ♅ in one hour and some odde minutes; but if you have the time of the day exact, you need not ever mistrust the verity of your Judgment: which will infinitely satisfie any that are Students herein, and cause them to take great pleasure in the Art, and make them sensible, that there is as much sincerity in all the whole Art of Astrologie, when it is rightly understood and practiced, which at this day I must confesse it is by very few.⁴¹

Lilly strongly points out that these "rules" are applicable to every astrological situation, and he emphasizes the

⁴¹Lilly, pp. 148-149.

importance of considering infortunes in the horary figure:

As these rules will hold certaine upon the body of every querent, and in every question, so will they upon the body of the quesited, (mutatis, mutan-
dis;) as if one enquires somewhat concerning his Wife, then the Signe of the seventh house, and the Signe wherein the Lord of the seventh is, shall shew the Womans Marks; so shall the Signe upon the Cusp of the twelfth, for that is the sixth from the seventh, and the Signe wherein the Lord of the twelfth is in, shew two more Moles or Marks of the Woman.

Usually an Infortune in the Ascendant blemishes the Face with some Mole or Scarre according to his nature, for the first house signifies the Face, the second the Neck, the third the Armes and Shoulders, the fourth the Brest and Paps, and fifth the Heart, &c. and so every house and Signe in order, according to succession; for what Signe soever is in the Ascendant, yet in every Question the first house represents the Face: Many times if the ☽ be in ♋ or ♌ of the ☉, the querent hath some blemish or the like near one of his Eyes; and this is ever true, if the ♋ or ♌ be in Angles, and either of them have any ill aspect to Mars.⁴²

Lilly's example is based on horary questions, and it clearly points out the existence of an astro-medical theory of a mark appearing on a man's body at his birth caused by astrological influences. The horary method Lilly cites above, erecting a horoscope on the moment of some event or question to determine the outcome of the event, is a branch of astrology quite common in Renaissance England. Whenever an event occurred that warranted investigation the querent quickly wrote down the time of the event and later erected a horoscope for the event's time to see if the event was promising or ill. Hamlet, as soon as he talks to the ghost of his

⁴²Lilly, p. 149.

father, exclaims: "My tables--meet it is I set it down /
 [Writing] That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain"
 (I.v.107-108). Harrison points out Hamlet is writing in a
 notebook.⁴³ Possibly the "tables" Hamlet refers to are
 astrological tables and the Prince is marking the time he
 saw the ghost to determine if the ghost is truthful in his
 discourse, or Hamlet may want to know if the ghost is an
 evil or good spirit. Lilly describes how a sudden event can
 be judged:

Of a thing suddenly happening, Whether it
 signifieth Good or Evill.

Erect your Figure of Heaven at what time the
 Accident happened, else when you first heard of it;
 then consider who is Lord of that Signe wherein the
Sunne is, and the Lord of that Signe wherein the
MOON is, and the Lord of the house of Life, which
 is ever the Ascendant, and see which of these is
 most powerfull in the Ascendant, let his position
 be considered, and if he be in * of Δ with the \odot
 Υ or $\text{\textcircled{f}}$, there will no evill chance upon the preced-
 ing Accident, Rumour or Report; but if you find
 that Planet weak in the Scheame, combust, or in \square
 $\text{\textcircled{p}}$ or $\text{\textcircled{c}}$ of $\text{\textcircled{d}}$ $\text{\textcircled{h}}$ $\text{\textcircled{f}}$, there will some misfortune follow
 after that accident, in one kind or other; if you
 consider the Planet afflicting your Significator;
 his positure and nature, it may easily be dis-
 covered, in what nature the evill will chance or
 upon what occasion; as if the Lord of the third,
 from or by some Neighbour or Kinsman; if the Lord
 of the second impedit them, then losse in sub-
 stance; if Lord of the fourth, expect discontent
 with one of your Parents, or about Land or Houses;
 if the Lord of the fifth, some difference or dis-
 cord in an Alehouse or Taverne, or in Company
 keeping, or by meanes of some Child, &c. and so of
 the rest.⁴⁴

⁴³Harrison, ed., p. 895, fn. 98.

⁴⁴Lilly, p. 150.

Hamlet's comment at the close of this scene, "The time is out of joint. Oh, cursèd spite / That ever I was born to set it right!" (I.v.189-190), indicates that Hamlet knows the element of time, astrological time, is "out of joint" with his own natal horoscope, and hence he must set "it right" despite his "cursèd spite." Hamlet, as a scholar at the University of Wittenberg, could have been familiar with horary astrology.

Shakespeare elevates the astro-birthmark theory to the ethical plane of a moral defect. He transforms an astro-medical theory into a dramatic metaphor. By working the metaphor through Hamlet's conceit, the moral result parallels the physical equivalent of such natal defects. The meaning is obvious; the metaphor quite understandable; just as "Fortune's star" stamps a person's body with a defect, it stamps his soul as well, and the soul may from that "particular fault" corrupt itself. Hamlet's vicious mole implies a moral imperfection as well as a physical imperfection. Ulysses' speech on order and Hamlet's discourse on the "vicious mole" display Shakespeare's skill in fashioning an elaborate dramatic conceit out of astrological images. Each conceit works because of the macro-microcosmic paradigm Shakespeare constructs, a cosmic paradigm familiar to most Elizabethans. Shakespeare employs this almagestical archetype successfully by cultivation of specific astrological images.

The celestial images employed by John Webster in his

powerful tragedy, The Dvtchesse of Malfy, have strong astrological implications that foreshadow dramatic events. The celestial imagery is woven into the dramatic structure of the play in a symbolical manner. Webster mainly employs this symbolical technique in the characters of Bosola and the Duchess and in the natal horoscope of the first child of the Duchess. Webster fuses both literal and symbolical meanings into his dramatic imagery through astrological implications.

Bosola comments to the Cardinal in the opening scene of the play: "I will thrive some way: blackbirds fatten best in hard weather: why not I, in these dogge-dayes?"⁴⁵ The celestial image used here is the "dogge-dayes" which, as mentioned earlier, occur in the months of July and August. During this period the Dog Star, Sirius, and the sun are conjunct in the constellation Canis Major. This celestial happening, according to astrological tradition, produces an infertile terrestrial period because the earth is hot, dry, and scorched; it is a period when all efforts to grow crops are useless. The image seems to foreshadow Bosola's futile attempts to gain advancement through the harvesting of his actions with the Cardinal and Ferdinand. Bosola's "dogge-dayes" produce "hard weather," and like Sirius, the Dog Star,

⁴⁵John Webster, The Dvtchesse of Malfy, The Complete Works of John Webster, ed. F. L. Lucas. 4 vols. (London, 1966), II, I.i.39-40. All citations from Webster's plays are from Lucas' standard edition.

he is swayed by the influence of larger forces, the Cardinal and Ferdinand, who finally cause the downfall and death of Bosola. Bosola thrives "in these dogge-dayes," but his effort for advancement proves barren.

Another example of astrological implications in Webster's celestial imagery pertains to the Duchess. She is first referred to by Antonio in terms of light imagery: "She stains the time past: lights the time to come" (I.i. 214). Webster develops this light image into an image of the sun. It appears when Ferdinand is disclosing his hatred for the Duchess to the Cardinal: ". . . ill finde Scorpions to string my whips, / And fix her in a generall ecclipse" (II.v. 101-102). The image indicated here is the sun being eclipsed by the moon; therefore, this celestial image suggests that the Duchess will die as the sun "dies" during an eclipse. This image is repeated by Ferdinand when he confronts Antonio and the Duchess in her private chamber:

Die then, quickle:
Vertue, where art thou hid? what hideous thing
Is it, that doth ecclipze thee?
(III.ii.80-82)

It is in the dark scene between Ferdinand and the Duchess that the effect of this eclipse image is dramatically realized. Ferdinand, about to present the Duchess with a dead man's cold hand, gloats: "This darkenes suits you well" (IV.i.36). Ferdinand has literally eclipsed the light of the Duchess, as he will eclipse her life.

The sun is considered by astrologers to be the sign

of royalty and nobility: "The Sun denotes a dignity of manner, integrity of nature, and loyalty to a cause."⁴⁶ The sun is the ruler of the royal zodiac sign, Leo, or the Lion. A further leonine allusion may be hinted at in Ferdinand's caustic reference to the children of the Duchess when he asks: ". . . where are your Cubbs" (IV.i 40)?--lion cubs? The eclipse imagery is brilliantly linked to the sun imagery. Astrologers agree that a solar eclipse means that a person in high estate--in the Renaissance, a king, queen, pope, or other such royal personage--will meet with calamity or death.⁴⁷ Webster appears knowledgeable of this eclipse tradition and seems to be referring to it in the Duchess' death.

Another suggestion that the Duchess is aesthetically associated with the sun may be found when Bosola is talking with Antonio, after Antonio reveals to Delio the secret of his marriage to the Duchess; Bosola's celestial imagery defines Antonio's relationship to the Duchess and his general social position in the play: "Oh (Sir) you are Lord of the ascendant, chiefe man with the Duchesse. . . : Say you were lineally descended from King Pippin, or he himselfe, what of this?"(II.i.99-102). The literal meaning of

⁴⁶Litzka R. Gibson and Walter B. Gibson, The Complete Illustrated Book of Psychic Sciences (New York, 1966), p. 45.

⁴⁷See Lilly, p. 71.

the passage is apparent. Antonio is on the rise, or "Lord of the ascendant," because he is in the favor of the Duchess. Through the astrological meaning of the passage Webster artfully links this particular line of Bosola to a line in the letter Bosola finds containing the natal horoscope of the Duchess' newborn babe and relates this to the sun imagery of the Duchess.

Webster displays an accurate understanding of astrological detail in the natal horoscope of the Duchess' first child. This horoscope portends the difficulties and dangers the child will suffer under the persecution of Ferdinand and the Cardinal. The child is born between the hours of twelve and one on December 19, 1504. No such horoscope appears in Bandello's account. It is Webster's own invention. The hour of the child's birth is at a time when all the forces of evil are at their height--midnight, and this can be considered an ill omen. Bosola carefully reads the horoscope:

Antonio here about, did drop a Paper--
Some of your helpe (falce-friend)--oh, here it is:
What's here? a childes Nativitie calculated!

The Dutchesse was deliver'd of a Sonne,
'tweene the houres twelve, and one, in the night:
Anno Dom: 1504. (that's this yeere) decimo nono
Decembris, (that's this night) taken according
to the Meridian of Malfy (that's our Dutchesse:
happy discovery!). The Lord of the first house,
being combust in the ascendant, signifies short
life: and Mars being in a human signe, joyn'd
to the taile of the Dragon, in the eight house,
doth threaten a violent death; Caete[r] a non
scrutantur.

(II.iii.70-80)

This date puts the child's birth in the astrological sign of Sagittarius. Webster even places the child in the

Leo decanate of Sagittarius, or the last ten days of the sign. This is indicative of the child's royal birth, for the sign Leo governs kings and other male royalty. The lord of the ascendant in the horoscope is "combust" and this signifies danger of oppression by some great person who is in a position of power. Being in the native's First House, the danger will be to his physical well-being. Blagrove explains the significations of combustion:

Combustion.

A Planet is said to be combust of the Sun when he is not fully elongated from the Sun 8 degrees, 30 minutes: when a Planet is combust, it sheweth, that those who are represented thereby are in great fear, and over-powered by some great person: and in case of Sickness, it sheweth great danger of death, more especially if the Sun be in the eighth House, or Lord of the eighth, twelfth, or fourth House, at the time of Decumbiture, or Question.⁴⁸

Webster uses the natal horoscope to dramatically foreshadow the dangers facing the child which prove true when Antonio and the child flee the Duke's persecution. Ironically, this is the only child to survive the Duchess. The other two children are executed along with their mother. Antonio's son returns with Delio in the closing scene, and Delio remarks:

Let us make noble use
Of this great ruine; and joyne all our force
To establish this yong hopeful gentleman
In's mothers right.

(V.v.135-138)

⁴⁸Blagrove, p. 87. See also Lilly, p. 648.

" . . . Mars being in a human signe, joyn'd to the taile of the Dragon, in the eight house, doth threaten a violent death" (II.iii.78-79). This letter does not specify what human sign Mars rules. By the process of elimination, Aquarius, Gemini, and Virgo are ruled out because there are no indications of violent deaths when Mars rules in these signs. The only other sign considered as a human sign is Scorpio. The sign of Scorpio was pictured as the god Mars, who was considered to be a human among the other symbols of the zodiac. Scorpions were used to represent this sign. Possibly Webster gives a suggestion of the death of the child in Ferdinand's diatribe: ". . . i'll finde Scorpions to string my whips" (II.v.101). When Mars is in the Eighth House, which Scorpio rules, a violent death is destined.⁴⁹

Webster reinforces the unfavorable aspect of the horoscope by indicating that the child is born "joyn'd to the taile of the Dragon." This same allusion is part of Edmund's horoscope in King Lear. The celestial image invoked in both plays refers to the elliptical path of the moon as it intercepts the elliptical path of the earth as the satellite revolves around the planet. An ascending node, according to Margaret Hone in her book The Modern Textbook of Astrology, exerts a favorable influence on a natal horoscope. A descending node, or a birth under the dragon's tail,

⁴⁹ See Ferrier, p. 87. Ferrier lists the ill effects of Mars in the Eighth House. Also see Lilly, p. 648.

exerts an unfavorable influence on a child's birth.⁵⁰ By accurately using this astrological image of a celestial occurrence, Webster is emphasizing the destined early and violent grief of the Duchess' child.

It can be seen that Webster employs celestial imagery in such a manner in The Dytchesse of Malfy suggesting symbolically the future events that will occur to the characters in the play. He does this through the astrological implications in the images he chooses. He is aware of the astrological associations celestial images create, and he employs them artistically to foreshadow dramatic events in the play and to aesthetically produce a unique form of dramatic irony.

Other playwrights found astrological material adaptable to the stage. Ben Jonson's utilization of astrology is seen in the opening speech of Volpone. Volpone is greeting the day as the sun dawns:

Good morning to the day; and, next, my gold:
Open the shrine, that I may see my saint.
Haile the worlds soule, and mine. More glad then is
The teeming earth, to see the long'd-for sunne
Peep through the hornes of the celestiall ram,
Am I, to view thy splendor, darkning his.⁵¹

The astrological allusion is obvious; it is spring when the

⁵⁰ Margaret Hone, The Modern Textbook of Astrology (London, 1962), pp. 152-153.

⁵¹ Ben Jonson, Volpone, Ben Jonson, eds. C. H. Herford and Percy Simpson, 10 vols. (London, 1937), I, I.i.1-6. All quotations from Ben Jonson are cited from this standard edition.

sun is in the sign of the zodiac known as Aries, the Ram. Aries begins the cyclic drama of the annual seasons, and Jonson employs this image at the beginning of the play. When it is combined with the new dawn arising in the sky, the feeling Jonson communicates to his audience is one of commencement. Jonson co-ordinates the beginning of his play with the play's time structure through astrological allusion.

The image of the sun is brought into play by Jonson when Volpone compares the sun, a creation of nature, to a golden coin, an artifact of man. Immediately, a correspondence is set up between a natural object of the universe and an unnatural object of mankind. The scene suggests a feeling of adoration which belongs to the sun, as in the case of sun worshippers, but such adoration is transferred to the golden coin instead, delineating a specific value system in Volpone. Jonson artistically creates a feeling of commencement in the beginning of the play, and at the same time he initiates a value system adhered to by his main character.

Later on in the play, Jonson uses an astrological allusion to reveal a common belief of the period concerning portents. Sir Politic Would-Be and Peregrine are conversing, and Sir Politic comments:

Now, heauen!

What prodigies be these? The fires at Berwike!
 And the new starre! these things concurring,
 strange!
 And full of omen! Saw you those meteors?
 (II.i.35-38)

Peregrine acknowledges that he has witnessed such extra-

terrestrial occurrences and Sir Politic replies: "Fearefull!" (II.i.39). "Fearefull" is an apt description of the general reaction of the Renaissance public to a sudden display of astronomical phenomena. Unnatural heavenly displays played an important part in astrology. The motions of the heavens were considered uniform and regular. Using the principle of judicial astrology, if a sudden disruptive celestial happening were to occur in the heavens, disrupted events should happen on the earth. Sir Politic refers to an actual astronomical occurrence which took place in Berwick-on-Tweed, England, a Northumbrian seaport on the mouth of the Tweed River.

Sir Politic Would-Be is not the only Jonsonian character who considers astrology important in the affairs of the world. In Jonson's masterpiece, The Alchemist, astrology, combined with its sister occult art, alchemy, forms a background of the play that reveals the follies and vices of a "get-something-the-easy-way" philosophy. The main purpose of astrology in this play is to reinforce the accuracy of the alchemical art. The concentration here will be on the astrological imagery and not on the alchemical imagery. However, these occult arts are linked together, at least as subject matter, and cannot really be separated to do either of them justice.

The practice of alchemy was both an honest occupation and a con game. Chaucer's Canon's Yeoman's Tale tells

the vices of the alchemist's trade.⁵² One important tenet must be understood concerning the art and practice of alchemy. The purity of the practitioner of the art is of primary importance in alchemy. The legendary philosopher's stone could not be produced by a man of vice. The same process of purification which occurred in the alchemical process, purification, distillation, and projection had to take place in the alchemist on a moral level. In the case of the incorrigible Subtle, he could never make the stone. Operating on this basic premise, The Alchemist is a brilliant satire on the follies of men who are "taken in" by the Subtles of the world.

Jonson is quite knowledgeable of Subtle's alchemical art. The allusions to astrology support the alchemical details. The first time Jonson utilizes an astrological reference is when Dol Common mentions the terms "Sol" and "Luna," i.e., the "sun" and the "moon" (I.i.152). But Jonson uses this astrological reference in a special alchemical sense to indicate a particular value system. The terms "Sol" and "Luna" could have numerous astrological meanings, e.g., male and female, king and queen, ruler and subjects. When placed in the specific alchemical context of the play, and in the particular scene with the three

⁵²Geoffrey Chaucer, The Canterbury Tales, The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, ed. F. N. Robinson, 2nd. ed. rev. (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1961), "The Canon's Yeoman's Prologue and Tale," pp. 213 ff.

confederates arguing over money, the terms "Sol" and "Luna" not only represent the precious alchemical metals of gold and silver, but also reveal that the primary alchemical concern of the unholy triumvirate is economic advancement. Subtle, after being threatened by Face, exclaims: "Not I, by heaven--". Dol Common corrects the exclamation abruptly: "Your Sol and Luna-- [to Face] helpe me" (I.i.152). Face and Dol Common would throttle Subtle for a better "cut" of the con game of alchemy.

Another reference to astrology occurs when Dapper, a gullible clerk, is told by Face: "Well, a rare starre / Raign'd at your birth" (I.ii.123-124). This is a humorous comment on Face's part; there are no "rare" stars in astrology. There are rare conjunctions, eclipses, and aspects, but no rare stars. The parody may be upon the privileged Christian myth of a star shining brightly in the East to signify the birth of Christ. Yet Dapper replies enthusiastically to Face's announcement. Jonson is reinforcing a comical situation with an astrological allusion that is equally humorous. He seems to have a penchant for using the rare or newly discovered star as a comic device. Sir Politic Would-Be is fascinated by a newly discovered star (Volpone II.i.36). Dapper's gullible belief in astrology is indicated by his reaction to Face's remark: "At mine, sir? no" (I.ii.124).

An intricate astrological allusion appears in the conversation Subtle has with Drugger. Drugger has come to

Subtle to ask magical help in setting up a tobacco store. Subtle begins to give the man an account of his personality by reading his forehead and palms. This passage is significant because it reveals the extent to which astrology permeated the other branches of the occult arts. Jonson's accuracy in this passage is impeccable. After reading Drugger's forehead, Subtle proceeds to analyze Drugger's character according to the principles of chiromancy:

I knew't, by certaine spots too, in his teeth,
 And on the naile of his mercurial finger.
 FAC. Which finger's that? SVB. His little
 finger. Looke.
 Yo'were borne vpon a wensday? DRV. Yes, indeed,
 sir.
 SVB. The thumbe, in chiromantie, we giue VENVS;
 The fore-finger to IOVE; the midst, to SATVRNE;
 The ring to SOL; the least, to MERCVRIE:
 Who was the lord, sir, of his horoscope,
 His house of life being Libra, which fore-shew'd,
 He should be a merchant, and should trade with
 ballance.

(I.iii.48-57)

In the art of palmistry each finger is assigned to a planet in the solar system. Jonson enumerates the exact system used. Many books on palmistry were available to Jonson in the Renaissance period.⁵³ Each planet would influence the growth and character of that person. By interpreting the lines and growth structure of the hand, Subtle analyzes the individual's personality and planetary influences. Subtle notices that the mercurial finger has certain spots on it.

⁵³ Joannes Indagine, Briefe introduction vnto the art of chiromancy, trans. F. Wither[s] (1558). Also see Chapter II for further physiognomic references.

He does not disclose the nature or shape of those spots, which could be important in determining the characteristics of Drugger. Yet no other fingers are said to have marks on them and this means that the planet which is most influential in Drugger's horoscope, and therefore in his life, is the planet which governs the little finger. This planet, then, was the lord of Drugger's horoscope or had aspected the eastern horizon at the time of Drugger's birth. Such a planet is called the lord of the ascendant and it governs the physical appearance of an individual. Drugger's lord is Mercury.

Subtle's next statement is accurate, but is not necessarily deduced from palmistry or from Drugger's ascendant planet. He says that the House of Life, which is used here in the sense of career, is governed by the sign Libra, whose symbol is the balance, or scales. How Subtle reads this in the palm of Drugger's hand is questionable, but if the House of Life, the Tenth House of the horoscope, is ruled by Libra, which is a standard astrological interpretation, it would indicate a career as a merchant, or a lawyer.

There is a curious double entendre in this passage. The ruling planet, or lord of the sign of Libra, is Venus. Venus is the planet of harmony, beauty, and fairness. These are desirable qualities in a merchant. Yet the ruling planet Subtle associates with Drugger is Mercury, and it is in Mercury's association with Libra that the humor lies. Mercury, in ill-aspect, can be the planet of thieves and

deceit. Blaggrave uses the position of Mercury to indicate the time and direction of a prison escape.⁵⁴ A person with a bad mercurial disposition or character is considered sneaky, quick, and shifty. Drugger fits this description. He is not concerned about the acquisition of a clientele through hard work, but he wants a quick way of acquiring a profitable business. Jonson uses the astrological allusion here to underscore Drugger's personality.

Following the astrological supplement to palmistry, Jonson shows in his next astrological allusion the dependence of alchemy upon astrology. In Act III, scene ii, Subtle, replying to a question posed by Tribulation Wholesome, tells when the philosopher's stone will be ready:

SVB. Let me see,
How's the moone, now? Eight, nine, ten dayes
hence
He will be siluer potate; then, three dayes,
Before he citronise: some fifteene dayes,
The Magisterium will be perfected.

ANA. About the second day, of the third weeke,
In the ninth month? SVB. Yes, my good ANANIAS.
(III.ii.126-132)

Jonson's reference is intentionally specific. The moon is important because it governs the metal silver. The most profitable time for beginning activities governed by the moon is the time when the satellite is starting to wax. When the moon is full, its force on the alchemical process is strongest and hence liquified silver is the result.

⁵⁴Blaggrave, p. 176.

Three days after this the arduous process "citronizes." This term is not clear. The reference could be to the small quartz-like crystals which are characteristic of citron and not to the color of citron, in which case, "citronize" could refer to the process of crystallization which takes place just before the magisterium is projected.

Although Jonson handles the astrological image well in The Alchemist, it is in The Haddington Masque that Jonson's superb mastery of the astrological allusion manifests itself. The drama of the seasons and signs is artistically revealed in the masque of the zodiac which Vulcan summons forth from the earth:

VVLKAN.

It is a spheare, I'haue formed round, and euen,
 In due proportion to the spheare of heauen,
 With all his lines, and circles; that compose
 The perfect'st forme, and aptly doe disclose
 The heauen of marriage: which I tittle it.
 Within whose Zodiack, I haue made to sit,
 In order of the signes, twelue sacred powers,
 That are praesiding at all nuptiall howers:
 (ll. 275-283)

Vulcan, the pagan blacksmith, has forged a steel cosmographical model of the zodiac for Love's horoscope. This art of cosmography was popular in Renaissance England. One has only to examine the woodcuts on books published on cosmography in the 1600's and 1700's. Vulcan continues to give an astrological analysis of nuptial qualities:

1. The first, in ARIES place, respecteth pride
 Of youth; and beauty; graces in the bride.
2. In TAVRVS, he loues strength, and manlinesse;
 The vertues, which the bridegroom should
 professe.

3. In GEMINI, that noble power is showne,
That twins their hearts; and doth, of two,
make one.
4. In CANCER, he that bids the wife giue way
With backward yeelding, to her husbands sway.
5. In LEO, he that doth instill the heate
Into the man: which, from the following seate,
6. Is tempred so, as he that lookes from thence
Sees, yet, they keepe a VIRGIN innocence.
7. In LIBRA'S roome, rules he that doth supply
All happy beds with sweet aequality.
8. The SCORPIONS place he fills, that make[s] the
iarres,
And stings in wedlocke; little strifes, and
warres:
9. Which he, in th' ARCHERS throne, doth soone
remoue
By making, with his shafts, new wounds of
loue.
10. And those the follower, with more heate,
inspires,
As, in the GOATE, the sun renews his fires.
11. In wet AQVARIVS stead, reignes he, that
showres
Fertilitie vpon the geniall bowres.
12. Last, in the FISHES place, sits he, doth say;
In married ioyes, all should be dumbe, as
they.
And this hath VVLCAN, for his VENVS, done,
To grace the chaster triumph of her sonne.
(ll. 284-309)

Jonson applies the individual qualities of each zodiacal sign to nuptial attributes. An Arian person is proud and Aries begins the marriage just as it occupies the vernal equinox of the new astrological year. It is at this point, when the sun enters Aries, that the zodiac year begins with the vernal equinox. The second sign is Taurus, the Bull, and Jonson equates the qualities of the bull, strength and manliness, to the virtue the bridegroom possesses. He continues through the zodiac linking each of the zodiacal qualities to the marriage itself. Finally, Aquarius, the Water-Bearer, will bring the showers necessary to

produce a fruitful union of the two lovers.

The ritual of the masque is enriched by the procession of this zodiac ceremony. The analogy between the zodiac signs of heaven and the marriage of Lord Viscount Haddington to Lady Elizabeth Ratcliffe, daughter of Robert, Earl of Sussex, is a charming dramatic conceit. The signs of the zodiac bestow their presents upon the bride and groom, thus sanctioning the earthly marriage and binding it in heaven. Love's horoscope dignifies the solemn but festive occasion with the qualities of the zodiac.

It can be seen from this review of selected Renaissance plays that the Renaissance dramatist saw in the astrological image a suitable dramatic device. The use of astrological personalities in creating dramatic characterizations provided a workable psychology for Renaissance playwrights. The concept of astrology as Fate or Fortune created a functional deus ex machina for the dramatic manipulation of a character's destiny. The use of commonplace beliefs in astronomical phenomena enabled the playwright to use such phenomena as acceptable dramatic devices for foreshadowing events which would occur in his play.

Renaissance astrology's hold on the dramatist's mind is irrelevant when its artistic value as a dramatic device is considered. If the man on the street did consider his fortunes ruled by the motions of the planets, conjunctions, or eclipses, then this belief established a common starting ground for a playwright's attempt to communicate to

his audience. If the man on the street did not believe seriously in astrology, perhaps his curiosity overcame his purse and he paid to see the plays anyway. Whichever is true can only be conjectured. The fact remains that there are astrological allusions in the plays of Marlowe, Jonson, Webster, Shakespeare, and other Renaissance playwrights. These astrological allusions, when fully understood, contribute to the dramatic meaning and substance of the plays.

CHAPTER II

PHYSIOGNOMY IN RENAISSANCE CHARACTER

Physiognomy, like astrology, has its origins in the preliterate ages of mankind. The relationship between anatomy and character was a topic of earnest concern in the classical world. Aristotle, Galen, Polemo Rhetor, Adamantius, and other physiognomists saw a correlation between a man's character and his physical make-up.¹ Physiognomists wrote handbooks on their studies and they gave interpretations of character through anatomical analysis.² The influence of physiognomy on classical literature is considerable. The Homeric epics contain passages that illustrate the qualities in character through physical make-up. In the works of Hesiod, the gods are emphasized

¹Elizabeth Cornelia Evans, Physiognomics in the Ancient World, Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, N.S., 59, Pt. 5 (1969), pp. 5-17. This article represents the best critical work published in recent years on the manuscript history of the physiognomic treatises in the ancient world. I am much indebted to Professor Evans for her detailed study.

²The four prominent ancient physiognomic handbooks are the Pseudo-Aristotelian Physiognomonica, third century B.C.; de Physiognomonica by Polemo Rhetor of Laodicea, second century A.D.; the Physiognomonica of Adamantius the Sophist, fourth century A.D.; and a Latin text by an unknown author entitled de Physiognomonica. See Evans, p. 5. She lists these four treatises as the "important technical handbooks extant" in physiognomy, written in the Greek and Roman era.

with physical descriptions depicting their virtue. In Greek elegiac and lyric poetry, especially the love poems of Sappho, there is an intense concentration upon the physical beauty of the women in the poems. The drama of the Greeks, rich in the imagery of beauty and virtue, relies heavily upon physical description to convey the meaning or virtue of a character. The anger of a scorned Medea is read in the color and physical appearance of her eyes.³

Evans' study attempts to consider ". . . the awareness, either implied or expressed, of a connection between a man's appearance and his inner character as it is revealed in Greek and Latin literature from the time of Homer to the end of the fourth century after Christ, a century which marks the end of the classical era, and the beginning of the barbarian invasions; or, to put it another way, of the descriptions of personal appearance as an aspect of characterization in classical writers."⁴ Her approach is to examine characterization in classical literature from a physiognomic perspective: "It is clear that the technical

³It is beyond the scope of this study to enumerate many examples of physiognomic descriptions of classical characters found in Greek and Roman literature. Evans' study more than adequately displays examples of such description. I am concerned here with physiognomic description in English Renaissance drama, although I do cite examples of physiognomic portraiture from selected classical writers whose literature exerted an influence on English Renaissance drama.

⁴Evans, p. 5.

handbooks on physiognomy enjoyed a far greater popularity among Greek and Roman writers, especially those of the later Greek society and Roman Empire, than has generally been supposed."⁵

Evans' idea is not without support from other critics. Geneva Misener cites the specific influence of Aristotle's Peripatetic school of physiognomy upon the characters of Theophrastus: "The Peripatetic physiognomists added to their art a new and singularly happy method, the composite pictures of familiar types of character. They are the photographic complements of Aristotle's subtle ethical sketches and the witty satires on manners of Theophrastus. Many of the well-known social types sit for their pictures again, the small soul, the shameless, the ironical, and the loquacious."⁶ The characters of Theophrastus are taken from contemporary Greek society, and some of the character types display certain physiognomic attributes.⁷ This method of type-characterization develops a literary iconography which has as its basis the fundamental physiognomic principle that outward appearance is an indicator of personality:

NASTINESS

Nastiness is a neglect of the person which is

⁵Evans, p. 5.

⁶Geneva Misener, "Loxus, Physician and Physiognomist," Classical Philology, 18, No. 1 (January, 1923), 21.

⁷Misener, p. 21.

painful to others; and your Nasty fellow such as will walk the town with the scall and the scab upon him and with bad nails, and boast that these ailments are hereditary; his father and his grandfather had them before him and 'tis no easy matter to be foisted into his family. He is like also, I warrant you, to have gatherings on his shins and sores on his toes, and seek no remedy, but rather let them grow rank. He will keep himself as shaggy as a beast, with hair well-nigh all over his body, and his teeth all black and rotten.⁸

Theophrastus' iconic character provides ready-made dramatis personae for the alert dramatist. The characters of Theophrastus are drawn carefully, and their character qualities, physical and otherwise, create an iconic literature of character-types which certainly is revealed in Thomas Overbury's Characters (1614):

A Melancholy man

Is a straier from the droue: one that nature made sociable, because shee made him man, and a crazed disposition hath altered. Impleasing to all, as all to him; stragling thoughts are his content, they make him dreame waking, there's his pleasure. His imagination is neuer idle, it keepes his minde in a continuall motion, as the poise the clocke: hee windes vp his thoughts often, and as often unwindes them; Penelopes webbe thriues faster. Hel'e seldome bee found without the shade of some groue, in whose bottome a riuer dwells. He carries a cloud in his face, neuer faire weather: his outside is framed to his inside, in that hee keepes a Decorum, both unseemly. Speake to him; he heares with his eyes, eares follow his mind, and that's not at leasure. Hee thinkes businesse, but neuer does any: he is al contemplation, no

⁸Theophrastus, Characters in The Characters of Theophrastus, trans. J. M. Edmonds (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1953), pp. 86-87. See also Benjamin Boyce, The Theophrastan Character in England to 1642 (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1947), and Chester Noyes Greenough, A Bibliography of the Theophrastan Character in English with Several Portrait Characters (Westport, Connecticut, 1970).

action. Hee hewes and fashions his thoughts, as if he meant them to some purpose, but they proue vnprofitable, as a piece of wrought timber to no vse. His Spirits and the Sunne are enemies; the Sunne bright and warme, his humor blacke and cold: varietie of foolish apparitions people his head, they suffer him not to breath, according to the necessities of nature; which makes him sup vp a draught of as much aire at once, as would serue at thrice. Hee denies nature her due in sleepe, and ouer-paies her with watchfulnesse: nothing pleaseth him long, but that which pleaseth his owne fantasies: they are the consuming euills, and euill consumptions, that consume him alieue. Lastly, he is a man onely in shew, but comes short of the better part; a whole reasonable soule, which is mans chiefe preheminance, and sole marke from creatures sensible.⁹

The Overbury characters are examples of Renaissance physiognomic icons. This term simply means that a small stylized picture of a man's character is drawn using physiognomic tokens. Overbury's melancholic man "carries a cloud in his face, neuer faire weather:" The face is employed as a descriptive agent of the total melancholic disposition of Overbury's character. Overbury remarks that the melancholic's "outside is framed to his inside, in that hee keeps a Decorum, both vnseemly." The outside of the melancholic reflects the condition of his disposition and inner character. Overbury deliberately describes the respiration rate of the melancholic as three times faster than normal for the amount of air he needs. These small tokens,

⁹Thomas Overbury, Characters, The "Conceited Newes" of Sir Thomas Overbury and His Friends, ed. James E. Savage, Scholars' Facsimile and Reprints (Gainesville, Florida, 1968), pp. 100-102.

when put together, create the melancholic character-type.

Evans examines the influence of physiognomy on Greek drama. She mentions a form of "physiognomic consciousness" found in classical authors beginning with Homer and continuing down through the Roman playwright Seneca.¹⁰ Evans divides the art into three main areas: a comparison of the physical characteristics of men and animals through parallel anatomical similarities, e.g., the huge heart of a lion stands for courage; therefore, if a man has a huge heart, he has courage; an ethnological method of classification, such as Egyptians, Thracians, and Scythians; and a catalogue of the significant physical characteristics of the individual body.¹¹ Along with these three classifications, two basic tenets loom large in physiognomy: temperament or character is implied by certain physical tokens or signs and the physical body outwardly displays the innermost emotions found in the soul. The Greek physiognomists realized, long before the advent of modern psychology, the important link between the emotional and physiological processes in the body. These two physiognomic tenets possess tremendous dramatic potential for the playwright who wishes to convey certain character qualities through visual symbols or tokens. Greek drama relied on visual symbols, such as facial masks

¹⁰Evans, p. 6.

¹¹Evans, pp. 7-9.

to represent characters. By using certain physiognomic tokens the dramatist possessed an iconographic medium for character delineation. Evans reveals the basic reasoning behind physiognomy, with an excellent example from Aristotle's Prior Analytics:

It is possible to judge men's characters from their physical appearance, if one grants that body and soul change together in all natural affections. (No doubt after a man has learned music his soul has undergone a certain change, but this affection is not one which comes to us naturally; I mean such affections as fits of anger or desires among natural excitements.) Supposing, then, this is granted, and also that there is one sign of one affection, and that we can recognize the affection and sign proper to each class of creatures, we shall be able to judge character from physical appearance. For if a peculiar affection applies to any individual class, e.g., courage to lions, there must be some corresponding sign of it; for it has been assumed that body and soul are affected together. Let this be 'having large extremities.' This may apply to other classes, but not as wholes; for a sign is peculiar in the sense that the affection is peculiar to the class as a whole, and not to it alone, as we are accustomed to use the term. Thus the same affection will be found in another class also, and man or some other animal will be brave. Therefore he will have the sign; for ex hypothesi there is one sign of one affection. If, then, this is so, and we can collate signs of this kind in the case of animals which have only one peculiar affection, and if each affection has a sign, since it necessarily has only one sign, we shall be able to judge their character by their appearance. But if the genus as a whole has two peculiar affections, e.g., if lions have courage and a readiness to share, how shall we decide which sign of those which are peculiarly associated with the genus belongs to which affection? Probably if both affections are found in some other class not as a whole, that is, when of the classes in which each of them is found certain members possess one but not the other. For if a man is brave but not generous, and exhibits one of the two signs, clearly this will be the sign of courage in the lion as well.

Thus it is possible to judge character from the appearance in the first figure, provided that the middle term is convertible with the first extreme, but is wider in extension than the third term and not convertible with it: e.g., if A stands for courage, B for large extremities and C for lion. Then B applies to all of that to which C applies, and also to others, whereas A applies to all that to which B applies, and to no more, but is convertible with B. Otherwise there will not be one sign of one affection.¹²

With Aristotle's premise as a starting point, the later physiognomists elaborated upon specific anatomical characteristics. Aristotle's argument concentrates on certain correspondences between the anatomical similarities of men and animals. This emphasis is followed by later physiognomists and eventually the pseudo-science becomes codified. The importance of such physiognomic signs as posture, movement of the body, gesture, the build of the body, the color of the hair, and the complexion of the flesh is stressed because these physical tokens imply inner qualities.

After Aristotle the next influential physiognomist is Polemo Rhetor of Laodicea. He composes his de Physiognomonía sometime in the second century A.D. Polemo admired the ideal of the Greek man who possessed certain physiognomic tokens. Evans lists Polemo's physiognomic catalogue for the pure Greek man: ". . . [a] fair

¹² Aristotle, Prior Analytics, Aristotle: The Organon, trans. Hugh Tredennick and Harold P. Cooke (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1955), II.xxvii, pp. 527-531. Evans cites this passage as well (Evans, p. 5). It is the basic theory of physiognomy. All quotations from the Prior Analytics are from this edition.

face with light complexion mixed with red; . . . lean with hands and elbows of moderate size, watchful, quick to learn, with medium-sized head, with thickness and strength in the neck, soft reddish hair, . . . a square countenance, thin lips, a moderate straight nose, moist, shining eyes, which move quickly and contain much light."¹³ These are the conventional physiognomic traits of the pure Greek man, but Polemo also considers individual physiognomical traits including the fingers, the ankles, shins, knees, loins, thighs, hipbones, shoulder blades, the head, and the neck. Polemo also concentrates on the amount of hair, especially on the chest, stomach, and eyebrows.¹⁴ The number of combinations in which these anatomical tokens blend together produced character-types. Polemo depicts certain character-types: ". . . a robust, daring man; . . . a timid man; . . . a man devoted to literature and philosophy; . . . a man lacking zeal and curiosity; . . . a shameless man; . . . a man delighting in apparel and head dress; . . . a judicious and prudent man;" ¹⁵ Polemo includes other types too numerous to list. This list of physiognomic character-types may be the embryo of some conventional characters of the Renaissance stage: the fop, the rejected

¹³Evans, p. 15.

¹⁴Evans, pp. 14-15.

¹⁵Evans, pp. 14-15.

woman, the scorned lover, the clown-fool, the braggart soldier, the malcontent, the melancholic, and others.

Roman literature also utilized physiognomy in characterization. Seneca exhibits physiognomic techniques of characterization and his influence on English drama is a point well established. Seneca's concentration upon the important physiognomic areas of the body is revealed in the nurse's narration to the Chorus of Phaedra's tormented love. The nurse's description centers upon primary physiognomic areas: the eyes, hair, and cheeks:

No hope is there that such suffering can be relie[v]ed, and no end will there be to her mad fires. She is parched by a silent fever, and e'en though 'tis hidden away, shut in her heart, her passion is betrayed in her face; fire darts from her eyes; again, her weary gaze shrinks from the light; nothing long pleases her unbalanced soul, and her limbs by ever-shifting pangs are tossed in changeful wise. Now with failing steps she sinks down as if dying, and can hardly hold up her head on her fainting neck; now she lies down to rest and, heedless of slumber, spends the night in lamentations; she bids them to lift her up and again to lay her down, to loose her hair and again to bind it up; her raiment, with itself dissatisfied, is ever changed. She has now no care for food or health. She walks with aimless feet, wasted now in strength. Her old-time sprightliness is gone, and the ruddy glow of health no longer shines on her bright face; care feeds upon her limbs, her steps totter and the tender grace of her once beautiful form is fallen away; her eyes, which once shone like Phoebus' torch, no longer gleam with their ancestral fire. Tears fall down her face and her cheeks are wet with constant drops, as when on the top of Taurus the

snows melt away, pierced by a warm shower.¹⁶

The chief areas Seneca chooses to project Phaedra's love-madness are those anatomical areas stressed by Polemo and other physiognomists as tokens of character and disposition. It is no mistake that Seneca describes the poor posture and graceless carriage of the once graceful Phaedra. The carriage, walk, and posture of a human being were important physical indicators of disposition. Seneca focuses his description on the disorderly nature of Phaedra's physical appearance. Phaedra attempts to hide her grief, but the physiognomic portraiture Seneca paints can leave no doubt that the physical signs of Phaedra's body are an outward manifestation of the turmoil within the fated woman's soul.

Phaedra tells Hippolytus of her love for Theseus. The physiognomic focal point of this speech centers upon the face of Theseus, especially his cheeks:

Hippolytus, 'tis thus with me: Theseus' features I love, those former looks of his which once as a youth he had, when his first beard marked his smooth cheeks, when he looked on the dark home of the Cretan monster, and gathered in the long thread o'er the winding way. How glorious was he then! Fillets bound his locks, and his young face glowed with the blush of modesty; strong muscles lay beneath the softness of his arms; and his features were as of thy Phoebe or of my Phoebus-- or, rather, were thy own.

(ll. 645-655)

¹⁶Seneca, Hippolytus, Seneca's Tragedies, ed. Frank Justus Miller. 2 vols. (New York, 1917), I, ll. 360-383. All quotations from Seneca's tragedies are taken from this edition.

The face, cheeks, and arms of Theseus are objects which display the qualities Phaedra once loved in her husband. The golden glow found in Theseus' face is associated with virtue and modesty. The physiognomic equation is quite clearly stated by Phaedra herself; modesty in Theseus is inferred from the golden color of his face.

Plautus, another Roman playwright, employs animal physiognomy in some of his characters. An example can be taken from his comedy Aulularia. Certain animal parallels are drawn between Euclio and Megadorus. Euclio says:

This suggests itself to my mind, Megadorus, that you are a wealthy man, a man of rank; that I likewise am a person, the poorest of the poor; now, if I should give my daughter in marriage to you, it suggests itself to my mind that you are the ox, and that I am the ass; when I'm yoked to you, and when I'm not able to bear the burden equally with yourself, I, the ass, must lie down in the mire; you, the ox, would regard me no more than if I had never been born; and I should both find you unjust, and my own class would laugh at me; in neither direction should I have a fixed stall, if there should be any separation; the asses would tear me with their teeth, the oxen would butt at me with their horns. This is the great hazard, in my passing over from the asses to the oxen.¹⁷

Plautus, who probably influenced Jonson, Shakespeare, and Molière, invokes animal characteristics which can be directly traced to Polemo. Ben Jonson follows Plautus' technique of animal characterization in the names he gives to the

¹⁷Plautus, Aulularia, The Comedies of Plautus, trans. H. T. Riley, 2 vols. (New York, 1892), I, II.ii.180-191. All quotations from Plautus' comedies are taken from this edition.

characters in Volpone.

Another area of physiognomic influence which could have influenced characterization in Renaissance drama is classical poetry. Some of the character descriptions developed in classical poetry employ physiognomic tokens. The Renaissance dramatists were familiar with Ovid, Lucan, Catullus, and other poets and their technique of characterization. Lucan's Erictho in Pharsalia influenced Marston's Erictho in The Tragedie of Sophonisba. Ovid's Metamorphoses provided plot and character material for Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream and John Lyly's Midas. These classical poets relied on physiognomy for character portrayal. An excellent example of physiognomy in classical poetry is "The Song of Polyphemus" in Book XIII of Ovid's Metamorphoses:

'O Galatea' (he sang) 'whiter than privet,
 Bloominger than the meadows, slenderer
 Than the long alder-tree, brighter than glass,
 More capering than the tender kid, and smoother
 Than shells worn down by everlasting waves,
 More welcome than sun in winter, shade in summer,
 Lovelier than apples, more worth looking at
 Than sycamores, translucenter than ice,
 Sweeter than grapes when ripe, and softer even
 Than swan's-down ever, or cottage cheese, more
 lovely
 (On one condition: that you do not flee me)
 Than a well-watered garden. But, Galatea,
 You are more obstinate than untrained heifers,
 Harder than ancient oaks, falser than waters,
 Harder to bend than willow-withe and briony,
 Harder to move than rocks, more violent
 Than mountain torrents, vainer than a peacock
 When people praise him, crueller than fire,
 Sharper than thistles, deafer than the sea,
 And more aggressive than a pregnant bear,

More pitiless than a trodden snake,¹⁸
 Ovid concentrates on complexion, "whiter than privet,"
 and upon Galatea's build which is "slenderer / Than
 the long alder-tree," He presents a small
 portraiture of Galatea by focusing on certain physical
 attributes to illustrate her beauty. Ovid also employs
 animal correspondences such as the vain peacock and the
 aggressive bear. These poetic comparisons create the
 impression that Galatea has the qualities the bear and the
 peacock possess.

Catullus employs physiognomic details to convey
 character. Catullus displays his physiognomic technique in
 "O Elegant Whore":

O elegant whore!
 with the remarkably long nose
 unshapely feet
 lack lustre eyes
 fat fingers
 wet mouth
 and language not of the choicest,
 you are I believe the mistress
 of the hell-rake Formianus.¹⁹

This poem on a Roman whore, so Catullus claims, is written
 because Formianus' "whore" is being compared to the poet's
 own love, Lesbia. Catullus does not like the comparison and

¹⁸Ovid, Metamorphoses in Ovid's Metamorphoses,
 trans. Rolfe Humphries (Bloomington, Indiana, 1967),
 pp. 331-332. All quotations from Ovid's Metamorphoses are
 taken from this edition.

¹⁹Catullus, "O Elegant Whore," The Poems of Catullus,
 trans. Peter Whigham (Baltimore, 1969), p. 102. All
 quotations from Catullus' poems are taken from this edition.

he depicts Formianus' "whore" as ugly as he can with "fat fingers" and a "remarkably long nose." This poem by Catullus and the other examples from classical literature--the drama of Seneca and the poetry of Ovid--definitely demonstrate that the classical writers concentrated on the physical appearance of character to convey character traits such as beauty and courage, or, in Catullus' poem, concupiscence.

There are two literary traditions in the Renaissance emphasizing the pseudo-science of physiognomy. The first is the physiognomic characterization found in classical literature, especially in Seneca and the Roman poets. The second literary tradition is the physiognomy handbooks of the Renaissance, generally derived from the manuals of the Roman and Greek physiognomists, e.g., Polemo and Loxus. These Renaissance handbooks provided both audience and dramatist with signs or tokens by which to determine a person's character. One prominent English physiognomic source is the Secreta Secretorum (Louvain, 1485) and books based on it.²⁰ Another is John Metham's Physiognomy written around

²⁰See Lydgate and Burgh's Secrees of old Philisoffres; A Version of the "Secreta Secretorum," ed. Robert Steele, Early English Text Society, E.S., Nos. 66, 74 (London, 1894), p. xii, hereafter cited as Secrees. Steele discusses the books based upon the Latin Secreta Secretorum, and he mentions that the book's "first separate Englishing of known date is the Secreta Secretorum in English, addressed to Jas. Butler, Earl of Ormand, Lord Deputy of Ireland, by Jas. Young, circ. 1420" (Steele, p. xiii).

1448-1449.²¹ Other physiognomic handbooks which are possible sources for dramatic characterization are Levinus Lemnius, The Touchstones of Complexions . . . Contayning Most easy rules . . . whereby every one may . . . knowe . . . the inclinations, affections, motions, and desires of his Mynde inwardly. Fyrst wrytten in Latine, by Leuine Lemnie, and now Englished by Thomas Newton . . . (London, 1565);²² Stephan Bateman, Batman uponn Bartholome, his booke de proprietatibus rerum (London, 1582); Thomas Hill, A pleasant history, declaring the whole art of phisiognomy (1613), and The contemplation of mankinde (1571); and Joannes Indagine, Briefe introductions . . . vnto the Art of Chiromancy, or Manual divination, and Physiognomy, trans. Fabian Wither [s] (London, 1558), and The Book of Palmestry and Physiognomy (London, 1676).²³ These physiognomic handbooks were available to the Renaissance Englishman. The Wither[s] translation of Indagine's work was small enough to carry in a pocket for easy reference.²⁴

²¹Metham, p. viii. Metham's work and the Secrees are used in this study because they both rely on Aristotle, Polemo, Hippocrates, and other classical physiognomists for their sources (see Metham, p. 119, and Secrees, pp. 39 and 112-113).

²²Greenough, p. 7.

²³See also Ioannes Indagine, Chiromantia (Strassburg, 1534).

²⁴There were also many Latin physiognomic treatises available: Hippocrates, Antiqua Hippocratis translatio supra septem sectiones Aphorismorum una cum . . . Galeni

These two traditions provide examples and techniques which visually depict a character's inner qualities by his physical characteristics. This physiognomic technique of characterization provided two dramatic advantages. It allowed the development of stock dramatic characters, e.g., the "humouric" character, such as the melancholic; the planetary personality; and the evil or villainous character, such as the witch. Physiognomy provided anatomical dramatic symbols of virtues and vices which were known to both the dramatist and his audience. It did not require high intelligence or an education to know that a person who possessed a clubbed foot was an evil man or that quick, shifting eyes belonged to a person who could not be trusted.

Evans applies her thesis of physiognomy only to the ancient world. It is the purpose of the present study to display a functional relationship between physiognomic principles and Renaissance dramatic characterization. The Renaissance was an age consciously aware of the ancient Greek and Roman world it rediscovered. The English Renaissance writers imitated the classical genres, styles, and character descriptions in their writings. Physiognomic

commentatione (Venice, 1519); Galen, Claudii Galeni Pergameni de Anatomicis Administrationibus libri novem Ioanne Guinterio Andernaco interprete (Paris, 1531); and Giambattista della Porta, De Humana Physiognomonia (1586). Thomas Linacre translated portions of Galen's works into English as early as 1521. For further Latin editions of physiognomic treatises see W. P. D. Wightman, Science and the Renaissance, 2 vols. (London, 1962).

characterization did not permanently stop with the end of the classical era in the fourth century A.D.,²⁵ but rather some English Renaissance dramatists revived physiognomic characterization in their plays. It is the design here to examine a selection of characters in Renaissance drama from a physiognomic perspective to analyze the role physiognomy played in Renaissance drama.²⁶ These selected characters from the plays are subjected to physiognomic interpretation. This is not to say that all anatomical description in Renaissance drama lends itself to such interpretation. Not every wrinkle, low forehead, or black eyebrow is an indicator of dramatic personality. Yet certain physiognomic tokens are important personality signposts, and by reading these signposts it is possible to come to a deeper understanding of Renaissance drama.

Three major branches of physiognomy are employed by the Renaissance dramatists: animal, planetary, and emblematic, or the use of specific anatomical tokens. Sometimes these categories are distinctly separate and at other times they

²⁵Evans, p. 5.

²⁶See John Delane Wilson, "Some Uses of Physiognomy in the Plays of Shakespeare, Jonson, Marlowe, and Dekker" (Unpub. Diss., Michigan State University, 1965). Wilson deals with physiognomic characterization in some Renaissance plays, but not enough consideration is given to English physiognomic writings, e.g., by John Metham and James Yonge, and the anonymous Secreta Secretorum. Wilson does not delve into the Renaissance physiognomists themselves: Thomas Hill, John Indagine, and others.

overlap. Each category creates a physiognomic icon, or character type, and can provide the backbone of a dramatic personality. Christopher Marlowe's dynamic character, Tamburlaine, provides an excellent example of the classic leonine man. The specific limbs of the body, postures, and effects of the eyes are physiognomic tokens Marlowe employs to reveal Tamburlaine's lion-like strength. Tamburlaine is even compared poetically to a lion (I.ii.248-250). The awesomeness of his stature is mentioned by Menaphon (II.i.461-468). The ethnic origin of Tamburlaine is related to physiognomy (I.ii.350-356). The pseudo-Aristotelian treatise on physiognomy emphasized the Scythian race as one of the three major ethnic groups in the ancient world who possessed desirable physical characteristics.²⁷ It is no mistake that Marlowe has chosen a Scythian ethnic origin for his dynamic hero. Tamburlaine may come from humble beginnings as a poor shepherd but within his physique are the characteristics which Loxus, Polemo, and Adamantius would attribute to the leonine man. These characteristics are a classical catalogue of what might be called the "pure Greek man." The lion image Marlowe develops around Tamburlaine can be traced back to the physiognomic handbooks written some ten centuries before. Professor Evans comments that Adamantius, following the pseudo-Aristotelian physiognomic

²⁷ Evans, pp. 6 and 11.

manual, states:

. . . those who preserve most closely the Hellenic and Ionic features are tall men, broad, upright, well built, of rather light complexion, tinged with red, moderately fleshy, straight-legged, with well-formed extremities. The head is of moderate size and flexible, the neck powerful, hair yellow and soft, slightly curly, the face square, the lips thin, the nose straight, eyes moist and gleaming with much light in them. . . . In short, they represent the leonine type of man, which according to the Aristotelian manual is the best type of all.²⁸

The lion is a symbol of monarchs, but Marlowe attributes it to a lowly shepherd:

As princely Lions when they rouse themselues,
Stretching their pawes, and threatning heardes of
Beastes.

So in his Armour looketh Tamburlaine:

Me thinks I see kings kneeling at his feet,
And he with frowning browes and fiery lookes,
Spurning their crownes from off their captiue
heads.

(I.ii.248-253)

This leonine simile is continued in Menaphon's speech.

Tamburlaine's physical features as described in Menaphon's speech to Cosroe closely parallel this ideal classic Greek.

Cosroe asks Menaphon: "But tell me, that hast seene him, Menaphon, / What stature wieldes he, and what personage?"

(II.i.459-460). Menaphon responds by giving a physiognomic catalogue of the leonine man:

²⁸Evans, p. 16. The reference Professor Evans makes to the Aristotelian manual is to the pseudo-Aristotelian physiognomic work, Physiognomonica, c. third century B.C. (Evans, p. 5). It is important to note that other works by Aristotle discuss physiognomy as well: the Analytica Priora, De Anima, Historia Animalia, De Partibus Animalium, and De Generatione Animalium (Evans, p. 7).

Of stature tall, and straightly fashioned,
 Like his desire, lift vpwards and diuine,
 So large of lims, his ioints so strongly knit,
 Such breadth of shoulders as might mainly beare
 Olde Atlas burthen, twixt his manly pitch,
 A pearle more worth, then all the world is plaste:
 Wherein by curious soueraintie of Art,
 Are fixt his piercing instruments of sight:
 Whose fiery cyrcles beare encompassed
 A heauen of heauenly bodies in their Spheares:
 That guides his steps and actions to the throne,
 Where honor sits inuested royally:
 Pale of complexion: wrought in him with passion,
 Thirsting with souerainty with loue of armes.
 His lofty browes in foldes, do figure death,
 And in their smoothnesse, amitie and life:
 About them hangs a knot of Amber heire,
 Wrapped in curles, as fierce Achilles was,
 On which the breath of heauen delights to play,
 Making it daunce with wanton maiestie:
 His armes and fingers long and s(i)nowy,
 Betokening valour and excesse of strength:
 In euery part proportioned like the man,
 Should make the world subdued to Tamburlaine.
 (II.i.461-484)

Menaphon's detailed description almost parallels Evans' description of Adamantius' classical leonine man. Marlowe's concentration on the forehead, eyes, and shoulders, "a knot of Amber heire," the stature "tall and straightly fashioned," reveals that Marlowe's imagery converges on major physiognomic areas to reveal the character of Tamburlaine. Essentially, the body becomes a translator of the character of Tamburlaine. Menaphon uses the word "Betokening," implying that Tamburlaine's physical appearance is indicative of his power.

Marlowe then gives particular attention to a most important area of the body for revealing character, the eyes. Tamburlaine's eyes are "piercing instruments of sight: / Whose fiery cyrcles beare encompassed / A heauen of

heauenly bodies in their Spheares:" Marlowe also focuses close attention on the complexion of Tamburlaine's body, for Tamburlaine's body is "Pale of complexion: wrought in him with passion," The face plays a prominent part in the sculptured portraiture of this classical Greek model. Tamburlaine's "lofty browes in foldes, do figure death, / And in their smoothnesse amitie and life:" With a great sense of the classical desire for proportion and degree, Marlowe equates the Greek warrior Achilles with Tamburlaine by using a tonsorial image, for Tamburlaine's hair hangs about his eyebrows like

. . . a knot of Amber heire,
 Wrapped in curles, as fierce Achilles was,
 On which the breath of heauen delights to play,
 Making it daunce with wanton maiestie:

Marlowe's "physiognomic consciousness," as Professor Evans would label it,²⁹ extends down to the minute details of Tamburlaine's arms and fingers which are "long and s(i)nowy, / Betokening valour and excesse of strength:" Tamburlaine is the perfect Greek man because his features follow very closely the written tradition of physiognomists. Marlowe strongly supports his creation of such a man with specific physical characteristics attributed to the courageous man.

Another example of physiognomy can be found in the iconographic description of Margaret in Robert Greene's

²⁹Evans, p. 6.

The Honorable Historie of frier Bacon, and frier Bongay.

Greene utilizes physiognomic principles in Margaret by concentrating on the prime physiognomic areas of her body and by giving her the classic description of Helen of Troy.

Edward speaks to Ermsby about Margaret's beauty:

I tell the Lacie, that her sparkling eyes,
Doe lighten forth sweet Loues alluring fire:
And in her tresses she doth fold the lookes
Of such as gaze vpon her golden haire,
Her bashfull white mixt with the mornings red,
Luna doth boast vpon her louely cheekes,
Her front is beauties table where she paints,
The glories of her gorgious excellence:
Her teeth are shelues of pretious Margarites,
Richly enclosed with ruddie curroll cleues.
Tush Lacie, she is beauties ouermatch,
If thou suruaist her curious imagerie.³⁰

The order in which Greene concentrates upon the physiognomic areas can be traced to Polemo's and Adamantius' priority of body areas. Greene emphasizes Margaret's "sparkling eyes" which "Doe lighten forth sweet Loues alluring fire:" Here the eyes are the basis for this iconic portraiture of Edward's love. It was accepted physiology since the time of Galen that the eyes emitted light rather than acted as receptacles of light.³¹ Therefore, the love which is in Margaret's soul is transmitted via the ocular nerve out through the pupil and is projected onto the person of Edward,

³⁰ Robert Greene, The Honorable Historie of frier Bacon, and frier Bongay in Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay By Robert Greene 1594, ed. W. W. Gregg, Malone Society Reprints (Oxford, 1926), ll. 54-66. All citations from The Honorable Historie of frier Bacon, and frier Bongay are taken from this edition.

³¹ Thorndike, V, 305 and 475; VI, 387 and 548.

who is struck by her love.³²

The second area of concentration is Margaret's hair. The tresses of her hair are golden or amber in color, and in her tresses "she doth fold the lookes / Of such as gaze vpon her golden haire," The "golden haire" with its tresses that hang in folds is a classical physiognomic trait depicting purity of beauty. This iconic description of a woman is known as the Hellenic form epitomized by the Greek heroine Helen.³³

Greene continues his iconic description of Margaret using a physiognomic scale of priority. Edward is highly enthralled by her "bashfull white mixt with the mornings red, / Luna doth boast vpon her louely cheekes," Here a clever lunar image is combined with the solar image of a dawn breaking upon Margaret's lovely cheeks to create a prism effect. Next Edward mentions Margaret's forehead. It

³²For the effects of emitted eye rays on the heart, see Thorndike, V, 116. See also Reginald Scot, The Discoverie of witchcraft, intro. Hugh Ross Williamson (London, 1964). All Scot's quotations are from this book.

³³Evans states that Helen of Troy ". . . is the outstanding example of the Greek concept of *καλλος* (beauty)" (Evans, p. 34). Evans traces the iconographic descriptions of Helen's beauty through the classical dramatists and poets, thus indicating that Helen's physical description represented the classical idea of beauty. Evans also points out that Helen's beauty is not characterized by its abundant adjectives but by the brevity of language employed: ". . . it is the very absence of detail in any description of her that marks her portrait in classical Greek drama" (Evans, p. 34). This marked brevity in physical description is characteristic of physiognomic icons found in literature.

displays the physiognomy of her virtues and her excellence as described by the young prince: "Her front is beauties table, where she paints, / The glories of her gorgious excellence:" Edward deciphers Margaret's virtues by reading her forehead. A forehead which is smooth and void of impressions or wrinkles reflects a person whose virtues are unmarred.³⁴ Margaret's teeth are equated to pearls, emphasizing whiteness as purity: "Her teeth are shelues of pretious Margarites, / Richly enclosed with ruddie curroll cleues." Polemo emphasized the mouth in his physiognomic handbook.³⁵ Edward sums up his estimation of the fair Margaret with a significant physiognomic statement: "Tush Lacie, she is beauties ouermatch, / If thou suruaist her curious imagerie." This comment emphasizes the physiognomic concern for Margaret's physical appearance. Edward's speech enables Greene to describe Margaret's inner virtue by enumerating her outer physical features. Lacie retorts with the suggestion that there are more fish in the sea than Margaret, especially at court. Edward is undaunted by Lacie's point and continues with his iconic description of Margaret. He now concentrates on how happy he is with his true love. She possesses ". . . Lilly armes, / . . . christall skin, / Checked with lines of Azur" (ll. 83-85). The

³⁴John Indagine, The Book of Palmestry and Physiognomy (London, 1676), sig. B2.

³⁵Evans, p. 14.

physiognomic concentration is primarily on her complexion. The allusion to crystal skin reflects the Renaissance fascination with the problem of how crystals are formed.³⁶ Greene focuses his description on specific areas of Margaret's body--the forehead, teeth, hair, arms, and the complexion of her skin--and in so doing he portrays Margaret as the classical love-object, Helen of Troy. This is not to suggest that she is a direct parallel to Helen, but as an object of Edward's love, she does physically display Helen's beauty. Even the color of her hair denotes a virtuous disposition. Golden hair implies virtue whereas if her hair were red it would indicate she was prone to anger quickly.³⁷ Greene is deliberately attempting to re-create a classical form of beauty in Margaret and he consciously arranges her anatomical description to make her a worthy object of idealized love.

In the works of Marlowe and Greene, the physiognomic icons employed are idealized. The leonine man and the Hellenic woman depict certain perfections in the male and

³⁶One source of this fascination may be traceable to Thomas Lodge's English translation of Seneca's non-dramatic works published in 1614. Included in this translation is Seneca's Natural Questions. Seneca poses the problem of crystal formation, and he explains crystals as particles of celestial water which solidify to form a crystal after the temperature drops to a point where the air is cold enough to solidify the water. Therefore, if the term "christall skin" is considered in light of Seneca's explanation, the fair young maid Margaret has a bit of heaven in her skin.

³⁷"The Gouvernaunce of Lordschipes," Secrees, p. 114.

female personalities. Ben Jonson finds another use for physiognomy. He employs animal physiognomy in Volpone to depict the follies of men, not their virtues.³⁸ Jonson gives the names of various animals and carrion birds to his characters, and the particular bird assigned to each character reveals the personality of the character. The behavior of the characters in Volpone is patterned after the animals they represent. The magnifico Volpone is an old man who is faking death to fool the legion of legacy hunters surrounding him. His coyness in playing dead is a tactic the fox employs when being hunted. Volpone is traditionally assumed to be an old fox, and his actions in the play are similar to the actions of a fox. The adjectives Volpone uses to describe himself also convey his fox-like character. When he is greeting the newborn day at the opening of Act I, he tells his servant Mosca about his enjoyment in the acquisition of wealth: ". . . I glory / More in the cunning purchase of my wealth, / Then in the glad possession; . . ." (I.i.30-32). "Cunning" is a well-known attribute of the fox.

The names of Jonson's other characters in Volpone reveal a similar physiognomic pattern. Voltore is an

³⁸ Both Polemo and the pseudo-Aristotelian manual devote sections of their work to animal physiognomy. Polemo discusses some ninety-two animals, and he goes into detail on the characteristics of the lion, the peacock, the ass, and many others (see Evans, p. 14). The pseudo-Aristotelian manual examines the panther and the lion as well as other animals (see Evans, p. 9).

advocate whose name is an anglicized form of the Italian word for vulture, avvoltoio. There is also a possible pun on the Italian word voltare, meaning "change." Voltore hovers over Volpone waiting for him to die in order to secure the old man's legacy. All of the names Jonson gives the legacy-hunters imply the carrion characteristics of birds of prey. Corbaccio, an old gentleman, is a filthy great raven, and Corvino is the Italian adjective for a raven-like quality. "Corvine" is the contemporary English equivalent of corvino.

Volpone projects this birds-of-prey image in his speech when Voltore knocks at Volpone's door. Volpone barks his orders to Mosca:

Fetch me my gowne,
My furies, and night-caps; say, my couch is
changing:
And let him entertayne himselfe, awhile,
Without i' th' gallerie. Now, now, my clients
Beginne their visitation! vulture, kite,
Rauen, and gor-crow, all my birds of prey,
That thinke me turning carcasse, now they come:
I am not for 'hem yet. How now? the newes?
(I.ii.84-91)

The legacy hunters come, one by one, each hoping Volpone will name him heir to his legacy. When Voltore's gift of antique plate is presented to Volpone by Mosca, the old fox replies:

Good! and not a foxe
Stretch'd on the earth, with fine delusiue sleights,
Mocking a gaping crow? . . .
(I.ii.94-96)

Mosca supports the birds-of-prey conceit by a classical allusion to the bird-monsters sent by the Greek gods to

torment the blind Phineus: "You shall liue, / Still, to delude these harpyies" (I.ii.122). Mosca's allusion thus equates the common birds of prey Jonson presents with the notorious harpies of ancient Greece. The scene ends with yet another reference to birds of prey. Corbaccio knocks at the door as Voltore is leaving after Mosca tells him he is inscribed in Volpone's will as heir. Volpone comments: "The Vulture's gone, and the old rauen's come" (I.iii.81). It is important to remember the visual effect of Volpone lying on his couch, feigning a sickness-unto-death, and the flitting in and out of these legacy hunters. He is their carrion prey, and they circle about his dying form, awaiting his yielding legacy. Corbaccio's glee at Mosca's rendition of Volpone's increasing sickness reveals Corbaccio to be an unscrupulous man who desires financial gain even at death's expense:

CORB. Excellent, excellent, sure I shall out-
last him:
This makes me yong againe, a score of yeeres.
MOS. I was a comming for you, sir. CORB. Has
he made his will?
What has he giu'n me?

(I.iiii.55-58)

Mosca tells Corbaccio that Voltore ". . . smelt a carcasse, sir, when he but heard / My master was about his testament" (I.iiii.61-62). This image of putrefication coincides with the total impression of the carrion and birds of prey Jonson creates in the play.

Corbaccio leaves, assured by Mosca's confidence that

he shall be named heir. Mosca whispers under his breath: "Rooke goe with you, rauen" (I.iiii.124). When Corvino arrives he is beguiled by the deceptive Mosca into thinking Volpone's sickness has rendered him deaf. The foolish Corvino caws abuses into Volpone's open ear: "His [Volpone's] nose is like a common sewre, still running" (I.v.65). Corvino then leaves after he has given approval to Mosca's suggested killing of the "ailing Volpone."

One other suggested bird image is Sir Politic Would-Be's friend Peregrine. The name itself is an obvious reference to the peregrine falcon, a much-highly prized bird whose abilities at hunting were known to English falconers. "Peregrine" also means foreign, alien, or exotic, and this is the sense in which Jonson employs the name. No case can be made for Peregrine as a bird of prey such as Corbaccio, Corvino, or Voltore, but still the name is apt and Peregrine is "trained" by Sir Politic Would-Be in the fine arts of statecraft.

Jonson employs animal physiognomy in Volpone to denote the vices each of the legacy hunters possesses. The birds Jonson uses are all birds of prey who await the death of the old fox, Volpone, so they can feast upon his fortune. Volpone is a dramatic "beast-fable" which reflects the didactic purpose of the medieval beast-fable because it employs animals to teach a moral lesson. Jonson is adapting the beast-fable method to his satire on legacy hunters, and this animal physiognomy enables Jonson indirectly to

associate the follies of his characters with the undesirable qualities of the raven, the crow, the vulture, and the sly fox. Jonson intertwines the didacticism of the beast-fable with the satire of his drama in Volpone. The human aviary he creates makes the reader laugh,

And sport with humane follies, not with crimes.
 Except we make 'hem such by louing still
 Our popular errors, when we know th' are ill.
 (Every Man in His Hymovr
 Prologve, ll. 24-26)

Another fine example of Jonson's physiognomic technique is found in Every Man in His Hymovr. Edward Knowell, speaking to Stephen, comments on the importance of holding one's head up:

Come, wrong not the qualitie of your desert, with looking downward, couz; but hold vp your head, so: and let the Idea of what you are, be pourtray'd i' your face, that men may reade i' your physnomie, (Here, within this place, is to be seene the true, rare, and accomplish'd monster, or miracle of nature, which is all one.) What thinke you of this, couss?

(I.iii.122-128)

Jonson has Knowell point out the importance of letting people see Stephen's face if the latter is to play the part of the melancholic. It is in the face--its shape, complexion, and bone structure--that a man's passions and dispositions are read. Metham offers advice when a person wishes to evaluate a stranger:

Iff ther come a persone to yow, be yt man, be yt woman, to speke with yow for ony cause, thus schal ye knowe qwydyr thei loue off hert and drede yow, or yff thei hate owgth yow and dyspyse yow in her conseyt.

Iff ther come a persone to yow, the qwyche ys a

straunger, in ony matere, thus haue a consydera-
 cion to hys chere, that he perseyue yow noght.
 Yff swyche a persone be-hold yowre fase stedfastly,
 and ye in yowre talkyng loke vp-on hym, yff that
 persone be a-schamyd off yowre loke, and cast
 doune hys eyn to the ground, and syghe causeles;
 yff also ther appere watyr in hys eyn, as thow he
 wold wepe, that persone, qwatsum-euer he be, he
 buyth yow, feryth yow, and dred yow, and louyth
 yowre prosperite and welfare.

And yff yt be so that he behold yow boldely,
 and loke sternly in yowre face, and spekyth
 boystusly, and lokyth fast aboute; and lokyth
 vp-on yowre arayment with louryng chere,--that
 persone hatyth yow, and hath enuye at yowre
 welfare, and hath in maner scorn off yow. This ys
 the fyrste euydent tokyn as owteward.³⁹

Knowell's advice to Stephen bears a remarkable similarity to Metham's treatise on physiognomy and reveals Jonson's familiarity with the art. If Stephen is to put on the disposition of being "gentleman-like" and not appear like the fool he is, he must adopt the outward appearance necessary to reveal to anyone who would read his "physnomie" that he really is a gentleman. Therefore, Stephen tells Knowell:

". . . I will be more proude, and melancholy, and gentleman-like, than I haue beene, I'le ensure you" (I.iii.129-131).

Knowell concentrates on the visage and indicates the importance of maintaining the proper "physnomie" which should be portrayed in the face if one is to convey the air of a gentleman to his friends and other people with whom he is dealing. The comic irony here is that Stephen himself is only a fool and cannot even pretend to imitate a gentleman. It is important to note that Jonson does not rely upon an

³⁹Metham, p. 120.

obvious presentation of physiognomy. There is no attempt on Jonson's part to display a formal physiognomic icon. The idea of physiognomy becomes, in Jonson's hands, a subtle dramatic symbol of comic irony, not a stock anatomical composition of character.

The concern for the carriage and proper bearing of a gentleman is expressed in physiognomic terms once again in Act II, scene i. Kately expresses to Squire Downright the concern he has for Well-bred, the Squire's half-brother, and strongly emphasizes his concern with physiognomic description of gait and carriage:

My brother WELL-BRED, sir, (I know not how)
 Of late, is much declin'd in what he was,
 And greatly alter'd in his disposition.
 When he came first to lodge here in my house,
 Ne're trust me, if I were not proud of him:
 Me thought he bare himselfe in such a fashion,
 So full of man, and sweetnesse in his carriage,
 And (what was chiefe) it shew'd not borrowed in
 him,
 But all he did, became him as his owne,
 And seem'd as perfect, proper, and possest
 As breath, with life, or colour, with the bloud.
 But, now, his course is so irregular,
 So loose, affected, and depriu'd of grace,
 And he himselfe withall so farre falne off
 From that first place, as scarce no note remains,
 To tell mens iudgements where he lately stood.
 (II.i.42-57)

The total impression Kately is attempting to convey to Squire Downright relies upon the physiognomics Kately uses. Well-bred's decline from "what he was" is depicted by an alteration in his carriage, the manner in which a person carries himself. The implication Kately makes is that Well-bred's inner qualities, those which made him a gentleman, have now

been replaced by undesirable qualities, and it is the outward appearance of Well-bred's carriage which reveals to Kately this inward change of quality. Well-bred no longer bears ". . . himsele in such a fashion, / So full of man, and sweetnesse in his carriage," Kately knows Well-bred's ". . . course is so irregular, / So loose, affected, and depriu'd of grace, . . ." that the change of outward appearances implies a change in the inner nature of Well-bred's character. Again the simple physiognomic principle of "like causes like" is observed by Jonson to demonstrate character psychology.

With the infamous charlatan Subtle, the alchemist, Jonson employs physiognomy for comic effect. Subtle's physiognomic "reading" of Drugger's character and future is accurate, but comic effect is found in the generalizations Subtle draws from one small physiognomic token. These generalizations appear ridiculous to anyone familiar with the serious side of physiognomy. It is not by one sign or token that the whole personality is judged. Physiognomy considers all the tokens and signs of a man's anatomical composition. To tally all the qualities of the anatomical indicators and thereby formulate a total impression of an individual's inner qualities is the methodology of a competent physiognomist. What Subtle does in Act I, scene iii is quite comical when John Metham's discourse on physiognomy is considered:

. . . alwey ye owe to haue this consyderacion,--
that ye may yeue no rygh[t] dome off one .j. tokyn,
 but off many, acordyng qwedyr thei be in goode or
 ellys euyl; for yff a persone haue more gode
 tokynnys than bad, ye schal deme hys godenes; and
 yff yt be so that he haue manyere euyl sygnys than
 gode, ye schal deme afftyr hys euyl tokynnys.⁴⁰

Subtle's methodology is analogous to a person's claiming that an apple tree is round, red, and juicy because one part of that tree, the apple, is round, red, and juicy. Another aspect of Subtle's physiognomy renders him comic and yet quite believable at the same time. Subtle's use of physiognomy with Drugger is highly illegal by Renaissance standards. Subtle's physiognomy is for the purpose of predicting Drugger's future; it is not the practical art of determining a man's character and qualities. Subtle tells Drugger: "This summer, / He [Drugger] will be of the clothing of his companie: / And, next spring, call'd to the scarlet. Spend what he can" (I.iii.35-37). Astrology, fortune-telling, and all other methods of predicting the future were forbidden by a papal bull issued on January 5, 1586, by Pope Sixtus V.⁴¹ Pope Urban VIII also spoke out against divination in 1631.⁴² James I of England outlawed all forms of divination.⁴³

⁴⁰Metham, p. 145.

⁴¹See Thorndike, V, 245 and 247; VI, 145.

⁴²See Thorndike, VI, 145. Thorndike's Chapter XXXIV deals with papal documents and attitudes toward divination in the sixteenth century.

⁴³See Thorndike, VI, 549-550.

Therefore, Subtle is committing a crime as far as Renaissance law is concerned. He is merely a tyro in the fine art of physiognomic interpretation even though he can read individual tokens of the art. Subtle is comparable to a first-year medical student who can detect symptoms of illness, but whose diagnostic ability is far below par. Jonson reveals an uncanny familiarity with the intricate details of branches of physiognomy: metoposcopy, the reading of character from the face alone; chiromancy, the skill of divination by examination of the hand, popularly called palmistry; and even astrological physiognomy.

The art of metoposcopy deals with the shape of the facial bones, the complexion, and the lines in the face, especially the forehead. Subtle, when asked how he knew Drugger would become sheriff, replies:

By a rule, Captaine,
In metoposcopie, which I doe worke by,
A certaine starre i' the fore-head, which you see
not.
Your chest-nut, or your oliue-colour'd face
Do's neuer faile: and your long eare doth promise.
I knew't, by certaine spots too, in his teeth,
(I.iii.43-48)

The certain star "i' the fore-head" is not an imprint of a star-shaped birthmark in Drugger's forehead. It is a direct reference to the specific lines in the forehead, each of which is under the "rulership" of one of the seven "ancient" planets. Walter Gibson remarks on the metoposcopic significance of these lines in the forehead:

This phase of physiognomy [metoposcopy] was developed by Jerome Cardan during the 1500's. He

interpreted the horizontal lines of the forehead in astrological terms, naming them from the top downward, in the planetary order of Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, the Sun, Venus, Mercury, and the Moon.

A firm, straight cross line at any of those positions indicates a person with the finer attributes of that particular planet. Broken lines show uncertainty, while those that are widely separated signify a complete lack of planetary attributes.⁴⁴

It is impossible to determine exactly which of the lines Subtle is reading in Drugger's forehead, but it is claimed to be a fortunate line because Subtle tells Face that Drugger is "a fortunate fellow" (I.iii.33). Therefore it is safe to assume that Subtle reads one of the lines in Drugger's forehead which is under the dominion of a fortunate planet, usually Jupiter or Venus.

After this serious metoposcopic analysis Jonson adds a bit of subtle humor by including in Drugger's anatomical description a long ear and "certaine spots" on Drugger's teeth and on "the naile of his mercurial finger" (I.iii.49). The spots on the nails are a legitimate technique of physiognomic analysis,⁴⁵ but the obvious reference to spots on the teeth, along with the long ear, can only allude to the method of examining a horse for its general state of health and age. Prospective buyers examine the state of a horse's teeth to determine if the horse is a profitable buy or not.

⁴⁴Gibson and Gibson, p. 332.

⁴⁵See Thorndike, VI, 167; VII, 386.

The long ear, although it does have physiognomic significance, can also refer to the long ears of an ass. Metham relates that "Erys the qwyche be sklender and longe in qwantyte, thei sygnyffye enuye."⁴⁶

Jonson creates a character in *Subtle* who is comic and at the same time credible in his occult practice of physiognomy. *Subtle's* character is an attempt on Jonson's part to portray social realism on the English stage. Jonson states quite explicitly:

No countries mirth is better then our owne.
 No clime breeds better matter, for your whore,
 Bawd, squire, impostor, many persons more,
 Whose manners, now call'd humors, feed the stage:
 And which haue still beene subiect, for the rage
 Or spleene of comick-writers. . . .
 (Prologue, ll. 6-11)

What better subject for comic satire than London itself? *Subtle* is a composite of the many charlatans practicing the occult arts during the Renaissance. The most noteworthy example of such an imposter is Edward Kelley. Kelley's life is a mystery, but he seems to represent a wide class of professional shysters who preyed upon the financial end of the occult arts. Richard Deacon comments on John Dee's comrade:

Possibly some of the allegations against him [Edward Kelley] were untrue, but there is enough to show that he was at least a dabbler in necromancy and in those arts of magic which could be labeled 'black'. Certainly his whole life was devoted to a quest for the 'Philosopher's Stone'

⁴⁶Metham, p. 133.

and the transmutation of base metals into gold. He arrived at Mortlake with a phial containing a red powder and an indecipherable book which he claimed he had found in the ruins at Glastonbury and that in these two articles lay the clue to a recipe for manufacturing gold. In his early days he had been both a forger and a coiner.⁴⁷

Subtle's character comes quite close to that of Edward Kelley. This is not to suggest that Jonson used Edward Kelley as a model for Subtle, but Jonson may certainly have had models like Kelley on which to base the characterization of his alchemist. The intricate details Jonson displays in Subtle's use of physiognomy reveal that he consciously employed physiognomy to create a credible occult personality who was both real and comic at the same time.

Planetary physiognomy also provided character-types as potential stage personalities. Persons born under the influence of certain planets would manifest personality traits and physical attributes of that specific planet. The moods, temperament, and motivations of character played an important part in planetary physiognomy. Personality was dependent upon the "humours" of the body which in turn were ruled by the planets. An example of planetary physiognomy is found in George Chapman's Bussy D'Ambois. D'Ambois, the malcontent, is surrounded by images associating him with the

⁴⁷Richard Deacon, John Dee (London, 1968), p. 124. Dee, like Kelley, is denied his right as a Renaissance intellectual because of scholarly prejudice against the occult arts. Yet this man's thought was far ahead of the time. Many of the ESP studies conducted by psychologists today have their scientific origins in the work of this man.

planet Mars. His actions, temperament, and appearance may be traced to the Martian planetary type.

King Henry, while speaking to D'Ambois, refers to the brave courtier in bird images associated with the planet Mars:

Speak home, Bussy! Thy impartial words
 Are like brave falcons that dare truss a fowl
 Much greater than themselves; flatterers are kites
 That check at sparrows; thou shalt be my eagle,
 And bear my thunder underneath thy wings;
 Truth's words, like jewels, hand in th' ears of
 kings.⁴⁸

Henry tells Bussy: "Fly at him and his brood! I cast thee off, / And once more give thee surname of my eagle" (III.ii. 19-20). Eagles and falcons are associated with hunting and war. They are birds ruled by the planet Mars.⁴⁹

D'Ambois' great Martial energy, the force he exudes, is harnessed by Henry and ultimately unleashed for the social good. This feeling of great Martial energy is housed in D'Ambois' character. The incendiary imagery the Monsieur uses in an aside to describe D'Ambois again links him with the planet Mars:

⁴⁸George Chapman, Bussy D'Ambois, The Plays of George Chapman: The Tragedies, ed. T. M. Parrott, 2 vols. (New York, 1961), I, III.ii.1-6. All quotations from Chapman's tragedies are taken from this standard edition.

⁴⁹Agrippa, p. 58. Agrippa states: ". . . all such animals as are warlike, ravenous, bold, and of clear fancy, All birds that are ravenous, devour flesh, break bones, as the Eagle, the Faulcon, the Hawk . . ." are under the dominion of the planet Mars.

[Aside] His great heart will not down, 'tis like
the sea,
That partly by his own internal heat,
Partly the stars' daily and nightly motion,
Their heat and light, and partly of the place
The divers frames, but chiefly by the moon,
Bristled with surges, never will be won,
(No, not when th' hearts of all those powers are
burst)
To make retreat into his settled home,
Till he be crown'd with his own quiet foam.
(I.ii.157-165)

This cosmic influence gives D'Ambois a kinship with the natural order whose motion is caused by heat, a Martian quality. The celestial images suggested in the passage exert their influence on D'Ambois. The heat and movement of the universe give motion to the heart of Bussy D'Ambois.

The core of D'Ambois' character resembles the planetary personality of a person born under the influence of Mars. The war-like character of D'Ambois, his dynamic energy, his quickness to justifiable wrath, and his martial attitude, all suggest the Martian planetary-type. Lilly describes the Martian personality as follows:

In feats of Warre and Conrage [sic] invincible,
scorning any [who] should exceed him, subject to
no Reason, Bold, Confident, Immoveable, Contentious,
challenging all Honour to themselves,
Valiant, lovers of Warre and things pertaining
thereunto, hazarding himselfe to all Perils,
willingly will obey no body, or submit to any;
. . . one that Slightes all things in comparison of
Victory, and yet of prudent behaviour in his owne
affaires.⁵⁰

Mars governs the military profession and is the ruler of

⁵⁰Lilly, p. 66.

"Generals of Armies, Colonels, Captaines, or any Souldiers having command in Armies" ⁵¹ The Martian's eyes are "piercing" and he possesses a "bold, confident countenance, . . . active and fearlesse." ⁵² These core qualities of the Martian planetary-type provide the basis for the malcontent character of Bussy D'Ambois. His fierceness in battle equates his bold personality to the planet Mars, and this is revealed in the duelling scene.

Nuntius narrates the duel between D'Ambois and Barrisor, which abounds with Martian images of war, fire, and swords. A brief catalogue of the phrases reveals this imagery:

I saw fierce D'Ambois and his two brave friends
 Enter the field, and at their heels their foes;
 Which were the famous soldiers, Barrisor,
 L'Anou, and Pyrhot, great in deeds of arms:
 All which arriv'd at the evenest piece of earth
 The field afforded, the three challengers
 Turn'd head, drew all their rapiers, and stood
 rank'd:
 When face to face the three defendants met them,
 Alike prepar'd, and resolute alike.
 Like bonfires of contributory wood
 Every man's look shew'd, fed with either's
 spirit;
 As one had been a mirror to another,
 Like forms of life and death, each took from
 other;
 And so were life and death mix'd at their
 heights,
 That you could see no fear of death, for life,
 Nor love of life, for death; but in their brows
 Pyrrho's opinion in great letters shone;

⁵¹Lilly, p. 67.

⁵²Lilly, p. 67.

That life and death in all respects are one

 D'Ambois (that like a laurel put in fire
 Sparkled and spit) did much much more than
 scorn,
 That his wrong should incense him so like chaff,
 To go so soon out, and like lighted paper
 Approve his spirit at once both fire and ashes;
 So drew they lots, and in them Fates appointed
 That Barrisor should fight with fiery D'Ambois,
 (II.i.35-75)

The Martian image ignites in this passage as Nuntius
 relates the manner in which D'Ambois fights:

And then like flame and powder they commix'd

 But D'Ambois' sword (that lighten'd as it flew)
 Shot like a pointed comet at the face
 Of manly Barrisor; and there it stuck:
 Thrice pluck'd he at it, and thrice drew on
 thrusts,
 From him that of himself was free as fire;
 Who thrust still as he pluck'd, yet (past belief)
 He with his subtle eye, hand, body, scap'd;
 At last, the deadly-bitten point tugg'd off,
 (II.i.77-88)

The phrases, "Shot like a pointed comet" and "the deadly-
 bitten point," are suggestive of the poisonous tail of the
 deadly scorpion, another Martian animal.⁵³ The image is too
 clear to be unintentional. D'Ambois' sword becomes the
 treacherous stinger of the scorpion and strikes swiftly at
 the face of the startled Barrisor. Again, the unleashing of
 swift, uncontrollable energy gives the feeling of natural
 catastrophe in D'Ambois' actions. His words are like
 thunder, his movements like comets, and his heart moved by
 celestial heat. The feeling is that when this man moves the

⁵³Lilly, p. 68.

earth quakes. He is the Martian archetype: fierce, martial, unconquerable in will, and even surprised at his mortality:

. . . Is my body, then,
 But penetrable flesh? And must my mind
 Follow my blood? Can my divine part add
 No aid to th' earthly in extremity?
 Then these divines are but for form, not fact:
 Man is of two sweet courtly friends compact,
 A mistress and a servant: let my death
 Define life nothing but a courtier's breath.
 Nothing is made of nought, of all things made,
 Their abstract being a dream but of a shade.
 I'll not complain to earth yet, but to heaven,
 And, like a man, look upwards even in death.
 And if Vespasian thought in majesty
 An emperor might die standing, why not I?
 (V.iv.78-91)

The Martian images of blood and death are continued:

O, my heart is broken!
 Fate nor these murderers, Monsieur nor the Guise,
 Have any glory in my death, but this,
 This killing spectacle, this prodigy:
 My sun is turn'd to blood, in whose red beams
 Pindus and Ossa (hid in drifts of snow,
 Laid on my heart and liver) from their veins
 Melt like two hungry torrents, eating rocks,
 Into the ocean of all human life,
 And make it bitter, only with my blood.
 O frail condition of strength, valour, virtue,
 In me (like warning fire upon the top
 Of some steep beacon, on a steeper hill)
 Made to express it: like a falling star
 Silently glanc'd, that like a thunderbolt
 Look'd to have stuck and shook the firmament.
 (V.iv.131-146)

The sanguine metaphor flows into a suggestive fire image illustrating the color and liquid of the planet Mars. The whole tone of the death passage is Martian. Chapman gradually ascends from the microcosmic sun-blood metaphor, through the incendiary simile of "like warning fire upon the

top / Of some steep beacon, on a steeper hill," to the macrocosmic simile of "like a falling star / Silently glanc'd, that like a thunderbolt / Look'd to have stuck and shook the firmament."

The falling star in astrology is a sign of the death of a great man. The microcosm and the macrocosm seem to be married in the sanguine similes Chapman develops here. The crustacean shell of D'Ambois is pierced and all forms of the universe's energy pour out in this creature's blood. Umbra's speech following the death of D'Ambois carries on the astrological imagery:

Farewell, brave relics of a complete man,
 Look up and see thy spirit made a star;
 Join flames with Hercules, and when thou sett'st
 Thy radiant forehead in the firmament,
 Make the vast crystal crack with thy receipt;
 Spread to a world of fire, and the aged sky
 Cheer with new sparks of old humanity.
 (V.iv.147-153)

D'Ambois' spirit will be made a star and will join flames with the constellation Hercules. The ever-present incendiary imagery carries the Martian theme up into the heavens. Curiously enough, the constellation Scorpius, ruled by Mars, seems to rise and set in the northern hemisphere in close proximity to the constellation Hercules. It is possible that the allusion is to the constellation Scorpius and that Chapman is suggesting that D'Ambois is Scorpius.

One particular reference in Nuntius' speech is difficult to explain: "Spread to a world of fire, and the aged sky / Cheer with new sparks of old humanity." This

reference defies any interpretation other than an astrological one. Scorpio is associated with the month of November and the rising of this sign brings the hot winds of the Mediterranean climate. The reference could be to these hot winds which spread fire on the world with their thermal gusts. The "new sparks of old humanity" seems to be a nostalgic desire for l'Age d'or, a common Renaissance form of Utopia. It seems as though Chapman is suggesting that through the stellar example of D'Ambois the world might return to the old humanity.

So far this chapter has concentrated on physiognomic character-types: the classical leonine man and the Hellenic woman, the animal-types, and the planetary-types. Not all Renaissance dramatists relied upon the conventional physiognomic character-types. Another physiognomic technique of characterization relied upon the use of physiognomic tokens alone. Like a mosaic, these physiognomic tokens--a raised eyebrow, a hunched-back, and skinny fingers--could be pieced together to create any type of character imaginable. The Renaissance dramatists who used this type of mosaic approach to physiognomy found it especially adaptable to portraying evil in characters. Aristotle emphasized the imitative nature of art:

. . . we must copy the good portrait-painters who, while rendering the distinctive form and making a likeness, yet paint people better than they are. It is the same with the poet. When representing people who are hot-tempered or lazy, or have other such traits of character, he should make them such, yet men of worth [an example of hardness]; take

the way in which Agathon and Homer portray Achilles.

Keep, then, a careful eye on these rules and also on the appeal to the eye which is necessarily bound up with the poet's business; for that offers many opportunities of going wrong. But this subject has been adequately discussed in the published treatises.

16. What a "Discovery" is has been already stated. As for kinds of Discovery, first comes the least artistic kind, which is largely used owing to incompetence--discovery by tokens. These may be congenital, like "the spear the Earth-born bear" or stars, like those which Carcinus uses in his Thyestes; or they may be acquired and these may be on the body,⁵⁴

With this strong Aristotelian dictum on the visual quality of a work of art, the physical description of a dramatic character assumed great importance to the Renaissance dramatist.

In John Lyly's Endimion, Tophas, talking to Epiton, praises the "beauty" and "virtue" of Dipsas. Tophas' description provides an excellent example of physiognomic characteristics:

O what a fine thin hayre hath Dipsas! What a prettie low forehead! What a tall & statelie nose! What little hollowe eyes! What great and goodly lypes! Howe harmlesse shee is beeing toothlesse! her fingers fatte and short, adorned with long nayles like a Bytter! In howe sweete a proportion her cheekes hang downe to her brests like dugges, and her pappes to her waste like bagges! What a lowe stature shee is, and yet what a great foote shee carryeth! Howe thrifty must she be in whom there is no waste! Howe vertuous is shee like to be,

⁵⁴Aristotle, Poetics, trans. W. Hamilton Fyfe (London, 1953), XV.9-11, XV.11-XVI.4, pp. 57, 59. All quotations from the Poetics are taken from this edition.

ouer whom no man can be ielous!⁵⁵

This description suggests a portrait painter creating a hideous creature of the night and an examination of the physiognomic tokens Lyly uses reveals the interesting character traits of Dipsas. Many of the physiognomy handbooks published in England during the Tudor and Jacobean periods would supply adequate information to provide Dipsas' physiognomy. This "fine thin hayre" Dipsas possesses indicates fearfulness and coldness of temperament.⁵⁶ The "prettie low forehead" indicates slow wit.⁵⁷ Dipsas' "little hollowe eyes" indicate a crafty woman.⁵⁸ This caricature is further developed by Dipsas' lips as "great and goodly." Yonge points out that people who "haue grete lippes . . . bene folis y-lykenyd to assis."⁵⁹ Fingers which are "fatte and short, adorned with long nayles" betoken a person "wel ordeynyd to many craftes Greet ffyngers and shorte betoknys folye."⁶⁰ Such a

⁵⁵John Lyly, Endimion, The Complete Works of John Lyly, ed. R. Warwick Bond. 3 vols. (Oxford, 1967), III, III.iii.52-60. All quotations from Endimion are taken from this standard edition.

⁵⁶"The Gouvernaunce of Lordschipes," Secrees, p. 114.

⁵⁷Yonge, Secrees, p. 221.

⁵⁸Indagine, Book of Palmestry and Physiognomy, sig. B2.

⁵⁹Yonge, Secrees, p. 228. See also "The Gouvernaunce of Lordschipes," Secrees, p. 115.

⁶⁰"The Gouvernaunce of Lordschipes," Secrees, p. 117.

physiognomic portrayal fits the character of the ugly enchantress who practices the "many craftes" of the occult.

Lyly's description continues on to picture Dipsas in even more disgusting terms: ". . . her cheekes hang downe to her brests like dugges, and her pappes to her waste like bagges!" The hanging cheeks indicate a malicious evil person who is envious and possesses an ignoble mind.⁶¹ The breasts hanging down to Dipsas' waist present a repulsive picture of an old crone. Lyly creates a disgusting character composite in Dipsas to underline Tophas' madness. The "lowe stature" and "great foote" Dipsas displays add the final touch to the despicable enchantress. Cowards are "lyttille of stature and lowe."⁶² The great foot "tokenyth fooly and lowe of wrongis."⁶³

Lyly presents the caricature of Dipsas quite convincingly. The description is rendered through the love-struck Tophas and the purpose of the terrible picture Lyly gives is to underline Tophas' madness caused by the ugly enchantress. After this vivid, graphic account of Lyly's harridan, Tophas blindly exclaims: "Howe vertuous is shee like to be, ouer whom no man can be ielous!" The comic subplot lacks time to develop character adequately, and Lyly

⁶¹Yonge, Secrees, p. 234. See also "The Gouvernaunce of Lordschipes," Secrees, p. 115.

⁶²Yonge, Secrees, p. 224.

⁶³Yonge, Secrees, p. 235.

relies upon the physiognomic description to convey to his audience the humor of Sir Tophas' deluded love for Dipsas.

Lyly uses the principle that physiognomy is based upon "like produces like." If a person such as Dipsas possesses an evil soul, and the body is the temple of the soul, the body will mirror the vices of the evil soul.

Yonge explains physiognomy in such a manner:

Ertayne thynges hit is that the Sowle whyche Is
the fourme of the body, sueth the kynde and the
c complexcion and the propyrtys of the body, for
ofte-tymes we sene opynly that the coragis of men
ham chaungyth aftyr the Pascionys of the bodyes,

.
Hysnomye is a science to deme the condycions or
vertues and maneres of Pepill, aftyr the toknesse
p or syngnesse that apperyth in facione or makynge
of body, and namely of visage and of the voyce and
of the coloure.⁶⁴

Lyly describes Dipsas in such a way as to make her character unmistakable to the audience. Even a specific knowledge of what a "lowe stature" meant in physiognomic terms is not necessary to comprehend the character of Dipsas. The specific application of physiognomic "toknesse or syngnesse" reveals Lyly's conscious attempt to develop a despicable character. It is Lyly's total anatomical composite which conveys Dipsas' character. She is an evil person because she possesses an evil soul which manifests itself in her ugly body.

⁶⁴Yonge, Secrees, pp. 218-219. I have included the copyist's correction in the spelling of "Hysnomye" in my quotation because it is included in the Steele edition of the Secrees.

Physiognomy has its place in Renaissance tragedy as well as in comedy. Middleton uses the physiognomic technique of characterization to suggest the inward qualities of what constitutes virtue and vice in the tragic situation. The Changeling affords an excellent example of the function of physiognomy in tragedy. The first example of physiognomy in the play centers upon the eyes: their movement, expression, and the deeper meaning behind them. The eye imagery Middleton employs is strongly linked with the human quality of good judgement. Beatrice tells Alsemero:

Our eyes are sentinels unto our judgments,
And should give certain judgment what they see;
But they are rash sometimes, and tell us wonders
Of common things, which when our judgments find,
They can then check the eyes, and call them
blind.⁶⁵

Alsemero, playing off the dramatic conceit Beatrice began, replies:

But I am further, lady; yesterday
Was mine eyes' employment, and hither now
They brought my judgment, where are both agreed:
Both houses then consenting, 'tis agreed;
Only there wants the confirmation
By the hand royal, that is your part, lady.
(I.i.79-84)

Beatrice turns aside, and, realizing she is entrapped by her own mistaken judgement, states: ". . . sure mine eyes were mistaken; / This was the man was meant me" (I.i.86-87).

⁶⁵Thomas Middleton, The Changeling, The Works of Thomas Middleton, ed. A. H. Bullen. 8 vols. (New York, 1964), VI, I.i.75-79. All quotations from Middleton's The Changeling are taken from this standard edition.

This exchange between Alsemero and Beatrice focuses upon a conceit which is developed about the eyes as "sentinels unto our judgments." There is no physical description of the eyes; it is a fundamental principle of physiognomy, however, that it is through the visual perception of the anatomical tokens of the body that an individual renders judgement on the character of another person. The role of eyes in forming judgement is the crux of the conceit Middleton develops here. Alsemero tells Beatrice that his eyes "are both agreed." They do not waver but are firm because "Both houses" consent to the judgement they have made about Beatrice. Yonge comments that "Tho that in lokynge or in rewardynge ficchyth hare_u syght and hit holdyth stabill, they bene studyous and of good vndyrstondynge. And that apperyth, for whan a man studieth deply, he holdyth his syght stably."⁶⁶ Beatrice does ask Alsemero: "You are a scholar, sir?" (I.i.65). A scholar would possess eyes firm in their "employment."

Another example of eye imagery in The Changeling occurs in Act I, scene ii. Alibius, a doctor who is jealous of his young wife takes into his confidence his man, Lollo, and asks him to be his intelligencer. Lollo agrees to spy on the jealous doctor's wife and "To watch her treadings" (I.ii.40). The reason Alibius mistrusts his wife is that he notices the flirting eyes of the visitors who come

⁶⁶Yonge, Secrees, pp. 230-231.

to see his patients:

But here's the care that mixes with my thrift;
 The daily visitants, that come to see
 My brain-sick patients, I would not have
 To see my wife: gallants I do observe
 Of quick enticing eyes, rich in habits,
 Of stature and proportion very comely:
 These are most shrewd temptations, Lollio.
 (I.ii.53-59)

Alibius is a jealous man who, by observing the movement of the gallants' eyes, deduces that these men are "shrewd temptations" for his young wife. For Alibius admits, "I am old, Lollio" (I.ii.19), and he is worried about the attractions the young gallants offer his wife. It is a stock jealous-husband situation extracted from the medieval fabliaux or Roman drama. The reason for his jealous suspicions lies in his interpretation of the "quick, enticing eyes" of the gallants. Indagine claims that ". . . wavering, unstable eyes, declare a seditious, suspicious, unfaithful boaster."⁶⁷ He also indicates that ". . . playing with the eyes signifieth aldulterous persons."⁶⁸ Alibius is perfectly justified in worrying about his young wife.

Middleton makes a point of emphasizing the physical ugliness of De Flores. His face is so ugly that Beatrice can not stand the sight of him. When De Flores first appears in the play, Beatrice tells Alsemero she cannot

⁶⁷Indagine, The Book of Palmestry and Physiognomy, sig. B₂.

⁶⁸Indagine, The Book of Palmestry and Physiognomy, sig. B₂.

stand De Flores because he is like "a deadly poison" and she equates him to a "basilisk" (I.i.114-117). When De Flores attempts to retrieve Beatrice's fallen glove, she throws down the other glove and tells De Flores: "Take 'em, and draw thine own skin off with 'em!" (I.i.233). De Flores' self-concept supports the icon of ugliness Middleton depicts:

. . . she [Beatrice] baits me still
 Every time worse than other; does profess herself
 The cruellest enemy to my face in town;
 At no hand can abide the sight of me,
 As if danger or ill luck hung in my looks.
 I must confess my face is bad enough,
 But I know far worse has better fortune,
 And not endur'd alone, but doted on;
 And yet such pick-hair'd faces, chins like
 witches',
 Here and there five hairs whispering in a corner,
 As if they grew in fear one of another,
 (II.i.32-42)

The obvious physiognomic association is ugly face--ugly soul, saturated with vice. This proves true, as it is De Flores who murders Alonzo for Beatrice.

When Beatrice decides to employ De Flores to improve her own situation, her attitude changes for the sake of convenience. She wishes to have Alonzo de Piracquo murdered, and she realizes she can turn the love De Flores has for her to her advantage. Now she speaks only of the good qualities in De Flores and plays up to him for her own coy ends:

What ha' you done
 To your face a' late? you've met with some good
 physician;
 You've prun'd yourself, methinks: you were not wont
 To look so amorously.

(II.ii.73-76)

This obvious come-on is answered by De Flores:

Not I.

[Aside] 'Tis the same physnomy, to a hair and
 pimple,
 Which she call'd scurvy scarce an hour ago.
 How is this?

(II.ii.74-77)

Beatrice, like a boat in troubled water, changes her physiog-
 nomic tact, and she begins to re-evaluate the features of De
 Flores in terms of manly courage and experience:

Hardness becomes the visage of a man well;
 It argues service, resolution, manhood--
 If cause were of employment.

(II.ii.92-94)

Here the ugly face of De Flores suddenly becomes a token of
 excellent qualities. Yonge considers that the man who "hath
 a playne visage and nothyng fleshy, he is a chydere, a
 barratoure, il-taght, wrongfull, and foule."⁶⁹ Beatrice is
 making an obvious attempt to flatter the ugly De Flores for
 her own ends.

In this play Middleton develops the basic physiog-
 nomic principle that an ugly body betokens an ugly soul.
 De Flores is a horrible person, and his physical appearance
 is a constant reminder of the evil Middleton builds his play
 around. But Middleton also works the physiognomic corres-
 pondence backwards. Beatrice is a beautiful woman. She has
 no outward physical tokens to reveal her inward malice and
 desire to murder. This "reverse physiognomy" reveals that
 Middleton either was breaking away from iconic descriptions

⁶⁹Yonge, Secrees, p. 234.

of character like those used by Lyly and other Renaissance dramatists, or else that Middleton was influenced by Shakespeare's technique of disguised evil. One may see in the character of De Flores the deformity of Richard III, and the malignancy of an honest Iago. In fact, the phrase "honest Iago" finds a plagiaristic echo in Tomazo's epithet, "honest De Flores" (V.ii.9). It appears a bit too obvious, but the parallel can be made.

It is in Shakespeare that the stock physiognomic conventions become synthesized in a functional integration of inner character quality and outward appearance. Richard III exemplifies Shakespeare's utilization of physiognomy to create an evil character. In the first soliloquy Shakespeare displays the monstrous character of the duke by allowing the perverse Gloucester to unfold his own deformity. After a diatribe on the political conditions in the realm, Richard comments on his own physical make-up:

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--
 Why, I, in this weak piping time of peace,
 Have no delight to pass away the time,
 Unless to spy my shadow in the sun
 And descant on mine own deformity.
 And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover,
 To entertain these fair well-spoken days,
 I am determinèd to prove a villain

(I.i.14-30)

Such a self-portrait displays a physiognomy which suggests the evil character of the Duke. Richard is "not shaped for sportive tricks, / Nor made to court an amorous looking-glass;" He is deformed in his physical appearance, for he has been "curtailed of this fair proportion, / Cheated of feature by dissembling nature," Again, this ugly creature reflects the basic physiognomic principle which implies that if a person is deformed physically, he is deformed morally as well. Yonge cautions his reader against a deformed man:

. . . he Is envious, and tellyth not by the; and like as he is to enchue, that hath defaute of kynde; of quyke coloure; So is he to enchue, and more, that fautyth any lyme atte his byrth, or hath in othyr manere the lymes dyfformyd out of kynde: Suche bene to enchue as enemys, for to wickidnesse thay bene enclynet.⁷⁰

Richard's description of himself leaves no doubt that the Duke's own conclusion is quite valid: "I am determinèd to prove a villain / And hate the idle pleasures of these days" (I.i.30-31). Richard exhibits the perfect physiognomic composition to make him a villain. The visual perception of this deformed hunk of premature birth on the English stage is a walking example of the important role the physical features played in Renaissance characterization.

Shakespeare flashes this ugly image of the abortive Duke throughout the play in various strategic passages to

⁷⁰Yonge, Secrees, p. 232.

remind the audience of his inward evil nature. Anne's stychomythic exchange with the corrupted Duke reveals the constant bestial imagery with which Shakespeare surrounds Richard's character. Shakespeare even employs his own animal physiognomy, for he deals explicitly with the correspondence between the qualities of Richard and the qualities of crawling insects. In her lamentation over the corpse of King Henry VI, Anne excoriates the "hand," "heart," and "blood" (I.ii.14-16) that deceitfully murdered the "Pale ashes of the House of Lancaster" (I.ii.6). She curses the murderer and calls upon him "More direful hap" (I.ii.17) than can befall "adders, spiders, toads,/ Or any creeping venom'd thing that lives!" (I.ii.19-20). This disgusting animal imagery centers around those creatures believed by the Elizabethans to be poisonous. This abortive miscarriage of humanity, sent "Into this breathing world, scarce half made up" poisons the minds and hearts of all who come near him. Even Anne, while in Henry's funeral procession, succumbs to this "black magician" (I.ii.34) and his amorous overtures to court her.

Richard's image of physical ugliness is pursued further by Shakespeare. Anne calls Richard a "lump of foul deformity" (I.ii.57), alluding to his humped back. Indagine notes that a deformed or crooked back is ". . . a token of a

niggard and covetous person."⁷¹ Metham is quite clear about a deformed back and what inner qualities of character it represents: "A bak the qwyche bowyth round, that yt bowyth in the schuldyrrys to the brest, yt sygnyfyith enuyusnes and malyce; and this tokyn ys most trwe, qwan a man goth much stoupyng."⁷² The qualities of malice, envy, and evil suggested by the physiognomic tokens are the moral attributes Richard exhibits throughout the play. He ruthlessly rids himself of Edward, Prince of Wales, and Richard, Duke of York, the two young sons of Edward IV. They are mercilessly smothered in the Tower at Richard's command. Clarence, the brother of the late king, is drowned at Richard's forged order. Animal images are employed throughout the remainder of the scene. Anne refers to Richard as a "hedgehog" (I. ii.102) and repeats the toad reference mentioned earlier when she spits upon Richard: "Never hung poison on a fouler toad" (I.ii.148).

The allusions in this scene need no direct physiognomic citations. The creatures are all repulsive in their own nature. The qualities Shakespeare assigns to Richard are found in these low venomous creatures that crawl and spit their poison on the ground. Shakespeare does employ the stock physical tokens of the physiognomic system to

⁷¹Indagine, The Book of Palmestry and Physiognomy, sig. B₃.

⁷²Metham, p. 138.

depict Richard's evil nature, but Richard is much more than an anatomical composition of evil physiognomic tokens. He represents a smooth integration of the physiognomy of evil with the psychopathology of the evil personality. The fusion Shakespeare makes between the extrinsic school of psychology as it is represented by physiognomy and the intrinsic school of modern psychology displays his deep understanding of the total psychology of the human personality. He blends the outward, ugly physical deformity of Richard with the crippled, inner moral nature of the man. The fine display of the motivation behind the actions of Richard, his feelings, and reasons for his actions demonstrate the superior understanding Shakespeare possessed in rendering human conditions into art. Despite the evil nature of Richard and the physical ugliness that betrays that nature, there is an overwhelming perverse charisma to the man. His evil possesses a power which is capable of wooing Anne in the presence of her dead husband's corpse. Such a feat should be impossible, given the immediate situation of the funeral procession. The evil Richard exudes is as enchanting as the ugliness he displays is repulsive.

The function of physiognomy in Renaissance drama is to develop character. The human qualities the character possesses are reflected in the physiognomic tokens which the Renaissance dramatist stressed in his description of a character. Physiognomy afforded the Renaissance dramatist a visual medium by which to portray a contemporary

psychology. The selection of characters presented in this chapter is by no means complete, nor is it intended to be more than a survey of various physical attributes found in some of the dramatic characters of Renaissance drama. The physical features of a character coincide with the moral qualities that character possesses. The description of Tamburlaine's golden locks is not for the purpose of decoration or embellishment, but it is the portrayal of a dramatic icon representing courage, strength, and virtue. The deformity of Shakespeare's Richard III is not by accident; it is by artistic design, and that deformity is a dramatic symbol of the malformed soul within the crippled body that contains it. The physiognomic token may be labelled a dramatic synecdoche because it is a small part of a character's total anatomy; yet it can symbolize the total disposition and personality of the character.

CHAPTER III

THE SORCERER AS RENAISSANCE MAGUS

Renaissance magic was man's attempt to harness and control the mysterious forces of the universe and to coerce those cosmic forces. This chapter and the chapter following it examine two prominent practitioners of magic as they appeared on the Renaissance stage: the sorcerer and the witch. These chapters are character studies with the overall purpose of determining how the sorcerer and the witch mirror different images of the Renaissance occult tradition. The rabbit-pulling magician of the 20th century is a far cry from the sophisticated sorcerer of the Renaissance. All knowledge was the sorcerer's province and the world his place to roam. Magic was not merely a showpiece to Renaissance man, but it was part and parcel of the total quest for knowledge that made up the Renaissance. The magician studied to gain control over his environment, to manipulate cosmic forces for his own ends. The skill and power of affecting events and determining destinies through theurgical procedures became the primary goal of the Renaissance magus. With any pursuit of power there is the potential of abuse of that power once it is attained. The sorcerer's realm of knowledge and extent of powers may awe the most competent 20th century scientist, who, incidentally, can now accomplish many of the goals the sorcerer pursued.

The brilliance and spectrum of occult abilities Doctor Faustus and Prospero display dramatically symbolize the aspiring Renaissance mind. What price had to be paid for this knowledge? Was it meant for man to know what only God was supposed to understand? These questions posed ethical problems, and the Renaissance sorcerer wrestled with them as Jacob wrestled with the angel.

During the years between the publication of Marlowe's Doctor Faustus and Shakespeare's The Tempest, the sorcerer enjoyed prosperity and popularity on the English stage. The reasons for the sorcerer's theatrical prominence seem, at first glance, difficult to comprehend. Yet, by examining the plays in which this occult personality occurs, it is possible to gain some insights into the sorcerer's dramatic function and his theatrical personality. The approach this study takes is to examine the major sorcerer plays of the Renaissance period, concentrating on the character of the sorcerer, particularly his occult practices. The rituals, the magic, the speeches that the sorcerer makes, and his actions in the play are the focal point of this examination with the primary purpose of revealing a strong occult tradition in the English drama of the Renaissance period. No attempt is made to give a stage history of all sorcerer plays; other critics have attempted that.¹ However, the

¹For the stage-history approach to the sorcerer plays of the Renaissance period, see Robert Reed, Jr., The Occult

plays are examined in general chronological order, as established by scholarship. The problem of precise composition dates does not affect the primary aim of this study--to analyze the sorcerer character in the Renaissance drama. This chronological approach is taken to ascertain a dramatic development of the sorcerer in two theatrical moods--the tragic and the comic. These two moods begin with the first plays considered in this study: Marlowe's The Tragical Historie of Doctor Faustus and Greene's The Honorable Historie of frier Bacon, and frier Bongay.

The trend-setter of the sorcerer-play in the Elizabethan period is Marlowe's The Tragical Historie of Doctor Faustus. As the most prolific dramatist of the "University Wits," Marlowe presents a learned academician who buys knowledge at the price of his soul. Such a terse statement does the tragedy no justice, however, for only by plumbing the depths of Faustus' character can the full extent of this erudite man's commitment to knowledge be appreciated. Such knowledge encompasses the occult, and Faustus commits himself to the study and practice of the occult arts. The Chorus describes the educational background of Faustus. He has accomplished all that is humanly possible in learning:

on the Tudor and Stuart Stage (Boston, 1965) and Katherine Briggs, Pale Hecate's Team (New York, 1962). Professor Briggs supplies an excellent chapter on witchcraft in Elizabethan drama explaining occult terminology and citing some engrossing Elizabethan spells and charms.

Of riper yeeres to Wertenberg he went,
 Whereas his kinsmen chiefly brought him vp.
 So soone hee profites in Diuinitie,
 The fruitfull plot of Scholerisme grac't,
 That shortly he was grac't with Doctors name,
 Excelling all, whose sweete delight disputes
 In heauenly matters of Theologie,
 Till swolne with cunning, of a selfe conceit,
 His waxen wings did mount aboue his reach,
 And melting heauens conspirde his ouerthrow.
 For falling to a diuelish exercise,
 And glutted now with learnings golden gifts,
 He surffets vpon cursed Negromancy.
 Nothing so sweete as magicke is to him
 Which he preferres before his chiefest blisse,
 And this the man that in his study sits.
 (Chorus ll. 13-28)

Faustus is portrayed as a man of great learning who is genuinely curious about learning more than he, as a human being, is permitted by God to know. He wants to delve, at any price, into occult knowledge so that he may learn more about knowledge itself. Faustus, in the opening scene, reveals the breadth of his knowledge. He alludes to sweet analytics and claims a cure for the plague. In addition to being a physician, Faustus in his learning covers all of the conventional Renaissance erudition from Aristotle to divinity.

The Faustus that Marlowe creates is a unique character in English drama, one that is not seen before. He possesses an "over-kill" of human knowledge. Yet Faustus aspires to attain suprahuman knowledge which is not his to know in the Christian scheme of things. Faustus becomes the dramatic prototype for the sorcerer character. This character type is not found in pre-Renaissance native English drama. The English sorcerer character is essentially

a nondramatic character as demonstrated by the Arthurian legends.

Faustus makes a commitment to a "Christian" devil. His flirtation with the damnation of his human soul, combined with the secular pursuit of knowledge for knowledge's sake, is the dynamic force of the drama. Faustus is a human being who rejects all possible claims to salvation and who willfully chooses damnation as the price for acquiring knowledge. Some critics have said that this is the tragedy of Faustus, that he is ever conscious of his inability to repent. Possibly too much emphasis is put upon repentance. Perhaps Faustus is the new Renaissance man who realizes he must chance damnation as the price to be paid for opening up new vistas of knowledge. Faustus deliberately and frighteningly forsakes his salvation for the opportunity to acquire new knowledge. Faustus' tragedy is not his inability to repent, but his desire to prostitute his chance for salvation for the acquisition of knowledge.

If we compare a tragic sorcerer, Dr. Faustus, with a comic sorcerer such as Robert Greene's Friar Bacon in The Honorable Historie of frier Bacon, and frier Bongay, a curious dramatic paradox emerges: the sorcerer in English Renaissance drama is dramatically a bigeneric character. He is able to be portrayed both tragically and comically with equally satisfactory results. Dr. Faustus is tragic because Marlowe projects Faustus' pursuit of knowledge against a Christian background which assumes that man's knowledge must

be limited because of an all-knowing God. Friar Bacon is a comic character because Robert Greene extracts from the play the vital Christian theme of damnation or salvation. Friar Bungay does undergo a repentance of sorts, but this repentance is not really warranted. Friar Bacon is in no danger of being damned by his acts. It is the absence of the satanic compact in the dramatic situation of Friar Bacon's character that alleviates Greene's play of the dramatic heaviness found in Marlowe's tragic play. The signer of a satanic compact exchanges his soul for extra-human powers and extra-human knowledge. Satanic commitment, the resolution of free will, the idea of repentance, these are heavy themes which are the very "stuff" of the sorcerer's tragedy. Marlowe utilizes all of these motifs in Faustus' dramatic situation but Greene does not use any of them. At the beginning of the play, Friar Bacon possesses all of the powers which Faustus is trying to get, and it is assumed that Friar Bacon has gotten them through some legitimate means without prostituting his soul. Possession of Bacon's powers is taken for granted and there is no moral question over the origin of his powers or the means of their acquisition as in the case of Faustus.

The theme of nationalism in Greene's play is not present in Marlowe's tragedy. When Friar Bacon is asked by Dr. Mason to reveal the intent of his art, Bacon replies with an answer that is tainted with nationalism:

. . . I will strengthen England by my skill,

That if ten Caesars livd and raignd in Rome,
 With all the legions Europe doth containe,
 They should not touch a grasse of English ground,
 The worke that Ninus reard at Babylon,
 The brazen walles framde by Semiramis,
 Carud out like to the portall of the sunne,
 Shall not be such as rings the English strong:
 From Douer to the market place of Rie.
 (ll. 252-260)

In this passage Greene reveals a new type of motivation in the sorcerer, one of nationalistic pride. Friar Bacon's motives are socially oriented to the betterment of England, or are at least politically motivated. He is concerned with England's defense. He will create, through his magical powers, a wall which will keep out invading forces.² Faustus is not concerned about his fellow man. He wants to attain full knowledge for himself. Robert Reed suggests that Faustus is socially oriented simply because he talks to his fellow scholars. Faustus avoids his fellow scholars and speaks most of the time with Mephistophilis because Faustus wishes to acquire knowledge for his own selfish pleasure, either intellectual or otherwise. Reed claims that Faustus is ". . . a lover of practical jokes; most important, he never loses his sense of comradeship, that is, a jovial affection for his fellow men. He can advise his colleagues:

²The near land invasion of the Spanish Armada just six years before the publication of this play is probably responsible for Greene's strong emphasis upon Bacon's brass wall. A wall built around England would halt another Spanish invasion.

'Talk not of me, but save yourselves.'"³ Reed's point here is not well taken; the fact that Faustus talks to his colleagues does not necessarily reflect a genuine comradeship with them. In the episode Reed refers to (V.ii.1357-1418), Faustus' fellow scholars express a plea to save him from damnation. Faustus rejects it, again alienating himself from social contact; there is nothing jovial in the scene.

When Friar Bacon's jovial attitude is taken into consideration the above point is clear. He talks to the three scholars and debates with them. Faustus isolates himself from his fellow man when he makes his compact with Satan. The scholars in the play wonder where Faustus is most of the time. This anti-social problem does not exist with Friar Bacon. He is the head of a college. He is active in his college work. People come to see him. He has a scholar, Miles, who is with him all the time, and there is no feeling of human isolationism. The gradual decline of Faustus into isolationism is part of his tragic experience. On the other hand, it is nationalism which contributes to Friar Bacon's sociability with his fellow man. One cannot be nationalistic, concerned with the welfare and protection of the nation, if he is not concerned about the social beings that inhabit that nation. Friar Bacon is only too willing to use

³Reed, p. 93.

his powers to advance England's defenses and to help other men, e.g., Prince Edward with his problem in his love relationship with Margaret. Friar Bacon at least has a penchant for social concern and Faustus does not. Faustus wants to show off his power and he does this by fulfilling social requests simply to enhance his prestige as a sorcerer. He wishes to kiss the lips of Helen simply because of selfish desire. No social concern for his fellow human beings prompts anything that Faustus does.

Another curious comparison between Greene's and Marlowe's plays is the nature of the repentance found in each. Faustus' repentance comes too late. Actually a true repentance of Faustus in the play is impossible because of the very nature of his compact with the devil. Once he has agreed to give away his soul, the compact cannot be broken. There is strong legality to the compact. Once he has signed, the commitment has been made. One really wonders if God's mercy in this play is capable (even though we are reminded of it, perhaps too constantly) of overcoming the legality of the contract. In Friar Bacon's case, the dramatic validity of his repentance as a sorcerer is questionable. The good Friar seems to have semi-commendable reasons for employing magic. He defeats the German magician Vandermast for the greater glory of England. He helps Prince Edward with his love problem. There is no reason for Friar Bacon to repent. The reason for repentance given in the play does not really exist through Friar Bacon's fault. The repentance

scene is a difficult scene to analyze because up to this time Friar Bacon is not taken as a tragic dramatic character. In this scene, however, he approaches Faustus' tragic dimension. The two scholars wish to view, through Bacon's magic crystal, their fathers' fighting over Margaret's love. The good Friar again is being helpful as he allows them to witness the duel in his crystal. As the two sons watch their fathers' fight, each father is slain. Foolishly, the two scholars take arms against each other and they die as well. The scene pictures Bungay and Bacon together and Bungay's comment "O strange stratagem" (l. 1858) sums up the weirdness of the whole scene. Friar Bacon, while talking to Friar Bungay, comments on the futility of his magic, and despite the fact that he had nothing to do with the actual deaths of the fathers and sons, Friar Bacon relinquishes the occult arts simply because he does not wish to be an instrument or vehicle for those arts:

See Frier where the fathers both lie dead.
 Bacon thy magicke doth effect this massacre:
 This glasse prospectiue worketh manie woes,
 And therefore seeing these braue lustie brutes,
 These friendly youths did perish by thine art,
 End all thy magicke and thine art at once:
 The poniard that did end the fatall liues,
 Shall breake the cause efficiat of their woes,
 So fade the glasse, and end with it the showes,
 That Nigromancie did infuse the christall with.
He breakes the glasse.
 (ll. 1859-68)

The tone changes here. Bacon is no longer a jovial friar. When Bungay asks him why he broke the glass, he replies with a passage that is almost Marlovian in tone:

I tell thee Bungay it repents me sore,
 That euer Bacon medled in this art,
 The houres I haue spent in piromanticke spels,
 The fearefull tossing in the latest night,
 Of papers full of Nigromanticke charmes
 Coniuring and adiuring diuels and fiends,
 With stole and albe and strange Pentagonon,
 The wresting of the holy name of God,
 As Sother Elaim, and Adonaie,
 Alpha, Manoth, and Tetragramiton,
 With praying to the fiue-fould powers of heauen,
 Are instances that Bacon must be damde
 For vsing diuels to counteruaile his God.
 Yet Bacon cheere thee, drowne not in despaire,
 Sinnes haue their salues repentance can do much
 Thinke mercie sits where Iustice holds her seate,
 And from those wounds those bloudie Iews did pierce
 Which by thy magicke oft did bleed a fresh,
 From thence for thee the dew of mercy drops,
 To wash the wrath of hie Iehouahs ire,
 And make thee as a new borne babe from sinne,
 Bungay Ile spend the remnant of my life
 In pure deuotion, praying to my God,
 That he would saue what Bacon vainly lost.
 (ll. 1870-94)

This passage has the same tone of despair that is in Faustus' speeches in the last act of Marlowe's tragedy. Bacon says, "drowne not in despaire," Mercy and repentance are possible and Bacon chooses repentance, whereas Faustus elects despair; he does not repent. However, the question must be asked: Why is there any need for repentance in a comic character such as Friar Bacon? Is it dramatically valid when the overall light tone of the play is considered? Bacon's repentance is a disharmonious action which is not justified dramatically. There certainly are no devils to drag Friar Bacon off to hell. He has not committed atrocious acts against mankind. He has not been selfish in the use of his arts and in the death of the two scholars. The repentance is dramatically forced, with

perhaps almost a conscious attempt to imitate Marlowe's tragic technique, to keep the sorcerer in character with the tradition that Marlowe establishes. The sorcerer should attempt to repent for his commitment to the occult arts. But Greene fails in this dramatic convention because there is no satanic commitment on the part of Friar Bacon, as there is on the part of Dr. Faustus. When Faustus' satanic commitment is considered as a viable dramatic condition, then there is a need for Christian repentance, ipso facto. In the case of Friar Bacon it is the comic dimension which poses a problem.

Differences between the two sorcerer dramas have been shown--one is a comedy, the other a tragedy; Marlowe emphasizes a satanic compact, Greene does not; Greene emphasizes nationalism, Marlowe does not; the spectacle of competition is emphasized between sorcerers in Friar Bacon's situation, but in Faustus' it is not. Similarities appear also. Faustus and Bacon are both learned men, respected scholars, perhaps the best in their field. There is a concern on the part of both the doctors who come to visit Friar Bacon and the scholars who are trying to save Faustus' soul over the intent of each character's occult knowledge. Another dramatic similarity is the sorcerer's companion, Faustus' Wagner and Bacon's Miles.

Both Marlowe and Greene handle the sorcerer's character successfully. The chief difference is that Marlowe's play acquires a tragic dimension because of the satanic

compact with its damnatory overtones placed in the Christian milieu which dominates the play. Friar Bacon, despite his divine office, is essentially a character of secular drama, and the great Christian salvation theme is not present in Bacon's character; therefore, the "heaviness" of the damnation-salvation theme is not found in Friar Bungay.

A theme that is found in Greene's play is that of procured love, a theme that becomes part of the sorcerer's character in the non-tragic sorcerer plays. Friar Bacon is besought by Prince Edward to help solve his love problems with Margaret. Bacon makes Prince Edward face the reality of the situation between Margaret and the Prince, and he tells Prince Edward to look directly into his crystal where he will see what Margaret is doing. Edward himself is made to see Margaret as she is wooed by Lacy, the good Prince's comrade. Eventually he sees Friar Bungay attempt to marry the two. At this point, when Friar Bacon notices Prince Edward's discontent, Bacon utilizes his magic to render Friar Bungay mute and incapable of performing the wedding. In this scene Friar Bacon acts as a sophisticated panderer-type who aids, indirectly at least, Prince Edward's wooing of Margaret. Again in Act IV, scene ii, when Ralph is talking to the King of Castille and the Emperor, Ralph advises King Henry to send for Friar Bacon. Bacon can marry Prince Edward to Eleanor, the daughter of the King of Castille: "Marrie Harrie, follow my counsaile, send for frier Bacon to marrie them, for heele so coniure him and

her with his Nigromancie, that they shall loue together like pigge and lambe whilest they liue" (ll. 1720- 23). This love-matching, not present in Faustus, is added by Greene and is picked up in later plays, particularly by a magical procurement of love.

At the time of the writing of the Renaissance sorcerer plays, there is a lucrative tractate literature developing around the evils of sorcery and witchcraft. The distinction the tractate literature makes between sorcery and witchcraft is not clear; it is in Renaissance drama that this distinction becomes clear. One of the nondramatic sources of the sorcerer is found in the English translation by J. Freake, published in 1651, of Henry Cornelius Agrippa's works on occult philosophy. In 1651, Three Books of Occult Philosophy was translated in London by a printer at the Three Bibles, near the west end of Pauls.⁴ Agrippa

⁴The influence of Agrippa's work on the Renaissance period in England is quite underestimated. Paul Kristeller, in The Renaissance Philosophy of Man (Chicago, 1948), presents the views of a selection of Italian Renaissance writers whose ideas were widely read in England. Kristeller emphasizes the writer's thoughts may be ". . . grouped into three major currents of traditions: Humanism, Platonism, and Aristotelianism." Kristeller places his representative Renaissance thinkers in this trinitarian philosophical framework. Yet three out of the six writers he presents--Ficino, Pico, and Pomponazi--are strongly influenced by occult lore, and Agrippa gives a full exposition of ". . . the theory of Ficino's astrological magic, including the details of his planetary music." D. P. Walker makes the foregoing observation in a book on the spiritual magic of the Italian Renaissance thinkers: Spiritual and Demonic Magic from Ficino to Campanella (London, 1958), p. 91. Perhaps there is, to adhere to Kristeller's penchant for philosophical

is an infamous figure in occult philosophy and his writings exert an important influence on the alchemical sciences and on the occult arts in general. Agrippa himself visited England in 1510; he is reputed to have organized a cabalistic society in London at this time as he had in Paris. However, it is safe to say that his Latin manuscripts or Latin editions were circulating among the learned and the clerical people during the Renaissance. Agrippa's work deals with the characteristics of sorcerers and details of particular powers. Agrippa catalogues the "bindings" which are acts of sorcery and other forms of magic:

Now there are such kind of bindings as these made by Sorceries, . . . love potions, by binding to, and hanging up of things, by rings, by charmes, by strong imaginations, and passions, by images, and characters, by enchantments, and imprecations, . . . invocations, sacrifices, by swearing, conjuring, consecrations, devotions, and by divers superstitions and observations, and such like.⁵

In this catalogue of a sorcerer's powers, Agrippa reveals the magical details and functions of a sorcerer.

categories, a "twilight tradition" that permeates Bush's trinitarian approach to the Italian Renaissance.

⁵Agrippa, Three Books, p. 79. Agrippa's "bindings" refer to magical spells perpetrated by sorcerers. Although this particular edition, part of the White collection at Cornell University, is dated 1651, D. P. Walker assures us that the Latin work was written in 1510. He cites as his source Trithemius' letter at the beginning of De Occulta Philosophia. I assure the reader that my investigations of texts in this study are based solely on the primary, not secondary, sources of those texts. Where this is impossible, I shall inform the reader of my inability to do so.

These powers of the sorcerer provide excellent spectacle for drama. Such powers supernaturally manipulate the plot and allow a great freedom of action which does not have to be probable, or justified, except by the character of the sorcerer himself. A character in drama who could make two people fall in love by simply mixing a potion or a dramatic character who could manipulate events by magic provided the Renaissance dramatist with an excellent deus ex machina device. The dramatist could control the plot situations, even characters themselves, by inserting in his drama a sorcerer who could manipulate dramatic events by magic.

Agrippa reveals that his occult sources are the Cabala and the classical tradition. He quotes Virgil as a source for the sorcerer:

The force of the Sorceries is reported to be so great, that they are believed to be able to subvert, consume, and change all inferior things, according to Virgils Muse.

"Moeris for me these hearbs in Pontus chose,
And curious drugs, for there great plenty
grows;
I many times, with these, have Moeris spide
Chang'd to a wolfe, and in the woods to hide:
From Sepulchres would souls departed charm,
And Corn bear standing from anothers Farm."⁶

Agrippa cites Virgil's "Muse" as an expert on sorcerers. He points out that the companions of Ulysses were turned into savage beasts by Circe, a sorceress. As a final source Agrippa cites the poet Lucian's reference to

⁶Agrippa, Three Books, p. 79.

the sorcerers of "Thessala."⁷

A strong distinction the Renaissance made between witches and sorcerers is found in Thomas Ady's A Perfect Discoverie of Witches, published in London in 1661. On the front page, Ady lists the various types of witches:

Discourie of Witches or Deceivers of nine Sortes:
Idolaters, Diviners, Astrologers, Conjecturers,
Iuglers, Charmers, Oracle-givers, Southsayers, and
Necromancers: from Deut. xviii.10,11.⁸

It is important to notice that Ady does not consider sorcery to be a particular branch of witchcraft. He lists different types of deceivers to be discovered and his book is a study of how to discover the true witch. Ady's distinction was commonly adhered to that sorcerers were not

⁷Agrippa, Three Books, pp. 80-81.

⁸Thomas Ady, A Perfect Discoverie of Witches (London, 1661). No page is possible here because the list of various witches is taken from the front leaf of the 1661 edition found in the White collection. It is in Ady's own handwriting. The attempt here is not to suggest that Ady's work provided a direct source for Renaissance dramatists, for obviously the edition was printed too late; but rather, that Ady's listing here reveals that the Bible sources he cites were common knowledge to Renaissance thinkers. It is indicative that the Bible could provide the dramatists with such model sorcerers as the Pythonian priestess (Acts xvi-xvii); Bar-Je'sus (Acts xiii.6); Jezebel (II Kings ix.22); and the infamous Witch of Endor (I Samuel xxviii.7-25). These are specific occult Biblical characters commonly cited. There are many general references the witch-writers made to the Bible, and I shall cite but a few, for the list is subject to denominational prejudice in defining a sorcerer or a witch: Jeremiah xxvii.9; Malachi iii.5; Exodus vii.11 (This is a particularly enlightening passage because it reveals the competition theme between Moses and the Pharaoh's sorcerers. It may be a source for the competition theme found in the early Renaissance sorcerer plays.) Biblical quotations are from New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures (New York, 1961).

witches but possessed an identity all of their own.

The sorcerer has another strong literary background other than Agrippa or the tractarian writers of the Renaissance. This is the medieval Arthurian and Charlemagne legends that furnish the English stage with fertile literary sources for the sorcerer's character. The legend of Merlin is the most notorious and the most influential, as may be revealed by a later play in this study, The Birth of Merlin. Combined with the Arthurian tales of Merlin are the Charlemagne episodes of Boiardo, Ariosto, and Pulci. One needs only to cite the influence of Ariosto on Spenser to point out the Italian sphere of literary persuasion in the English Renaissance. Just as all the saints of feudal Christendom infringed upon the Renaissance so did the medieval occult personalities who dwelt on the "dark side" of theology: sorcerers, witches, ghosts, and dragons. Roland's sword Durandal and Arthur's Excaliber are but two medieval weapons endowed with the magic powers of occult tradition. Magic ointments and capes to make the wearer invisible are found in medieval romances. Copious other examples of magical objects can be cited, but let it be sufficient to say that the medieval romance provided another lucrative source for the Renaissance dramatist to draw upon in creating the stage sorcerer.

One such Renaissance playwright who availed himself of this prolific source is George Peele. Peele's interest in Ariosto's Orlando Furioso is manifested readily by

Peele's Sacrapant. Peele employed the medieval romance sorcerer in his play The Old Wives Tale. Peele's dramatic character is almost an exact copy of Ariosto's literary character. Sacrapant is another sorcerer who does not have to bargain a satanic compact. He is a self-sufficient first-rate sorcerer whose powers seem to depend upon his own talents. His Achilles' heel is his life-candle which glows in the dark, inside a glass container. If it is extinguished Sacrapant's life is snuffed out. Sacrapant, like Prospero, is an accomplished magician. He can cast illusions. The woman he loves, he purloins, casting on her an illusion which keeps her from remembering who she is, or what Sacrapant has done to her, but he does tell her his life's story:

In Thessalie was I borne and brought vp:
 My mother Meroe hight a famous Witch,
 And by hir cunning I of hir did learne,
 To change and alter shapes of mortall men.
 There did I turne my selfe into a Dragon,
 And stole away the Daughter to the King;
 Faire Delya, the Mistres of my heart:
 And brought hir hither to reuiue the man,
 That seemeth yong and pleasant to behold,
 And yet is aged, crooked, weake and numbe.
 Thus by inchaunting spells I doo deceiue,
 Those that behold and looke vpon my face;⁹

Sacrapant reinforces his dramatic identity as a sorcerer. He conjures up the finest wine from France and the best meat

⁹George Peele, The Old Wives Tale, ed. W. W. Greg, The Malone Society Reprints, Vol. 9 (Oxford, 1908), ll. 416-427. When no act or scene citation is given it is not present in the edition used.

from the King's table at the request of his love, Delia. This action is reminiscent of Faustus' conjuring up the dish of Indian grapes for the Duchess of Vanholt. When Delia's two brothers attempt to rescue her Sacrapant immediately stops them with a fantastic display of defensive magic. He flashes thunder and lightning. The two brothers, their swords drawn, immediately fall down. Two Furies enter to do Sacrapant's command and they carry the brothers off to a cell. Later, Sacrapant places them in the fields to do servile labor. Delia, spellbound, does not recognize them. With sheer craftsmanship like that of Shakespeare's Prospero, Sacrapant maintains an illusion here to detain Delia. It appears that the Elizabethan dramatist, or the audience, admired the sprezzatura of a sorcerer. The natural polished theurgy of a Prospero or a Sacrapant is much preferred to the pirated craftsmanship which is acquired by Alexander or Dr. Faustus through a satanic compact. Peele's Old Wives Tale, published in 1595, may have exerted an influence on Shakespeare. There are dramatic parallels in Peele's play, e.g., Sacrapant's isolation with a female figure, Delia, whom he loves, parallels Prospero's solitude with his daughter Miranda. Although Miranda is Prospero's daughter, Prospero acts out of love for her just as Sacrapant acts out of love for Delia. Another dramatic parallel is the maintenance of magical illusion, usually not found in the other sorcerer plays, by the sorcerer himself. This is found in The Old Wives Tale, but on an elementary level. The ability to

magically maintain a defense perimeter, to halt an act of aggression, is present in both plays. In The Old Wives Tale Sacrapant disposes of Delia's brothers' attacks by magic. Ariel in The Tempest prevents the murder of Gonzalo at the hands of Antonio and Sebastian. The dramatic parallels are there. Either the ideas were derived from a common source, or The Old Wives Tale was known to Shakespeare.

The play ends with the extinguishing of the life lamp and Sacrapant's death. But there are other characters who are curious. A mysterious old man, Erestus, and a woman called Venelia, whose dramatic roles in the play are of a prophetic nature, function as dramatic foreshadowing. They are one-dimensional characters who do not develop beyond uttering certain prophecies or oracles. The play, as a whole, is third-rate drama. It exhibits little dramatic unity. Some critics believe there are missing parts to this manuscript. Such an assumption is a plausible explanation for the incongruity and the lack of continuity of the play.

The Italian sources for Peele's play, Ariosto particularly, provide a strong literary prototype for the Renaissance dramatic sorcerer. The medieval Arthurian legends provide sources even closer to England than the Charlemagne legends. The magical accomplishments of Merlin are an important part of the mythical history of England. In Anthony Munday's sorcerer play John à Kent and John à Cumber, the competition theme dominates the plot and the match-making efforts of John à Kent unify the dramatic

structure. The medieval tradition of Merlin's love for Vivianne, the Lady of the Lake, and the magic tricks surrounding their love furnishes this play with a literary tradition of magic and love conflict and thereby adds another dimension to the sorcerer's stage character--the match-maker and procurer of lovers.

Although John à Kent and John à Cumber is incomplete because of some textual disintegration and mutilated pages, it can be seen that the plot does center upon two sorcerers. Essentially what this play balances on and what provides the dramatic force of the play is the strong competition between the two magicians, John à Kent and John à Cumber. They provide plot manipulation in the play through the various magic tricks each of them does and through each sorcerer's love-matching attempts. In this play, the sorcerer functions as a deus ex machina. John à Kent reveals contemporaneous action that would be impossible to portray on the Elizabethan stage. One primary example of this is when John à Kent reveals that the two daughters plan to be married the next day. There is no way Sir Griffin or Sir Gosselen could know this if John à Kent had not told them, for the affair is to take place in Chester, far away from the present scene.

John à Kent's magical powers are discovered in the questions put to the sorcerer by Sir Griffin, who is skeptical of John's occult abilities:

Canst thou my freend, from foorth the vaultes

beneathe,
 call vp the ghostes of those long since deceast?
 Or from the vpper region of the ayre:
fetche swift wingde spirits to effect thy will?¹⁰

Necromancy is mentioned before this in Marlowe's Doctor Faustus. Faustus can communicate with the dead, or with the dead in the form of a fiend assuming the likenesses of Helen and Alexander. In Greene's play, Friar Bacon conjures Hercules, also in the form of a fiend. This distinction between actually communicating with the dead and, on the other hand, having a fiend of hell assume the form of some dead person is a fine Elizabethan distinction which is evidenced in the sorcerer's ability. Evidently the Elizabethan sorcerer can call up fiends to assume the bodily shape and form of persons deceased, but he cannot communicate directly with the dead themselves. The influence of the Cabala, the Jewish mystical writings, on Renaissance occult drama can be seen here in the nature of Griffin's questions. Griffin first asks about the vaults beneath the earth. Then he asks John if he can summon spirits "to effect thy will?" This is an allusion to the hierarchal placement of the spirits after the fall of the angels from heaven. Each of the spirits, according to the tradition of the Cabala, fell proportionately to the degree of the nature of his sin. They were "frozen" in levels of the earth and

¹⁰Anthony Munday, John à Kent and John à Cumber, eds. W. W. Greg and Muriel St. Claire Byrne, The Malone Society Reprints (Oxford, 1923), 11. 108-111.

the atmosphere. Lucifer, the leader of the rebellion, was thrust down into the center of the earth where Dante has him.¹¹ Each spirit is locked in place in the elements of the earth in proportion to his degree of sin, the demons closest to Lucifer being the most evil sinners. The offenses decrease proportionately out away from the center of the earth. The spirits of the air eventually build up to the angelic choir in heaven where the balance then shifts from the offenses against God to the love of God.¹² This hierarchy of spirits, in the air and the earth, is focused on here by Munday. John replies to Griffin with a supercilious question which implies that John à Kent can perform particular occult practices with the same ease in which

¹¹There are writings on the cabalistic hierarchy. The most scholarly is A. E. Waite, The Holy Kabbalah (New York, 1960). Francis Barrett's The Magus, Or Celestial Intelligencer (London, 1801) provides an excellent examination of the demons who occupy the sub-lunary spheres. It must be remembered that Christianity took, from other beliefs, just as much as it contributed, and in some cases, more. This concept is often lost by scholars of the Renaissance period who attempt to view the period only as an age of great Christian synthesis. In the field of mysticism and occult rituals, however, Christianity, historically speaking, is a late-comer.

¹²See Waite, pp. 269-277. The influence of the Jewish Cabala on the Renaissance Christian thought is a fertile field that needs much ploughing. Joseph Blau's The Christian Interpretation of the Cabala in the Renaissance (New York, 1944) shows this field to be quite prolific for Renaissance scholars. The problem of scholarly research on the influence of the Cabala is put forth precisely by Kenneth Rexroth in the introduction to Waite's classic study: "There is singularly little on Jewish mysticism of any sort to be found in English. Furthermore, most of it is not very rewarding. Much of it is definitely antagonistic," p. vii.

Griffin can eat and sleep.

In the next scene, which takes place in Chester, the two brides-to-be are awaiting the marriage ceremony with their fathers' choices as the intended grooms. Here is a fine example of the sorcerer's magical powers. John's magical transformation provides the typical Plautian plot of hidden identity to manifest itself as it does so often in English Renaissance drama. John enters transformed into an old hermit. The old man character, or in this case, an aged hermit, is employed in English literature as early as Chaucer, in The Pardoner's Tale, and is also used by Marlowe in Doctor Faustus. He appears again in John à Kent and John à Cumber. The exact function of the old man in these three plays cannot be precisely defined. Munday utilizes the character specifically for disguise purposes. It is interesting to note that this type of character is popular in Eastern literature. The hermit, the aged sire, appears in the Ramayana, some of the Upanishads, and the Bahgavad Gita. Perhaps somehow this character as a tradition has crept westward into English literature. Obviously, the literary association is between age and sagacity. The person who lives longest possesses greatest wisdom; therefore, wisdom is frequently portrayed on the stage as an old man. This archetypal old man, the aged hermit, appears to be popular in Renaissance drama.

John à Kent reveals to the prospective brides, Marion and Sidanen, his adeptness at palmistry. They ask

him to read their hands and he agrees to do so. He tells both girls that they must purify themselves at ". . . Saint Winifrides fayre spring . . ." (l. 260) before they get married the next day. Otherwise, hard fortune will befall them as brides. They agree to do this and John offers to guide them to the spring, by the light of the moon. This is part of John à Kent's attempt to forestall their wedding. He explains the time that is best to go on the sojourn:

when twise two houres the daughters of the night,
 haue driuen their Eban chariot thorow the ayre,
 and with their duskie winges breathde calme rest,
 vppon the eyeliddes of eche liuing thing:
 The siluer shyning horned lamp dooth rise,
 by whose cleere light we may discerne the pathe,
 wherin though lamely now I seeme to plod
 yet will I guyde ye safely to the spring.
 And for your coming at the back gate wayte.
 (ll. 287-295)

Twice two hours after the daughters of the night drive their chariots through the air sets the embarkation time four hours after dusk. "The siluer shyning horned lamp dooth rise" is apt because the moon represents the horns of the procreant bull, the symbol of fertility; it is fitting for a marriage situation. The real purpose of the trip is to reunite the ladies with their true loves; therefore, John à Kent prevents the intended marriage under the very noses of the grooms chosen by the ladies' fathers.

When Morten discovers that John à Kent's sorcery succeeds in fouling up his marriage to his loved one, he calls upon the help of the Scottish sorcerer, John à Cumber. At this point, the play builds into a competition between two

magicians. John à Cumber and John à Kent welcome the competition. In the end, John à Kent manages to cast an illusionary "glamour" over the eyes of his rival magician who in turn, because of this spell, marries the wrong couples and unknowingly fulfills John à Kent's desired ends.

Thus far the sorcery plays examined are either tragic or comic in mood. The tone is light or heavy depending upon the author's manipulation of the Christian sense of sin. Various literary sources, indicating possible sorcerer character strains, were cited, and these sources exerted their influence on the Renaissance dramatic characterization of a sorcerer: the medieval romances, both the Arthurian and the Charlemagne legends; the religious tractarian literature of the Renaissance period which expressed religious opposition to sorcerers and witches, but, at the same time, provided the character details needed to create the stage sorcerer; and finally some contemporary "sorcerers" such as Agrippa and the Biblical sorcerers cited in religious tracts. There is yet another literary source for the sorcerer archetype-- the history of the Church itself.

Many popes were suspected of occult leanings. History neither denies nor affirms their affiliation with the "dark side" of theology. An air of mystery surrounds the clouded activities of some of the popes, e.g., Urban VIII, John XXII, Silvester II, and the notorious Alexander VI. This list is by no means complete, but it is ample to indicate a possible source for sorcerer-types. Alexander VI is

the subject of the sorcerer's most potent, magical powers-- the art of theurgy. Theurgy is the ability of a magician to secure the aid of demons, or divinities, depending on which religious perspective he is in, in accomplishing the sorcerer's aims, as in the gothic tragedy, The Divils Charter (1607). The Divils Charter is a play on the life and death of the unscrupulous Roderigo Borgia, who becomes Pope Alexander VI. Certain similarities to Marlowe are evident in this play, yet with the nondramatic occult literature on the literary market of Renaissance England, especially after the coronation of King James, the magical procedures for conjuration, necromancy, and other occult activities can quickly be found in the tractarian literature of the era.¹³ The dramatic convention of conjuration evidently draws quite heavily on the tracts against magic.

As the play opens, Francesco Guicchiardine functions as a rather stiff chorus who provides the antecedent dramatic action. He delivers a straightforward historical narrative. He is a ghost who has come to dwell with the mortals on earth to tell a story about Roderigo Borgia, who has lately become Pope Alexander VI. He is to tell what

¹³ Even Reginald Scot's Discoverie provides excellent occult charms, conjurations, and other occult miscellanea suitable for dramatic presentation. See Scot, pp. 315-318.

". . . Vngodly meanes, and Art"¹⁴ Alexander used to obtain the crown.

Following Guicchiardine's choral comment, Alexander enters the stage between two Cardinals dressed in a purple habit. There is a canopy-like set on the stage and there are bags of money under the canopy. Alexander gives the money and the gold to the Cardinals. Apparently he is buying his way into the conclaves. The Cardinals leave, and Alexander is alone with his servant, a monk:

. . . with a magical booke and rod, in priuate whispering with Roderick, whome the Monke draweth to a chaire on midst of the Stage which hee circleth, and before it an other Circle, into which (after semblance of reading with exorcismes) appeare exhalations of lightning and sulphurous smoke in midst whereof a diuill in most vgly shape: from which Roderigo turneth his face, hee beeng coniured downe after more thunder and fire, ascends another diuill like a Sargeant with a mace vnder his girdle: Roderigo disliketh. Hee discendeth: after more thunder and fearefull fire, ascend in robes pontificall with a triple Crowne on his head, and Crosse keyes in his hand: a diuill him ensuing in blacke robes like a pronotary, a cornerd Cappe on his head, a box of Lancets at his girdle, a little peece of fine parchment in his hand, who beeing brought vnto Alexander, hee willingly receiueth him; to whome hee deliuereth the wryting, which seeming to reade, presently the Pronotary strippeth vp Alexanders sleeue and letteth his arme bloud in a saucer, and hauing taken a peece from the Pronotary, subscribeth to the parchment; deliuereth it: the remainder of the bloud, the other diuill seemeth to suppe vp; and from him disroabed is put the rich Cap the Tunicle, and the triple Crowne set vpon Alexanders head,

¹⁴ Barnabe Barnes, The Divils Charter (1607), ed. R. B. McKerrow, reprint of Louvain 1904 edition, Materials for the Study of the Old English Drama, Series 1, Vols. 4-6 (Vaduz, 1963), Prologvs, l. 24.

the Crosse-keyes deliuered into his hands; and
withall a magicall booke: this donne with thunder
and lightning the diuills descend: Alexander
aduanceth himselfe, and departeth.

(Stage Directions, ll. 35-57)

These stage directions are quoted in their entirety because they contain the occult details of Alexander's satanic compact. The book Alexander takes from the Monk is a conjuring book. Possibly the book is one of the medieval grimoires: the Key of Soloman or the Grand Grimoire of Pope Honorius. Such grimoires describe the necessary procedures for the conjuration of specific spirits. One such procedure is outlined in Barnes's stage directions. The monk draws a circle in the middle of the stage and another circle around that circle. Following a series of magical incantations, there appear exhalations of lightning and smoke. In the midst of this spectacle, the devil comes in a most ugly shape. The conjuration is in keeping with the Faustian tradition, although not in direct imitation of Faustus. The devil appears in a most hideous form, and Alexander banishes him because he is too hideous to see. The first devil goes away, and another devil appears out of the fire and brimstone. Again, the demon appears in a form which Alexander does not care for and the devil descends. After more thunder and fearful fire, the devil appears dressed in pontifical robes, the Pope's crown, the diadem on his head, and the cross-keys of heaven in his hand. The demon is carrying a box of lancelets in his cincher and parchments in his other hand.

Barnes's conjuration differs from the Faustian scene because it develops into a parody of the Christian communion rite, found in the Mass, the chief Christian ritual. The devil in pontifical robes appears as the chief priest in this mimetic Mass. Alexander petitions the devil, asking him for help to become Pope. This is imitative of the Offertory part of the Mass where the people present their petitions to God. God reciprocates in the offering of the Mass in terms of His body and blood. Here Alexander willfully receives the devil, and the devil gives to Alexander the satanic compact which Alexander reads. After pulling up his sleeve, he is lanced by the devil and his blood fills a saucer. This communion rite is not found in Faustus. There is a signing of the parchment with blood in Faustus, but the blood is not lanced out of Faustus' arm in a procedure known as "the letting of the blood," quite common to the doctors of the Elizabethan age. Nor is Faustus' blood poured into a saucer. Faustus merely signs the paper and the pact is sealed. Barnes has another devil appear who accepts the signature on the parchment. The first devil drinks the remainder of the blood from the "chalice" in an act of communion.

This particular scene in Barnes's play reveals continental notions of witchcraft. European witchcraft had become associated with satanism. The particular drinking of blood, the legalistic procedure of the signing of the parchment, the letting of the blood, all are reminiscent of

highly ritualized witchcraft operating in the countries of France and northern Italy.¹⁵

This scene is not taken directly from Marlowe but is influenced by Marlowe's Doctor Faustus. It is too ritualistic. The devil is called up within the circle, instead of the conjurer being in the circle.¹⁶ In this scene with Alexander, all is done without a spoken word. It carries the force of a silent Mass in the form of a dumb show. The silent scene takes place between Guicchiardine's speeches and the main body of the play. There are no more specific scenes dealing with the devil until the Pope's son, Caesar Borgia, murders the Pope's other son, the Duke of Candice

Following this murder scene, there is a small interjection from the choric Guicchiardine. He moralizes on death and blood--and only lengthens the scene. The scene then quickly changes. Alexander is in his study again. He is concentrating on his magic glass crystal and realizes

¹⁵ Jules Michelet, Satanism and Witchcraft (New York, 1939). No page is needed for citation because the whole book powerfully reveals the ultimate degree of sadism and horror heaped upon the poor women of the Continent. Michelet's approach is direct, and the technique is narrative. This book is not dry with historical statistics but presents the despairing situation of the diabolical persecution of witches on the Continent.

¹⁶ See Scot, pp. 315-334. Herein Scot elaborates on conjuring procedures. McKerrow in his Introduction to the edition cited above indicates that the Heptameron, seu Elementa Magica of Petrus de Abano, which he dates between 1246-1320, may be a possible source for Barnes's demonology (McKerrow, p. xi).

that his son Candie is murdered. He screams "Where is that traiterous homicide?" (IV.i.1707) and asks who killed the Duke of Candice. He cries, and for the first time in the play Alexander is upset. He comes out of his study with his conjuring book in his hand. This scene, which is more than just a stock conjuration scene, borders on necromancy, or learning about past and future events by raising the dead. It is important to remember the murder-motif which permeates this conjuration scene and the scene before it. The significance of the occult details Barnes employs in this scene constantly reinforces the martial theme of murder and revenge:

Alexander commeth vpon the Stage out of his study with a booke in his hand.

Oh, oh, very good very good: well I perfectly peceiue.

By this escention of Arctophilax,¹⁷
 What time of night it is, sorrow giue place;
 Reuenge in blood and fierie sacrafice,
 Commaundeth: nature now preuents her current:
 yeeld,
 Let vs adore the second eye of heauen, he boweth

¹⁷ I call the reader's attention to line 1715. In the quotation McKerrow uses the word "escention." My reading of the 1607 edition finds the word "descention." It is important to ascertain the correct position of Arctophilax because necromancy and all evil magic rituals are usually performed when signs and planets are in positions which increase their malefic power. If Arctophilax is on the descendant, that is, on the western horizon of the earth, then it is going under the earth, and this position is one of the many opportune times for working evil. Further indication that the word is not "escention" is found in line 1727: "Now mountes bright Athaman in his goulden ascention, . . ." Two signs cannot be rising on the eastern horizon within the region of the celestial zodiac at the same time.

his bodie.

Bright Armatas increaseth she, is not combust.

O sacred season for nocturnall Ceremonies.

This ioyeous quarter is in Casmaran. ha. he
looketh on a watch.

What hower of night ist? why tis Salam, twelue a
cloke,

What are our angels of this quarter?

Gargatel Tariel Gauiel.

How goodly these augurize faire auspices of truth,
Now mountes bright Athaman in his goulden ascen-
tion,

Direct in opposition with our hemispher, he
tinketh on a bell.

And now there hower with them is Aetalon:

Bernardo bring hither thy white robes of sanctity,

Hast thou Coles ready burnt bring in my Thurible,

And sence about this sanctified place,

For heere Festatiui must haue her honor.

Candie my sonne is murthered, Candie my sonne,

Candie my sonne is murthered: I will raise

All the great diuills to shew the murtherer,

Euen as thou lou'dst my sonne hast and dispatch,

Hast and dispatch it as thou louest my soule.

Tis not yet ayne by three quarters of an hower,

What are our Angels of this night? Michael,

Dardael, Huratipel.

In a triumphant carre of burning gold,

Crownd with a circlet of blacke hebeny,

And with a mace of Iet King Varca rides.

Attended with his ministers of state, Andas and

Cynaball.

Fit dismall times for our solemnities.

(IV.i.1714-45)

Alexander checks the time for calling upon the specific demons of the hour. He mentions that by the descension of Arctophilax revenge and blood and sacrifice are in order. He checks the time exactly--twelve o'clock, the conventional dramatic time for the working of evil. He asks who the angels are of this quarter. At first all this mumble-jumble may seem confusing, yet it reveals Barnabe Barnes's specific knowledge of the Cabala and other Elizabethan occult literature. A specific grimoire called the

Lemegeton, or the Lesser Key of Solomon, contains the names and powers of over seventy demons. Book I, Goetia, lists their specific domains of power.¹⁸ By invoking these spirits at the specific hour in which they are ruling, the conjurer can invoke either good spirits or evil spirits. The evil spirits are dedicated to destruction and death, and the good spirits are dedicated to positive ends. Basic techniques of ritual magic are also found in Greco-Egyptian magical texts dating about A.D. 100 to 400.¹⁹ This seems not to have been explored as a literary tradition, but Barnes appears familiar with the details of conjuration techniques.

The magic wand is a symbol of the sorcerer.

Cavendish points out that it is necessary to use a wand to draw the magic circle:

A magic wand or rod is . . . one of the supreme emblems of magical power, partly because it is a phallic symbol. The use of ceremonial staffs or wands is very ancient and they have been found near prehistoric hearths. Moses and Aaron used their magic rods to smite the land of Egypt with

¹⁸Lewis Spence, An Encyclopaedia of Occultism (New York, 1968), p. 243.

¹⁹Cavendish, pp. 138-140. Cavendish discusses the Greco-Egyptian magical tradition from the Corpus Hermeticum, attributed to the Egyptian Hermes Trismegistus, through the Gnostics, down to the more modern occultists: Aleister Crowley and Eliphas Levi. However, Cavendish's treatment is rather spurious in the Renaissance period of magic and it is Frances A. Yates's excellent scholarly work, Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition (London, 1964), that treats the Renaissance magical tradition accurately. Yates discloses the Hermetic tradition of Renaissance writers of Italy.

plagues. The wand also belonged to Hermes, who led the souls of the dead down to the underworld, and it became an emblem of all who rule over the dead. In the Odyssey Circe changes the comrades²⁰ of Odysseus into swine with her rhabdos or wand.

In The Divils Charter Barnes is familiar with the procedures of ritual magic. The Greco-Egyptian magic tradition is manifested in the Judaeo-Christian milieu by the biblical Moses' magic wand. Moses throws his staff down and it turns into a snake. The crosier that the bishops, or mitred abbots, carry contains carved glyphs, or markings, illustrating Christian events. Similar markings, although of a different nature, are found on the magic wand. These runes symbolized magical power.

Some of the demons Alexander mentions are difficult to track down. They seem to have been lost in antiquity. Most magic, with the exception of the grimoires, was an oral tradition. However, some demons Alexander mentions are identifiable. At the beginning of the scene, after Alexander comes out of his study with his magic-book, he refers to the time in astrological terms:

. . . I perfectly peceiue
By this descention of Arctophilax,
What time of night it is, . . .
(IV.i.1714-1716)

The allusion to Arctophilax refers to the constellation of Ursa Minor. The lesser bear, Ursa Minor, was called Arctophilax 1, the chief star of which was Arcturus. Ursa Minor is descending on the western horizon as Alexander begins his

²⁰Cavendish, p. 234.

conjuring. Ursa Minor is associated with the fury of the bear. The bear is a martian creature, governed and dominated by Mars. Mars delights in revenging blood and sacrifice.²¹ Ursa Minor is not a common astrological invocation. Ursa Minor and Ursa Major, the references seen in Shakespeare's King Lear (I.ii.140-144), are extra-zodiacal constellations. They are outside of the normal zodiac scheme of things and are unnatural. The time then is right--twelve o'clock. Alexander says: "Let vs adore the second eye of heauen, [he bows his body in ritual formation] / Bright Armatas increaseth she, is not combust" (IV.i.1720). This reference to Armatas as the second eye of heaven would seem to call up a reference to the moon. Moon worship is part of occult ritual. There is one other possible, and more probable, explanation to this sidereal reference. It is night and the first eye of heaven would be the moon. The second eye of heaven would be the brightest star shining in the sky--the evening star. If this is the case, Armatas could refer to the planet Mars, coming from the Latin word Arma, meaning

²¹Another possible reason Barnes utilizes the Ursa Minor constellation is its mythological origin. Callisto, beloved of Jupiter, was hated by Hera, who caused her to be turned into a she-bear during a hunting episode, and Callisto was slain mistakenly by her son Arcas. Jupiter placed her in the heavens because of his love for her. The myth is fitting here because of Caesar's murder of his brother. Therefore, Ursa Minor is a suitable martial constellation to make the time right to avenge a ruthless murder. Thomas Bullfinch, The Age of Fable (New York, 1965), p. 39.

"weapons." Armatas' power is increasing. She is not combust. According to Blagrave, "A Planet is said to be combust of the Sun when he is not fully elongated from the sun eight degrees thirty minutes: When a Planet is combust, it showeth that those who are represented thereby are in great fear and overpowered by some great person; . . ." ²²

Therefore, the possibility that the reference here is to the malefic planet Mars would make the conjuration "a . . . sacred season for nocturnal ceremonies" (IV.i.1721). The only argument which can be placed against this interpretation, and it is a fair argument, is that Alexander refers to the heavenly body mentioned in the feminine gender. This would tend to support the conjecture that the moon is referred to here. Whichever planet it is, the moon or Mars, both are suitable to occult activity. The season of conjuration, be it for revenge, in which case Mars is suitable, or be it for nocturnal activities, for which the moon is suitable, is described accurately.

The rest of the images Alexander invokes are rare. They are not mentioned in the Bible, except one, Salam, which may be associated with the sorcerer Melchizedek, who is known in the Bible as the King of Salem, and ". . . he

²²Blagrave, p. 87.

was priest of the most high God."²³ This priest is a sorcerer. He is further described in Hebrews vii.3 as being ". . . fatherless, motherless, without genealogy, having neither a beginning of days nor an end of life, but having been made like the Son of God, he remains a priest perpetually:" Alexander's devil comes in the guise of the high priest of the Roman Church. He is dressed in the pontifical robes, and a further reference to Salem is found in Psalm lxxvi.1-3: "God is known in Judah; In Israel his name is great. / And his covert proves to be in Salem itself," Salem implies secrecy, as this psalm suggests by the word "covert." Salam seems to have a connotative occult meaning as Alexander uses it. It is the secret or covert time of night--twelve o'clock.

Alexander names three angels who are guardians of this quarter of the night and it is to them he must appeal and "augurize faire auspices of truth" (IV.i.1726). The demonic angels are part of the Cabala tradition. They are not found in the New Testament, nor are they specifically mentioned in the Old Testament, with the exception of Michael. Michael is mentioned in Daniel as a great prince who would stand up on behalf of the people (Daniel xii.1),

²³ Waite discusses Melchizedek and his priestly function: "When the time comes for the Zohar to speak of Melchizedek King of Salem it says that his offering of bread and wine symbolized the world above and the world below" (Waite, p. 299).

and in the letter of Jude in the New Testament Michael argues over Moses' body, thus linking him with Moses, one of the leaders of the Hebrew occult tradition (Jude 8). Michael throws the defeated angels out of heaven in the Book of Revelation. Michael in the Jewish tradition means "he who is equal to God." Alexander is calling upon God's warrior.

The Arbatel of Magic was published at Basel (1575) in Latin. It describes the universe divided up into 196 Olympic provinces. Spirits govern the world at various times. The book describes how to appeal to the various spirits that have influence over certain aspects of the world. The sorcerer desiring to see the future or to control natural forces can appeal to the spirits. Only Isagoge, one of the original nine volumes, survives.²⁴ It is possible that this work or any of the medieval grimoires serve as a source for Barnes's conjuration scene because Alexander seeks out specific demons in precise geographical areas.

Alexander then fashions out a circle with his wand. He employs a fumigation called red sandalwood. The parody here on the ritual of the Mass is evident. The fumigation could correspond to the use of incense in a Catholic High Mass to purify the altar:

Cense well Barnardo: bring me some fire in an earthen vessell

²⁴ Spence claims "The Arbatel is one of the best authorities extant on spiritual essences, their powers and degrees" (Spence, p. 35).

Now must I laboure like a collyers horse.

After Bernardo had Censed he bringeth in coles,
and Alexander fashioneth out his circle then
taketh his rod.

My pretious best approu'd and trusty seruant,
Hence in all hast be-take thee to thy beads,
Whilst these darke workes of horror are in hand,
Red Sandall is my fumigation.

(IV.i.1748-55)

Alexander utilizes it here to draw to him the particular spirits he has mentioned. The specific fumigation is red sandalwood. There are two magical reasons for this. Red sandalwood appeals to Mars and it supports the martian theme of murder, as Mars governs murders. Any plant which is red in color, acidic in taste, or acrid in smell would be a suitable incense to invoke the favor of Mars. Another reason for fumigation is to prevent the conjured demon from hurting the sorcerer. The sandalwood protects Alexander.²⁵

Following the fumigation, Alexander stands outside the circle and begins his magic ritual:

standing without the circle he waueth his
rod to the East.

And calleth vpon	} {	VIONATRABA.
To the West.		SVSERATOS.
To the North.		AQVIEL.
To the Sowth.		MACHASAEL.

Coniuro, et confirmo super vos in nomine Eye, eye,
ey; hast vp & ascende pernometu ya, ya, ya; he, he,
he; va; hy, hy; ha, ha, ha; va, va, va; an, an,
an;

Fiery exhalations lightning thunder ascend a
King, with a red face crowned imperiall

²⁵ See Scot, p. 244 and p. 333; and Barrett, pp. 40-41. Barrett's work, although not written in the Renaissance, explains the tradition and details of specific conjuration procedures.

riding vpon a Lyon, or dragon: Alexander
putteth on more perfume and saith.
 I coniure thee by these aforesaid names,
 That thou receaue no phantasmatike illusions.
 (IV.i.1757-67)

He invokes the cardinal points of the compass on the circle he has drawn. He appeals to the four spirits which are given dominion over those areas. Alexander conjures in Latin and the proper use and pronunciation of the words, the incantations, and the rhythms of the words, are important in the conjuration. The incantations in lines 1761-1763 vaguely resemble an exaggerated pronunciation of the traditional Hebrew word for God, Yahweh. This word was considered by many of the cabalists to be a key power word when calling out spirits and often was circumscribed about magic circle.²⁶

Once the prescribed vocal incantations have been completed, there is the traditional thunder and lightning entrance of the devil, dressed as a king riding upon a lion. Immediately Alexander puts on more fumigation. By this, Barnes probably means that Alexander fumigates the air more to keep away the frightening devil. Alexander reminds the devil that the demon is bound by him through the sacred names he has used. When Alexander asks to see the man who murdered his son Candie, the devil disappears, and another

²⁶ See Waite, Appendix IV, p. 617. Waite explains the cabalistic doctrine of the Divine Name and the creative power the Divine Name conveys.

devil dressed in a suit of armor appears. Alexander asks once more for the devil to show him the man who killed his son, Candie:

Alex. Then by the dreadfull names of Amioram,
Titepand Sadai shew me that damned childe of
reprobation,

Which this night murdered the duke of Candie.

Diui. Keepe a firme station stir not for thy
life,

He goeth to one doore of the stage, from
whence he bringeth the Ghost of Candie
gastly haunted by Caesar persuing and
stabing it, these vanish in at another
doore.

Alex. Hold, hold, hold, hold; per todos santos now
no more, Caesar hath kill'd a brother and a father.

(IV.i.1797-1806)

The devil presents to Alexander the ghost of Candie with Caesar pursuing it and stabbing it, over and over again. This ghost is distinctly labeled a ghost by Barnes. But the ghost's appearance suggests this scene depicts actual necromancy. The ghost's wounds are gaping and bleeding. From the spirits of the dead, through necromancy, a sorcerer can learn the events of the past and the events of the future. The bloody ghost serves to advance the plot by acting as a revelatory device which permits Alexander to have knowledge of the murderers of his son-in-law and his son. Magic moves the plot forward; otherwise Alexander could not know about the murders. Alexander now has the knowledge through magic which helps to advance the action of the play.

Barnes's focus on the occult details of this scene, although tedious and long-winded, has its purpose. These

details are put into the play so frequently that they give the tragedy a "gothic" character. Yet this strength in Barnes, the eye for occult detail, may also be his greatest weakness. Despite the fact that all the fumigations, magical incantations, etc., provide spectacle for the Renaissance stage, the play as a whole falls flat on its back. The scene with the occult spectacle becomes bogged down in magical details, and the whole of the play is sacrificed for the part--the occult spectacle scene. When the incantations are finished and Alexander knows who killed Candie, the question must be asked: what does Alexander do about it? The answer: nothing. He does nothing with this knowledge. The scene builds and builds and builds, with suspense and spectacle, and Alexander promises revenge, but his desire for revenge quickly subsides in the presence of his son Caesar. Alexander is a powerful, dynamic character who is unscrupulous in his own dealings, and for him not to act ruthlessly in this instance is inconsistent with his character.

It is only in the final scene that Barnes approaches anything resembling tragic stature. This scene achieves dramatic force because Alexander ceases to be a John Dee and returns to human evil. Alexander has prostituted all his values to become a usurper pope. The representative of absolute evil, the devil in Alexander's pontifical robes, is vividly pictured in this scene. This diabolical confrontation between human evil and absolute evil intensifies into a

pulsating dramatic force that carries this scene through. The devil comes to claim Alexander. As the evil Pope pulls back the curtain and sees the devil, he makes the sign of the cross. The devil replies:

What dost thou start foule child of reprobation
 Vaine are thy crosses, vaine all exorcismies,
 Those be no fruites of faith but mere hypocrisie:
Signa te signa temeré me tangis & angis
Roma tibi subito motibus ibit amor.
Rome Which once was thy gorgeous concubine
 Hath now forsaken thee: now doth she finde,
 Thy falshood which did her adulterate
 What dost thou tremble slaue of sinne and hell?
 (V.vi.3071-79)

The fiend's vituperous diatribe frightens the malignant Vicar of Christ, and he attempts to exorcise the devil:

Alexander taketh his booke of Magike, the
Diuil laugheth.
Alex. I exorcise thee foule malignant spirit
 In the names of, of, of _____
Diuil. Of what? foule mouth, poluted soule?
 Corrupted flesh; God hath forsaken thee,
 Thy date expired is, thy powre determined.
Alex. Dissolue, dissolue, break, breake, black
 soule dissolue,
 And poyson all this hemisphere with sinne.
Diu. Thy death and dissolution stand at dore,
 Resolue now to dissolue, thy soule is ours.
Alex. Proud Lucifer Traytor, to great Iehouah,
 Father of lies my time is not expir'd
 I will not do that violence to God,
 Taking that which is his from him
 To be bestow'd on his great enemy.
Diu. Thou that hast throwne those graces in
 his face,
 How canst thou think vpon saluation?
 Think that th'art damn'd. I will declare it
 plainly.

(V.vi.3080-98)

The scene is dramatically powerful, but the play is not one of the most successful tragedies of this period. The reason for this lies in the character of Alexander himself.

Alexander is seen as an evil man from the start. This is not true of Faustus. Faustus displays the human side of his character. Marlowe balances his potential to do good against Faustus' inclination toward evil. Faustus never does an evil thing. He never commits murder. The dramatic principle in the Faustian drama is this delicate ethical balance between good and evil, between heaven and hell. This is not true in Barnes's play. Alexander is totally evil from the start, and he exhibits no potential to do good. Repentance is an afterthought, simply coming after Alexander's soul is damned to hell. If a god who is dedicated to any kind of goodness should absolve Alexander's soul, it is doubtful any human being could forgive his evil. As the play ends, Alexander is dying of poison, an ironic symbol of the moral poison which has infected his mind and soul. The devil had switched the glasses, and Alexander drank the poisoned wine he had prepared for the Cardinals. He dies alone on the stage, isolated from the rest of humanity. There is no redemptive hope, and frankly his death is unimportant because a man like Alexander deserves to die.

In the confrontation with the devil in this last scene, Barnes employs a familiar folklore tradition of trying to outwit the devil. In folklore tradition the human being who has made the satanic compact with the devil tries to outwit the devil by some type of logical chicanery and thereby win his freedom. In this scene, however, the

process is reversed. It is the devil who pulls the trick on Alexander:

Alex. Seauen years are yet to come, I look for them.

Diu. Examine thy soule with this counterparte.

Alex. Behold it? is it not for eight years & 8. daies?

Diu. Thou foole examine in Arithmetik, Numbers without distinction placed thus. Annos with the figure II. signifying eleuen years, & the figure, Seauen applied to Dies importing seauen daies.

Alex. How? how? how? how? howes that?
Deh quella malitia del Diabolo: Deh quello veleno del inferno.

And for what stands this figure then?

Diu. Why for eightene this figure stands for octauo referred vnto die last before, signifying th'eight day after, so that Annos vndecem without distinction signifying eleauen years; and this figure seauen added to daies; and that octauo post, importing the eight day following, moriere, thou shalt die. I meane thy bodie with thy soule in respect of Heauen.

Thus many daies hast thou continued Pope,
And this is thy last day design'd by fate.

(V.vi.3100-17)

Alexander assumes that he has much more time than indicated on the satanic parchment. However, the devil shows Alexander exactly how many days and months he has. The present date is the day in which the contract is to expire. Alexander tries to exorcise the devil, but it is to no avail. There is an attempt here to create the same feeling Marlowe produced in Faustus, but there is no overwhelming sense of Christian despair like Faustus displays. Alexander feels extreme torment. He knows he is at the mercy of the devil, and he realizes there is no way out. He is conscious of his own human nature, his own hell, which condemns him as a sinner, but the only thing which bothers Alexander is the

terrible idea of living physically in hell. He says to the devil:

I tell thee I cannot be resolu'd,
To dwell in darknesse breake black soule dissolve,
And poyson all this Hemisphere with sinne,
(V.vi.3213-15)

The wretched Alexander realizes that the nature of his sin is of such magnitude that it could poison the entire hemisphere with sin. As he is borne away by the devils, Alexander apprehends the fate to which he is taken and realizes that he will be tormented with never-ending tortures. He will freeze, he will burn, and his suffering will never end. For once, Barnes's scene builds a dramatic intensity without destroying it completely. Alexander and hell are the diabolical marriage of human evil with absolute evil.

Certain ambivalent impressions arise from Barnes's play. Alexander VI is a strong, unprincipled character. The agreement he makes with the devil is dramatic spectacle. It is surrounded by lightning, thunder, conjurations, all of the traditional fire and brimstone of the devil. The ritualistic magic and procedure are quite accurate and seem to be deliberate on the part of Barnes to reveal in this drama a parody of the Christian Mass, which in turn points out the consequence of communion with evil. It is this communion of evil, the willful partaking of evil, which is the greatest sin of Alexander VI. He employs the power he gains from the devil, not in a perfunctory way as Faustus sometimes does, but he uses it to advance his own selfish ambitions, and he

employs that power to harm his fellow man, not help him.

The whole play illustrates the problem of uncontrollable theurgy. The sorcerer always is in danger lest he will not be able to control the demons he conjures up. The magic circle, standing without it instead of within it, the burning of the fumigation, and the pentacles illustrate firmly the feeling that Alexander could not handle the type of evil he conjured. The devils go on strike when Charles invades Naples and they refuse to help this wicked Pope. He does not control them as well as Faustus does, nor does he control the forces of nature with sophistication as does the craftsman Prospero. In The Divils Charter, Alexander accomplishes theurgy by the satanic compact, and he pays the price for the contract. The possibility of harm is always present in the practice of theurgy because the sorcerer is not sure if he can contain or control the demons he summons, and this magical inadequacy is suggested in early sorcerer plays, e.g., Marlowe's Doctor Faustus and here in Barnes's play. Usually the convention of the magic circle is employed by the dramatist to symbolize the need for protection of the sorcerer, hence Dr. Faustus' carefully drawn characters to summon the right spirits. Another convention that suggests demonic harm to the sorcerer is the terrible first appearance of the demon. Faustus asks the demon to return as ". . . an old Franciscan frier; / That holy shape becomes a diuell best" (ll. 260-261). Alexander makes a similar

request. Perhaps a demon summoned from hell is a force to be reckoned with.

Theurgy was not the only method of acquiring magic. One did not have to coerce the demons into performing magical acts. Magic could be acquired naturally by birth--that is, if one of the parents of an offspring possessed magical powers to begin with. One sure way to meet this criterion of natural magic, magic by birthright, was to have a demon for a father. The next play deals with this situation. The literary source for The Birth of Merlin is the many adventures of the medieval magician in Arthurian legends, but an important patriotic feature is added to the dramatic Merlin. The authors, presumably Rowley and Shakespeare, emphasize the importance of Merlin in the history of England. This mytho-historical role of Merlin makes possible the progeny that will produce King Arthur and eventually the British empire with Elizabeth as queen. It is the same mytho-historical synthesis utilized by Spenser in The Faerie Queene. Spenser even employs Merlin in Britomart's attempt to discover her destined spouse to begin the progeny which will eventually produce Queen Elizabeth I. There is a historical perspective in The Birth of Merlin synthesized with the mythical Merlin that weaves a thread of national destiny through the play.

Two sorcerers emerge here even though the play deals with Merlin. The first part of the play, until the actual birth of Merlin, is dominated by the hermit-sorcerer Anselme.

He comes to Aurelius, King of Britain, in time to defeat the Saxon invasion, and through his mystical powers of creating illusions, he drives away the enemy forces. Once again the sorcerer's powers are wielded for national fame or political ends. But the impression of nationalism found in frier Bacon and frier Bongay is much stronger than in this play. Anselme helps his fellow man because of a strong feeling of Christian charity. He is a Christian, and the Saxons are pagans. He induces Donobert's daughters to follow the ascetic life, and eventually they go into the convent. The two had been betrothed to the courtiers, Edwyn and Cador. Before Anselme first appears, Toclio, Aurelius' courtier, tells the court about the magical feats Anselme has performed. Toclio mentions that Anselme is

. . . sent by the Earl of Chester to the King,
 A man of rare esteem for holyness,
 A reverent Hermit, that by miracle
 Not onely saved our army,
 But without aid of man o'erthrew
 The pagan Host, and with such wonder, sir,
 As might confirm a Kingdom to his faith.²⁷

Toclio is not the only person who has heard of the hermit. Modestia, a daughter of Donobert, also replies that she

²⁷William Shakespeare and William Rowley, The Birth of Merlin (1622), The Shakespeare Apocrypha, ed. C. F. Tucker Brooke (Oxford, 1967), I.i.71-77. All quotations from The Birth of Merlin are taken from Brooke's edition. It should be noted that despite the 1622 publication date, Brooke points out: "From the language and grammar, . . . as well as the general tone, it is clear that The Birth of Merlin was not composed later than the reign of James I; nor is it at all likely that it antedates James's accession" (Introduction, p. xivii).

longs to see him. Toclio precognizes Anselme as "half a prophet" (I.i.84), and "he could tell . . . any news of the lost prince" (I.i.85). The "lost prince," Aurelius' son, is wandering in the woods, love-mad over a woman he has seen. He fails to return to the kingdom and his father is worried about him. Anselme, using his prophetic powers, finds the lost prince. After this impressive character build-up, the actual entrance of Anselme in the play is rather modest. He merely walks into the court, and the king turns around asking who it is. Upon noticing that it is Anselme, the king exclaims:

Welcome, my happiness!
 Our Countries hope, most reverent holy man,
 I wanted but thy blessing to make perfect
 The infinite sum of my felicity.
 (I.ii.162-165)

The hermit's unspectacular entrance, after the character build-up by Toclio, is dramatically well-timed. He enters the scene just after Aurelius has been totally overwhelmed by the beauty of the Saxon general's sister, Artesia, who has been sent by her brother to sue for terms of peace. Aurelius completely loses his heart over her and makes a hasty marriage proposal which the other nobles of the court regard as untimely and unsafe for the kingdom. They consider it unwise to welcome into the king's heart one so close to the king's enemy. It is at this delicate point, when the king is elated with joy concerning Artesia and the nobles are discontent about the king's choice, that the hermit enters. The hermit is a melancholic character. He is always

dwelling on the other world, rather than this world. He tells the king that happiness is not found in this world. This melancholic thought disrupts the king's jubilant mood. He immediately turns the tables on Anselme and claims that the hermit is deceived because the king has found both "Beauty, Alliance, Peace, and strength of Friends" in his confirmed link with Artesia (I.ii.170). The hermit warns him outright that this hasty marriage is not good. He cautions the king that he is too near his misery and pleads with Aurelius to "Stand further from destruction" (I. ii.179).

The hermit's dramatic function here is to foreshadow events by prophecy which will occur later in the play. The king's misery is his murder by Artesia and the seemingly certain downfall of the kingdom, which is only prevented by Merlin. Anselme performs only one magic feat in the play. He competes with Proximus, the Saxon sorcerer, in a competition between magicians like that in frier Bacon and frier Bongay. Anselme competes with Proximus, but the competition here is on a religious rather than on a national level. The hermit-sorcerer emblemizes Christianity, and Proximus, paganism. The contest manifests the superiority of God's magic against the non-Christian magic. Proximus conjures two spirits disguised as Hector and Achilles, who fight before the assembled court with much pomp and ceremony. It appears as though Proximus has won the contest, until Anselme steps in between the two classical warriors and they

cannot fight any more. Their hands and swords freeze, and they tremble. Proximus is amazed at this:

What power o're-aws my Spells?
 Return you Hellhounds!

 . . . the prince of devils
 Is in this Hermits habit: what else could force
 My Spirits quake or tremble thus?
 (II.iii.99-104)

The hermit takes advantage of the situation and spouts a polemic about Christianity as he exclaims:

Know, mis-believing Pagan, even that Power,
 That overthrew your Forces, still lets you see,
 He onely can controul both hell and thee.
 (II.iii.108-110)

God's magical power is supreme over the pagan's. This sole magical feat Anselme performs is for the greater honor of God, and sorcery is given a Christian sanction in this drama. Anselme dramatically functions as a John-the-Baptist figure in this play; he is a precursor to the greatest magician of all English literature, Merlin.

Merlin's debut institutes a change of tone in the play. Whereas the hermit, a contemplative religious melancholic, creates a serious tone, he is dramatically balanced over and against Merlin, who emerges as a comic character. Merlin is born with a beard on his chin. He is reading books soon after he is born, in order that he might accomplish his destined work more efficiently. He is depicted dramatically as the Christ-child is portrayed in thirteenth century Byzantine religious icons. The small Christ-child figure, with a halo around his head, is on the lap of the Madonna; yet the child possesses grown-up features. The

13th century Madonna Enthroned in the Mellon Collection at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., presents such a Christ-child. The child seated on his mother's lap has a full head of hair, and he is sitting up straight with one hand in the air as if he is going to speak. The facial features are adult, not childlike. This iconic technique is attempted in the characterization of Merlin in this play, but it is done with comical overtones.

The events and circumstances surrounding the birth of Merlin are a curious mixture of serious and comic tones. Merlin is the offspring of a devil-father and a not-too-bright mother called Jone Goe-too't.²⁸ Joan's brother, a clown figure, is an extremely funny character, possibly one of the most underrated comic figures in English drama. Merlin's birth is accompanied by thunder and lightning. All the forces of nature are disrupted at the magician's entrance into this world. The devil himself oversees the birth, and the birth scene closely resembles the conventional conjuration scene. At Merlin's birth the "Christian" devil is doing his own conjuring. He calls up classical personalities from their ancient underworld habitat: Hecate, Lucina, Persephone, and Ceres. He appears to be a very well-read demon, quite steeped in the classics. Persephone and

²⁸The name of Merlin's mother is listed as Jone Goe-too't in the Dramatis Personae, but throughout the play Jone is spelled Joan.

Ceres, classical deities of fertility, personally aid the birth of Merlin. The devil mumbles over the infant:

Mix light and darkness: earth and heaven dissolve,
 Be of one piece agen, and turn to Chaos;
 Break all your works, you powers, and spoil the
 world,
 Or, if you will maintain earth still, give way
 And life to this abortive birth now coming,
 Whose fame shall add unto your Oracles.

 . . . summon up the Fates,
 (III.iii.1-9)

The devil summons the Roman witch Erictho from Lucan's Pharsalia.

The summoning of these dark personalities for Merlin's birth dramatically calls attention to the event and also shows that the pagan pantheon of gods join ceremoniously in bringing this exceptional child into the world. When the devil calls for the Fates they enter with Lucina and they come, as the devil says, "to aid this birth prodigious" (III.iii.14). He tells them to quickly "bring this mixture of infernal seed / To humane being" (III.iii.18-19). Therefore, the Fates of classical mythology seal Merlin's nature and this infernal seed is brought to fruition.

Along with appearing as a dramatic icon of the Christ-child, Merlin possesses two natures, just as Christ also claimed. Merlin is born both of a devil father and of an earth mother. His nature is both demonic and human. Christ's nature was both divine and human. The tradition of the Christ-child studying and learning in the temple and

being quizzed by the Jewish elders upon his learning is emphasized also in Merlin's first bookworm appearance. The idea that all of nature's processes are suspended at the birth of the Christ-child is paralleled here by the devil's comment to nature to dissolve heaven and earth. The Christ parallels can be carried on: Merlin's miraculous performances and his physical appearance verify this similarity. Without extending it to logical absurdities, the Christosymbolism is there.

When Merlin first enters with Joan, he is reading a book (III.iv.24). Exactly what period of time has passed since his birth is not known. The scene follows the miraculous birth scene. Upon Merlin's entrance he meets his clown-uncle and deals with him in a manner similar to slapstick comedy. Merlin's first display of magical knowledge is to reveal that he knows his uncle's secret love life. His uncle, completely taken aback, accuses Merlin of being a witch because Merlin knows his secret. Like Faustus', the magic acts which Merlin undertakes have a comic undertone. He plays back and forth with his uncle, asking him where his purse is. Merlin has picked his uncle's pocket and his uncle sees in Merlin's particular talent a possible financial future for Merlin and himself.

The comic subplot of Merlin's birth is balanced over and against the more serious main political plot of Aurelius' struggle against the Saxons. Merlin's first public display of his magic occurs when he confronts

Proximus, the Saxon magician, at the castle of Vortiger, King of Welsh Britain. According to a prophecy, the castle which Vortiger is building can never stand until the foundation of that castle is laid with mortar mixed with the blood of a child whose father was not a mortal. Obviously there is no character in the play who could fulfill this contrived prophecy other than Merlin. Merlin goes to the castle and it is discovered that his father is not mortal. Proximus is the author of the contrived prophecy. He and Merlin face-off for a magical contest. Merlin cleverly and comically polishes off this great Saxon magician in one swift move. Merlin turns around and asks by whose direction the prophecy was made. Proximus replies:

By mine;
 My Art infalable instructed me,
 Upon thy blood must the foundation rise
 Of the Kings building; it cannot stand else.
 (IV.i.214-217)

Merlin simply looks at Proximus and asks him:

Hast thou such leisure to inquire my Fate,
 And let thine own hang careless over thee?
 Knowst thou what pendelous mischief roofs thy head,
 How fatal, and how sudden?
 (IV.i.218-221)

This young upstart crow confronts Proximus, the experienced magician, with such boldness that Proximus responds:

Pish!
 Bearded abortive, thou foretel my danger!
 My Lord, he trifles to delay his own.
 (IV.i.222-224)

Merlin glares at Proximus and tells the Saxon sorcerer there is not a minute's time between him and his death. Proximus

laughs at this statement--and he dies laughing. A stone jars loose from the building and falls upon Proximus, instantly killing him. Although this happens in a serious situation, there is a comic effect to the stone falling out of the building on Proximus at Merlin's command. Merlin performs this magical feat with a blasé finesse which rivals Medea's threat to Jason. Following the slaughter of Jason's children, Medea prophesies that Jason shall die with his head crushed beneath a shattered relic of Argo.²⁹ Later on, Jason is found dead under the stern of the Argo where a timber had fallen and hit him on his head. This scene from Euripides is grave in tone, and the episode from The Birth of Merlin is comic in tone, but the dramatic technique is the same--the curse of death.

The next example of Merlin's magical powers reveals a common medieval device--the magic wand. Merlin strikes his magic wand and it reveals to King Vortiger why he cannot maintain the foundation of his castle (IV.i.240ff). When Merlin waves his wand there is thunder and lightning. Two dragons appear, one white and one red. They fight for a long period of time. Vortiger is impressed with Merlin's power and Merlin explains that the dragons are the reason Vortiger cannot build the foundation. The two dragons fight

²⁹ Euripides, Medea, The Plays of Euripides, trans. Edward P. Coleridge, 3 vols. (London, 1891), I, p. 71. All citations from Euripides' plays are from this standard edition.

all night and any work done during the day is destroyed by their jousting during the night. As to the dragons, there are countless medieval lores dealing with dragons; therefore, speculation on their origin would be pointless. What is important is that the interpretation which Merlin gives to the red and white dragons foreshadows the outcome of the play. The red and white dragons, as Merlin interprets them, are symbols. The red dragon represents Vortiger who asked for the Saxons to come into Brittany, and the white dragon symbolizes the Saxons. The white dragon succeeds in driving off the red dragon; Merlin interprets the spectacle as the Saxons attempting to turn on Vortiger. Merlin's prophecy proves true and he establishes his reputation as a prophet.

Merlin's third public demonstration of magic also revolves around his ability as a prophet; for it is a comet in the sky that turns Merlin's eye to events he must prophesy (IV.v). This he does, but the prophecy includes the birth of Arthur who will, if the mytho-historical approach to Elizabeth I's regal predecessors is granted, begin the long line of monarchs leading to the Virgin Queen's reign. Comet reading, that is, telling the future from the appearance of a comet in the sky, is a form of divination. The technique Merlin applies to the reading of the comet can be traced to the Middle Ages, especially to the Liber Particularis of Michael Scot, a Scottish astrologer of some repute. Dante mentions Scot in The Inferno and accredits him with magical powers. He placed the magician in the fourth bolgia

of the eighth circle, the place in hell for those who wasted their lives attempting to discover the future by magic and divination. All the diviners are chained with their heads facing backward so that they can only see what is behind them.³⁰ There are other examples of Scot's reputation as a magician. Therefore, it is not surprising that Scot's opinion on comet reading is the crux of Merlin's technique of analyzing the sighting of the comet.³¹

Merlin's knowledge of comets is based upon Scot's interpretation of comets. Merlin analyzes the comet favorably by prophesying the parturition of Arthur, the progenitor of Queen Elizabeth. Merlin, looking at the comet, tells the Prince to behold a dragon's head out of which two streaming lights pour forth their beams both east and west. Merlin interprets the dragon's head as the Prince himself as King.³² The two jets of light are the progeny of the new King: ". . . two Royal babes, / Which shall proceed from you" (IV. v.102-103). He goes into a quite detailed description,

³⁰ Dante Alighieri, The Inferno, trans. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, ed. Bernard Stambler, rev. ed. (New York, 1962), Canto xx, 115-117.

³¹ The appearances of comets usually were interpreted by astrologers as portents of misfortune. Pestilence, wars, famines, and plague were the usual effects of a comet. The technique of interpretation involved many intricate calculations, e.g., position, brightness, relation to the sun, and speed. See Thorndike, V, 163, 239; VI, 78 and 424.

³² This is an obvious symbol of England's St. George's dragon.

interpreting the comet favorably. The two royal babes will be, Merlin tells the Prince, a daughter and a son. The daughter will be a Queen of Ireland because one of the comet's beams points toward the northwest. The son is to be Arthur, and he is destined to fill chronicles and conquer land, even down to Rome.

A comic contrast is offered to this serious scene. The actions of the clown-uncle undercut the grave tone of the comet's appearance. Merlin's uncle makes an attempt to interpret the meaning of the comet. He gazes profoundly at the comet and says: "Me thinks, I see something like a peel'd Onion; it makes me weep agen" (IV.v.78-79). This line is the funniest in the play, and it comes just before Merlin's serious prophecy. Merlin gestures magically, and the uncle becomes tongue-tied and can only mutter nonsense. Merlin proceeds with the serious rendering of the comet's meaning for England.

The final magical feat Merlin performs is to free his mother from the seductions of his devil father. By this act Merlin's human nature is insured dominion over his demonic powers which he acquired from the devil. The idea that the powers of Merlin will be employed for the betterment of mankind, rather than in a fiendish way, is affirmed. The playwright reaffirms this theme dramatically in the first scene of Act V. Merlin confronts his father, whom he immediately recognizes, but it takes a while for the devil to recognize him. The devil tries to invoke his fatherly

authority on Merlin, but Merlin is determined to punish his father for attempting to force his affections a second time on his now repentant mother. Merlin point-blankly tells the devil that his powers are inferior to Merlin's and Merlin proceeds to lock him inside a rock. Thunder and lightning occur as Merlin seals his father into the rock. He tells the devil with a defiant tone: ". . . there beget earthquakes or some noisom damps, / For never shalt thou touch a woman more" (V.i.81-82). Merlin exhibits a human concern for his mother: "How chear you, mother?" (V.i.83). She refers to Merlin: "my son is my deliverer" (V.i.84). The sounds of war call Merlin back to aid the Prince. Before he leaves, Merlin provides for his mother an earthly paradise where she retires as a penitent. It is another earthly Eden, which Merlin calls "Merlin's Bower" on the plains of Salisbury (V.i.93).

Anselme reappears for the last time in the last act, and for the first time in the play the hermit and Merlin are on stage together. Structurally, the entrance of the hermit, the Christian sorcerer, and Merlin, who gained his powers from non-Christian sources, is dramatically timed at the end of the play to illustrate the fusion of Christian and natural magic. This represents a quiet condoning of Merlin's natural magical powers. It is done after Merlin locks the devil in stone, demonstrating that the human nature of Merlin is certain to dominate his infernal powers or, at least, control them. The entrance of the Christian sorcerer

timed with the entrance of Merlin, the natural sorcerer, establishes an equilibrium of magical powers in the play.

The play ends on a note that "All future times shall still record this Story, / Of Merlin's learned worth and Arthur's glory" (V.ii.109-110). By looking back at the character of Merlin in this play, it can be seen that he resembles the medieval magician, especially with his magic wand. Merlin's magical power lies in his ability to prophesy as the Merlin in medieval literature. Merlin in this play emerges as a comic figure who plays an important role in the history of England. He does not possess any Christian conflict over values such as those Faustus struggles with. At the same time, he does not exhibit absolute control over nature and the natural processes, as Prospero does. He seems to be a direct outgrowth of the Merlin found in medieval romances, cast in a unique dramatic role.

The Birth of Merlin represents a gradual sophistication of the sorcerer's power upon the Renaissance stage. Merlin quite confidently handles his magical powers, and he does not fear any harm from the demon-father who created him, presumably in a moment of unguarded passion--almost too human a disposition. The masterful magician has everything under control. The sorcerer has come a long way down the tight-rope of Renaissance drama, maintaining his balance both as a tragic character, as in Doctor Faustus, and as a

comical character, as in The Birth of Merlin. This is not to imply that there are no shades of gray in between, as the gothic tragedy of The Divils Charter proves. Yet the one noticeable characteristic of the stage sorcerer that stands out is that he gradually acquires a greater amount of sophistication in his control of magic. This achievement of sophistication indicates an evolution of the Renaissance sorcerer's character. It is in the final play of this study that the consummate sophistication of the sorcerer's magical powers is attained. No longer present is the fear of demonic harm, or the satanic compact, or the need for external magical implements such as the magic circle, and conjurations. The sorcerer, aspiring man, assumes the ultimate knowledge of the inquiring mind of the Renaissance period, without the fear of punitive harm of demons, and, most of all, without the sense of Christian guilt that too much knowledge was God's province. Such a thaumaturgist is the sophisticated magus of Shakespeare's The Tempest--Prospero.

In Prospero the sophistication of the sorcerer's powers is evident. At the same time it is noticed that after Prospero, the sorcerer archetype does not make its appearance on the English stage again with such marked distinction. The character of Prospero displays a fusion of the English tradition of witchcraft and the classical tradition of the sorcerer archetype synthesized in Shakespeare's play. Shakespeare, the great synthesizer, fuses these two traditions in a remarkable aesthetic achievement. As the

play opens, Prospero has been deprived of his rightful place as the Duke of Milan. He was overthrown by Alonzo, the King of Naples, and as a result of the coup, Prospero, ousted from Milan, has found seclusion on a lonely island somewhere between, as Harrison places it, Tunisia and Naples. The play opens with thunder and lightning, all the outward appearances of a tempest at sea.

Tempests or winds, on the sea, were a topic of much discussion during the Renaissance. The nature of winds, the causes of them, and their effects can be traced from mythological origins to a sincere interest in their scientific or natural causes. An example of the Renaissance interest in the nature of winds can be found in Thomas Lodge's English translation of Seneca's non-dramatic works published in 1614. Seneca's Natural Questions are included in this translation. One chapter is devoted entirely to the causes and nature of winds. The exact origins of the winds, the meaning of the direction of winds, the causes of tempests; all these matters are discussed by Seneca. Lodge's translation gave emphasis to the question of winds for the English Renaissance mind. It is only necessary to mention casually James I's personal encounter with tempest-raising witches. The English monarch felt that the North Berwick witches were quite capable of raising storms at sea. Therefore, storm-raising by magic was believed to be practiced in England.

Shakespeare is able to create the mood of supernaturalism in the opening scene by summoning up the

association between magic, tempests, and shipwrecks. The first character on stage explains to the audience the plight of a shipwreck by a terrible storm at sea. The Elizabethan audience could hardly fail to discern some form of magic from such a catastrophe, especially in view of James I's experience in 1591 with storm-raising. James brought out another edition of his Daemonologie in London in 1603. James dwells on the tempest-raising experience in his book; therefore, Shakespeare was on common ground with his audience.

Prospero is the rightful heir to the throne of Milan; and as he is deposed, society is out of joint, and consequently Nature is disruptive and out of joint. Shakespeare utilizes here the theme of sympathetic Nature, or natural synchronism between cosmic and political worlds. Prospero and Nature are artistically linked in a close relationship to the point where Prospero can manipulate Nature. The rightful ruler and Nature are joined. This sympathetic Nature is manipulated by the sorcerer in this play, and the synchronism of Nature is relative to the actual mood of Prospero himself.

Prospero succeeds, by creating the tempest, in bringing the external world into his supernatural world. This again would hardly be acceptable in any other type of a plot with a character other than a sorcerer type. Prospero is the center of the play's universe, and he has attracted the enemies of the external world into his charms in such a way that he can manipulate his own environment as he sees

fit. At the beginning of the play no one knows this. The second scene shifts to Prospero's cell on the island. The first line Miranda speaks, she beseeches her father to calm the waters:

If by your art, my dearest father, you have
Put the wild waters in this roar, allay them.
The sky, it seems, would pour down stinking pitch
But that the sea, mounting to the welkin's cheek,
Dashes the fire out. Oh, I have suffered
With those that I saw suffer! A brave vessel,
Who had no doubt some noble creature in her,
Dashed all to pieces. Oh, the cry did knock
Against my very heart! Poor souls, they perished!
(The Tempest I.ii.1-9)

Miranda's petition reveals that Shakespeare is entirely cognizant of the powers ascribed to the sorcerer. Prospero assures Miranda that he will do no harm, that what he has done has been out of concern for Miranda herself--a refreshing human touch.

Prospero wears a mantle which gives him certain magical powers. When Prospero takes off the mantle he comments: "Lie there, my art" (I.ii.24). This magic cape is not used by other Renaissance sorcerers. It is a curious dramatic device; the cape is Prospero's power when he puts it on. It can be compared to the tarncape of Siegfried in the medieval epic, Nibelungenlied. In this German epic Siegfried takes, from a dwarf who is guarding the treasure of the Nibelungs, a magic cloak, or tarncape. When Siegfried puts on the cloak, it gives him magical powers--it renders him invisible. Prospero's cloak seems also to possess magical powers.

There is no satanic compact in The Tempest. Prospero already has his powers before the play begins, and he utilizes them for justifiable political reasons. Prospero stands out as a unique creation on Shakespeare's part. He is well educated, as most sorcerers are, and is a duke. His education since he has withdrawn to the island is the study of the occult arts. Prospero's political misfortune indicates that he may have studied more than he should have as Antonio began slowly to usurp rule of the kingdom. Prospero, speaking to Miranda, comments regretfully:

I, thus neglecting worldly ends, all dedicated
To closeness and the bettering of my mind
With that which, but by being so retired,
O'erprized all popular rate, in my false brother
Awaked an evil nature. . . .

(I.ii.89-93)

Prospero goes on to say that his library was kingdom enough for his rule, and consequently, because of Prospero's lack of concern about the kingdom, Antonio took it over.

Another reference by Shakespeare to Prospero's scholarly attitude or concern for his books is found later on in this scene. Prospero explains how he and Miranda were set adrift on a raft. Had it not been for the help of Gonzalo, who gave them fresh water and food, they would have perished. Shakespeare also points out that Gonzalo gave to Prospero the books which the sorcerer admired above his kingdom, to take in his exile:

A noble Neapolitan, Gonzalo,
.
. . . of his gentleness,
Knowing I loved my books, he furnished me

From mine own library with volumes that
 I prize above my dukedom.
 (I.ii.161-168)

Here is a man who prides his books above his kingdom, and he takes his books with him when he is set adrift by Alonzo. He lands on an island separated from the rest of mankind. Again, the isolation motif is developed by Shakespeare. Prospero the sorcerer is isolated from mankind so he may pursue his studies of the occult. Prospero is a scholar, concerned about knowledge which other people are not generally concerned about.

Miranda, who has been educated by Prospero himself, asks Prospero why he has raised the tempest at this particular hour. The answer gives an insight into the "time is right" motif that motivates Prospero's actions in the play. The precise moment for Prospero's creating the tempest is determined by astrology, not by haphazard chance:

Know thus far forth.
 By accident most strange, bountiful Fortune,
 Now my dear lady, hath mine enemies
 Brought to this shore. And by my prescience
 I find my zenith doth depend upon
 A most auspicious star, whose influence
 If now I court not, but omit, my fortunes
 Will ever after droop. Here cease more questions.
 Thou art inclined to sleep, 'tis a good dullness,
 And give it way. I know thou canst not choose.
 (I.ii.177-186)

The situation stated in this astrological reference is that an opportune planet has approached the mid-heaven. The zenith here cannot be interpreted to mean, as Harrison interprets it in his footnote (p. 1478), the height of Prospero's

fortune. Zenith is a certain position on the astrological chart located at the mid-heaven of a natal chart. A favorable star is rising in Prospero's horoscope; therefore, there is the opportunity to undertake a certain event, in this case to regain his rightful kingdom by taking action against his enemies. The only houses possibly containing the mid-heaven, as the zenith, are the tenth, eleventh, and possibly the ninth. These houses are thought to influence specific things. Oger Ferrier, in his work, A Learned Astronomical Discoverse of the Ivdgement of Nativities III Bookes, translated into English in 1642, lists the affairs of the ninth, tenth and eleventh houses as follows:

The ninth [signifies], long viages, long pilgrimages and navigations, . . . divination of dreams, . . . divine punishment, and is called, . . . The House Cadent of the angle occidentall, & otherwise, the house of God,

The tenth signifieth honour, dignities, offices, magistrates, administratious [sic], government, rulers, . . . and is called, The middle and heart of heaven: the Meridian point and angle Meridian

The eleventh house signifieth friends, companions, hope, confidence, favour, helpe,³³

It can be seen here that Shakespeare is quite accurate in his astrological information. All of the affairs of these

³³Ferrier, pp. 77-78. Although this work comes after the publication of The Tempest, it is cited here as an indicator of Renaissance astrological interpretation of natal planets, mundane houses, and their respective influences.

three mundane houses of the zodiac, even given a tenth house cusp as a mid-heaven, play prominent roles in the events of The Tempest. The navigation of the ninth house in the sea-voyage Antonio takes and the opportune sea-voyages of Alonzo are associated with a "plan" of divine punishment. The tenth house affairs govern honor, offices, and rulers. It is fitting that the time is right to gain back Prospero's kingdom. The eleventh house emphasizes friends, help, and favor to gain desired ends. Such is the situation with Gonzalo, the friend; Ariel, the helper; and the marriage of Miranda and Ferdinand, creating the hope of a "brave new world" (V.i.183). If this astrological interpretation is correct, then the confusing statement of Prospero at the beginning of the speech falls into place:

By accident most strange, bountiful Fortune,
Now my dear lady, hath mine enemies
Brought to this shore.

(I.ii.178-180)

Often in a natal chart the moon is placed in such a position as to reflect the moon's position if the sun were placed on the cusp of the first house of the ascendant. In so doing, the Point of Fortune is determined, and it is then placed in the chart of the native. The suggestion here is that the moon is the "bountiful Fortune," meaning the Point of Fortune, and it is the moon's influence that has brought the enemies of Prospero to his island. The chart position of the Point of Fortune, or the moon, determines fulfillment of desired ends, and if the Point of Fortune should happen to fall on a

chart's mid-heaven or zenith, it indicates fulfillment of those affairs listed above, the affairs of either the ninth, tenth, or eleventh house.³⁴ Shakespeare is stressing the theme of sympathetic Nature in this astrological allusion.

Following this astrological allusion, Prospero reinforces this immediate sense of time by indicating that if he does not take advantage of his opportune astrological situation, his "fortunes will ever after droop" (I.ii.183-184). He then puts Miranda into a sleep, and he hints that perhaps she is asking too many questions:

Here cease more questions.
Thou art inclined to sleep, 'tis a good dullness,
And give it way. I know thou canst not choose.
(I.ii.184-186)

The dream theme begins to drift into the play, and the borderlines between illusion and reality become imprecise. The minute Miranda sleeps, Ariel comes to aid Prospero. Ariel is a delightful spirit. He fulfills the role of the sorcerer's companion, but in a more ethereal sense than Friar Bungay's relationship with Friar Bacon, or Shrimp's relationship with John à Kent. Ariel is the lowest nature of divinity and the highest nature of man. A curious creature,

³⁴No one source can be cited for the technical astrological explanation given here. Any standard textbook on astrology assigns these affairs to the various mundane houses mentioned. The Point of Fortune is from Arabian Astrology, quite popular in the English Renaissance, as borne out by Ferrier and others. See the catalogue of astrologers listed in fns. 10 and 16, Chapter I, above.

Ariel defies categorizing in the Christian angelology. It is the demonology of the Cabala that provides an insight into the nature-origin of Ariel.

The Cabala is an esoteric body of occult doctrine stemming from ancient Jewish beliefs. The Cabala names the spirits which are present in the universe. If a sorcerer studies the Cabala, he can gain these spirits under his control. He can then govern certain occurrences in the universe. According to cabalistic tradition, as outlined by Francis Barrett in his book The Magus, or Celestial Intelligencer, Ariel has traditionally been described in the Cabala as the spirit presiding over the south wind.³⁵ Shakespeare may be knowledgeable of this cabalistic tradition because he assigns to Ariel the task of causing the tempest which casts the shipwrecked sailors of Alonzo's party on Prospero's island (I.ii.193-205).

Barrett describes the dominion of the winds as follows:

There are also four princes of the angels, which are set over the four winds, and over the four parts of the world. Michael is placed over the east-wind, Raphael over the west, and Gabriel over the north, Nariel, who by some is called Ariel, is over the south.³⁶

Ariel, in keeping with his cabalistic origin, relates

³⁵Barrett, p. 57. See also Scot, pp. 315-333.

³⁶Barrett, p. 57.

exactly how he mounted the ship, in the form of a wind, and proceeded to create St. Almo's fire. Characteristically, Ariel is portrayed by Shakespeare in keeping with the cabalistic tradition of Ariel as a wind-spirit:

I boarded the King's ship. Now on the beak,
 Now in the waist, the deck, in every cabin,
 I flamed amazement. Sometime I'd divide,
 And burn in many places; on the topmast,
 The yards and bowsprit, would I flame distinctly,
 Then meet and join. Jove's lightnings, the pre-
 cursors
 O' the dreadful thunderclaps, more momentary
 And sight-outrunning were not. The fire and
 cracks
 Of sulphurous roaring the most mighty Neptune
 Seem to besiege, and make his bold waves tremble--
 Yea, his dread trident shake.

(I.ii.196-206)

In this passage Ariel ignites the ship into a conflagration and frightens the passengers so one man exclaims "Hell is empty, / And all the devils are here" (I.ii.214-215). He accomplishes this without causing the death of a single passenger. This type of magic Prospero works through Ariel is not evil magic; it is expert *theurgy*.

Also under the command of Prospero is Caliban, who represents the element Earth. He is born of a witch by the name of Sycorax who copulated with the devil. Whether this witch ever existed or not is impossible to determine from the information given in the text. She supposedly comes from Algiers where she was banished for practicing witchcraft. The people of Algiers banished her to this island. There Sycorax locked Ariel in a cloven pine tree where he remained imprisoned a dozen years. Before Prospero came,

the witch died and left her son Caliban on the island. Prospero freed Ariel and kept him as an indentured servant, and he tried to teach Caliban how to speak and do things, until Caliban attempted to molest Miranda, whereupon Prospero locked him in a sty. The contrast here between Ariel and Caliban reflects the cabalistic occult tradition. When the angels fell from God's grace, the spirits, according to their degree of sin against God, were lodged proportionate distances from Lucifer. Since Lucifer's sin was the greatest he was in the center of the earth, in the center of hell. Each of the other spirits was arranged in concentric circles outward from the center of the earth upwards to heaven.³⁷ Caliban, being a "spirit" of the earth, is a creature who is more corporeal and less spiritual in nature than Ariel. Ariel, an air spirit, is further from the earth and is more spiritual and less corporeal in nature. Measured in terms of the Cabala, Caliban's geocentrism makes him more prone toward evil, simply because he contains less good, since he is not as close to God as Ariel. Caliban is the basic elemental creature that could represent the baser nature of man. Ariel represents the soul or divine nature of man. It is a duality on which the Renaissance audiences enjoyed speculating.

Ariel can be compared to the Pythagorean concept of

³⁷Waite, p. 272. I have relied upon Waite for the cabalistic tradition of the fallen angels.

music. Music was considered by the Pythagorean Greeks to be the main ordering force of the universe.³⁸ Music, with its octave ratios, its perfect tone, its harmony, and its symphony illustrated to the Elizabethan mind as well as the minds of the Greeks the perfect system of subordination and authority as manifested in cosmic order. Ariel exudes music which is hypnotic in nature. He sings songs which rhyme, an example of order and subordination of language. His music has an ethereal quality to it--a piper quality. When Ariel enters the spot where Ferdinand was cast upon the shore, the spirit enters invisible, singing and playing. Ferdinand remarks on the strange sound he hears in the air:

Where should this music be? I' th' air or th'
earth?
It sounds no more, and, sure, it waits upon
Some god o' th' island
.
This music crept by me upon the waters,
Allaying both their fury and my passion
With its sweet air. Thence I have followed it,
Or it has drawn me rather. . . .
(I.ii.387-395)

The power of Ariel's music is the source of Ariel's magic--the Pythagorean notion of harmonia. This is the imposition of cosmos on chaos, or simply, Ariel's function to restore peace, concord, and right order to Prospero's kingdom.

Ariel's biographic history reveals the good nature of Ariel. He could not perform certain acts which were

³⁸Aristotle, Aristotle: The Metaphysics, trans. Hugh Tredennick, 3 vols. (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1956), I, I.v.1-11, pp. 31-37.

asked of him by his former mistress, "the foul witch Sycorax" (I.ii.258). Because he would not perform some of her horrid tasks, she imprisoned Ariel in the pine tree where he remained for a dozen years, until Prospero set him free. This behavior of Ariel, as an incorporeal being, implies a human conscience of sorts, which is displayed in the play twice. It is first shown in the passage where Prospero, speaking to Ariel, explains that because Ariel

. . . wast a spirit too delicate
To act her [Sycorax] earthy and abhorred commands,
Refusing her grand hests, she did confine
thee,

(I.ii.272-274)

Secondly, later on in the play, Ariel acts as a foil to Prospero's conscience when the spirit feels compassion for Alonso, Gonzalo, and Antonio, who at Prospero's command are now distracted by Ariel's spell. Ariel speaks to Prospero, saying:

. . . "The good old lord, Gonzalo."
His tears run down his beard like winter's drops
From eaves of reeds. Your charm so strongly works
'em
That if you now beheld them, your affections
Would become tender.

(V.i.15-19)

Prospero replies to this human-like compassion by asking him: "Dost thou think so, spirit?" (V.1.20). Ariel gives a very affectionate answer: "Mine would, sir, were I human" (I.i.21).

If Prospero and Ariel represent the positive nature of humanity, what does Caliban symbolize? The speculation on Ariel's nature previously discussed makes it necessary to at

least conjecture on Caliban's nature. Caliban serves as a comic character. The scenes with Stephano and Trinculo are funny indeed, and the act serves partly as comic relief for some of the serious scenes. Caliban's nature is derived from his dramatic characterization as a foul lump of earth, a deformed monster, possibly a giant turtle. All of the epithets which Stephano, Trinculo, and Prospero himself heap upon Caliban are quite descriptive of his physical character. Nonetheless, he has our sympathy. He is a not entirely unlovable character who dwells by himself as punishment for his attempt to molest the fair Miranda. The obvious allegory here is that if Ariel epitomizes the higher nature of man, the harmonia between man and nature's intelligences, then Caliban emblemizes man's link to his instinctual past, his baser nature.

Prospero's character sources are as difficult as Caliban's to ascertain, possibly because Prospero is a fine fusion of many sorcerer traditions. Neither the classical sources, nor the contemporary non-dramatic literature provides an adequate answer. Prospero is a magician of Shakespearean artistry. He is solely a creation of Shakespeare. Prospero with his tarncape and his wand is reminiscent of the medieval magicians who relied on a sacred object to effect their magic. The wand of Merlin found in medieval tales is a powerful magic instrument whereby the sorcerer Merlin can work magic. The book with which Prospero calls his spirits is a "typical" conjuring book, such as

Faustus or Alexander used. It seems as though Prospero's powers fade, or are completely lost, when he dismisses Ariel, his spirit, for in his epilogue it can be clearly seen that Prospero relinquishes his powers willfully.

Prospero is a unique sorcerer. His powers are sympathetic Nature personified in Ariel, Nature's harmonia. Prospero is not bound to Ariel in any way; he makes no satanic compact. His magic is not an evil magic. He does not work malevolence in the world. His magic is not an overambitious vice. He does not aspire, as Faustus does, to total knowledge. His magic is restricted to the surrounding geographical area of this magnificent island which Ferdinand calls paradise. It is Ferdinand also who realizes in the marriage masque scene, "So rare a wondered father and a wise / Makes this place Paradise" (IV.i.123-124). Ferdinand realizes it is through Prospero's magic that the island takes on its paradisiacal character.

Prospero is a fantastic sorcerer; yet he easily relinquishes his power:

Now my charms are all o'erthrown,
And what strength I have's mine own,
Which is most faint. Now, 'tis true,
I must be here confined by you,
Or sent to Naples. Let me not,
Since I have my dukedom got,
And pardoned the deceiver, dwell
In this bare island by your spell,
But release me from my bands,
(Epilogue, 1-9)

Prospero no longer has his powers; he has given them up. He has succeeded in restoring the natural order of his political

realm. Milan is now his. Repentance has been given. Vengeance is not a necessary requirement of that repentance, and all is well in the Shakespearean world again.

As mentioned earlier, synchronism, or sympathy of Nature, is one of Shakespeare's most powerful motifs. Nature, as a responsive character in the play, reacts and acts upon all of the other characters' situations in Shakespeare's play. In this play Prospero defies such mundane labels as magician or sorcerer. Prospero at the height of his powers is not merely controlling Nature--Prospero is Nature. He effects environmental changes. He influences the minds of men through delusion. He makes them sleep. All the powers he has are his alone, not because of any compact with the devil. He does not have to give his life and soul for the powers, but rather Ariel is bound to Prospero. The very ordering power that nature herself possesses, harmonia, is Prospero's. Prospero is the Renaissance concept of Superman: man joined with nature, directing the processes of Nature for good ends and not for evil.

The themes of sympathetic Nature and the synchronism of natural order and political order are quickly established in this play. Prospero, deposed ruler of Milan, is ousted from the duchy; therefore, the political order is disrupted. The natural order mirrors this political condition and it too is disordered. Cosmic order is in sympathy with the political order and with Prospero. This sympathy of Nature to Prospero constitutes his magic. Prospero is the most

sophisticated sorcerer of the Renaissance, because through sympathetic Nature the political order once again mirrors the cosmic order, or harmonia rules supreme.

In looking back on these plays, it has been the purpose to examine the dramatic character of the sorcerer as he appears in English Renaissance plays. His literary origins, development, and characteristics were examined. From this examination a certain number of characteristics appear, and they define the sorcerer as the Renaissance dramatists presented him on the stage. The English sorcerer comes from the upper class. He is either a duke, like Prospero; or an educated man, as is Faustus; or a member of the clergy, as in Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay. This upper class association with the sorcerer lent a certain amount of social polish to the sorcerer. He was knowledgeable of courtly traditions and of the political events which were current in his circle. Along with this upper class association of the sorcerer, it is obvious that the sorcerer is very scholarly. He indulged himself in a great deal of study for his art, and pursued this art with diligence. When Prospero leaves his banished dukedom in Milan, Gonzalo supplies him with books. No word need be said of the scholarly attitudes of Dr. Faustus. He clearly reveals them himself for us in the very first scene. Friar Bacon spends a great deal of time studying. He is the master of a college. He is a distinguished graduate of Oxford. Another dramatic characteristic entering into the sorcerer's

character is his inclination to isolation. This isolation can be manifested either geophysically, as in the case of Prospero isolated upon his magic island, or socially, as in the case of Friar Bacon who is living alone. People seek out the sorcerer; he does not go to them. Dr. Faustus intellectually isolates himself from the rest of the scholars. Another trait of the sorcerer is an interest in astrology, an intellectual and intricate art, whereby the sorcerer is concerned with the workings of the universe. Prospero mentions that he must strike while an auspicious star is at the zenith of his horizon. Friar Bacon is conscious of astrological lore. The infamous Pope Alexander VI indulges in several descriptive passages as to the proper time to undertake the practices of the black arts.

There are two types of Renaissance stage sorcerers. There is, first, the sophisticated sorcerer who maintains control over the demons and his magic through his own natural ability. Through magic he is capable of manipulating the natural forces of nature itself. The second type of sorcerer is the one who makes a satanic compact. He must achieve his magic by a satanic lend-lease act. He borrows his magic for a certain period of time, and he must give his soul or his life as collateral. Pope Alexander VI does this. The second class of sorcerer is regarded by the Elizabethans, or at least the dramatists, as an inferior type of sorcerer. His magic is not as sophisticated as that of the sorcerer who makes no satanic compact.

A final characteristic of the sorcerer in Renaissance drama is the practice of highly ritualized magic, magic which can be traced back to the extant editions of grimoires or the Cabala. Possibly there are a large number of lost grimoires and magic-books. The rituals persist. These are rituals only the scholar would know because he had to read often in Latin to employ the pentacles. The magic circles, the characters, the glyphs, the conjuration procedures are entirely part and parcel of the sorcerer's "high magic," in contrast to the "low magic" of the witch.

CHAPTER IV

THE RENAISSANCE STAGE WITCH

The sorcerer represented the Renaissance height of human aspiration for knowledge and the witch symbolized the vulgarization of that human aspiration. She was on the "dark side" of theology. It is the intention of this chapter to explore the witch as she appeared on the Renaissance stage, and by contrasting her with the sorcerer-archimage already examined in the previous chapter, it is possible to delineate the dramatic characteristics of each. An analysis of the witch-type, as she appeared in Renaissance plays, reveals her character to be the synthesis of two literary witch-types prevalent in Renaissance England: the Greco-Roman witch, as she was presented in classical literature; and the "Christian" witch, as she was depicted in demonological literature of the day.

The first of these traditions, the Greco-Roman witch, is treated generally by Robert Reed, Jr. Reed focuses on "The impact of supernatural agents on plot and theme, as well as on the total internal organization of the drama."¹ The approach of this chapter differs from Reed's in

¹Reed, p. 11.

that it delves more into the character of the Renaissance witch than into the stage history of the witch.² Reed claims that "Principles of the occult are not ignored" and that they are "incorporated, when appropriate" into his discussions of the plays.³ Reed has ignored a great deal of the occult in the superficial treatment he gives to the witch's character, and the occult tradition is an important part of the Renaissance dramatic witch.

The passing of the sorcerer from the Renaissance stage created a vacuum in the Renaissance dramatis personae. No magical counterpart could supplant the sophisticated Renaissance magus exhibited in Doctor Faustus or Prospero. The problem also arose that the devil, although quite believable and serious in early English morality plays, by the end of the Medieval period had degenerated into a comic character with his cloven foot and stereotyped appearance. Only Mephistophilis offers a credible portrayal of a "secular" devil in the plays of Renaissance England. Evil, if it was to be portrayed with any degree of verisimilitude, needed a face lifting, a whole new public image. The Renaissance witch-type provided an answer to evil's

²Reed, p. 148. The title of his chapter, "Witches: Their Stage History," is indicative of Reed's stage-history approach to the witch-type.

³Reed, p. 11. The fact is that Reed seldom displays an intimate knowledge of occult literature, nor does he reveal specifically how Renaissance witch drama deals with occult knowledge.

"credibility gap." Renaissance dramatists turned to the current evil of their own English society and found a suitable replacement to fill the void left by the extinct sorcerer. At the same time, this discovery provided a suitable understudy for the Old Vice of the morality plays. The witch's dramatic star rose quickly.

The Elizabethan audience knew witches and understood their magical powers. It is not the purpose here to prove or disprove the existence of witches. It is the task here to examine the dramatic witch as she is presented on the Renaissance stage; such a task includes determining the possible literary sources of the dramatic witch, the function and character of the witch in Renaissance drama, and the difference between the witch and the sorcerer-magician as two occult characters on the English Renaissance stage. An examination of the major Renaissance witch plays is undertaken with deliberate focus on the witch's dramatic function and the occult nature of her character. Some of the works examined in approximate chronological order are John Lyly's Mother Bombie (1594); Robert Greene's Alphonsus, King of Aragon (c. 1599); Shakespeare's I Henry VI (1591); Shakespeare's Macbeth (1606); John Marston's Tragedy of Sophonisba (1606); Dekker, Rowley, and Ford's The Witch of Edmonton (c. 1622); Thomas Heywood and Richard Brome's The Late Lancashire Witches (1634); and Thomas Heywood's The

Wise Woman of Hogsdon (1638).⁴

Medea and Erictho are two classical witches whose characterization influenced the Renaissance dramatic concept of a witch. An examination of the character and activities of these two witches is helpful in comprehending the Renaissance witch-type. Seneca's Medea held a certain fascination for Peele, and the despicable Erictho of Lucan's Pharsalia caught the unusual imagination of Marston. Stage business for the Renaissance witch such as magic ceremonies, prophesying, the brewing of potions, or the concocting of weird mixtures was highly imitative of the classical witch. The first noteworthy example of a dramatic witch emerges in Euripides' Medea. Medea is probably the prototype for the Greco-Roman witch. She falls in love with Jason because of Cupid's arrow. Jason pursues the Golden Fleece, and Medea

⁴Reed lists other plays in his examination of Renaissance witch-drama. I choose to ignore the "white witch" distinction Reed makes. It is the black witch's character with which I am dealing. Reed stretches his argument to call Medea, Melissa, or Mother Bombie a "white witch." A witch, to the Elizabethans, was an agent of the Devil, and there was nothing good about her. It appears that Reed's debt to Katherine Briggs's Pale Hecate's Team is certainly manifested in this dichotomous classification. (See Briggs's Appendix I, pp. 223-224. Maleficia and Theurgy.) Miss Briggs herself points out that theurgy or "White magic . . . was often employed to rather dubious ends." See Briggs, p. 224. George Gifford settles this argument rather definitely: "A witch is one that woorketh by the Deuill; or by some de-uelish or curious art, . . ." (See George Gifford, A discourse of the subtilt practices of Deuills by witches and sorcerers (London, 1587), sig. B2.) I accept Gifford's definition in my treatment of the Renaissance witch.

uses her magical arts to aid him in his quest. Medea possesses a magical ointment which, when rubbed on Jason's body, protects him against wounds. Medea also tells Jason to throw a stone in the midst of the dragon teeth men if too many of them attack him. This will cause them to cease fighting with Jason's men and fight among themselves. Medea helps Jason in direct defiance of her father, who is angry with Jason. She charms the great serpent which guards the Golden Fleece. Charms become an important occult practice of the Renaissance witch-type as well.

All that Medea has done up to this point is for the love of Jason and is related by the nurse at the beginning of Euripides' play:

Ah! would to Heaven the good ship Argo ne'er had
 sped its course to the Colchian land through the
 misty blue Symplegades, nor ever in the glens of
 Pelion the pine been felled to furnish with oars
 the chieftain's hands, who went to fetch the
 golden fleece for Pelias;

 [And now Medea] lies fasting, yielding her body to
 her grief, wasting away in tears ever since she
 learnt that she was wronged by her hus-
 band,

(p. 33)

Medea is spurned in her love for Jason. He scorns Medea's love for the love of the daughter of Creon. Through her occult knowledge Medea strikes back at Jason for wronging her. She fashions a magic coat which Jason unknowingly gives to his new love. When Creon's daughter puts on the garment she is enveloped in flames. Medea's feeling of scorn and passion for vengeance is revealed in these lines

she speaks to Jason:

. . . Father and home of my free will I left and
 came with thee to Iolcos, 'neath Pelion's hills,
 for my love was stronger than my prudence. Next I
 caused the death of Pelias by a doom most grievous,
 even by his own children's hand, beguiling them of
 all their fear. All this have I done for thee, thou
 traitor! and thou has cast me over, taking to thy-
 self another wife, though children have been born
 to us. Hadst thou been childless still, I could
 have pardoned thy desire for this new union. Gone
 is now the trust I put in oaths. I cannot even
 understand whether thou thinkest that the gods of
 old no longer rule, or that fresh decrees are now
 in vogue amongst mankind, for thy conscience must
 tell thee thou hast not kept faith with me. Ah;
 poor right hand, which thou didst often grasp.
 These knees thou didst embrace! All in vain, I
 suffered a traitor to touch me! How short of my
 hopes I am fallen! But come, I will deal with
 thee as though thou wert my friend. Yet what kind-
 ness can I expect from one so base as thee? but
 yet I will do it, for my questioning will show
 thee yet more base. Whither can I turn me now? to
 my father's house, to my own country, which I for
 thee deserted to come hither? to the hapless
 daughters of Pelias? A glad welcome, I trow,
 would they give me in their home, whose father's
 death I compassed! My case stands even thus: I
 am become the bitter foe to those of mine own
 home, and those whom I need ne'er have wronged I
 have made mine enemies to pleasure thee. Where-
 fore to reward me for this thou has made me doubly
 blest in the eyes of many a wife in Hellas; and in
 thee I own a peerless, trusty lord. O woe is me,
 if indeed I am to be cast forth in exile from the
 land, without one friend; one lone woman with her
 babes forlorn! Yea, a fine reproach to thee in
 thy bridal hour, that thy children and the wife
 who saved thy life are beggars and vagabonds!

(p. 46)

Medea has been rejected in love, scorned by her father's
 family, and has no place to return, except to her heart's
 revenge. The slaying of Jason's children, the magic burning
 of Creon's daughter, and Medea's prophecy of Jason's death
 confirm Medea as an occult personality and western drama's

first successful witch. Jason is left a castrated man; his immortality, measured in the human terms of his children, lies slain. Medea, outcast forever, finds herself a vengeful woman in the end, and she leaves Jason with the curse: ". . . thou, as well thou mayest, shalt die a caitiff's death, thy head crushed 'neath a shattered relic of Argo, when thou hast seen the bitter ending of my marriage"

(p. 71). In this Euripidean tragedy Medea's witchcraft is motivated by scorned love. No one can deny Medea her revenge, although humanity objects to the methods she uses. She changes from the pure young princess who first fell in love with Jason to an embittered revengeful woman because of her husband. Somehow, Medea is justified in resorting to the occult arts for her revenge.

Ovid, in his treatment of Medea as a Roman witch, adheres closely to Euripides' Medea, but with one noticeable difference. Ovid focuses on the technical details of Medea's occult art. The penchant for ritual magic is also characteristic of the Renaissance dramatic witch. In Book VII of the Metamorphoses, Medea, when she meets Aegeus' son, Theseus, loathes him at first sight and determines to dispose of him through occult magic. Ovid's technical description of Medea's magical rituals are vivid:

She brewed a poison for him; she had brought it,
Long since, from Scythian shores: it once had
dripped
From a dog's jaws, that Cerberus, the hound
Of Hell's dark caverns, Cerberus, the hound
Whom Hercules dragged up, in chains of iron,

While the great dog, fighting, turned his eyes
 away
 From daylight's flashing radiance. All three
 throats
 Bayed in his fury, and from his triple jowls
 White foam dripped on the fields of green, and
 grew,
 Men say, and thrived in the rich strong soil, and
 gained
 The power to hurt. Such noxious weeds they are
 They will even grow on rocks, and people call them
 The flower of stoniness.

(p. 166)

Ovid renders a darkly detailed treatment of Medea's herb brewing. This image of the Thessalonian witch performing occult rites is duplicated in Renaissance drama. The working of charms; veneficium, the brewing of poison; the conjuring of love philtres, all these were performed by witches.

Gillian Tindall in A Handbook on Witches remarks: "It is worth remembering that poisoning was a large part of the witch's activities, a common continental name for her was 'venefica'--the poisoner. Moreover, magic murder often went hand in hand with straightforward murder" ⁵

Medea is capable of rooting up the rocks from the soil, tearing oak trees out by their roots, moving forests and mountains, creating earthquakes, and calling ghosts from their graves. She is careful to mention that these feats would be impossible without the aid of Hecate. She continues to enumerate her magical powers:

. . . I can make the moon

⁵Gillian Tindall, A Handbook on Witches (New York, 1966), p. 108.

Darken, the car of the Sun turn pale at my singing,
 The Dawn turn pale at my poisons. The flame of
 the bulls
 Cooled at my order, with your aid; the necks
 Bent to the weight of the yoke. You helped me
 turn
 The seed of the Dragon, the savage earth-born
 brothers,
 To fight among themselves; you lulled the Dragon
 To slumber he had never known; you brought
 The golden prize back to the cities of Greece.
 (p. 160)

Medea asks Hecate to give her a potion with which King Aeson may regain his youth. Medea then mounts her chariot, which is drawn by two winged dragons, and sweeps through the air:

. . . All herbs that Ossa,
 Pelion, Othrys, Pindus, and Olympus
 Produced, she studied, and the ones that pleased
 her
 She cut with the bronze sickle or pulled up
 With roots still clinging to them. Many grasses
 She took from many river-banks, among them
 An herb that gives long life, not yet made famous
 By what it did to Glaucus
 (p. 160)

Medea is gathering herbs for magic--a practice called herboria. Later witches in the Renaissance had knowledge and skill in the practice of herboria. Especially in England, the midwife, or the nurse-mother, an aged woman who practiced midwifery or folk medicine, came under suspicion for practicing herboria.⁶

The fantastic air journey that Ovid attributes to Medea is characteristic of the night-riding worshippers of

⁶Wallace Notestein, A History of Witchcraft in England from 1558-1718 (New York, 1968), p. 41.

Diana. Reginald Scot and other writers on witchcraft speak about similar night-ridings. The incredible ride through the night by Medea in a chariot pulled by winged dragons has its counterpart in continental witchcraft. Continental witches flew to and from their sabbat meetings on various animals and English witches flew through the air to attend sabbats also.⁷ This passage from Ovid may be a possible source for Christopher Marlowe's Dr. Faustus' flying around the world in a chariot drawn by two flaming horses as a manifestation of his occult powers.

When Medea returns home from her night-riding, she allows no one to touch her, not even her husband. She proceeds to build two altars from the ground, one dedicated to Hecate and one dedicated to youth, and places her various herbs, which she has collected, on these altars. Ovid is explicit as to what herbs Medea places on the altars, wild-wood and vervain. Medea then performs a ritualized sacrificial offering of a black ram. She digs ditches around the altars, and she cuts the black ram's throat, soaking the

⁷Tindall, p. 38. See also Scot, p. 57; and James I, King James the First Daemonologie (1597) Newes from Scotland . . . (1591), ed. G. B. Harrison, Elizabethan and Jacobean Quartos (Edinburgh, 1966): "What are the waies possible, wherby the witches may transport themselves to places far distant." James points out: ". . . one way is natural, which is natural riding, going or sayling, at what houre their Master comes and aduertises them. . . . an other way . . . is by being carryed by the force of the Spirite which is their conductor, either aboue the earth or aboue the Sea swiftlie" (p. 38). All citations from James I are taken from this edition.

ditches with blood. Through these rites she succeeds in restoring youth to King Aeson. Ovid's Medea is quite an accomplished occultist and is more sophisticated in her art than is Euripides' Medea.

There are other passages in the Metamorphoses where Ovid portrays occult rituals which, in Renaissance drama, contribute to the witch's dramatic character; e.g., in Book VII, Ovid's use of a bronze cauldron, the witch's pot, in which Medea boils her root-herbs for magical use. The cauldron almost becomes a stock convention in English witch stage tradition. Shakespeare pictures three witches huddled around a cauldron, conjuring up spells during a sabbat. In The Witch by Thomas Middleton, Stadlin, Hoppo, and Puckle are similarly gathered around a cauldron. The cauldron becomes synonymous with witchcraft.

Also found in Ovid is the witch's link with the occult tradition of lycanthropy. Ovid mentions that "At the full of the moon, a hoot-owl's wings and flesh, / A werewolf's entrails also, and the fillet / Of fenny snake, the liver of a stag" (pp. 161-162) are gathered by Medea for her cauldron. Ovid's reference to a werewolf, or the idea of lycanthropy itself, has an important function in Thomas Heywood's The Late Lancashire Witches. In Heywood's play the witches do not turn into wolves, but they do transform themselves into cats and torment the miller who operates Mr. Generous' mill. One practical reason why the specific

werewolf pattern of lycanthropy does not follow in England, although there are some isolated cases of such transformations, may be simply that wolves as a species in England became extinct early in English history.

What emerges from Ovid's Metamorphoses is not the sympathetic Medea of Euripides. The scorned woman whose revenge is personally justified, but not tolerated by society, in Euripides becomes, in Ovid, a sophisticated practitioner of occult magic. Her motive for revenge falls from the nobility of a love-scorned woman to the ignoble obsession of revenge for revenge's sake. This dark tone of ritualized evil, directed toward ignoble ends, becomes a prominent feature of the Renaissance dramatic witch. Medea's herbs, her rituals, and her incantations in Ovid's Metamorphoses possess a shadowy quality. This penumbral magic, when it is extracted from a pagan context (where it is at least tolerated for its own sake) and placed in the Christian milieu of Renaissance England, waxes black and evil, and it is designated a satanic magic, diametrically opposed to the good power of the Christian God.

Although Ovid's non-dramatic Medea provides valuable information on specific occult ceremonies, it is Seneca's Medea which casts the black witch into a Stygian role from which she never escapes. Medea becomes thoroughly evil and diabolical in Seneca's description of the once noble Grecian princess. The witch Seneca creates is despicable. The

imagery is primarily auditory in nature, as Senecan drama was generally read, not acted. Through the extended manipulation of auditory and visual imagery, Seneca creates a most disgusting view of the once noble Medea. Her actions in Seneca's play are motivated by blood and vengeance. Seneca dwells on Medea's malicious intent toward other characters in the drama. Her vicious nature overwhelms any justifiable motivations Medea could possibly have for her acts. Seneca's Medea also practices veneficium and herboria, but instead of gathering plants for the purpose of bringing youth to an aged king, she is collecting herbs to concoct deadly poison. All the Senecan images surrounding Medea are associated with the evil aspects of the occult arts. Medea prays for a serpent to descend from the sky. The reference here is to the constellation Draco winding between the two bears, Ursa Major and Ursa Minor.⁸ The serpent is a source of wisdom in occult practices, especially in the Egyptian tradition.

Seneca's strong rhetorical style is displayed in Medea's diatribic incantation to the constellation Draco, asking Python to answer her prayers. She appeals to Python as the assistant of Apollo and Diana and asks that Hydra return to cut off the hand of Hercules.⁹ Her plea here is to all the serpentine creatures of mythology who are

⁸The explanation of the constellation Draco is from Miller, ed., p. 289, fn. 1.

⁹Miller, ed., p. 289, fn. 4.

associated with doing evil against the gods. She refers to the "ever-watchful dragon" (p. 289) who invigilates the Golden Fleece. She asks this serpent to come and aid her in her incantations. It is the same dragon which she had lulled to sleep for Jason, enabling him to steal the Golden Fleece.

Seneca draws a dire picture of Medea being surrounded by a whole tribe of serpents. Seneca is capable of creating a dark, atmospheric mood.¹⁰ This murky atmosphere prevails later in Marston's *Erictho* and in Shakespeare's *three weird sisters*. Seneca pictures Medea in this umbrageous atmosphere:

When she had summoned forth the whole tribe of serpents, she assembled her evil store of baleful herbs. Whatever trackless Eryx produces on his rocky slopes; plants that grow on heights clothed in unbroken winter, the heights of Caucasus, spattered with Prometheus' gore; plants wherewith the rich Arabians smear their arrows, and the bold Mede, girt with his quiver, or the light-armed Parthians; or those juices which, under the cold pole, high-born Sueban women gather in Hyrcanian groves; whatever the earth produces in the nest-building springtime or when frozen winter has stripped the woods of their glory and bound all things with icy fetters; all plants that bloom with deadly flower, and all whose juices breed cause of death in their twisted roots--all these she handles.
These plants felt the knife while Phoebus was making ready the day; the shoot of that was

¹⁰It is important to remember that Seneca's tragedies were known in Sixteenth Century England in Latin and also in English translation as early as 1559. The seventh tragedie of Seneca, Entituled Medea was available in 1566. A collection of Seneca's tragedies, Seneca his tenne tragedies, Translated into Englysh appeared in 1581.

clipped at midnight; while this was severed by
finger-nail with muttered charms.

(pp. 289 and 291)

The images which Seneca develops here evoke a feeling of sterility, a feeling of coldness, a "frozen winter" "under the cold pole," an "unbroken winter," and these are comingled with the sanguine imagery of "Prometheus' gore." All the images, snakes, winter, and blood, create a Stygian atmosphere. Seneca fashions a mood of gloom, murkiness, or darkness. The gathering of herbs at midnight when Phoebus is on the other side of the earth reinforces this dark mood. It is the witching hour, and there is an obscuration or extinction of the natural world order and in this condition Medea thrives. Seneca develops this mood further when he describes how Medea gathers her herbs and prepares herself for the incantations:

She seizes death-dealing herbs, squeezes out
serpents' venom, and with these mingles unclean
birds, the heart of a boding owl, and a hoarse
screech-owl's vitals cut out alive. Other objects
the mistress of evil arts lays out, arranged in
separate heaps; in some is the ravening power of
fire; in others numbing frost's icy cold. She
adds to her poisons words, no less fearsome than
they.--But listen, her frenzied step has sounded,
and she chants her incantations. All nature
shudders as she begins her song.

(p. 291)

Seneca continues the dark images he began, and he starts now to increase the intensity of the tenebrous mood. The words Seneca uses are associated with poison and pollution-- "serpents' venom" and "unclean birds." Seneca devises a Cimmerian environment; all nature shudders as Medea chants

her song. This dark image of the witch is carried over into the Renaissance dramatic witch. A majority of the powers the Elizabethans attribute to English witches, either in their drama or in the reality of the witchcraft trials, can be traced to classical literary sources. These magical powers are portrayed in the character of Medea and other classical witches, especially Lucan's *Erichtho*, who will be considered later in relation to Marston's Tragedie of Sophonisba.¹¹

The second main influence on the Renaissance dramatic witch is the "Christian" witch, an amalgamated product of continental and English demonological and witchcraft treatises. These treatises provided contemporary examples of behavioral characteristics found in the "Christian" witch, and the abundant supply of these treatises furnished the Renaissance playwright with formulaic character descriptions of what a witch should look like, do, and say. This codified literature was reinforced with a religious fervor on the continent which eventually found its way into England, especially when the Marian exiles returned under Elizabeth's

¹¹See Reed, pp. 161-163. I do not wish to elaborate on the non-Medean classical witch because Reed's approach is broad and general enough to include other classical witches. I have concentrated on Medea here to show a definite classical model of a witch that was available to the Renaissance dramatists. See also Alan Macfarlane, Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England (London, 1970). See also Montague Summers, The History of Witchcraft and Demonology (London, 1920); Thomas Spalding, Elizabethan Demonology (London, 1880); and Rossel Robbins, The Encyclopedia of Witchcraft and Demonology (New York, 1959).

reign.¹² These returning exiles eventually came to occupy prominent positions in the Church's hierarchy. Thomas Bentham, who was later to become the Bishop of Coventry, returned from Zurich as did John Parkhurst. John Scory had served as chaplain to the exiles in Geneva.¹³ It became a profitable business among English clergymen and other notables to imitate the continental demonologists in writing lengthy treatises on the subject of witchcraft and demonology. After Reginald Scot's discouerie of witchcraft (1584), there was a continuous stream of English treatises on witches and demonology. This was especially true when King James I ascended the English throne, as he considered himself a scholar and an authority on demonology. He ordered all copies of Scot's discouerie of witchcraft burned because of Scot's skeptical attitude toward witches. Once James I established an occult literary trend with his Daemonologie (1597), it quickly became the fashion to write treatises on the King's special interest--witchcraft.

¹²Notestein, pp. 14-18. John Jewell is a primary example of the returning Marian exiles. Preaching to her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth I, around 1559 or 1560, Jewell states that witches and sorcerers ". . . these few last years are marvellously increased within this your grace's realm. These eyes have seen most evident and manifest marks of their wickedness. Your grace's subjects pine away even unto death, their colour fadeth, their flesh rotteth, their speech is benumbed, their senses are bereft" (Notestein, p. 16).

¹³Notestein, p. 16. See footnote on the Burr interview.

The English treatise writers were strongly influenced by continental demonological authors. The Malleus Maleficarum (1498) written by Jakob Sprenger and Heinrich Kramer was the witch-hunting guide in Europe, and Reginald Scot relies upon it for his information.¹⁴ Johannes Nider's Formicarius (1484) is written in the dialogue form that King James employs.¹⁵ Jean Bodin's De la demonomanie des sorciers (Paris, 1580) is cited by Scot in the discouerie of witchcraft,¹⁶ and Ben Jonson cites Bodin in the footnotes to The Masque of Qveenes (1609). Other possible continental demonologists whose work may have influenced the English treatise authors are Nicholas Remy, Demonolatreiae Libri Tres (Lyons, 1595); Martin Antoine Del Rio, Disquisitionum Magicarum (Louvain, 1599); and Giovanni Batista della Porta, Magia Naturalis (Naples, 1558).¹⁷

King James's Daemonologie (Edinburgh, 1597) was quickly followed with strong support from William Perkins'

¹⁴ Heinrich Kramer and Jakob Sprenger, Malleus Maleficarum (1498), trans. Montague Summers (London, 1928). This edition is part of the Arents collection at the Syracuse University Library. Robbins treats this in an entry. See Robbins, p. 337.

¹⁵ See Robbins, p. 355, and Cavendish, p. 302. I used the second edition of Nider's Formicarius (Augsburg, 1484), a copy of which is in the White collection at Cornell University Library.

¹⁶ Scot, p. 39.

¹⁷ These writers are listed by Ben Jonson in his footnotes to The Masque of Qveenes, I, Notes.

A Discourse of the Damned Art of Witchcraft (1608), published posthumously.¹⁸ Alexander Roberts in A Treatise of Witchcraft (1616) recognized the prevalence of witchcraft and advocated the necessity of the punishment of witches. Thomas Cooper's The Mystery of Witchcraft (1617), based essentially on King James's Daemonologie and Perkins' work, answers King James and his questions. Michael Dalton with The Country Justice (1618) and Richard Bernard in A Guide to Grand Jurymen (1627) tells jurymen to be cautious, but nevertheless exact in their persecution of witches. The anti-witch literature increases following King James's ascension to the throne. Only two people in this period express views which are different from King James's position: Samuel Harsnett, with his Discovery of the Fraudulent Practices of J. Darrell (1599) and his A Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures (1603); and somewhat later the more well-known John Cotta's treatise, The trial of witch-craft shewing the treve and right methode of the discovery (1616).¹⁹ These two writers were asking that skepticism in witchcraft trials be observed.

¹⁸Robbins, pp. 167-169. Robbins' work is a competent exhaustive study of witchcraft and demonology. I want to assure the reader that I have personally examined the White collection at Cornell University, and my evaluations are based upon analysis of the demonological literature which I have read. Deviations from or concurrences with Robbins will be duly noted.

¹⁹I have examined only the 1616 edition.

Essentially the English treatise writers were anti-witch. These men, with the exception of John Cotta, were mostly clergymen writing either to court the favor of the king or to expound on theological sanctions against witchcraft. The verses from the Bible which they used to support their arguments come from both the Old and the New Testament, the most prominent example being taken from the Old Testament, I Samuel xxviii, in which Saul goes in disguise to the Witch of Endor and asks her to employ divination whereby he might see Samuel.²⁰ Another Biblical example is found in Exodus xxii:18: "You must not preserve a sorceress alive." This pronouncement provided the Biblical grounds for continental persecutors to justify the death of many women in the witch persecutions. In Deuteronomy xviii:10-11 is the injunction: "There should not be found in you . . . anyone who employs divination, a practitioner of magic or anyone who looks for omens or a sorcerer, or one who binds others with a spell or anyone who consults a spirit medium or a professional foreteller of events or anyone who inquires of the dead." It is evident that the Biblical attitude toward the witches strengthens the argument against them.

These two major influences, the Greco-Roman

²⁰Reed comments briefly on the "Witch of Endor"; see pp. 55 and 57. See also Robbins, pp. 159-160, and Notestein, pp. 62, 241, 295, and 298.

literary witch and the Christian witchcraft literature, synthesize in the dramatic character of the Renaissance witch. These influences create an occult zeitgeist which increased with the return of the Marian exiles and reached its zenith under James I, presumptuous intellectual and self-styled demonologist. This occult zeitgeist, with its witches, devils, and familiars, found its way to the stage--a social drama of a sort--and the stage became the domicile of the world's most detestable social pariah. A witch's poison could kill a king, as well as a beggar. Black magic could create a tempest capable of destroying a farmer's crops or sinking a monarch's royal ship. Such was the atmosphere of England surrounding the first witch play considered in this study: John Lyly's Mother Bombie.

Mother Bombie (1594) is the earliest Renaissance play dealing with an English witch. This play helps establish the trend of the witch-type in the early Elizabethan period. Both contemporary and classical witch influences are evident in Lyly's dramatic witch. The play is written ten years after Reginald Scot's publication of The discoverie of witchcraft (1584), and the witch mania in England had not taken a strong hold. In Mother Bombie, Lyly relies mostly on the classic Greco-Roman witch. Mother Bombie mechanically advances the plot action in the play. There is no individualization, little development in her character, and no suitable justification for her art of prophecy. She appears more as a third-rate gypsy fortune-teller than as a

spell-binding classical witch. The play displays no strong sense of organic unity. There is no relation between the Mother Bombie scenes and the complicated main plot of the play. Mother Bombie serves to manipulate the love plot; she operates purely as a contrived device for dramatic foreshadowing, and a poor device at that. She is a dramatic vacuum.²¹ The pseudo-oracular utterings of Mother Bombie fall short of any attempt at supernaturalism, and there are no witch accouterments such as the cauldron, the ointments, and the familiar which appear later in the plays of Shakespeare, Dekker, and Heywood. This play's characterization and unity are quite inferior to Lyly's other plays, especially Endimion, in which the style is neatly balanced with technical mastery. It can be seen that Mother Bombie is more or less a feeble starting point in the Renaissance dramatist's concept of the witch.

Mother Bombie serves as a walking Delphic oracle, devoid of character, more as a prophetic institution than an occult personality. This can be seen in Act III, scene i, when Maestius and Serena visit Mother Bombie and Serena asks: "Good mother tell vs, if by your cunning you can,

²¹Reed disagrees with this view. He sees Mother Bombie as "dramatically effective" (Reed, p. 151). He also claims her prophecies provide ". . . both suspense and direction that would otherwise be lacking from the play." Reed sees Mother Bombie this way because he considers her an example of ". . . the general esteem that was accorded white witches;"

what shall become of my brother and me."²² Mother Bombie replies, as if she were a fortune machine:

Let me see your hands, and looke on me stedfastly
with your eyes. You shall be married to morow
hand in hand, by the lawes of good nature & the
land, your parents shall be glad, & giue you their
lande, you shal each of you displace a foole, &
both together must releuee a foole. If this be
not true call me olde foole.

(III.i.946-951)

Perhaps Serena comments tellingly: "These doggrell rimes and obscure words, comming out of the mouth of such a weather-beatẽ witch, are thought diuinations of some holy spirite, being but dreames of decayed braines" (III.i.955-958).

Mother Bombie merely flits on the stage and offers some prognostication essential to the working out of the plot and then she disappears uttering her "doggrell rimes." She interprets dreams in her third and last appearance. Vicinia is troubled at night with dreams. Mother Bombie explains the dreams to Silena, the daughter of Vicinia, claiming that she is not a witch but "a cunning woman" (II.iii.763). Mother Bombie then has Silena hold up her hand and tells the girl's love life from it. Here the occult art of palmistry serves as a form of dramatic foreshadowing which justifies, in a trite way, the love-intrigue plot in

²²John Lyly, Mother Bombie (1594), ed. Kathleen M. Lea, The Malone Society Reprints (Oxford, 1948), ll. 944-945. All quotations from Lyly's Mother Bombie are taken from this edition.

which Silena and the others are involved. The play is important because Mother Bombie initiates the English witch character in Renaissance drama, and Lyly presents a main theme of the Renaissance witch drama: societal accusation of witchcraft, and the witch's assertion of her innocence.

Shortly after Mother Bombie, Robert Greene's The Comicall Historie of Alphonsus, King of Aragon (1599) was published. In Greene's play Medea is modelled after the Greco-Roman witch. Perhaps because he belonged to the "University Wits," Greene relied heavily on classical sources for his plays. This enchantress is the Renaissance interpretation of the classical literary witch, par excellence. She is capable of prophecy, and she predicts the inevitable fate of Amurack. Added to her role is a choric function which may best be seen when Medea cautions the defeated Amurack against anger:

Enter Medea, and say.

Nay Amurack this is no time to iarre,
 Although thy wife did in her franticke moode
 Vse speeches which might better haue bene sparde,
 Yet do thou not iudge the same time to be
 A season to requite that iniurie:
 More fitteth thee with all the wit thou hast,
 To call to mind which way thou maist release
 Thy selfe, thy wife, and faire Iphigina,
 Forth of the power of stout Alphonsus hands.
 For well I wot, since first you breathed breath,
 You neuer were so nie the snares of death.
 Now Amurack, your high and kingly seate,
 Your royall sceptor, and your stately Crowne,
 Your mightie Countrey, and your men at armes,
 Be conquered all, and can no succour bring.
 Put then no trust in these same paltrie toys:
 But call to mind that thou a prisoner art:
 Clapt vp in chaines, whose life and deaths depends
 Vpon the hands of thy most mortall foe.

Then take thou heed that what some ere he say,
Thou doest not once presume for to gainsay.²³

Euripides' Medea, a woman oppressed by love's scorn, is quite different from Greene's one-dimensional character advising Amurack. It is in Medea's choric role that Seneca's influence is displayed. It is the Senecan rhetorical nature of Medea's speech that conveys its didactic nature. Seneca's influence on Medea in this play goes even beyond the rhetorical structure of this speech.

Greene depicts Medea in a conjuring situation similar to Seneca's treatment of Medea's ritualized magic. She enters with Fausta and her daughter Iphigina claiming that all the charms which they uttered are fulfilled as Amurack is now fast asleep. She begins her magic ceremonies to conjure up the blind Greek seer Calchas from the deep darkness of Pluto's realm:

Enter Medea, Fausta the Empresse,
Iphigina her daughter.

Now haue our charmes fulfilled our minds full well,
High Amurack is lulled fast a sleepe,
And doubt I not, but ere he wakes againe,
You shall perceiue Medea did not gibe,
When as she put this practise in your mind:
Sit worthie Fausta at thy spowse his feete.

Fausta and Iphigina sit downe at Amuracks feete.
Iphigina, sit thou on the other side:
What ere you see be not agast thereat,
But beare in mind what Amurack doth chat.

²³Robert Greene, The Comicall Historie of Alphonsus, King of Aragon (1599), ed. W. W. Greg, The Malone Society Reprints (Oxford, 1926), ll. 1786-1807. All citations from this play are taken from this edition.

Medea do ceremonies belonging to coniuring, and say.

Thou which wert wont in Agamemnons dayes
 To vtter forth Apolloes Oracles
 At sacred Delphos, Calchas I do meane,
 I charge thee come, all lingring set aside,
 Vnles the pennance you thereof abide.
 I coniure thee by Plutoes loathsome lake,
 By all the hags which harbour in the same,
 By stinking Stix, and filthie Flegeton,
 To come with speed and truly to fulfill
 That which Medea to thee streight shall will.
 (ll. 927-950)

Here Greene's Medea engages in Senecan ritualistic conjuring; Greene's stage directions ". . . do ceremonies belonging to coniuring,. . . ." hint that Elizabethan knowledge of conjuring ceremonies was more than casual because Greene allows the actor to work out the conjuring procedure. This can be contrasted by the intricate stage directions explicated by Barnabe Barnes in The Divils Charter (1607), where he specifically outlines the conjuration ritual in the opening scene.

Medea, essentially a choric figure, is a minor character who meanders through the play with her mysterious rituals. She moves the plot forward, as in the case of most supernatural characters, without the necessity of human causes, thus allowing the dramatist to attain certain ends without relying upon human characters to effect those ends. Greene is the first dramatist of primary importance to use the classical notion of a witch in English Renaissance drama. His witch in this classical tradition and Lyly's native English witch, Mother Bombie, delineate the two primary strains of witch characterization in early

Renaissance drama. At times, especially in Jacobean drama, these strains become intermingled and intertwined, blurring their individual identities. Greene's *Medea* and Lyly's *Mother Bombie* represent a class of Renaissance witch called the white witch who practices "white" magic as opposed to "black" magic.²⁴ This concept of the witch seems to be a product of English witch trials. Often a woman who is practicing folk medicine or midwifery, as Notestein illustrates, is indicted on charges of witchcraft.²⁵

Shakespeare provides an excellent example of the English black witch in *I Henry VI* (1594). In this play the political overtones of nationalism are fused with the theological requirements of the "Christian" witch. The result is *Joan La Pucelle*, a provocative study in the characterization of the Renaissance witch-type. Shakespeare's character is based on Joan of Arc, the saint of France and the object of hatred in England during the Hundred Years' War. In the French scenes, Joan appears as a noble person, honestly convinced of her own divine vocation to lead the French forces. In the English scenes, she is regarded as a black witch, in league with the devil.

In Act I, scene v, when Joan La Pucelle is engaged in combat with Talbot, she is accused of witchcraft:

²⁴See Reed, p. 152.

²⁵Notestein, p. 41.

TAL. Where is my strength, my valor, and my force?

Our English troops retire, I cannot stay them.
A woman clad in armor chaseth them.

[Re-enter LA PUCELLE]

Here, here she comes. I'll have a bout with thee.
Devil or Devil's dam, I'll conjure thee!
Blood will I draw on thee, thou art a witch,
And straightway give thy soul to him thou servest.

PUC. Come, come, 'tis only I that must disgrace thee.

[Here they fight.]

TAL. Heavens, can you suffer Hell so to prevail?

My breast I'll burst with straining of my courage,
And from my shoulders crack my arms asunder,
But I will chastise this high-minded strumpet.

[They fight again.]

(I.v.1-12)

In the next scene, Charles refers to Joan as the "Divinest creature, Astraea's daughter" (I.vi.4) in praise of her military feats. Later on in the same scene he lauds her as "Joan la Pucelle . . . France's saint" (I.vi.29).

Joan approaches tragic stature in the last act when the English have captured her at the battle of Angiers. Some of Joan's comments could be said by one of Shakespeare's male warriors, e.g., Hotspur or Prince Hal. Joan's defiant character possesses the same boldness and firmness found later in Shakespeare's more mature female characters, e.g., Lady Macbeth and Cleopatra. A scout tells Charles and Joan that the English army is united again and prepared to give battle. Burgundy remarks that he hopes the ghost of Talbot is not there to frighten Joan; Joan valiantly replies:

Of all base passions, fear is most accursed.
Command the conquest, Charles, it shall be thine.
Let Henry fret and all the world repine.

(V.ii.18-20)

In Act V, scene ii at the battle of Angiers, Shakespeare chauvinistically depicts Joan from the English point of view. In this scene Shakespeare vividly portrays Joan as an English witch. Witches, in league with the devil, are, as pointed out in the Malleus Maleficarum, usually deserted by the devil when he is needed most. The fiends leave Joan to meet her just end and Joan must face the English alone.²⁶

Joan enters and calls upon her familiars:

PUC. The Regent conquers, and the Frenchmen fly,
 Now help, ye charming spells and periapts,
 And ye choice spirits that admonish me
 And give me signs of future accidents. [Thunder.]
 You speedy helpers, that are substitutes
 Under the lordly monarch of the North,
 Appear and aid me in this enterprise.

[Enter FIENDS.]

This speedy and quick appearance argues proof
 Of your accustomed diligence to me.
 Now, ye familiar spirits, that are culled
 Out of the powerful regions under earth,
 Help me this once, that France may get the field.
 [They walk, and speak not.]
 (V.iii.1-12)

Joan's satanic contract is up. The fiends desert her, after they have led her to death and damnation. The fiends silently walk off and ignore her plea:

Oh, hold me not with silence overlong!
 Where I was wont to feed you with my blood,
 I'll lop a member off and give it you
 In earnest of a further benefit,
 So you do condescend to help me now.
 [They hang their heads.]

²⁶Kramer and Sprenger, p. 102. The devil, after the prescribed amount of time contracted between the fiend and his servant, "casts her off, and tries to expose her to temporal afflictions, so that he gain some profit from her despair."

.
 Cannot my body nor blood sacrifice
 Entreat you to your wonted furtherance?
 Then take my soul, my body, soul and all,
 Before that England give the French the foil.
[They depart.]
 See, they forsake me! Now the time is come
 That France must vail her lofty plumèd crest
 And let her head fall into England's lap.
 My ancient incantations are too weak,
 And Hell too strong for me to buckle with.
 Now, France, thy glory droopeth to the dust.
 (V.iii.13-29)

Shortly after the devils desert her, Joan is taken prisoner by York. He knows that the devils have deserted her, and he asks her to yield. When York sees Joan, he exclaims: "See how the ugly witch doth bend her brows, / As if with Circe she would change my shape!" (V.iii.34-35). He condemns her as a "Fell banning hag, enchantress" (V.iii.42). Shakespeare contrasts this diabolical description of Joan with the divine destiny of Joan in Act I, scene ii. In this scene she tells the Dauphin of France it is heaven's design, not the devil's, that she muster the forces of France:

Dauphin, I am by birth a shepherd's daughter,²⁷
 My wit untrained in any kind of art.
 Heaven and our Lady gracious hath it pleased
 To shine on my contemptible estate.

²⁷ It is interesting to note the mystical atmosphere surrounding literary shepherds, especially in the Christian tradition where the shepherd image is employed as a metaphor for Christ. The shepherd is also predominant in the pastoral tradition from the idyllic world of Theocritus up to the shepherds found in Spenser's *Fäerie Queene*. The magical flute of Faunus and other pastoral creatures provides ample demonstration of the magic invested in these literary shepherds.

Lo, whilst I waited on my tender lambs,
 And to sun's parching heat displayed my cheeks,
 God's Mother deignēd to appear to me,
 And in a vision full of majesty
 Willed me to leave my base vocation
 And free my country from calamity.
 (I.ii.72-81)

Joan is left in this scene without the help of her familiars. This situation is in accordance with the theological position taken by a prominent clergyman in Shakespeare's time. George Gifford in A discourse of the subtil practices of Deuills by witches and sorcerers (1587), in circulation at the time of Shakespeare's I Henry VI, goes into detail as to the exact purpose of Satan's reason for making a pact with the witch:

. . . yet the Deuils They bee the authours and deuisers of sinne, they drawe men into it, the Deuill then hath deuised witcherye coniuration, and Enchauntment. The Deuill allureth and seduceth men to become Witches, Coniurors, or Enchaunters, he seemeth to be a seruaunt vnto the Witch, but shee is his seruaunt. The coniuors suppose that they bind him by the power of coniuration in which they reckon vp the names of God, but he is voluntarily bound, or doth indeed but faine himselfe to be bound, for shal we thinke [that] he would devise [and] teach an art wherby he should indeed be bound: can any man be so blockish as to imagine, that god wil in deed bind him by his power at the will of a Coniuror. Againe we may not thinke that he which is more forward vnto euill and mischief, is set on and procured by the lesse forward vnto euill, for that is preposterouse, then muste wee graunt that the Witch doth not prouoke forward the Deuill, but the Deuill bearing swaye in the heart setteth hir on.²⁸

Gifford points out that the purpose of the satanic pact is

²⁸Gifford, p. 40.

always to "lead men into the depths of sin, that they may be drowned in deeper condemnation."²⁹

Joan is pictured as a lowly shepherd's daughter inspired by God to lead the French army in victory over the English. The image of Christ as a shepherd is linked to Joan as a shepherd's daughter to reinforce her divine calling. When Joan claims her wit is "untrained in any kind of art" (I.ii.73), G. B. Harrison interprets Joan's statement to mean that she possesses no "book learning."³⁰ Another explanation is possible. That Joan knows no "art" could mean that she does not know the black arts of conjuring, necromancy, divination, etc. This denial of black magic is important dramatically because it rules out any possibility of a league with the devil from a French point of view, and it reinforces the sanctity of Joan's character. At the same time, Shakespeare balances this "holy" picture of Joan over and against the English view of Joan as a witch. Joan develops as one of Shakespeare's most prismatic characters. She reflects both evil and good, depending on the perspective she is viewed from, the English or the French. She is as strong a symbol of England's hate as she is of France's hope. Her death, if it does not approach tragic dimensions, certainly evokes sympathy, and her rebuttal of York's

²⁹Gifford, p. 40.

³⁰See Harrison, ed., p. 111, fn. 73.

caustic comments is admirable and noble:

First, let me tell you whom you have condemned:
 Not me begotten of a shepherd swaine,
 But issued from the progeny of kings,
 Virtuous and holy, chosen from above
 By inspiration of celestial grace
 To work exceeding miracles on earth.
 I never had to do with wicked spirits.
 But you, that are polluted with your lusts,
 Stained with the guiltless blood of innocents,
 Corrupt and tainted with a thousand vices,
 Because you want the grace that others have,
 You judge it straight a thing impossible
 To compass wonders but by help of devils.
 No, misconceived! Joan of Arc hath been
 A virgin from her tender infancy,
 Chaste and immaculate in very thought;
 Whose maiden blood, thus rigorously effused,
 Will cry for vengeance at the gates of Heaven.
 (V.iv.36-53)

Joan asks her tormentors to relinquish the death sentence on the grounds of being enceinte. York lashes back at her accusing Joan of an illicit relationship with the Dauphin: "She and the Dauphin have been juggling. / I did imagine that would be her refuge" (V.iv.67-68). The fact that Joan pleads exemption from execution for reasons of pregnancy does not detract from her noble stature. On the contrary, it adds to her credibility because she is well acquainted with English law and uses it against her oppressors. She is making a legitimate legal move. A similar situation is found in John Webster's The Dytchesse of Malfy, when the Duchess' servant asks that she be spared execution on the grounds that she is pregnant (IV.ii.276). Joan's plea is in vain. Warwick and York mock her because she cannot properly name the father of her child. The attempt falls abortive, and she is led away and bound at the stake, but not before

she curses and prophesies the fate of the English.

Shakespeare, by presenting the French and English perspectives on Joan's vocation, unites two opposing views in a single character. The saint-sinner polarity Shakespeare presents is possible because witchcraft doctrine provides a basis for it. In the dramatic presentation of Joan as saint and witch, Shakespeare reveals a working knowledge of Scot's discouerie of witchcraft (1584) and possibly even continental witchcraft literature. This working knowledge is displayed by the topical witchcraft allusions Shakespeare employs in the play. One of these allusions is made when Talbot confronts Joan in hand-to-hand combat:

Devil or Devil's dam, I'll conjure thee!
 Blood will I draw on thee, thou art a witch,
 And straightway give thy soul to him thou servest.
 (I.v.5-7)

Talbot here refers to a method employed by interrogators to prove that a person was a witch, called "scratching the witch."³¹ The idea was to draw blood on the accused witch, and she was considered guilty if the particular charm or witchcraft ceased after she bled. The drawing of blood to prove a witch seems peculiar to English witchcraft. This procedure is included in William Perkins' book, A Discourse of the Damned Art of Witchcraft (1608), which becomes a

³¹Robbins, pp. 457-458.

standard English witch-hunter's bible.³²

Another example of a witch's power Talbot points out is the actuality that Joan can drive back the fierce English army:

My thoughts are whirlèd like a potter's wheel.
I know not where I am, nor what I do.
A witch by fear, not force, like Hannibal,
Drives back our troops and conquers as she
lists:

(I.v.19-22)

Reginald Scot set forth the belief that a witch could turn the tide in military affairs:

In the warres between the kings of Denmarke and Sueveland, 1563. the Danes doo write, that the king of Sueveland caried about with him in his campe, foure old witches, who with their charms so qualified the Danes, as they were thereby disabled to annoie their enimies: insomuch as, if they had taken in hand anie enterprise, they were so infeebleed by those witches, as they could performe nothing. And although this could have no credit at the first, yet in the end, one of these witches was taken prisoner, and confessed the whole matter;³³

Talbot's speech parallels Scot's explanation. Shakespeare artistically blends English nationalism and English witchcraft into Joan's character. At the same time, he preserves Joan's integrity as God's chosen leader of the French forces. The dramatic credibility of Joan is maintained in this complex characterization by a sophisticated fusion of opposite dramatic qualities, good and evil, in the witch-type.

³²William Perkins, A Discourse of the Damned Art of Witchcraft (London, 1631), p. 206.

³³Scot, p. 73.

Joan is a highly successful portrayal of a contemporary English witch.

In contrast to Shakespeare's contemporary witch, John Marston's Erictho is a direct imitation of Lucan's Erictho in Pharsalia. The Tragedy of Sophonisba is a play where Marston's penchant for grotesque and macabre imagery is masterfully displayed. Erictho is the most disgusting witch in Renaissance drama. She is a revolting re-creation of Lucan's hag and she provides a foil to the overwhelming virtue of Sophonisba. Syphax seeks the aid of the enchantress Erictho in acquiring Sophonisba's love and this situation mirrors a similar situation in Pharsalia, when Sextus, the son of Pompey, seeks out Erictho to divine his future. Although the exact function of Erictho in these two cases is different, the actual character remains despicably the same. Thus Syphax claims he'll search for Erictho in "deepest hell."³⁴ She lives among "Forsaken graves and tombs" (IV.i. 101) where she forces ghosts out from their sepulchers. This description of Erictho's locale remains essentially the same as Lucan's description of Erictho's habitat in Pharsalia: ". . . she wanders amid the bodies of the slain, exposed, sepulchres being denied."³⁵ Marston describes

³⁴John Marston, The Tragedy of Sophonisba, The Works of John Marston, ed. A. H. Bullen, 3 vols. (Boston, 1887), II, IV.i.97. All citations from Marston are taken from this edition.

³⁵Lucan, Pharsalia, trans. H. T. Riley (London, 1890), p. 237.

Erictho's decrepit physical appearance in a noxious manner:
 "A loathsome yellow leanness spreads her face, / A heavy
 hell-like paleness loads her cheeks" (IV.i.103-104). Again,
 this parallels Lucan's description of Erictho in Book VI of
Pharsalia:

Leanness has possession of the features of the hag,
 foul with filthiness, and, unknown to a clear sky,
 her dreadful visage, laden with uncombed locks, is
 beset with Stygian paleness. If showers and black
 clouds obscure the stars, then does the Thessalian
 witch stalk forth from the spoiled piles, and try
 to arrest the lightnings of the night.
 (p. 233)

Marston carries Lucan's image of the black clouds over into
 his descriptions by indicating that:

. . . if dark winds
 Or thick black clouds drive back the blinded stars,
 When her deep magic makes forced heaven quake
 And thunder spite of Jove,--Erictho then
 From naked graves stalks out,
 (IV.i.105-109)

Marston's most morbid description involves Erictho's necro-
 mantic rites. Marston's Erictho leaps on the tombs breaking
 them open, and the ritual is as follows:

Forsaken graves and tombs, the ghosts forced out,
 She joys to inhabit.
 A loathsome yellow leanness spreads her face,
 A heavy hell-like paleness loads her cheeks,
 Unknown to a clear heaven; but if dark winds
 Or thick black clouds drive back the blinded stars,
 When her deep magic makes forced heaven quake
 And thunder spite of Jove,--Erictho then
 From naked graves stalks out, heaves proud her
 head
 With long unkemb'd hair loaden, and strives to
 snatch
 The night's quick sulphur; then she bursts up
 tombs,
 From half-rot sear-cloths then she scrapes dry
 gums
 For her black rites; but when she finds a corpse

But newly graved, whose entrails are not turn'd
 To slimy filth, with greedy havock then
 She makes fierce spoil, and swells with wicked
 triumph
 To bury her lean knuckles in his eyes;
 Then doth she gnaw the pale and o'ergrown nails
 From his dry hand; but if she find some life
 Yet lurking close, she bites his gelid lips,
 And, sticking her black tongue in his dry throat,
 She breathes dire murmurs, which enforce him bear
 Her baneful secrets to the spirits of horror.
 To her first sound the gods yield any harm,
 As trembling once to hear a second charm:
 (IV.i.101-125)

This morose image is lifted right from Pharsalia where Lucan
 reveals his cadaverous beldame haunched on the chest of her
 newly found, but not yet cold, corpse:

But when corpses are kept within stone, from which
 the moisture within is taken away, and, the corrup-
 tion withdrawn, the marrow has grown hard; then
 does she [Erictho] greedily raven upon all the
 limbs, and bury her hands in the eyes, and delight
 to scoop out the dried-up balls, and gnaw the
 pallid nails of the shrunken hand; with her mouth
 she tears asunder the halter and the murderous
 knots;
 Full often, too, at her kinsman's pile has the dire
 Thessalian witch brooded over the dear limbs, and
 imprinting kisses, has both cut off the head, and
 torn away the cheeks pressed with her teeth, and
 biting off the end of the tongue as it cleaves to
 the dried throat, has poured forth murmurs into
 the cold lips, and has dispatched accursed secrets
 to the Stygian shades.
 (pp. 234-235)

Marston adds nothing new to Lucan's description as
 far as character goes. He adds no originality to the Greco-
 Roman witch. He is a slavish imitator. Even the function
 of the witch in Marston's play, to discover a love potion
 for Syphax, is not original. Lucan indicates: "Through the
 charms of the Thessalian witches a love not induced by the

Fates has entered into hardened hearts" (p. 230). Marston only repeats Lucan's description of Erictho, he does not improve upon it.

Marston and Shakespeare clearly represent the two main literary traditions influencing the Renaissance dramatic witch, the classical and the contemporary. Marston's Tragedy of Sophonisba relies chiefly on classical sources for witch characterization. Shakespeare's Macbeth (1606) is written at a time when the witch in English society was an object of intense political and religious hatred. James I had launched a personal attack on witches in his Daemonologie and he ordered all copies of Scot's skeptical discouerie of witchcraft burned. In this climate of political concern for the implications of witchcraft, Shakespeare's three weird sisters made their debut.

Lily Bess Campbell relies upon King James's Daemonologie as the main source of Jacobean witch theory. The Daemonologie and other demonological literature describe the activities, physical characteristics, and powers of witches and demons. Renaissance theologians, jurists, and physicians were concerned with the perplexing nature of witches and demons. Debating the problem of the witch's corporeal nature, her compact with the devil, and her demonic activities was in theological vogue from Reginald Scot down to the first half of the eighteenth century. Shakespeare was sensitive to the paradoxical nature of witches. He picked up this diabolical paradox and wove it

into Macbeth's theme of ambition. James points out in the Daemonologie, as Lily Campbell reiterates, that ambition is a suitable loophole for the devil, through witches, to attempt to contact a prospective client--like Macbeth.³⁶

When the three witches first appear, Shakespeare displays one of the supernatural powers allotted to witches, the power of raising tempests, thunder, and lightning. This is a politically significant scene because King James's "conversion" to a belief in witches occurs at the witch trial of Agnes Sampson. Sampson was tried for treason because she allegedly caused a storm or tempest to be raised in the sea, with the expressed purpose of wrecking the King's ship enroute to Norway. Sampson reveals to James at the trial the very words which he had whispered to his wife on the night of their marriage, words which no one else could possibly know. Almost every major witchcraft writer, from Scot to James, at this time associates storm raising, thunder, and lightning with witchcraft. Macbeth's witches will meet again, as the second witch states, "When the hurly-burly's done,/ When the battle's lost and won" (I.i. 3-4). Witches also possessed the power to turn the tide of battles. The battle Macbeth is fighting yields victory. Victory easily feeds a soldier's ambition. In the discouerie of witchcraft Scot cites examples of foreign

³⁶Campbell, p. 214.

nations who utilized the assistance of witches to win wars. He cites specifically the "eyebiting witches in Ireland."³⁷ The witches might be helping to turn the battle in Macbeth's favor. It is a conjecture coincidental with Renaissance witch theory.

In the third scene the witches begin to take on more definite attributes assigned to them by the English demonologists. One witch has been killing swine. Another pesters a sailor's wife. The reference to the chestnuts is a common Elizabethan explanation of why old women turned to witchcraft. Reginald Scot points out that old women go around from house to house to beg and are turned away from the food for which they are begging. As they go away they curse the people and should anything occur to the master of the house, or his family, or any of his agricultural possessions, the old woman would immediately be suspected of being a witch.³⁸ In Shakespeare's specific case, the witch asked for chestnuts to eat. This stereotyped situation is developed here to give his hags contemporary credibility. Shakespeare's witch retaliates on the sailor husband of the woman who refused her food, and seeks her vengeance upon him.

Each witch in Macbeth offers to lend winds to the

³⁷ Scot, p. 73.

³⁸ Scot, pp. 29-31.

first witch to achieve her desired revenge on the sailor. Scot alludes to the popular belief held by some that ". . . thunder . . . lightening, raine . . . tempestuous winds come from the heavens . . . are raised by the cunning and power of witches and conjurers; . . ." ³⁹ Gillian Tindall has commented on Macbeth's exchange of winds in relation to the infamous Isle of Man witches:

Weather-spells were particularly associated with witches--this is one of the many factors linking witchcraft with the ancient religions, whose priests were 'rain-makers' One of the witches in Macbeth schemes, on a slightly less Dianic and exalted plane, to stir up a storm to spite a seaman and his wife; her sister-witches generously offer her winds. This recalls the Isle of Man witches, who sold cords with three knots in them to sailors; when the first knot was undone it brought a good breeze, the second a stronger one and the third a gale. (Though this was not . . . the origin of the nautical "knot" as a measure of speed.) ⁴⁰

With the wind the first witch receives, she claims she will tempest-toss the sailor's ship on the ocean. Shakespeare's obvious contemporary allusion is to the witchcraft trial of Agnes Sampson and a group of disgruntled Scottish natives who were accused of raising a tempest to destroy the King's ship by tossing it on the waves. ⁴¹ In Macbeth this revengeful witch then shows the second witch the thumb of a pilot

³⁹ Scot, p, 25.

⁴⁰ Tindall, pp. 113-114.

⁴¹ James I. See Agnes Sampson's testimony, pp. 12, 13, and 15.

who was "wrecked as homeward he did come" (I.iii.28). Shakespeare reveals here his familiarity with sympathetic magic. If the thumb is from the pilot of a ship already sunk, the thumb contains sympathetic magic properties. It can cause another ship to sink by the principle of "like causes like" or sympathetic magic. This is not the only passage in which Shakespeare displays a more than casual knowledge of the occult arts. The principles of sympathetic magic Shakespeare evokes are blended into the dramatic structure of his plays so well that they become an essential part of the play.

Another example of sympathetic magic is found in the charm-speech before the initial entrance of Macbeth and Banquo. A popular power of the Elizabethan witch is the charm, according to witchcraft literature of the time. In the Middle Ages charms were employed against disease, crop failure, and evil. The medieval grimoires exhibit charms for almost any purpose. Reginald Scot devotes more than two chapters to charms and the technique of charms; he is quite specific as to the performance of each charm. It is important here to distinguish the charm from the more sophisticated form of magic, the conjuration. Charms allowed people to satisfy certain simple security needs. Conjuration techniques were highly ritualistic in nature, sophisticated in their approach to spirits, and usually reserved for the more intelligent class of magician. Scot cites various charms. He mentions charms

. . . against the falling evill, the biting of a mad dog, the stinging of a scorpion, the toothach, for a woman in travell, for the Kings evill, to get a thorne out of any member, or a bone out of ones throte, charmes to be said fasting, or at the gathering of hearbs, for sore eies, to open locks, against spirits, for the bots in a horsse, and speciallie for the Duke of Albas horsse, for sowre wines, &c.⁴²

These charms were specifically laid down, and the exact prescription had to be followed if the charm was to be effective. The Malleus Maleficarum laid down rules which differentiated between a good and an evil charm. These rules were strictly followed. All charms devised by a witch were considered evil because such charms were made in covenant with the devil. In Scotland, it is important to notice that as late as 1678, according to Sir George Mackenzie, a lawyer of the time, the punishment for witches using charms was death by burning.⁴³

It is not unusual, then, for Shakespeare's witches to be creating charms. The charm-episode may reflect a very popular contemporary notion of witchcraft. Before Macbeth enters, the weird sisters, hand in hand, mumble a rhyme mysteriously, invoking the number three and its multiple, the number nine. Three is the sacred number of the Holy Trinity. Most witchcraft rites were pictured by

⁴²Scot, p. 208.

⁴³Sir George Mackenzie, Laws and Customs of Scotland and Matters Criminal (Edinburgh, 1678-1699). Robbins cites this in his bibliography, p. 567.

witch-mongers and witch-hunters as parodies on Christian rituals. The number three represents a numerical parody on the Blessed Trinity. The number nine is a specific occult number which Shakespeare emphasizes: "Thrice to thine, and thrice to mine, / And thrice again to make up nine" (I.iii.35-36). Cavendish points out the importance of the number nine in magic when applied in the sets of threes: "Nine is another magically powerful number because it reduplicates the [magic] power of three (9=3x3)."⁴⁴ Cavendish gives another charm relying upon the numbers of three and nine:

A sinister measuring charm is recommended by the Renaissance magician Cornelius Agrippa. Take the body of a dead man and a piece of rope. Measure the corpse with the rope--from the elbow to the end of the longest finger, from the shoulder to the end of the longest finger, and from head to toe. Do this three times, giving nine measurements altogether. Dispose of the dead body and keep the rope. Anyone afterwards measured in the same way with the same rope will fall into misery and misfortune.⁴⁵

Shakespeare uses the numbers nine and three to enhance the mysteriousness and potency of the charm. The Jacobean audience would recognize this sinister charm. Nine and three are not arbitrarily chosen by Shakespeare; they show that he exhibits a considerable amount of technical occult knowledge.

When Macbeth meets the witches a traditional picture

⁴⁴Cavendish, p. 75.

⁴⁵Cavendish, pp. 75-76.

of the English witch emerges. In the witchcraft treatises of Holland, Scot, Gifford, and Perkins, English witches are presented as old hags. The Christian idea that spiritual evil manifests itself in physical ugliness dominates witchcraft literature. If a person's soul is full of ugly sin, the body will also be ugly. Witches are usually old hags. Reginald Scot mentions that melancholy old women are mercilessly accused of witchcraft when probably it is their melancholy that makes them believe their own delusions of possessing powers.⁴⁶ Shakespeare contrives the old hag the way she is developed in the theological treatises of the time and in the drama. The witch was essentially an ugly, old hag in the works of Jean Bodin, a French demonologist, and Guazzo, an Italian demonologist, and the English demonologists followed suit. Edmund Spenser illustrates the Renaissance conception of the ugly witch in Book I of The Fäerie Queene (1590). Here he describes Duessa as a "filthy foul old woman."⁴⁷ Spenser goes on to describe her in disgusting detail.

Shakespeare's witches are ugly-looking hags, with "choppy finger," "skinny lips" and "beards" (I.iii.44-46). Banquo's remark about the witch's beard demonstrates their

⁴⁶ Scot, pp. 64-65.

⁴⁷ Edmund Spenser, The Fäerie Queene: Books I and II, eds. Robert Kellogg and Oliver Steele (New York, 1965), I.ii.38

ugliness. Yet Walter Clyde Curry has an opposing view of witches. He maintains there is an atmosphere of "sublimity" surrounding the witches' appearance when they first meet Macbeth and Banquo. Curry comments on the particular royal atmosphere about the witches' appearance:

There is a curious majesty and even a sublimity about the way-ward creatures who meet MacBeth and Banquo upon the heath that is not at all characteristic of ordinary witches. Among them they seem to know the past, the present, and something of the future; they possess the power of vanishing like bubbles into thin air. Holinshed speaks of 'three women in strange and wild apparell, resembling creatures of elder world . . . either the weird sisters, that is (as ye would say) the goddesses of destinie, or else some nymphs or feiries, indued with knowledge of prophesie and by their necromanticall science.'

For some of Shakespeare's critics his Weird Sisters seem to have properties in common, . . . the Nornae of Scandinavian mythology; for others they suggest the classical Parcae or the enchantress, Circe. Possibly Shakespeare's figures are all of these and more. The symbols through which a great dramatic artist concretes his abstract thought are never simple. They are usually immensely complex and therefore the more stimulating, compounded out of many contradictory elements, assimilated and fused by the artistic imagination into a unified whole.⁴⁸

The first sentence of Curry's comment is unfounded. All the attributes which Curry ascribes to "a curious majesty and even sublimity" can be explained away simply as the Renaissance notion of witchcraft. King James in his Daemonologie mentions that witches have the power, through the devil, to vanish like bubbles into thin air, and demons, needless-to-

⁴⁸ Walter Clyde Curry, The Demonic Metaphysics of Macbeth (Chapel Hill, 1933), p. 12.

say, can do this also. As far as knowing the past, the present, and something of the future, Henry Holland lists divination in his A Treatise Against Witchcraft (1590) as one of the seven "special arts of the devil practiced by wicked men and women."⁴⁹ Henry Holland divides, as do most Renaissance demonologists, the powers of the witches according to the classification indicated in Deuteronomy xviii. George Gifford, recognized by Holland as the English expert on witchcraft, defines the witch and the powers of the witch. Gifford's work, A discourse of the subtill practices of Deuills by witches and sorcerers, defines a witch as ". . . one that worketh by the deuill, or by de-uelish or curious art, either hurting or healing, revealing things secret or forthtelling things to come," ⁵⁰ Curry's point is somewhat dubious when he attributes an air of sublimity and majesty to these creatures. There is no sublimity involved. Divination and supernatural knowledge, as Gifford reveals, were powers considered by theologians to be assumed by a witch.

⁴⁹ Henry Holland, Treatise Against Witchcraft (Cambridge, 1590), sig. B₄. In all fairness to Holland it should be pointed out he is distrustful of the evidence presented against witches in the English courts of his time. In this sense he is a skeptic when it comes to belief in witches and he follows the skepticism of Reginald Scot. However, when James I writes his Daemonologie, the King assails the skepticism Scot cautiously suggests, and when James ascends the English throne in 1603, he orders all copies of Scot's discouerie of witchcraft to be burned. Needless to say, royalty ranked over reason.

⁵⁰ Gifford, sig. B₂.

When Macbeth's witches make their proclamation and address Macbeth in "borrowed robes," they pronounce in an oracular fashion to Banquo as well. Their prophecies, like most oracles, are confusing. The Delphic oracles were difficult to understand. The oracles of the Sphinx were given in the form of riddles. The prophecies of Christ were given in parables; therefore, when Macbeth says "Stay, you imperfect speakers, tell me more" (I.iii.70), he is left with what amounts to an imperfect prophecy which sows the seeds of his own destruction. The witches vanish and Banquo remarks: "The earth hath bubbles as the water has, / And these are of them. Wither are they vanished?" (I.iii.79-80). Macbeth replies: "Into the air, and what seems corporal melted / As breath into the wind" (I.iii.81-82). Witches can vanish, whether they be demons themselves, as Curry hints, or whether they be witches. It is a power attributed to them by Scot also.⁵¹ King James, in Daemonologie, examines the physics of the incorporeal nature of the witches and he concludes that witches are capable of vanishing into the air as are demons.⁵² Their power is derived from a compact with the demons. No atmosphere of sublimity is exhibited here; the witches are quite "normal," by Renaissance standards.

When Ross and Angus notify Macbeth that he is now

⁵¹Scot, p. 31.

⁵²James I, pp. 38-41.

Thane of Cawdor, Banquo comments: "What, can the Devil speak true?" (I.iii.108). Banquo sees the manifestation of the weird sisters' prophecy, and he considers that prophecy is in the realm of evil which is the kingdom of the devil. That Banquo should respond in this way is consistent with Elizabethan ideas of witchcraft. Gifford points out: "There are no doubt a thousand waies differing euery one from the rest in one circumstance or another, under which Satan doth hide and cover his craft and deadly poyson."⁵³ Witchcraft is one of the "thousand waies." This line cannot be interpreted, as some critics have taken it, to be conclusive proof that the witches are prophetic demons themselves. For, as Gifford explains, the devil comes in many forms, and anything that was suspect of evil would be suspected of being either an agent of the devil or the devil himself.⁵⁴

Having now created the witch's character by dramatically displaying magical attributes and occult knowledge, Shakespeare weaves the witch's characterization into the theme of Macbeth's ambition. Shakespeare's "theology of evil" is important to Macbeth's "vaulting ambition." Therefore, Macbeth is a fitting subject for the witches to tempt. The Renaissance approach to demonology and witches maintained that the devil roams the world, seeking the ruin

⁵³Gifford, sig. B₃.

⁵⁴Gifford, sig. B₃.

of souls, as the instrument of God's vengeance. It is God who is responsible for the things which the devil is able to do, and it is God who is responsible for the devil himself. The elect people of God, as Gifford suggests, are as susceptible as the non-elect to the temptations of the devil, if not more so, because through God's instrument, the devil, God is testing the elect and their faith in Him.⁵⁵ Job is the primary example. It is not the devil who has the power to test Job. It is only with God's permission that the devil can test the endurance and faith of Job. This Old Testament view of Satan is popular during the English witchmania period. The reason for its popularity may be that the Renaissance demonologists returned to the study of the Hebrew language of the Old Testament. This effort constituted an etymological attempt on their part to arrive at a definition of the witch with support from the Bible.

Scot in the discouerie of witchcraft bases Books VI, VII, IX, X, XI, and XII on a discussion of the exact meaning of Hebrew words related to witchcraft: Chasaph, Ob, Kasam, Onen, Nahas, and others. Scot and other witchcraft writers are concerned about the nature and the permissibility of the devil in the world. They go back to the Hebrew concept of the word satan. Cavendish points out: "The name Satan comes from a Hebrew word meaning 'adversary.' In the older books

⁵⁵ See Gifford, Chapter IV: "The Nature of Devils described with their operations and effectes."

of the Old Testament, written before the Jews were carried away into exile in Babylon in the sixth century B.C., a satan is merely an opponent A satan was not necessarily supernatural."⁵⁶ After the exile the satan "acts as an accuser of men before God."⁵⁷ Cavendish points out the function of the Old Testament satan quite clearly:

In the book of Zechariah, possibly dating from the late sixth century B.C., the prophet sees Joshua the high priest standing before God to be judged. The satan stands at Joshua's right hand 'to resist him' or argue the case against him. There is already a suggestion that the satan is excessively zealous as a prosecutor, because God rebukes him for accusing a righteous man.

In the first two chapters of Job, perhaps written about a hundred years after Zechariah, the satan is still the accuser of men and he now seems definitely malignant. The sons of God present themselves before Jehovah and the satan is with them. In words which were probably intended to have an ominous ring, the satan says he has come 'from going to and fro in the earth and from walking up and down in it'. Jehovah praises Job as a righteous man, but the satan argues that it is easy for Job to be faithful to God, because he is happy and prosperous. As a test, Jehovah allows the satan to kill Job's children and his servants and his cattle, but Job refuses to curse God for these catastrophes, Jehovah lets the satan afflict the unfortunate Job with a plague of sore boils all over his body, but Job still remains faithful.⁵⁸

Cavendish's point is that God is allowing the satan to test Job's faithfulness, and it is God who allows the evils to be inflicted upon Job; it is not within the power of the satan

⁵⁶Cavendish, p. 283.

⁵⁷Cavendish, p. 283.

⁵⁸Cavendish, pp. 283-284.

to do evil unless God wills it:

In this story the satan is determined to destroy Job's credit with God and he is the direct instrument of Job's punishment. But he acts only under God's instructions and he is felt to be performing a useful function. He tries to bring to the surface the wickedness inherent in men

It was from this notion of an implacable angel who accuses men and punishes them that the Devil of medieval and modern Christendom eventually grew. When the Old Testament was first turned into Greek, 'the satan' was translated as diabolos, meaning 'an accuser', with the implication of a false accuser, a slanderer, and this is the word from which our 'Devil' comes.⁵⁹

If Cavendish's view is correct, then there is another possible perspective on Macbeth. Many critics have viewed the play as a struggle between Macbeth's Christian conscience and the overpowering forces of diabolical evil, symbolized dramatically by the three witches.

If the Renaissance view of the devil as God's pettifogging plaintiff is considered, which the writings of Gifford, Holland, and others indicate, then another theme in Macbeth is plausible. Macbeth is the testing ground for one man's loyalty to God and, subsequently, his failure to measure up to the test of that God. Perhaps Macbeth is the Job-theme with a new twist. This would dissolve the problem of Macbeth's witches possibly being demons, for it is with God's permission that the witches do what they will, because they are the devil's agents. In essence, the

⁵⁹Cavendish, p. 284.

witches test Macbeth's ambition, as the Old Testament "satan" tested Job. Macbeth's condition and confusion result from an inability to discern good from evil:

This supernatural soliciting
Cannot be ill, cannot be good. If ill,
Why hath it given me earnest of success,
Commencing in a truth? . . .

(I.iii.130-133)

This view of Macbeth gives the play a different dramatic meaning. If the play is viewed as a struggle of one man's conscience between the forces of good and evil, it is a type of literary Manichaeism, if you will. What is suggested here is that Macbeth is being tested, as Job was tested, but Macbeth fails the test. His vaulting ambition over-leaps itself, and he brings upon himself the cause of his own destruction. This interpretation of the play views God in a different light, and it casts the witches in an altogether different role. God is the author of evil, through his permissibility of evil in the world, and Macbeth's witches are God's Old Testament "satan" testing Macbeth's Christian loyalty.

In this examination of the witches in Macbeth three significant points emerge. The witch comes of age as a dramatic character in Renaissance drama. Secondly, Shakespeare reveals an intimate familiarity with occult lore and demonology to create his "wyrd sisters." The dramatic metaphor of evil created in Macbeth is dynamic, not static, and it represents a distinct theology of evil. Thirdly, this theology of evil, encased in the witches' nebulous

character, permeates the atmosphere of the entire play. Shakespeare integrates this mysterious atmosphere into Macbeth's ambition and destiny, and creates the play's phantasmal mood.

Shakespeare's knowledge of Renaissance witchcraft is surpassed by that of only one other playwright. Ben Jonson displays the most profound knowledge of witches and their activities in English Renaissance drama. Yet Jonson's witchlore seldom revealed itself on the common stage; it focused on the ritualized drama of the Renaissance--the masque. Jonson chose this form because it stylized the formalistic nature of the witch's sabbat and he tried to reproduce the sabbat on the stage in The Masque of Queens (1609). Jonson's occult scholarship shines brilliantly because he cites his witchcraft sources in the masque's footnotes. The notes are actually a "Who's Who in Demonology" of the Renaissance period and they provide modern day scholars with a starting point for possible dramatic sources on demonology and witchcraft. The masque presents ". . . twelve Women, in the habite of Haggs, or Witches, sustayning the persons of Ignorance, Suspicion, Credulity, &c." (Preface, ll. 17-19).

Eleven witches enter the stage and Jonson's stage directions to the actors include the following: "These eleuen Witches begining to daunce (w^Ch is an vsuall ceremony at they^r Convents, or meetings, Where, sometimes, also they are vizarded, and masqu'd) on the sodayne one of them miss'd

they^r Cheife, and interrupted the rest, w^th this Speach" (Preface, ll. 43-47).

Jonson is well versed in English and continental demonology and he cites as his source of the witch dance King James's book, Daemonologie. He alludes to the continental demonologists, e.g., Bodin, Del Rio, Sprenger, and Kramer in his footnotes. Jonson is familiar with the Latin translations as well as the English works. Some of the works he cites were not as yet translated into English.⁶⁰ Jonson's witches function as dramatized moral allegories of suspicion and credulity. The charms which they utter are common to medieval grimoires. There are a great number of grimoires circulating on the Continent and in England at this time. The three best-known grimoires are The Grimorium Verum (1517), The Grand Grimoire (n.d.), and The Grimoire of Pope Honorius (1629). Jonson may well have known these works while they were in circulation, but it cannot be certain that they were available to him in his preparation of The Masqve of Oveenes. The Grimorium Verum, translated from the Hebrew, is based upon The Key of Solomon (n.d.). It deals with conjuration of spirits and could certainly have afforded Jonson some charms and magical secrets. The second part of the grimoire

⁶⁰An example of one of Jonson's sources not available in English is Kramer and Sprenger's Malleus Maleficarum. This infamous work became the "Bible" of witch-hunters. It was not translated into English until Montague Summers' edition in 1928.

was noted for ceremonies of this nature, and it contains the secrets of Albert Magnus, Secretes of the vertues of herbes (1549).⁶¹ Therefore, Jonson had at his disposal both The Grimoirium Verum and the continental demonologists' works, both sources teeming with occult rituals that Jonson depicts. The dame, or head witch, enters "naked arm'd, barefooted, her frock tuck'd, her hayre knotted and folded with vipers; In her hand a Torch made of a dead-Man's arme, lighted; girded with a snake" (ll. 95-100). Jonson imitates the classical witch the same way that Marston does, but Jonson adds greatly to the witchcraft rites. There is an air of sophistication in the sabbat ritual. The coven and the sabbat in The Masqve of Queenes are developed into a formalized ritual, coincidental with the somber nature of the masque as a literary genre. Whereas Marston merely duplicates the despicable nature of Erictho, Jonson in The Masqve adds to the witch tradition, stylizes its dramatic form, and presents an accurate rendition of a witches' sabbat. Jonson deals primarily with the banquet and the homage to the dame, and for reasons of good taste he leaves out the mass sexual orgy, a characteristic aspect of the continental sabbat tradition. Jonson's intricate knowledge of the sabbat may

⁶¹Lewis Spence indicates this belief in his book, Encyclopedia of Occultism, p. 194, now out of print, but still a valuable reference work in occult literature. The information on the medieval grimoires used above is based on Spence's work.

stem from either the Latin Malleus Maleficarum or the French writer, Jean Bodin. Reginald Scot touches upon the sabbat only lightly. For such detailed knowledge it is probable that Jonson studied Bodin, for he does refer to the French demonologist in his footnotes. The Masque of Qveenes is the best piece of occult drama in the English Renaissance.

Following Jonson's Masque of Qveenes, Thomas Middleton's The Witch was written (c. 1612), and it is curious to note that in The Witch Thomas Middleton picks the names of two witches directly out of Reginald Scot's discouerie of witchcraft. All copies of Scot's book were supposedly burned by King James I when he ascended the British throne.⁶² Nevertheless, Middleton's witches, Hoppo and Stadlin, are found in Scot's book. Scot cites the Malleus Maleficarum as his source for these two witches, one who was called "Hoppo, who made Stadlin a maister witch, and could all when they list invisible transferre the third part of their neighbours doong, hay, corne, &c: into their owne ground, make haile, tempests, and flouds, with thunder and lightning; and kill children, cattell, &c:" ⁶³

Middleton's witch scenes provide the means of manipulating the plot in this play. Hecate's charms provide the dramatic impetus which motivates the play's action. There

⁶²Robbins, p. 453.

⁶³Scot, p. 192.

are three specific occult examples of Hecate's dramatic function: the tied-knot charm which Hecate gives to Sebastian to negate the consummation of Antonio's marriage, Hecate's aid in the Duchess' plot to kill her confederate Almachides, and Almachides' effort to seek a charm to procure Amoretta's love. Middleton's witch scenes are dramatically balanced against the court scenes. They are less complicated than the court scenes, which are endlessly entangled in political and love intrigue. The complicated court plots are difficult to follow. They tax the imagination and endurance of even the most patient readers. The witch scenes in Middleton's play deliberately imitate contemporary Elizabethan witches. Middleton derives his witch material from either the witchcraft trials or popular ballads based on English witchcraft trials. No positive accurate link to specific court case can provide a source for this play. Yet there is enough evidence to suggest there were possibly more ballads and records of witchcraft trials than are now extant. Such trials could have provided ample dramatic sources for Middleton.⁶⁴

Hecate provides stage spectacle and a great amount of occult atmosphere. For instance, in the preparation of the potion which Hecate gives to Almachides, her incantation resembles the mumble-jumble the witches in Macbeth murmur

⁶⁴See Notestein, pp. 243-244.

over their cauldron:

. . . take this vn-baptized-Brat:
 Boile it well: preserve the ffat,
 you know 'tis pretious to transfer
 our 'noynted fflesh into the Aire,
 in Moone-light nights, or Steeple-Topps,
 Mountaines, and Pine-trees, that like pricks, or
 Stopps,
 seeme to our height: High Towres, and Roofes of
 Princes
 like wrinckles in the Earth:⁶⁵

Middleton dramatically develops the witch-doctrine of transvection, the ability of a witch to transport herself from one place to another. This is possible because of an ointment. The witches boil down an unbaptized baby's fat, and they smear it on their bodies. This ointment enables them to fly from one place to another.⁶⁶ This doctrine of transvection matures fully among the continental demonologists and is incorporated into English demonology.⁶⁷ It also circulates widely in England at this time. Middleton's occult doctrine of transvection, repulsive as it may be, reveals his accurate knowledge of witch-lore.

The actual conjuration scene, the mixing of the love potion, and the marriage spell-casting cannot be exactly traced, but it is possible that any one of the grimoires

⁶⁵Thomas Middleton, The Witch, eds. W. W. Greg and F. P. Wilson, Malone Society Reprints (London, 1950), I.ii.201-208. All citations from Middleton's The Witch are taken from this edition.

⁶⁶Robbins, p. 365.

⁶⁷Robbins, pp. 511-514; and Scot, p. 57.

could have provided the magic ceremonies. The most probable sources of these are The Grand Grimoire and The Key of Solomon. Conjunction is an elevated form of magic that Hecate practices. As a piece of ensemble movement and stage business, it is fairly successful spectacle. The pace of the witch scenes is hypnotic. The scenes invoke a ritualistic mood through their rhythmic effect. This rhythm coordinates language with the witches' dances and movements which would otherwise be chaotic. A choreographic effect is achieved through the incantations and the dancing. When compared to the court scenes, the witch scenes function better dramatically. The reason for this may be less plot intrigue. The language is smoother and not as syntactically complex as the complicated language of the court scenes.

It would seem that Middleton's The Witch was a successful play because it is followed by a series of witch plays whose characterization pays little attention to the classical witch. They concentrate upon the contemporary witch. This is particularly true of Dekker, Rowley, and Ford's The Witch of Edmonton (1622). Dekker admits his dependence upon contemporary witch events:

The Town of Edmonton hath lent the Stage
A Devil and a Witch, both in an age.
To make comparisons it were uncivil,
Between so even a pair, a Witch and Devil.
But as the year doth with his plenty bring
As well a latter as a former Spring;
So has this Witch enjoy'd the first, and reason

Presumes she may partake the other
season:⁶⁸

The plot of this play is as simple as Dekker states it: "Forc'd Marriage, Murder; Murder, Blood requires: Reproach, Revenge; Revenge, Hells help desires" (Argument). Margaret Sawyer is an old witch who is society's scapegoat, and Dekker develops this theme. The play is the stock stereotype portrayal of an English witch, old, ugly, and evil. The one saving touch to this play is the sympathetic character of Margaret herself. She is harassed by Old-Banks, a well-to-do farmer. He even physically beats her. Margaret wants revenge for this injustice and the Devil, with one ear always cocked to human folly, hears her plea, and he offers her his aid. Mother Sawyer refuses to accept the offer, but the Devil threatens to tear her flesh if she does not. The Devil's threat of physical harm is also found in Marlowe's The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus, and there is a suggestion of it in Barnabe Barnes's The Devils Charter. The old woman agrees to accept the devil's help because she fears the Devil will harm her.

The source of plot material for this play may be the actual records of English witchcraft trials, or possibly one specific source could be Henry Goodcole's The Wonderful

⁶⁸Thomas Dekker, William Rowley, and John Ford, The Witch of Edmonton, The Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker, ed. Fredson Bowers, 4 vols. (Cambridge, 1966), III, Prologue, ll. 1-8. All citations from Dekker's plays are taken from this edition.

Discoverie of Elizabeth Sawyer (1621).⁶⁹ The abuse toward Mother Sawyer in the play parallels the social abuses heaped upon English witches who were brought to trial in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Yet it is unfair to say that Dekker develops Mother Sawyer as a mere societal scapegoat. She is pictured physically as a contemporary old, ugly, English witch, but her dramatic motives are the same as Euripides' Medea--a woman scorned. Margaret is a social pariah, and she wants revenge for being scorned. Medea is also scorned by society because she defied her father in helping her unfaithful Jason. Jason leaves Medea; the Grecian princess is scorned and wants revenge. The situation is similar in motivation only and it would be absurd to compare the two witches as equal. The interesting fact is that this odd mixture of contemporary witch portraiture and classical witch motivation produces a sympathetic character. There is no justice in Mother Sawyer's persecution, and if she is driven to retaliation against the society who abuses her, the play does not say much for that society. Dekker appears to be writing social drama here.

A dog appears in the play, and he is the first example of a witch's familiar developed into a minor character. It was common in England for the witch's

⁶⁹See Notestein, p. 359.

familiar to assume the form of a domestic pet.⁷⁰ An amusing scene occurs between the dog-devil and Cuddy-Banks (V.i. 86ff). The dog-devil trifles with Cuddy, a clown-type, attempting to trick Cuddy into a league with the Fiend. The clown is wise enough to avoid such a damned commitment and he refuses the offer. This comic situation directly parallels Mother Sawyer's dramatic predicament. With certain reservations, Cuddy is a foil to Mother Sawyer, for it is by the wisdom of this fool that the audience sees the foolishness of Margaret Sawyer. Although Dekker, Rowley, and Ford garnered the play's material from either Henry Goodcole's pamphlet or from the actual trial records of Margaret Sawyer's trial, the black dog is taken from another source. The black dog, as a familiar, is found in Reginald Scot's discouerie of witchcraft and Scot indicates that his source is Bodin. Scot claims that Jean Bodin is "sore offended with Cornelius Agrippa, . . . bicause . . . Agrippa recanted that which Bodin mainteineth, who thinketh he could worke wonders by magicke, and speciallie by his blacke dog."⁷¹ Dekker's dog is handled as a dramatic symbol of good defeating evil because when Mother Sawyer is finally

⁷⁰Tindall points out this unique British witch trait in her work cited earlier (Tindall, p. 94). Robbins concurs with her (Robbins, pp. 190-191). Barbara Allen Woods, The Devil in Dog Form (Berkeley, 1952), has composed a partial type-index of Devil as dog legends. It is a most informative work.

⁷¹Scot, p. 60.

condemned to death the dog changes from black to white with the obvious implication of the triumph of good over evil.

The contemporary English witch plays; Middleton's The Witch and Dekker's The Witch of Edmonton, occurred at a time when witch mania in English society was increasing. James's Daemonologie was published a second time in 1603, shortly after he ascended the throne. Other writers followed suit: Cooper, Roberts, Perkins, and Dalton, and the witchcraft treatises continued even into Charles's reign.⁷² The drama also continued to portray the contemporary witch on the stage. Thomas Heywood and Richard Brome's The Late Lancashire Witches (1634) projected another English witch affair on the stage. The play is a composite of the 1613 Lancashire witch persecution and the later Pendle Forest occurrence. Heywood and Brome extracted certain details from both historical episodes and blended them into the play. The play is centered upon the testimony of the boy-accuser in the 1634 Lancashire trial.⁷³ Edmund Robinson, an eleven year old boy, testified at the trial of the Lancashire witches. It was chiefly on his testimony that the witches were tried. The play's main plot is not part of the 1634 episode. It is taken from the 1613 Lancashire event which

⁷²Robbins, p. 167.

⁷³Robbins, pp. 95 and 381.

is the first recorded history of an English sabbat.⁷⁴ The bewitchment of Old Seeley's family may be taken from the Lancashire affair of 1613, perpetuated by a chap book.⁷⁵

The child-accuser character in Heywood's drama has a prominent history in the witchcraft trials. For instance, Jannet Device, age nine, testified at the Lancashire trial of 1613. In 1634 Edmund Robinson, according to Reverend John Webster, was only eleven years old at the time of his testimony. The Warboys witches were tried on the testimony of five young girls and they sent an old couple to death. There are other examples of the child-accuser successfully testifying against women in witchcraft trials. The most prominent is the Burton boy, Thomas Darling, in 1596.⁷⁶ Heywood's young child-accuser is captured by Goody Dickenson, a witch, during a hunt, and he is held prisoner by the witches. Goody turns him into a horse and gallops off the stage with him. Dekker adapts a tragic abuse of social justice--the child-accuser--to the Renaissance stage, with apparent comical success.

⁷⁴Robbins, p. 297.

⁷⁵Thomas Potts, The Wonderfull Discoverie of the Witches of Lancashire and London of 1612 (London, 1613). It is only fair to point out that Notestein disagrees with this view. See Notestein, p. 159.

⁷⁶See Robbins, pp. 94-96. Robbins' treatment of the child-accuser's court history is the source for this explanation, although I have examined the Robinson testimony as described by John Webster, The Displaying of Supposed Witchcraft (London, 1677).

The discovery plot of *Lady Generous's* severed hand is an ingenious dramatic surprise. The severed-hand device comes from folk tales related to the Germanic werewolf legends. It is part of the occult tradition of lycanthropy. Lycanthropy was known in Heywood's time. Robbins cites a poem of Samuel Rowlands, "Knaves of Hearts," London (1612):

A German called Peter Stump, by charm
Of an enchanted girdle, did much harm.
transferred himself into a wolfesh shape
And in the woods did many years escape
till the hangmen met him
And from a wolf from within a halter set him.⁷⁷

The man was called Peter Stump because of the severed right hand which gave him away, and it remarkably parallels the situation in Heywood's play.

Heywood focuses the plot around Master Generous, a respected man in the community, and his wife, Lady Generous. Unfortunately, Heywood does not develop the character potential of Mrs. Generous. Instead he dwells on the sensational activities of the witches themselves, such as the ligature of Parnell and Lawrence, and he also milks dry the sensational aspects of the *Malking Towers sabbat*. The first recorded sabbat at an English witchcraft trial took place at the Lancashire witch affair in 1613.⁷⁸ He exploits the sabbat sensationalism of the 1613 affair and borrows the characters of the 1634 affair, blending them into the drama.

⁷⁷Robbins, p. 490.

⁷⁸Robbins, p. 297.

Heywood's theatrical result is a mediocre piece of drama which nonetheless possesses a certain amount of tragic potential in the character of Mrs. Generous. Heywood succeeds in producing the equivalent of a Hollywood pot-boiler based on the exploitation of English witch-hunting mania. He wrote the play, and it was staged in London at the time the Lancashire cases of 1634 were being tried by the Privy Council.⁷⁹ Heywood's play mirrored the emotion of the time. It shared the responsibility of creating the intolerable climate which contributed to the death of the two accused witches. They died in the prison house, since the crown hesitated to release them because of aroused public opinion. Certainly Heywood's play not only exploited public opinion, but it also helped to create such opinion.

In 1638, Heywood published another play when English witch trials were at their lowest rate of witch executions.⁸⁰ The Wise Woman of Hogsden was not as popular a play as The Late Lancashire Witches. The plot has all the characteristics of a Plautine comedy. It is full of love, intrigue, and disguised identity. The Wise Woman of Hogsden has nothing in common with either the classical or the Elizabethan black witch. The Wise Woman's role is more in the tradition of the panderer-character Pandare in Chaucer's Troilus and

⁷⁹Notestein, pp. 158-159.

⁸⁰Robbins, p. 163.

Criseyde. She might even be compared to Friar Comolet in Bussy D'Ambois. The Wise Woman does not manipulate the love-plot or intrigue through magic, but through her well-planned strategies. Her character is more that of the English midwife or nurse-mother who practices folk medicine than that of a witch. She outwardly denies one of the most important criteria of witchcraft as Christianity saw it and as Elizabethans believed it. She claims no league with the devil. She uses no magical instruments, no conjurations or potions. The Wise Woman manipulates the intrigue of Heywood's play through her conniving and machinations, not magic. Her whispering solutions to love problems are the only "magic" in the play. This play does not fulfill the requirements of the witch play.

The stage success of the Renaissance witch depended upon her meeting certain dramatic requirements. These requirements differed from the characteristics displayed by the Renaissance sorcerer, although both were occult stage characters. A comparison of these characteristics reveals a change in the Renaissance attitude toward magic. The sophisticated, although sometimes dangerous, theurgical magic of the sorcerer was replaced by a more vulgar magic practiced by a plebeian crone. The early emphasis upon the Greco-Roman witch in Renaissance drama quickly gave way to the realistic portrayal of English contemporary witches, although strains of the Greco-Roman witch can be seen in

her character, actions, and motivation. The witch was successful because the drama exploited the popularity of the non-dramatic witchcraft treatises of the Renaissance. This exploitation proved profitable just as the treatises themselves were profitable, as the numerous printings and reprintings of them indicate. Also, when James I assumed the throne, there was an obvious attempt to court the king's favor by agreeing with his attitudes on witches and demonology, as written in his Daemonologie. James even had his work republished when he became king in 1603.

There are definite differences between the sorcerer and the witch as they appeared in Renaissance drama. The sorcerer is usually a male, and he is portrayed without any emphasis on his physical beauty. The witch is usually female, and there is a strong emphasis upon her ugliness as a reflection of her sinful nature. The sorcerer is an educated person, in some cases erudite. The witch is uneducated and her mumble-jumble magic is simple. The sorcerer isolates himself from the rest of society to pursue forbidden knowledge which he eventually must wrestle with to bring under his control. The witch is either a social creature, through the sabbat meetings, or she is a social pariah, as Mother Sawyer is. Either way, the witch does not withdraw from society to pursue knowledge for knowledge's sake alone. Her motivation is usually one of a personal nature, such as revenge, ligature, veneficia, or, in the case of Macbeth's three weird sisters, they act as the agents

of God's Old Testament satan. The sorcerer's motivation is usually of an intellectual nature, and he practices the more sophisticated aspects of the occult arts such as astrology, which requires a certain amount of mathematical and astronomical knowledge. The sorcerer is not bound to, nor is he accused of, worshipping the Devil. The sorcerer may be committed to the Devil, but this commitment is of a highly legal nature as well as religious. The satanic compact the sorcerer is involved in is a lend-lease act, a legal contract, in which occult powers are lent or leased to the sorcerer for a certain period of time with the price of the contract being the magician's soul. The "Christian" witch is a devil worshipper, and she worships him, not the Christian God. She even suckle's the devil in imp form from a hidden witch's teat.⁸¹ The relationship is physical as well as spiritual. The witch in the later Renaissance plays is based upon actual trial cases of infamous English witches. The sorcerer's dramatic character is based upon semi-mythical stereotypes found either in previous literature, e.g., Merlin, Faustus, or Pope Alexander VI; or these stage magicians were modeled after actual English sorcerers, e.g., John Dee, John Lamb, or Edward Kelley.

The chief dramatic difference lies in the type of magic the witch and sorcerer practiced. The sorcerer was

⁸¹Robbins, p. 193.

involved with highly ritualized magic: pentacles, conjurations, magic circles, astrology, and theurgy. The Renaissance magus might be compared to the Biblical Moses and his powers. The sorcerer is a book-worm, and he learns his sophisticated magic from conjuring books, and many a volume of forgotten magical lore. The Cabala and the Hermetic writings, the medieval grimoires, and other sources provided the literary background for his sources of magic. The witch's magic is mundane and vulgar. Her potions are disgusting with tongues of bats, unbaptized babies, snake eyes, and other various assorted sundries, blended into her concoctions. But most important of all, the Renaissance witch, more so than the sorcerer, is under the scourge of the Bible that sanctioned the execution of witches. Her nasty habit of veneficium alone made her a despicable person, and she was feared as a snake in the night. This Biblical condemnation of the witch--her original Hebrew name was Chasaph translated into Latin Veneficum--was a result of her reputation with poisons.⁸² The sorcerer practiced what was called by the Hebrews, Hartumim, or natural magic, the perfection of natural philosophy.⁸³ This Renaissance distinction is the main difference between the dramatic characterization of these two occult personalities, and it is obvious from the plays that this distinction was

⁸²See Scot, pp. 109-116.

⁸³See Scot, pp. 243-265.

adhered to.

The sorcerer and the witch vanish from the Renaissance stage "Into the air, and what seemed corporal melted / As breath into the wind" (Macbeth I.iii.81-82). Why? "Whither are they vanished?" (I.iii.80). Banquo's question is an appropriate critical problem to pose. Two successful occult personalities of the English stage vanish from Renaissance drama, and their popularity, so short lived, never ascends to a theatrical zenith again. The answer may lie in the occult zeitgeist mentioned at the beginning of the chapter. This occult spirit of the Renaissance died at the same time the witch and sorcerer cease to be popular dramatic characters. The life-style of post Renaissance England no longer made room for the "real-life" sorcerers such as John Dee, Edward Kelley, or John Weir. They were dead, and the Renaissance occult zeitgeist waned away. The witch was no longer an object of societal hatred, with the exception of a few isolated cases. She was transported across the Atlantic in the fears of the Puritans who settled Massachussets, and once again, for a brief period, the witch cast her spells in the literary works of Nathaniel Hawthorne. Renaissance drama mirrored the realities in English society. The sorcerer and the witch were but mere images reflected in Renaissance drama, and when the two occult figures disappeared from English society their dramatic images faded from the stage as well.

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ABSTRACT

This study deals with the occult tradition in English Renaissance drama. The approach to the study is through examination of selected plays and treatises which contain occult references. Two specific occult areas and two Renaissance occult stage characters are dealt with: astrology and physiognomy; and the sorcerer and the witch. Plays from Marlowe, Shakespeare, Greene, Peele, Jonson, Barnes, and other playwrights are analyzed in terms of imagery, characterization, and dramatic development. Concentration is on occult literary works which might possibly have influenced Renaissance drama.

Examination of the milieu of selected plays reveals that contemporary demonological and witchcraft treatises influenced the characterization of the witch and that occult personages, e.g., John Dee, Edward Kelley, and others, possibly provided models from the Renaissance sorcerer.

Acceptance of Renaissance belief in the occult is important in the present dissertation because the dissertation operates on the supposition that the occult tradition was a part of the dramatists' dramatic equipment. In the Renaissance view, star-crossed lovers were actually under the influence of astrological aspects, and conjurations could produce demons just as prayers could work miracles. A

man's humped back did determine his inner qualities as a person. The "like produces like" correspondence, which is a basic occult principle, is a functionally effective basis on which to build drama: one set of circumstances, e.g., physical characteristics, planets conjuncting, conjurations, etc., can cause another set of circumstances to occur. The occult tradition provided a dramatic equation for the Renaissance dramatist and he consciously integrated it into his drama.