THE CHARACTER OF TAMBURLAINE

by

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Christopher Marlowe created a character when he made Tamburlaine, and people to this day have been trying to characterize this creation. Everyone, to one degree or another, agrees that there is a strange dichotomy of character between Parts I and II. This thesis attempts to show the character of Tamburlaine in all of its contradictions, and to present a theory as to why Christopher Marlowe presented Tamburlaine in Part II as he did. It is the belief of this writer that the Tamburlaine of Part I was an affront to the moral sensibilities of the Elizabethan audience and that Part II was written to show that Tamburlaine was human and subject to God's laws.

Chapter I presents the "romantic" interpretations of the critics who see Tamburlaine as embodying all the aspirations of the Elizabethans. They see Tamburlaine as a sort of Herculean hero whose evils cannot be judged by ordinary mortal standards. Other "romantic" critics see Tamburlaine as a scourge of God who can be forgiven his cruelties because of his role as God's appointed. The weaknesses of these interpretations lie in their inability to find meaning for Part II. For, by no stretch of the imagination, can Tamburlaine be seen favorably in Part II.

Chapter II shows the unfavorable interpretations of Tamburlaine. Included in this chapter are those interpretations that see Tamburlaine as a vehicle for expressing Marlowe's supposedly atheistic views. These critics see Tamburlaine as a Machiavellian individual. It is true that Tamburlaine was Machiavellian in some respects, but in other ways he was the antithesis of Machiavellianism. Both these chapters point out that there is a change of character between the two parts which in some way

must be accounted for. The human Tamburlaine in Part II is not the individual who held the fates bound in his hands in Part I.

Part II attempts to show that Marlowe was forced to destroy his creation by writing Part II in order to comply with the demand of the audience. The Elizabethan audience was not content to allow an atheistic tyrant to remain victorious. Thus, they demanded a sequel to show him being conquered by God. To show this the Elizabethan world picture is presented, their ideas on sin, and their medieval heritage which affected their philosophy. Seeing Tamburlaine as a play consisting of ten acts, it can easily be termed a tragedy. It is a tragedy that shows how overwhelming earthly ambition leads to destruction. In accepting this thesis that Marlowe was forced to write Part II, the various interpretations can be reconciled to a great extent, and we can appreciate the task that Marlowe faced in being forced to draw upon his imagination for another five acts.

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THE CHARACTER OF TAMBURLAINE

Introduction

Tamburlaine was the play that, on a single day, made an unknown university wit the foremost dramatist of his day. Christopher Marlowe wrote Tamburlaine, Part I, and adhered closely to the historical accounts of the original Scythian leader. Popular demand forced the author to write Part II; but having exhausted his historical sources previously, he was forced to draw upon his own imagination to complete another five acts. Marlowe brought into existence a complex character when he made Tamburlaine, and people to this day have been trying to characterize this creation.

In order to understand the character of Tamburlaine one must examine the various interpretations, find the area of conflict, and attempt to resolve it. This is not an easy task, for the character of Tamburlaine is indeed many faceted. Some interpretations consider Parts I and II as separate entities that present two distinct Tamburlaines. Their evidence is based primarily upon the fact that the two parts were not written at the same time. Other critics do not consider Part II worthy of mention. Still others see a single Tamburlaine with a strange dichotomy of character--one that is good in Part I and bad in Part II.

One critic exhibits Tamburlaine as an admirable character by pointing out the instances in which Marlowe makes his hero both physically and morally more admirable than he appears in the sources. This quality leads to the interpretation of the protagonist as the Herculean hero.

Other interpretations picture Tamburlaine as an evil man with Machiavellian characteristics and still others interpret him as the scourge of God.

The spectacular events of Marlowe's life have figured in the interpretations of his play. Some critics have interpreted Tamburlaine as reflecting Marlowe's own views, especially his supposed atheism. These critics support their interpretations by pointing out either Tamburlaine's cruelty and blasphemy or Marlowe's endeavor to exonerate Tamburlaine of cruelty by presenting him as the scourge of God. The temptation to inject Marlowe into his works comes from the few known events of his life. Scholars do not know enough about Shakespeare's life to identify him with his plays; they know enough about Marlowe's life to <u>think</u> they can make this identification.

For examination, these many conflicting interpretations can be loosely classified as either favorable or unfavorable attitudes toward Tamburlaine. An investigation of these various interpretations will reveal, I believe, that the conflicts center on the character change of Tamburlaine between the two parts. The critics who consider both parts worthy of analysis agree that there is a change of character between the two parts, yet they do not ask <u>why</u> Marlowe made the Tamburlaine of Part II a coarser, more brutal, and more vulnerable protagonist. Most of these interpretations surmise that Part II displays a weakening of Marlowe's creative ability.

The many conflicting interpretations of the character of Tamburlaine can be resolved to a great extent by viewing the play from the perspective of the Elizabethan audience. To do this, the moral philosophy

of the Elizabethan age must be explored and their view of world order must be examined. Looking at Part I as an Elizabethan would, we can understand the demand and necessity for Part II. In addition, we can appreciate the task Marlowe faced in showing a Tamburlaine in Part II that adhered to the moral sensibilities of his audience.

CHAPTER I - FAVORABLE INTERPRETATIONS OF TAMBURLAINE

The character of Tamburlaine is viewed favorably by many critics. These interpretations can be termed "romantic," for they picture the protagonist as representative of the "spirit" of the Renaissance. They see the rise of Tamburlaine as heroic, embodying all the aspirations of the Elizabethans.

Tamburlaine is a hero in the eyes of Miss Leslie Spence.[1] She sees Tamburlaine in a romantic role, but only in Part I, for no mention is made of Part II. She supports her interpretation by saying that Marlowe adopts only those sources which amplify Tamburlaine's noble virtue. It is true that the sources agree that Tamburlaine was a great conqueror, but Marlowe, according to Miss Spence, makes his hero's career even more strange and remarkable than do the moralized historical accounts by Mexia and Perondinus.[2] Though both accounts marvel at the Scythian, the quality of their admiration differs. Perondinus records Tamburlaine as an instrument of suffering and devastation; Mexia stresses Tamburlaine's ability, the glory of his career, his courtesy, and the love and awe of his followers. Moreover, Mexia places Tamburlaine above the moral law because of his divine mission as the scourge of God.

[1] "Tamburlaine and Marlowe," PMLA, XLII (September, 1927), p. 604.

[2] Two of Marlowe's sources are Mexia's Sylva de Varia Lecion (Seville, 1543), translated into English by Fortesque in The Foreste (London, 1571) Part II, Chap. 14; and Perondinus' Vita Magni Tamburlaine (Florence, 1551), Spence, p. 604.

Marlowe adapts "Mexia's heroic view of Tamburlaine as a man magnificently endowed with abilities and ambitions, a man whose very cruelties are ordered by heaven."[3] Although Marlowe depicts Perondinus' horrible details of Tamburlaine's cruelties--the humiliation of Bajazeth and the slaughter of the Virgins of Damascus--he endeavors to "exonerate his hero."[4] Miss Spence interprets Bajazeth as the proud and cruel emperor who is punished by the scourge of God:

> And let the majesty of Heaven behold
> This scourge and terror tread on emperors.
> (Part I, IV, 2, 31-32)[5]

To prove that not Tamburlaine but the stubborn governor of Damascus is responsible for the execution of the Virgins, Miss Spence quotes these lines:

> our ruthless governor
> Hath thus refused the mercy of thy hand.
> (Part I, V, 2, 29-30)

The impression given by this critic is that Tamburlaine offered mercy; because it was refused, he was justified in his slaughter of the virgins. This endeavor to exonerate Tamburlaine, which is not recorded in the historical sources, is evidence to Miss Spence that Marlowe intended to elevate his hero.

Furthermore, Miss Spence points out that Tamburlaine's cruelties are just punishments which are ordered by God. She says that by ennobling the faults of the historical Tamburlaine, Marlowe made his hero more

[3]Spence, p. 612.

[4]Ibid.

[5]All references to Tamburlaine are to the edition by Una Ellis-Fermor (New York, 1930).

admirable. This admirable quality, according to Miss Spence, is more deeply intensified when Marlowe adds the gentler qualities of pity and love to the original passions of cruelty, wrath and military ambition. "Tamburlaine of the play, as he stands beside Tamburlaine of the historical sources, tells us only one thing about Marlowe's taste in heroes--he wanted his hero admirable."[6]

The weakness of the above interpretation is obvious. Miss Spence refers only to those extra-historical facts that ennoble Tamburlaine. No mention is made to the inventions of Marlowe that stress Tamburlaine's cruelty. One of the most cruel and most dramatic acts of Tamburlaine was to use the head of the captive Bajazeth as a footstool. The historical sources reveal that Bajazeth was caged by Tamburlaine, but no mention is made of the footstool incident. Thus, one must assume that Marlowe emphasized the character of Tamburlaine, not to ennoble him, but to make him more dramatic. In addition, in interpreting Tamburlaine as an admirable hero, it is impossible for the critic to find a meaning for Part II, because, not by any stretch of the imagination, can Tamburlaine be seen as admirable in Part II.

Miss Ellis-Fermor is another who pictures Tamburlaine as an admirable hero and as "the everlasting embodiment of the unslaked aspiration of youth."[7] In the introduction of her edition, Tamburlaine in Part I embodies:

> a poet's conception of the life of
> action, a glorious dream of quickened

[6]Spence, p. 621.

[7]Miss Ellis-Fermor restricts this favorable interpretation to Part I in her introduction in cited edition.

> emotions, of exhilaration and stimulus
> that should 'strip the mind of the leth-
> argy of custom', tear the veils from
> its eyes and lay bare before it in all-
> satisfying glory the arcana where the
> secret of life swells, a secret ever
> elusive yet ever troubling men's desire.
> (p. 53)

She believes that the great speeches made by Tamburlaine in the earlier part of the play all promise the discovery and revelation of some profound truth of man's spirit, his aspiration, the capturing of an ideal. This revelation comes and shows the true theme of the play when Tamburlaine says:

> Our souls whose faculties can comprehend
> The wondrous architecture of the world
> And measure every wandring planet's course
> Still climbing after knowledge infinite...
> (Part I, II, 7, 21-24)

This critic sees these four lines of Tamburlaine, Part I, as the very essence or spirit of the Renaissance, and an emotional illumination of the philosophy of the Elizabethans.

In her discussion of Part II, Miss Ellis-Fermor, unable to sustain her romantic interpretation of the character of Tamburlaine, conjectures that the sympathies of Marlowe are no longer strongly enough engaged to stimulate his imagination to constructive plotting and he is forced to eke out his material from irrelevant episodes. In this latter part, according to Miss Ellis-Fermor, Marlowe is weary of writing and "forcing his genius."[8]

In seeking to show that Tamburlaine reflects the ideals of the Renaissance, Miss Ellis-Fermor has lifted the above four lines out of

[8]Ellis-Fermor, p. 50.

context, thus giving them an entirely different meaning when isolated from the whole speech of Tamburlaine. The five lines that immediately follow the above quotation reveal Tamburlaine's true character:

> And always moving as the restless spheres,
> Wills us to wear ourselves and never rest,
> Until we reach the ripest fruit of all,
> That perfect bliss and sole felicity,
> The sweet fruition of an earthly crown.
> (Part I, II, 7, 25-29)

Another weakness is displayed in this criticism, for Tamburlaine is seen by Miss Ellis-Fermor as a modern lady looking back on him, and to her his upward striving was noble. It will be illustrated in Chapter III that to the Elizabethans earthly ambition was a sin.

The romantic view is also taken by Professor Tucker Brooke. He treats Tamburlaine, Part I, as the only Tamburlaine produced by Marlowe. In his Essays on Shakespeare and other Elizabethans, he obviously does not consider Part II worthy of mention. In addition, he does not consider the attitude of the author important, for he asks, in a romantic fashion: "Does Tamburlaine live ill or well?...Who can possibly care for an answer? As well ask whether a mountain ought to tower in sterile grandeur above the pleasant useful meadows, or whether the ocean has a right to roar."[9]

Professor Brooke, continuing in the romantic vein, states that Marlowe was the first to teach the "drama what Spenser was teaching verse fiction--the splendor of romance."[10] He tells us that Marlowe, in Tamburlaine, Part I, is showing that life is the thing, not how, or

[9](New Haven, 1948), p. 183.

[10]Ibid.

where, or why one lives. Viewing Part I as a romantic drama, Professor Brooke sees tragedy in it; he says the "tragedy (Part I) closes on the Greek note: pity and terror, followed by serenity and beauty infinite. What better prologue than a play like this to an age of glorious tragedy?"[11] This romantic interpretation sees the end of the play at the conclusion of Part I. Professor Brooke, along with the other romantic critics mentioned, unable to classify Part II, concludes that the latter part degenerates into minor, less spectacular episodes.

Tamburlaine as the Herculean Hero

Tamburlaine is also interpreted as the Herculean Hero, "a warrior of great stature who is guilty of striking departures from the morality of the society in which he lives."[12] Several interpretations point out that there are striking resemblances between Tamburlaine and the superhuman characteristics of the Herculean Hero.[13] Eugene Waith makes a thorough analysis of Tamburlaine as the Herculean Hero, and attempts to explain what attitude is expressed toward him, toward the values he represents, and toward society.

Unlike the romantic critics, Mr. Waith sees a discernable pattern of grandeur in both parts of the play. He does admit, however, that it is possible that Marlowe's attitude changed toward the protagonist in the two parts. He says that Marlowe's "concept of heroic character is

[11]Brooke, p. 190.

[12]Eugene Waith, The Herculean Hero (New York, 1962), p. 11.

[13]The following critics stress Seneca's influence: Frederick S. Boas, Christopher Marlowe (London, 1960), p. 78 and Roy W. Battenhouse, Marlowe's Tamburlaine (Nashville, 1941), pp. 196 ff.

sufficiently complex to include what appear to be contradictory elements and that his attitude, going beyond simple approval or disapproval, remains constant."[14]

Some qualities of Tamburlaine certainly give the impression of the Herculean Hero created by Seneca, but Mr. Waith goes beyond this:

> The very structure of the play conveys this impression, for the successions of scenes--some of them might almost be called tableaux--stretching over great expanses of time and space, present the man in terms of the places he makes his and the time which at the last he fails to conquer. It is no accident that we always remember the effect of Marlowe's resounding geography, for earthly kingdoms are the emblems of Tamburlaine's aspirations. At the end of his life, he calls for a map, on which he traces with infinite nostalgia his entire career and points to all the remaining riches which death will keep him from.
> (Waith, p. 63)

Mr. Waith ends the above statement with the following quotation:

> And shall I die, and this unconquered?
> (Part II, V, 3, 150)

The successive episodes, according to Mr. Waith, contribute to the dominant theme in the play--the definition of a hero. The first view of Tamburlaine reveals him as an early example of the "noble Savage." Zenocrate even mistakes Tamburlaine for a simple shepherd:

> Ah shepherd, pity my distressed plight!
> (Part I, I, 2, 7)

The audience watches Tamburlaine in the succeeding episodes reveal his ability as a great warrior and orator. His extravagant boasts, like those of Hercules, are ultimately fulfilled to the amazement of the world.

[14]Waith, p. 63.

The image of the Herculean Hero, as Mr. Waith points out, is made evident when Theridamas comments on Tamburlaine's appearance:

> Tamburlaine! A Scythian shepherd so embellished
> With nature's pride and richest furniture!
> His looks do menace heaven and dare the gods,
> His fiery eyes are fixed upon the earth,
> As if he now devis'd some stratagem,
> Or meant to pierce Avernas' darksome vaults
> To pull the triple headed dog from hell.
> (Part I, I, 2, 154-160)

The last line of this passage also suggests the Herculean conquest of hell. The transformation of the Scythian shepherd into a noble warrior is also evident in the passage. The Herculean image is more deeply intensified in Menaphon's description of Tamburlaine:

> Of stature tall, and straightly fashioned,
> Like his desire, lift upwards and divine,
> So large of limbs, his joints so strongly knit,
> Such breadth of shoulders as might mainly bear
> Old Atlas' burthen,...
> Pale of complexion, wrought in him with passion,
> Thristing with sovereignty and love of arms,
> His lofty brows...
> Wrapped in curls, as fierce Achilles' was...
> His arms and finger long and sinewy,
> Betokening valour and excess strength:
> In every part proportioned like the man
> Should make the world subdue to Tamburlaine.
> (Part I, II, 1, 7-30)

In this passage Tamburlaine's body is made symbolic of his Herculean character.

Tamburlaine is not only a man of wrath, as the Herculean hero characteristically is, he is also cruel. Waith states that his cruelty is intentionally emphasized in his treatment of Bajazeth. Tamburlaine's cruelty is "a cosmic extension of the cruelty Achilles shows to Hector or Hercules to the innocent Lichas...It is an important part of the picture, a manifestation of Tamburlaine's 'ireful Virtue,' to use Tasso's

phrase, and one of the chief occasions for wonder. One may disapprove, and yet, in that special sense, admire."[15]

In discussing the character of Tamburlaine in Part II, Mr. Waith says, not too convincingly, that the portrait is not changed; its lines are more deeply incised. This critic excuses Tamburlaine from his deeds of cruelty by saying that Tamburlaine's very nature is cruel, and the hero obliges us "to accept cruelty, along with valour, pride, and ambition as part of the spirit which makes this man great."[16]

Mr. Waith believes that Tamburlaine's faults are an integral part of a heroic nature, half divine and half human. He suggests that this type of nature was familiar to, and admired by, the Elizabethan audience, and unlikely to offend anyone but "precise" churchmen or the poet's enemies. Because of the epic grandeur of the style, its frequent use of exotic names, its hyperboles, its largeness of spirit so often ascribed to the great hero, the play could only arouse admiration from its audience.

The above interpretation would be satisfactory had the critic only analyzed Part I. In an effort to prove the human characteristics displayed by Tamburlaine in Part II as common to Hercules, Mr. Waith has to go beyond Seneca and quote sources from Sophocles, Euripides, and others. The obvious human weaknesses, the cruelties such as the stabbing of his own son and the revengeful burning of a town, could in no way be accepted as part of the spirit of an admirable superhuman being by the Elizabethan audience.

[15]Waith, p. 70.

[16]Waith, p. 81.

Mr. Waith says that his interpretation is broad enough to include the romantic, Machiavellian, and scourge of God interpretations. This interpretation cannot absorb the romantic view, for this view sees only the first part of Tamburlaine, and it overlooks Tamburlaine's cruelty or puts the blame for it on someone else. Unable to sustain their romantic view of Tamburlaine in Part II, these critics merely ignore it or dismiss it as an "afterthought." Mr. Waith's interpretation is not consistent with the Machiavellian interpretation, for the latter sees Tamburlaine as a human being, and not as a semi-divine. The scourge of God interpretation also differs in that it shows God triumphant at the end of the play. Mr. Waith sees no moral lesson in the death of Tamburlaine.

All of the above critics who display Tamburlaine as an admirable character cannot sustain their interpretations through Part II. Miss Spence and Professor Tucker Brooke make no mention of Part II. Part II must be considered if for no other reason than that it exists and was presented to the Elizabethan audience on alternate days with Part I. Miss Ellis-Fermor treats Part II as an inferior play that Marlowe wrote hurriedly as an afterthought, for her romantic interpretation fails to be convincing in the latter part. Mr. Waith, after admitting that Marlowe's attitude toward his hero does possibly change at the end of Act V, goes on to state that we are forced to accept, and still admire, the cruelty displayed by Tamburlaine in Part II. An Elizabethan or modern viewer simply cannot accept the cruelties of Tamburlaine in Part II as part of the spirit of a great man. None of these romantic critics satisfactorily explain the dichotomy of character displayed in the two parts.

CHAPTER II - TAMBURLAINE AS AN EVIL TYRANT

Many critics view Tamburlaine as an evil, ambitious tyrant. Some interpretations state that the end of the play shows Tamburlaine being punished by a just and divine God for his evil life. Others, though seeing Tamburlaine as a vicious person, see nothing tragic in the death of the tyrant. Still other critics see Tamburlaine as an atheist who embodies the character of Marlowe.

It would seem an easy solution to the character of Tamburlaine to go to the sources available to Marlowe. There we could find the treatment given Tamburlaine, and then determine whether Marlowe adhered to these sources. One of Marlowe's primary sources, however, merely adds to the confusion, for it is ambiguous. Thomas Fortescue, in The Foreste, 1552 edition, stated that all historians agree that Tamburlaine

> Neuer sawe the backe, or frounyng face
> of fortune, that he neuer was vanquished,
> or put to flighte by any, that he neuer
> tooke matter in hande, that he brought not
> to the wished effect, and that his corage,
> and industrie neuer failed hym to bryng it
> to goode ende.[1]

Miss Ellis-Fermor's romantic interpretation is based primarily on the above passage. More recently, however, it has been discovered that in the following chapter Fortescue lists Tamburlaine among those cruel kings and bloody tyrants who may be called "Ministers of God" because they persecute the wicked, but who nonetheless are themselves "not

[1]As quoted by Ellis-Fermor, pp. 297-298.

hence held for iust, ne shall they escape the heuy iudjement of God."[2] This source first glorifies Tamburlaine in Chapter fourteen, but in a summation at the end treats him as a cruel, ambitious tyrant. Thus it does us little good to attempt to solve the question of Tamburlaine's character from a perusal of this historical source. Marlowe's other source, Perondinus, treats Tamburlaine as an evil tyrant but excuses him as a scourge of God. It should be remembered also that Tamburlaine had exhausted these sources before he began Part II.

When Marlowe's historical sources are compared with the original Tamburlaine, the confusion is further compounded. Marlowe's sources had been Christianized by Mexia and Perondinus. It was an error to assume that Timur the Lame had begun his career as a lowly shepherd, for, in actuality, he had begun as the leader of a nomadic Tartar tribe. This Timur was a brilliantly successful and cruel leader who established a far-flung empire. He fought against the Turks in 1402 in one of the most decisive battles in history. This battle held the Turks out of Bysantium for another fifty years. At this time Timur was a tottering old man, far removed from the youthful warrior pictured in Marlowe's sources. The Christian historians interpreted the defeat of the Turks as a manifestation of divine Providence, for in speaking of Bajazeth, Fortescue says:

> This tragidie might suffice, to withdrawe
> men, from this transitorie pompe, and honour,
> acquaintyng theimselues with Heauen and with
> heauenly thinges onely.[3]

[2]As quoted by Douglas Cole, Suffering and Evil in the Plays of Christopher Marlowe (Princeton, New Jersey, 1962), p. 101.

[3]As quoted by Battenhouse, p. 146.

Marlowe adhered closely to his sources as Professor John Bakeless, in his analysis, has pointed out:

> It shows him as a careful writier who bases work of the purest poetic beauty on an elaborate and careful study of all available materials.[4]

Christopher Marlowe, in sticking closely to his historical sources, has given us a Tamburlaine containing qualities worthy of admiration, and, at the same time, exhibiting him as an ambitious, atheistic tyrant.

Tamburlaine as the Machiavellian Character

Tamburlaine has often been interpreted as the Machiavellian character. The bases for these interpretations are the many similarities between Tamburlaine and the ideal prince described in Machiavelli's The Prince. (The Elizabethan dramatists were interested in strong, domineering characters, and Cambridge scholars were attracted to the splendid boldness of The Prince.) To Marlowe, who used this type of character, "Machiavelli must have appeared a kindred, lofty spirit."[5] Robert Greene, the contemporary of Marlowe, warned him against both "Machiavellian policy" and "Diabolical Atheisme."[6] That Marlowe was familiar with some concept of Machiavellian policy is made evident in the prologue of The Jew of Malta.

[4]The Tragicall History of Christopher Marlowe, Vol. 1 (Cambridge, Mass., 1942), p. 204.

[5]J. Warshaw, "Machiavelli in Marlowe," Sewanee Review, XXIV (October, 1916), p. 432.

[6]Greene, as quoted by Bakeless, pp. 123-124.

There are many parallels that can be adduced by comparing Tamburlaine with Machiavelli's concept of an ideal prince. Tamburlaine is compared to a fox:

> That, like a fox in midst of harvest-time
> Doth prey upon my flocks of passengers,
> (Part I, I, 1, 31-32)

Shortly afterwards, Tamburlaine is likened to a lion:

> As precisely lions when they arouse themselves,
> Stretching their paws, and threatening herds of beast.
> (Part I, I, 2, 52-53)

Thus Tamburlaine accords with Machiavelli's most famous dictum that the successful prince must act the part of the lion and the fox:

> It being necessary then for a prince to know well how to employ the nature of the beast, he should be able to assume both that of the fox and that of the lion.[7]

Tamburlaine, by conquest, throughout the play seizes many thrones and crowns. Machiavelli (Prince, p. 8) states that capturing a throne, no matter how much infamy may accompany it, is a natural act. According to Machiavelli, Fortune offers merely the opportunity for success; success itself comes to the man who has the personality and greatness of spirit to command his supporters at all times (Prince, p. 75). Tamburlaine fits this ideal, for many times in the play he boasts that he is "his fortune's master." Machiavelli (Prince, p. 19) says the prince must exhibit himself in rare trials of heroic action, so as never to give his followers leisure to rest and thus to plot against him. Tamburlaine, throughout the play, exhibits heroic action; he continually contrives greater and greater military conquests, and he certainly keeps his soldiers busy!

[7]Niccolo Machiavelli, The Prince, trans. and ed. T. G. Bergin (New York, 1947), p. 47.

Machiavelli (Chapter XXI) discusses the importance of the prince in showing himself a lover of virtue and of the arts. Tamburlaine's many speeches often refer to virtue; virtue, however, to Tamburlaine means different things at different times, and in one instance he identifies virtue with power:

> A god is not so glorious as a king...
> To wear a crown enchas'd with pearl and gold,
> Whose virtues carry with it life and death;
> (Part I, II, 5, 57-61)

Tamburlaine shows his love of beauty when he describes, in one of literature's most famous passages, Zenocrate's charms:

> Zenocrate, lovelier than the love of Jove,
> Brighter than is the silver Rhodope,
> Fairer than whitest snow on Scythian hills,
> Thy person is more worth to Tamburlaine
> Than the possession of the Persian crown...
> A hundred Tartars shall attend on thee,
> Mounted on steeds swifter than Pegasus.
> Thy garments shall be made of Median silk,
> Enchas'd with precious jewels of mine own,
> More rich and valurous than Zenocrate's.
> With milk-white harts upon an ivory sled
> Thou shalt be drawn amidst the frozen pools,
> And schale the icy mountains' lofty tops,
> Which with thy beauty will be soon resolv'd.
> (Part I, I, 2, 86-101)

The above qualities could also be paralleled with the Senecan hero and earlier conceptions of the tyrannical hero. Professor Boas, in an historical study, states that Marlowe's conception of Machiavelli was based upon Gentillet's French translation, Contre N. Machiavelli.[8] This work is a corrupted version of Machiavelli's principles. Because the Italian text had not been translated into English, this critic surmises that Marlowe had only a superficial knowledge of Machiavelli.

[8]Boas, p. 19.

Professor Bakeless, on the other hand, in his historical study surmises that Marlowe did have a true knowledge of the Machiavellian doctrine acquired from his studies at Cambridge, and that Marlowe probably used both the original and the Gentillet translation, which condemns the whole Machiavellian doctrine as "beastly vanitie and madnesse, yea, full of extreme wickedness."[9] Professor Bakeless lists the ways in which Marlowe and Machiavelli can be contrasted:

Machiavellianism of *The Prince*	Machiavellianism of Marlowe
1. Applies only to political affairs.	1. Applies also to personal affairs.
2. Does not necessarily distinguish between *virtu* and virtue.	2. Opposes *virtu* to virtue.
3. Advocates *virtu* for good of the state as a whole.	3. Advocates *virtu* for personal ends.
4. Admits that *fortuna* (element of luck) must be considered.	4. Neglects *fortuna*.
5. Employs *virtu* for a single purpose.	5. Seeks power for its own sake.
6. Requires psychological insight.	6. Conspicuously lacks psychological insight.[10]

It can be noted that Tamburlaine does not consistently follow all of Machiavelli's principles. Machiavelli advises the prince to unite the conquered territories in order to insure law and order. On the other hand, Tamburlaine does not possess this aim for his only purpose is to be a "terror to the world" and gain more and more crowns. Once a territory is conquered, Tamburlaine never looks back on it.

[9]Innocent Gentillet, *Contre N. Machiavel*, as quoted by Bakeless, p. 348.

[10]Bakeless, p. 349.

Machiavelli justifies cruelty only when it furthers the state. However, according to some critics, Tamburlaine enjoys cruelty for its own sake.[11]

Machiavelli (Prince, p. 26) further advises the prince to kill all the heirs to the conquered thrones. Although the Scythian Tamburlaine of Marlowe's sources kills not only his royal benefactor but the king's sons as well, the Tamburlaine of the play fails to kill the heirs of Cosroe and Bajazeth. Thus Tamburlaine does not follow all of the actual principles of the Prince, but he does follow some of the Elizabethan concepts of the Machiavellian character: love for wars, arms, cruelty, and expediency. The Elizabethans, excepting the scholars, saw the Machiavellian character, spawned in the land of popery and passion, as something vaguely cruel and atheistic.

Tamburlaine as an Atheistic Marlowe

Some critics look upon Tamburlaine as an atheist and an instrument for expressing Marlowe's own atheistic philosophy. The temptation to inject Marlowe into his stage characters comes from the spectacular events of Marlowe's life. The records indicate that he was arrested at least twice, with one of the arrests involving a homicide. He was, as has been noted before, accused of atheism by Greene. The Privy Council directed he be given an M. A. degree for "services rendered." From their historical researches, some critics have concluded that Marlowe was atheistic and, not being artist enough or having no desire to veil his own thoughts, had his hero express his unorthodox views.

[11]Tamburlaine, after learning of Zenocrate's death, savagely burned a town for no justifiable reason.

Professor Paul H. Kocher, in discussing the character of Tamburlaine, says: "Through all his raging against Heaven, his boasts that he is a divinely commissioned Scourge or is imitating a God of Strife, Tamburlaine is wrestling with God, from whom he cannot escape. He must conquer God, or else succeed in feeling that he stands in a special relation of favor to him, and so it is perhaps with Marlowe."[12] Another critic is much more dogmatic: "Tamburlaine is strewn with the dead faith of a divinity student who found Christianity unpalatable and repugnant, and who discovered in poetry, and indeed the whole pagan part of the world, spiritual comfort and inspiration."[13]

Willard Thorp's interpretation suggests that Marlowe did indeed embody many of his ideas in the play, but he disguised them to satisfy the Elizabethan audience.[14] It is true that the Elizabethan audience was influenced by the didacticism of the moralities and many romantic tales underwent thorough "cleansing" before the stage presentation. The Puritans also exerted great influence upon the dramatists. In Marlowe's time, a dramatist seeking esteem could not outrage popular standards. According to Mr. Thorp, Marlowe could not directly reflect his atheistic view in the play and expect the audience to accept him. Hence, the problem was one of accommodation, of finding a means by which he could express himself without offending the audience.

Mr. Thorp supports his interpretation by conjecturing that Marlowe also veils his private opinion in Faustus and The Jew of Malta.

[12]Christopher Marlowe (New York, 1962), p. 103.

[13]Charles Norman, The Muses Darling (New York, 1946), p. 22.

[14]"The Ethical Problem in Marlowe's Tamburlaine," J. Engl. and German Phil., XXIX (July, 1930), pp. 385-390.

In the former, the play suggests a morality of the type found in Woodes' Conflict of Conscience, in which the forces of good and evil fight for the soul of man. Into this traditional cadre, according to Mr. Thorp, Marlowe is able to fit, through Mephistopheles and Faustus, the blasphemies of his own philosophy. "Similarly in The Jew of Malta the Machiavellian horrors in which Marlowe revelled with delight, are appropriately enough charged to the despised and possibly even ridiculous Barabas."[15] Again, in the play Tamburlaine, Mr. Thorp says the hero's cruelty and blasphemy are excused because of his divine purpose as the scourge of God.

According to Mr. Thorp, Marlowe makes use of the legend of the scourge of God which was associated with the historical Tamburlaine. Marlowe saw the advantage of such a conception of his hero, and by relying on the audience's belief that Tamburlaine is the instrument of God, Marlowe is "permitted to make Tamburlaine as grandiloquent and outrageous as he wishes."[16]

This interpretation says that Marlowe further satisfies his contemporary audience by making Tamburlaine virtuous in his sexual ethics. He assures the Soldan of Egypt that his daughter Zenocrate is clear of "all blot of unchastity." When he surrenders the captive queens to his soldiers, Tamburlaine permits the soldiers only those queens who were concubines. Further, Tamburlaine is merciful to the Soldan because he is Zenocrate's father. In speaking of Tamburlaine's sexual ethics, Mr. Thorp does not associate them in any way with Marlowe's own ideas on

[15]Thorp, p. 386.

[16]Ibid., p. 389.

this subject. Evidently this critic accepts the unproven idea that Marlowe was atheistic, but rejects the equally popular theory that he was homosexual.

Marlowe, according to Mr. Thorp, endeavored not to write anything in the play which would offend the Elizabethan audience. In Part II, he permitted the Christians Sigismund, Frederick, and Baldwin to be defeated by the Turk Orcanes, but their defeat is a result of their breaking the sacred troth with him. In this case, according to Mr. Thorp, Orcanes acts as the scourge of God. He praises Christ for the victory. In order not to offend the audience, Mr. Thorp says, Marlowe gives Tamburlaine a Christian image which is shown in his regard for the Christian religion, his hatred of its enemies, and his war against the heathen. Mr. Thorp does not mention the incident in which Tamburlaine slaughters the innocent inhabitants of Damascus, nor does he mention the cruelty shown by Tamburlaine in the stabbing of his son, actions are indeed difficult to put into a "Christian image."

Another critic, John Bakeless, identifies Tamburlaine's character as Machiavellian throughout both parts of the play. He then identifies Tamburlaine's character as that of Marlowe. Of Marlowe he says:

> His was an art that did not as yet conceal the artist, nor did his characterizations possess enough depth or subtlety to veil the mind from which they emerged. A poet rather than a playwright, Marlowe had, almost until the end, but one formula for his plays; and his unwavering persistence in it makes clear enough to the thoughtful reader the bent of his own mind.
>
> According to that formula, his plays are built around a single Machiavellian superman--

> Tamburlaine, Faustus, Barabas, the Guise, even to some degree Young Mortimer.[17]

This critic, in an earlier chapter, admires Marlowe for sticking closely to his historical sources when he wrote Tamburlaine. The sources showed that Tamburlaine was Machiavellian in many respects, but this seems to be thin evidence upon which to base the assumption that Marlowe himself was also Machiavellian.

The biographical researches noted above see the products of the poet's work as, in Goethe's well known phrase, "fragments of a great confession." However, as Rene Wellek and Austin Warren have pointed out, the relation between the private life of a poet and the work itself is not a "simple relation of cause and effect."[18] According to these two critics, the whole view that a work of art is self-expression pure and simple is false.

The hazards attending such identifications of Marlowe and Tamburlaine may be illustrated from the study of Tamburlaine made by Paul H. Kocher. Looking at the play for what light it may throw on the character of Marlowe, he finds that Part I is dominated by two religious ideas: the first is that the law of nature commands Tamburlaine and others to seek worldly power; the other, that in his conquests Tamburlaine is acting as the scourge of God. The first is thoroughly Anti-Christian, especially to the Elizabethans; the second is thoroughly compatible with Christianity. Thus, Mr. Kocher is faced with a problem in Marlowe's thought as he interprets it. He then asks: "May not all of Tamburlaine's

[17]Bakeless, p. 238.

[18]The Theory of Literature (New York, 1949), p. 72.

religious ideas be harmonized by simply amputating the Christian Appendages...?"[19] He concludes that even then some inconsistency remains. In his discussion of Part II, Professor Kocher finds that in many instances Calyphas, the cowardly son of Tamburlaine, is ridiculous. Yet, in Act IV, when the boy's mockery of the warrior code is revealed, it is a "personal outburst of the dramatist."[20] The weaknesses in this interpretation are obvious: one cannot simply "amputate" parts of a play which do not adhere to preconceived notions, and one cannot arbitrarily select passages and say that these, and these alone, are dramatic outbursts expressing the author's own philosophy.

Tamburlaine as the Scourge of God

Tamburlaine is seen as the scourge of God by many scholars. To the Elizabethans, the scourge of God had two functions: to explain historical calamities and to show the ultimate power of God. Marlowe was aware of these functions, for Tamburlaine, Part I, was written when Marlowe was a divinity student at Cambridge where he was undoubtedly familiar with Protestant theology concerning the scourge of God.

Marlowe's sources support the interpretation of Tamburlaine as the scourge of God. Fortescue wrote in Foreste, one of Marlowe's sources, that "it is to be supposed that God stirred hym uppe an instrument, to chastice these proud and wicked nations."[21] Fortescue reinforces this image of Tamburlaine by recounting Pope Pius's statement in reference to

[19]Kocher, p. 81.

[20]Ibid., p. 84.

[21]Quoted in Thorp, p. 387.

his merciless treatment of certain women and children sent to him on the third day of a siege:

> A certaine merchaunte...hardned hymsylfe to demaund hym the Pope the cause why he used theim so cruelly...to whom he answered..."Thou supposest me to be a man but to muche abusest me, for none other am I but the wrathe and vengeaunce of God and ruine of the world."[22]

The Pope's explanation was justification to Fortescue for Tamburlaine's slaughter. On the other hand, most people interpret this as an act of great cruelty.

Mr. Roy Battenhouse, in his analysis of the character of Tamburlaine, sees him as the scourge of God. He pictures Tamburlaine's rapid rise to power as assuming a divine purpose: to punish the Persians, the Turks, and the Babylonians. The chastisement which Tamburlaine administers, according to Mr. Battenhouse, is deserved: the Persian king Mycetes is vain and foolish; Cosroe is a usurper; the Turk Bajazeth is proud and cruel. In his discussion of Part I, Act V, Mr. Battenhouse, unable to justify Tamburlaine's cruelty in the killing of the virgins from a "divine instrument" point of view, conveniently switches to a discussion of Tamburlaine's personal cruelty, forgetting temporarily that he is trying to prove that Tamburlaine is a scourge of God to punish the wicked.

In his discussion of Part II, Mr. Battenhouse states that after Tamburlaine has punished the world's wickedness as symbolized by Babylon, his usefulness to God's purpose is at an end. This critic sees Tamburlaine reaching the epitome of blasphemy in the following lines:

[22]Ibid.

> Now, Casane, where's the Turkish Alcaron,
> And all the heaps of superstitious books
> Found in the temples of Mahomet
> Whom I have thought a god? they shall be burnt...
> In vain, I see, men worship Mahomet:
> My sword hat sent millions of Turks to hell,...
> And yet I live untouched by Mahomet.
> (Part II, V, 1, 172-181)

This bonfire of "superstitious books" was also seen by one of Marlowe's contemporaries as a confession of his atheism; it meant, to Robert Greene, daring God out of his heaven. Yet, in so far as its target is Mohammedanism, it conforms to the doctrine of orthodox Christianity. Mr. Battenhouse, in believing the above lines show the turning point in Tamburlaine's career from "scourge of God" to "God's defier," ignores the following lines that suggest that Tamburlaine still believes in God:

> There is a God, full of revenging wrath,
> From whom the thunder and the lightning breaks,
> Whose scourge I am, and him will I obey.
> (Part II, V, 1, 182-184)

Soon after the burning of the books, Tamburlaine cries: "But stay; I feel myself distempered suddenly (Part II, V, 2, 116). According to Mr. Battenhouse, when "Elizabethan theatre-goers viewed Tamburlaine's attack of illness following upon his blasphemy, certainly they must have considered the stroke God's."[23] Thus, Mr. Battenhouse interprets Tamburlaine as the scourge of God who is destroyed by God when he fulfills his mission.

The researches of Mr. Battenhouse sought to prove that the two parts of the play were integrated and showed a consistent Tamburlaine in both parts of the play. In order to do this, Mr. Battenhouse had to ignore the killing of the Christian virgins in Part I, which, in no way

[23]Battenhouse, p. 347.

could be justified in the eyes of the Elizabethan audience. Mr. Battenhouse further wishes us to believe that Marlowe had Part II in mind when he wrote Part I, an idea dismissed by other critics.

There is much, however, deserving of merit in Mr. Battenhouse's studies. It is true that the Elizabethans undoubtedly saw God triumphant over Tamburlaine: witness the sudden death of his beloved Zenocrate, and his sudden distemper at the height of his power. It is hazardous, however, to state just the precise point where Tamburlaine ceases to be the scourge of God and becomes a mere wicked human being.

The critics in this chapter have, for one reason or another, attempted to prove Tamburlaine's character as that of an evil tyrant. Part II would certainly justify their claims, for he is certainly an evil, cruel tyrant in the latter part. On the other hand, there is something majestic about the conquering hero of the first part. Tamburlaine at first appears almost a superman, continually active and, up to a certain point, incapable of suffering. The ringing words of his blank verse sweep aside the doggeral rhymes of former stage heroes. Thus one can only surmise, after an investigation of the favorable and unfavorable views of Tamburlaine, that he experiences a strange transformation between Parts I and II. The first part treats of love and war, the second of war and death. Tamburlaine, in Part I, defying his fellow men, seems a "God or Fiend." Defying the gods, in Part II, he is nothing more than a human being. Why this strange dichotomy?

CHAPTER III - THE ELIZABETHAN AUDIENCE'S INTERPRETATION OF TAMBURLAINE

The last two chapters have revealed there is a change of character in Tamburlaine between the two parts of the play. The Tamburlaine who breaks down into a frenzy over the death of Zenocrate in Part II is not the conqueror who held "the Fates fast bound in chains" in Part I. The Tamburlaine of the second part is more human, for he must accept the inevitability of death.

All critics, with the exception of Mr. Battenhouse, see this change at the end of Act V. Try as one might, there is no way to deny that Tamburlaine's character presents a strange dichotomy. Harry Levin,[1] in an objective study, sees Part I as a glorious spectacle of an evil, yet glorious tyrant, rising to the heights of glory. In his opinion there is nothing tragic in Part I. In Part II he sees Tamburlaine as a human being giving us the moral lesson that the art of war is fundamentally barbarous.

Another critic, Douglas Cole,[2] sees Tamburlaine in much the same way as Harry Levin. He points out that Part I comes to a resolution without foreshadowing or hinting at a sequel. Furthermore, Part I includes most of the historical material available to Marlowe in his sources. After seeing Tamburlaine in Part I as admirable, Cole states that Tamburlaine's true character comes out in Part II. He sees Tamburlaine as destroying himself by his own excesses: "Tamburlaine, in his dynamic but

[1] The Overreacher (Cambridge, Mass., 1952), passim.

[2] Cole, passim.

futile attempt to be more than man, reveals that the drive for superhumanity through martial conquest leads inevitably to inhumanity."[3]

After creating the Tamburlaine of Part I, Marlowe had exhausted most of his historical sources, and he gave no hint of Part II. Why, then, did he write Part II? In his Prologue to Part II, he stated:

> The general welcomes Tamburlaine receiv'd,
> Hath made our poet pen his second part,

Yet, one wonders, if "general welcomes" were the only reason for the second part, why did not Marlowe continue in the same vein as he had done in Part I? Why did not he continue to allow Tamburlaine and Zenocrate to ride triumphantly? The sudden humanization, the weaknesses, the madness and death of Tamburlaine, must have been exhibited for reasons other than the "general welcomes" received. Looking at Tamburlaine from the viewpoint of the Elizabethan audience will reveal the reason for Tamburlaine's strange dichotomy of character.

The Elizabethans were aware of the legend surrounding Tamburlaine before they went to see Marlowe's play. From the many editions that Marlowe's two primary sources enjoyed, it can be shown that the Elizabethans knew of these romanticized accounts. By word-of-mouth or by reading Mexia they learned that Tamburlaine rose to power from a lowly beginning--a pleasant fiction, but without historical foundation. The legend told that the rise was accompanied by ruthless slaughter, but Christianized accounts had found extenuation for this cruelty by dubbing him a "scourge of God." As has been pointed out, the audience was also aware that Tamburlaine was listed among the cruel and wicked kings who must face the

[3]Cole, p. 113.

heavy judgment of God. Thus, the Elizabethans were in some ways prepared for Marlowe's Tamburlaine.

The Elizabethans went to the theatre not primarily to see, but to hear. The stage scenery and the settings were scanty. The play was the thing. They were dazzled and awed by the first utterances of Tamburlaine, as portrayed by Edward Alleyn, himself a man of colossal size (6'7") and great histrionic ability.

Listening to the prologue they were prepared to be led

> to the stately tent of war,
> Where you shall hear the Scythian Tamburlaine,
> Threatening the world with high astounding terms,
> And scourging kingdoms with his conquering sword.
> (Prologue, Part I)

The audience is first told of Tamburlaine's character by his enemies. He is described as a fox that preys upon the flocks and as a robber who fleeces merchants on their way to Persepolis. The plans of Tamburlaine are revealed: to reign in Asia and to make himself monarch of the East.

Tamburlaine first appears in Scene Two speaking to the captive Zenocrate. Boastfully Tamburlaine tells her of his abilities and then asks suddenly:

> But, tell me, madam, is your grace betrothed?
> (Part I, I, 2, 32)

Tamburlaine is evidently smitten with love at first sight and frankly tells Zenocrate she must grace his bed. Made bold by her beauty, he discards his shepherd's clothes for the regalia of a warrior. Foreshadowing is evident to the audience, from their prior knowledge, when his lieutenant, Techelles, likens Tamburlaine to a lion and foresees kings

kneeling at his feet. Then, for the first time, the audience is given an example of Tamburlaine's and Marlowe's "mighty line":

> Zenocrate, lovelier than the love of Jove,
> Brighter than is the silver Rhodope,
> Fairer than whitest snow on Scythian hills,
> Thy person is more worth to Tamburlaine
> Than the possession of the Persian crown,
> Which gracious stars have promised at my birth.
> (Part I, I, 2, 87-92)

In the first military action the power of Tamburlaine's oratory wins Theridamas over to his side. The audience hears the description of Tamburlaine by Theridamas:

> A Scythian shepherd so embellished
> With nature's pride and richest furniture!
> His looks do menace heaven and dare the gods,
> (Part I, I, 2, 154-156)

Act II opens with a description of Tamburlaine by Menaphon:

> Of stature tall, and straightly fashioned,
> Like his desire lift upward and divine;...
> Pale of complexion, wrought in him with passion,
> Thirsting with sovereignty and love of arms;
> (Part I, II, 1, 7-20)

Tamburlaine is referred to as fortune's master, and the "king of men," who is "ordained by Heaven." The following scene reveals to the audience the craftiness of Tamburlaine as he dupes Cosroe and wins an easy victory over Mycetes. Tamburlaine says

> For fates and oracles of Heaven have sworn
> To royalize the deeds of Tamburlaine,
> (Part I, II, 3, 7-8)

The audience then hears Tamburlaine's love for worldly triumphs:

> Is it not passing brave to be a king,
> And ride in triumph through Persepolis?
> (Part I, II, 5, 53-54)

As Cosroe lies dying, Tamburlaine reveals his true nature by explaining why he has warred against his one-time companion:

> The thirst of reign and sweetness of a crown,
> That caused the eldest son of heavenly Ops
> To thrust his doting father from his chair,
> And place himself in the imperial heaven,
> Moved me to manage arms against thy state.
> (Part I, II, 7, 12-16)

This is immediately followed by another statement revealing his greatest ambition:

> Nature, that fram'd us of four elements
> Warring within our breast for regiment,
> Doth teach us all to have aspiring minds:
> Our souls, whose faculties can comprehend
> The wondrous architecture of the world,
> And measure every wandering planet's course,
> Still climbing after knowledge infinite,
> And measure moving as the restless spheres,
> Wills us to wear ourselves and never rest,
> Until we reach the ripest fruit of all,
> That perfect bliss and sole felicity,
> The sweet fruition of an earthly crown.
> (Part I, II, 7, 18-29)

Here, for the first time a crack in the armor of Tamburlaine is revealed to the audience. Whereas a heavenly crown was the pious hope of every Christian Elizabethan, an earthly crown was the notorious emblem of worldliness, heterodoxy, and pride of life. In short it is blasphemy.

> A God is not so glorious as a king:
> (Part I, II, 5, 57)

for Tamburlaine, as for his followers, one of whom adds,

> I think the pleasure they enjoy in heaven,
> Cannot compare with kingly joys in earth;
> (Part I, II, 5, 58-59)

This passage also reveals another weakness in Tamburlaine. His four humors are not balanced by reason. Health depended upon keeping these four elements in harmony. Thus, to the Elizabethans, choleric humor and worldly ambition could serve as a foreshadowing of disaster. Shakespeare used this device in Othello:

Some bloody passion shakes your very frame.
These are portents;[4]

The rise of Tamburlaine is meteoric and Act III offers the audience further revelation of character when it hears Tamburlaine proclaiming:

I that am termed the Scourge and Wrath of God,
The only fear and terror of the world.
(Part I, III, 3, 44-45)

The audience next sees Tamburlaine triumphant over his great opponent, the Turk Bajazeth, who is besieging the Christian city of Constantinople. This humiliation of Bajazeth was probably seen by the audience as just punishment for his cruelty. "Christian historians naturally interpreted the Turkish defeat as a manifestation of Providence and looked upon the victorious infidel as a supernatural instrument: flagellum dei, the scourge of God."[5]

By the end of Act III the audience is aware that Tamburlaine is no longer satisfied with picturing himself as the ruler of Asia for he boastfully tells of his plans to conquer the world:

And all the ocean by the British shore;
And by this means I'll win the world at last.
(Part I, III, 3, 259-260)

This ambitious Tamburlaine would probably receive shouts of heckling at this point from the nationalistic Elizabethan audience.

The following act displays Tamburlaine in all of his boastful glory. Using Bajazeth as a footstool, he proudly announces:

The chiefest God, first mover of that sphere,
Encased with thousands ever-shining lamps,

[4]Folger Library Edition (New York, 1957), p. 115.

[5]Battenhouse, p. 342.

Would sooner burn the glorious frame of Heaven,
Than it should conspire my overthrow.
(Part I, IV, 2, 8-11)

After the above, the audience hears another long boastful speech which reveals once again Tamburlaine's unquenchable thirst for power. Act IV also displays Tamburlaine's cruelty in his treatment of Bajazeth and his wife. He vows never to release Bajazeth from his cage; he uses him as a footstool to mount his throne; and he brings the captive in at banquets to taunt him.

The act also has another opponent for Tamburlaine--the Soldan of Egypt, the father of Zenocrate. The Soldan shouts his opinion of Tamburlaine:

The scum of men, the hate and scourge of God,
(Part I, IV, 3, 9)

Act V presents to the Elizabethan audience the most dramatic evidence of the cruelty of Tamburlaine. The four virgins come to him to plead for mercy for their city. Tamburlaine coldly orders their death. As Tamburlaine leaves for battle, Bajazeth and Zabina hurl invectives upon him and his fortune; but left alone, they admit the inevitability of his victory. This realization prompts Zabina to despair:

Then is there no Mahomet, no God,
No fiend, no fortune, nor no hope of end
To our infamous, monstrous slaveries?
(Part I, V, 2, 176-178)

Hearing this, after witnessing Zabina's humiliations, well might the Elizabethan audience ask the same question.

Soon after, other results of Tamburlaine's brutality are seen. Preferring death to further dishonor, Bajazeth bashes his brains out against the cage. When Zabina sees her dead husband, she goes mad and

kills herself. Zenocrate discovers this gory scene after lamenting the fall of Damascus, the massacre of her countrymen, and the slaughter of the supplicant virgins. She reveals her deep feeling for the suffering of others, and the following speech serves to contrast her humanity with the ruthlessness of Tamburlaine:

> Those that are proud of fickle empery,
> And place their chiefest good in earthly pomp,
> Behold the Turk and his great emperess!
> Ah, Tamburlaine, my love, sweet Tamburlaine,
> That fightst for sceptres and for slippery crowns,
> Behold the Turk and his great emperess!
> (Part I, V, 2, 290-295)

The above moralizing should have served as a warning to Tamburlaine, but the sight of the bloody Bajazeth and Zabina raises no remorse. Returning triumphant from battle, he boasts he has made the heavens weep blood and hell to overflow with the souls he has dispatched. The play ends with the betrothal of Tamburlaine and Zenocrate.

What then was the Elizabethan audience to make of Tamburlaine? They had seen the rise of an ambitious tyrant, the scourge of God, to the exalted state where he puts himself on a plane above the laws of God. His love of beauty and his rise to worldly power were at once heroic and frightening. Leaving the theatre the audience experienced the sensation that was an affront to their moral sensibilities: a tyrant, even though in some ways an admirable tyrant, had defied the laws of God and gotten away with it. Their moral consciousness simply could not allow this tyrant to remain victorious. In the mind of the Elizabethan audience, the glorious and titanic figure of Tamburlaine could not be separated from the dark shadow of human suffering that he himself cast. They saw that Tamburlaine alone represented the primary source of evil in the

universe of the play. The Elizabethans demanded a sequel from Marlowe to bring this tyrant down and to justify the ways of God to man.

The Elizabethan Age, to many modern critics, was a secular period between two outbreaks of Puritanism: a period in which religious enthusiasm had been forgotten in order to allow the new humanism to shape our literature. These critics place their emphasis on the voyages of discoveries and other brilliant externals of Elizabethan life. "They do not tell us that Queen Elizabeth translated Boethius, that Raleigh was a theologian as well as a discoverer, and that sermons were as much a part of an ordinary Elizabethan's life as bear-baiting."[6] One can state with assurance that the Elizabethan Age was theocentric. Though there were various new things in the Elizabethan Age to make life exciting, the old conflict between the claims of two worlds still persisted.

The audience probably paralleled Tamburlaine with another famous tyrant in their mystery plays that were still being presented. Herod, the favorite villain of the mysteries, foreshadowed Tamburlaine when, in the Wakefield cycle, he boasted that his supremacy extended from India to Italy, from Norway to Normandy, from Padua to Paradise. The audience could also see a resemblance between the killing of the virgins of Damascus and Herod's slaughter of the innocents. The audience remembered Herod as an aggressive boaster who was brought down by death, or reduced to comic absurdity. Thus, Tamburlaine, who had out-Heroded Herod, must also be shown to suffer.

Many modern critics forget the central role that God played in the daily lives of the Elizabethans. Bible reading and family prayer

[6]E. M. W. Tillyard, The Elizabethan World Picture (New York, (1942), p. 1.

were routine customs of the English. Early in the first decade of Elizabeth's reign, Roger Ascham wrote in his Schoolmaster: "Blessed be Christ, in our city of London, commonly the commandments of God be more diligently taught, and the service of God more reverently used."[7] Since the Puritan attack on the theatre had begun before the time of Tamburlaine the audience would be sensitive to any moral affront presented to them.

The conflict between humanism and the Medieval renunciation of worldly aspirations still existed throughout the Renaissance. The two contradictory ideas co-existed in a state of high tension. "Further it is an error to think that with the Renaissance the belief in the present life won a definitive victory."[8] Through the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, through the Elizabethans to Milton, the old arguments persisted. When Milton calls fame "that last infirmity of noble mind," he is giving his own version of the perpetual struggle.

Tamburlaine's actions, in the eyes of the Elizabethans, were an affront to their general conception of universal order. This world order was so much taken for granted, "so much a part of the collective mind of the people, that it is hardly mentioned except in explicitly didactic passages."[9] One of the clearest expositions of order is Elyot's in the first chapter of the Governor:

> Take away order from all things, what should then remain? Certes nothing finally, except some

[7]Quoted in English Reprints, ed. by Edward Arber (London, 1870), p. 21.

[8]Tillyard, p. 5.

[9]Tillyard, p. 9.

> man would imagine eftsoons chaos. Also where there is any lack of order needs must be perpetual conflict. And in things subject to nature nothing of himself only may be nourished; but, when he hath destroyed that wherewith he doth participate by the order of his creation, he himself of necessity must then perish; whereof ensueth universal dissolution.
>
> Hath not God set degrees and estates in all his glorious works? First in his heavenly ministers, whom he hath constituted in divers degrees called hierarchies. Behold the four elements, whereof the body of man is compact, how they be set in their places called spheres, higher or lower according to the sovereignty of their natures. Behold also the order that God hath put generally in all his creatures, beginning at the most inferior or base and ascending upward...And it may not be called order except it do contain in it degrees, high and base, according to the merit or estimation of the thing that is ordered. (Italics mine)

Anyone revolting against this scheme of world order, in the Elizabethan's mind, would suffer the wrath and vengeance of God.

The writers of the day displayed the idea of God's triumph in either of the two ways pointed out on page twenty-five, and the Elizabethans wanted the same illustration from Marlowe. That the Renaissance writer's treatment of tragic history was permeated by moral considerations has been illustrated by Professor Tillyard in his first two chapters of The Elizabethan World Picture. They point out that the Englishmen of Marlowe's day thought of history as the record of God's Providence and of the world as the theatre of His judgments.

In view of the above, the assumption that the Elizabethans wanted to see the downfall of Tamburlaine is the only way we can account for the change in character of Tamburlaine. In viewing it in this way one can also appreciate the dilemma facing Marlowe. He had exhausted practically all of his historical source material; the only important account not utilized by Marlowe is the description telling of the Scythian's

serene death at a ripe old age. That Marlowe did not use this account is further evidence that the author was aware that the audience expected Tamburlaine to be brought down to death in a more spectacular way.

Had "general welcomes" been the only reason for Tamburlaine's existence in Part II, it seems sensible to assume that Tamburlaine would not have changed character, but continued on in his triumphant march. Zenocrate, an extra-historical element in the play, would not need to have died so early in Part II. The cruel stabbing of his own son by Tamburlaine, another element of Marlowe's imagination, need not have been introduced as further evidence of Tamburlaine's madness and inhumanity. These elements showing Tamburlaine's will no longer as "fortune's master" must be assumed to have been injected as a result of popular demand to show the protagonist as a vulnerable human being subject to the will of God.

This thesis, it is readily admitted, can only be built upon a foundation of "truthful imagination" and probability. It is the only interpretation, however, that can reconcile the two parts. It gives a greater appreciation for Marlowe in that it shows a deepening of his art, for he had to depend on his imagination for material in Part II to meet the demand of his audience. Marlowe faced the tremendous task of altering his original creation in order to conform to the moral sensibilities of his audience.

In speculation on the problem of writing Part II, Harry Levin, without hazarding a guess why Marlowe changed Tamburlaine except because of "general welcomes," says: "He was forced, by the very impact of his creation, to face the genuinely tragic conflict that was bound to destroy

the monster he created."[10] In other words, Marlowe had to show Tamburlaine changing from "fortune's master" to an evil human being subject to divine retribution. We can sympathize with the problem facing Marlowe. In the first part his historical sources provided him a means by which he had brought Tamburlaine to the highest worldly success. The problem of Part II was how to bring this proud atheist to his deserved overthrow without completely destroying the model presented in Part I. How successful he was can be seen from the reaction of the Elizabethan audience to Part II.

The second part starts with a Tamburlaine who is all but invincible. Elizabethans learned from the title page that Part II deals with three primary episodes:

> (1) His impassionate fury, for the death of his Lady and love, faire Zenocrate:
>
> (2) His fourme of exhortation and discipline to his three sons, and
>
> (3) The manner of his owne death.
>
> Prologue to Part II)

The audience first sees the Christians and Mohammedans combine forces to defeat Tamburlaine. The next scene presents Callapine, the prisoner of Tamburlaine and son of Bajazeth, bribing his way to freedom. This is the first instance thus far that shows a weakness in the military structure that Tamburlaine has built. The audience next sees Tamburlaine in conversation with Zenocrate and his three sons. Zenocrate asks:

[10] The Overreacher (Cambridge, Mass., 1952), p. 35.

Sweet Tamburlaine, when wilt thou leave these arms,
And save thy sacred person free from scathe,
And dangerous chances of the wrathful war?
(Part II, I, 4, 9-11)

To this query Tamburlaine answers:

When heaven shall cease to move on both the poles,
And when the ground, whereon my soldiers march,
Shall rise aloft and touch the horned moon;
And not before, my sweet Zenocrate.
(Part II, I, 4, 12-15)

From this answer the audience knows that Tamburlaine still considers himself incapable of being destroyed. His advice for his sons is:

Be all a scourge and terror to the world.
(Part II, I, 4, 63-64)

Act II, for the first three scenes, reveals nothing further of the character of Tamburlaine, for it shows the Christians and Mohammedans at each others' throats. Scene four shows the beautiful Zenocrate dying and Tamburlaine's fury at not being able to control destiny. The audience hears Tamburlaine threatening to:

break the frame of heaven;
Batter the shining palace of the sun,
And shiver all the starry firmament...
(Part II, II, 4, 104-06)

For the first time in his career, his weakness, his subjection to a Higher Power, is revealed both to Tamburlaine and his audience. That death should oppose him is something Tamburlaine cannot understand; previously it had always been his servant. Yet, Tamburlaine evidently, for the moment, realizes he is no longer invincible, for he says:

And, till I die, thou shalt not be interr'd.
(Part II, II, 4, 132)

Increasing madness and choleric temper is revealed when he burns down a whole town because Zenocrate has been taken away from him.

Act III reveals Tamburlaine explaining the art of war to his three sons. Tamburlaine cuts his arm and invites his sons to join him in a covenant of blood. When Tamburlaine's own son, Calyphas, shows cowardice, he is stabbed to death by his father. This act not only shows Tamburlaine's increasing savagery, but is further evidence that he is no longer all-powerful in controlling other's careers.

The next scene of conquest is Babylon. Having by conquest marched from Persepolis through Damascus to Babylon, Tamburlaine is ready to storm Persia. At this point he has a touch of distemper, but his confidence returns:

> Sickness or death can never conquer me.
> (Part II, V, 2, 22)

The following scenes, however, show Tamburlaine's sickness and death. It can be seen that Marlowe completely alters the historical accounts of Tamburlaine's death. Instead of allowing him to die peacefully of old age, he uses the "humors theory" to bring Tamburlaine down. The Elizabethans, throughout the play, saw Tamburlaine as a man of passion--the choleric man; thus, Marlowe allows him to die of this disease. One critic notes that Tamburlaine's death "is not at all out of joint with his character; for his peculiar distemper has been occasioned by his innate passions, and in the light of sixteenth century psychophysiology it was perfectly obvious to an intelligent Elizabethan that the wrathful Scythian should be dispatched in such a manner."[11]

The Elizabethans believed that God had appointed scourges, but that if they proved to be unfaithful servants, "God had also provided

[11]Johnston Parr, "Tamburlaine's Malady," PMLA, LIX (September, 1944), p. 703.

that evil men should punish themselves through their 'affections' or 'passions,' that is, through their own inner disorders."[12]

The audience sees Tamburlaine in his final scene accepting death with stoic fatalism. Tamburlaine is finally aware that he is no longer master over death. The wheel of Fortune, which at one time spun at his pleasure, has come full circle. Whereas once Tamburlaine boasted of holding the Fates in his chains, now it is they who overthrow his triumphs. The audience is satisfied; they have witnessed tragedy--a man destroyed at the peak of his power by overwhelming ambition. Years later, Shelley furnished an epitaph for another tyrant which could apply to Tamburlaine:

> And on the pedestal these words appear:
> "My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
> Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!"
> Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
> Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
> The lone and level sands stretch far away.

[12]Willard Farnham, The Medieval Heritage of Elizabethan Tragedy (New York, 1936), p. 336-37.

Conclusion

If one accepts the thesis that Marlowe wrote Part II in response to the public's demand for a sequel to show the downfall of Tamburlaine, the many varied interpretations can, to a great extent, be resolved. Tamburlaine, Part I, offers the spectacle of the shepherd who becomes monarch of almost all the world. He was a giant in stature, a giant in ambition, and a ruthless destroyer.

During the triumphant march of Tamburlaine, the romantic critics can still see the characteristics they look for in Elizabethan England: its towering pride, unbridled enthusiasm for discovery, volcanic expression of ambition and aspiration, and boundless vistas opened to the human spirit.

In physical type Tamburlaine is the choleric man--pale in complexion, fiery in spirit, and prone to bitter jesting. This choleric's stature and actions are suggestive of Hercules, and Tamburlaine is endowed with gifts appropriate to the scourge of God. Following some of the rules of success laid down by Machiavelli, Tamburlaine's rise is spectacular. With Zenocrate providing him with love, he reaches his ambition--"the sweet fruition of an earthly crown."

At the end of Act V, the dilemma facing Marlowe can be viewed with sympathy. Instead of ignoring Part II, or tossing it aside as an "afterthought," we can view it with understanding. Part II must be considered in some way simply because it exists, and was, according to Henslowe's Diary, presented on alternate days with Part I. If Tamburlaine is a ten-act play, the first part deals with his rise to power. Part Two displays

Death cutting off "the progress of his pomp," and God, ruler of Fortune and Fate, throwing all "his triumphs down."

Christopher Marlowe's resolution of his problem can be viewed only with admiration. The "tragicall discourse" of Part I can be termed tragic only if we interpret the death of Bajazeth and his wife as tragic examples of the fruitlessness of worldly conquest. All the elements for a true tragedy are present only when we look at the play as one of ten acts. Marlowe, in being forced to bring his hero down to a human level, used ingenuity that demands applause. Tamburlaine's increasing madness, as a result of the untimely death of Zenocrate, is characteristically a part of the choleric man. His manner of death is consistent with his character as presented in Part I. Marlowe combined the elements of the two parts of the play so well that the Elizabethans could see a consistent Tamburlaine and a consistent theme: "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the world and lose his soul?"

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