

## *Edward II* and Residual Allegory

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[*Christopher Marlowe the Craftsman: Lives, Stage, and Page*, ed. Sarah K. Scott and M. L. Stapleton (Ashgate, 2010), pp. 63-77.]

Most students of Elizabethan drama would agree with Bernard Spivack that, except for an occasional throwback, the period after 1590 “marks the dead end and dissolution of the allegorical drama, at least on the popular stage.”<sup>1</sup> According to this prevailing narrative the appearance in the mid 1580s of *The Spanish Tragedy* and *Tamburlaine* (in which Marlowe in his famous Prologue thumbed his nose at the “jigging veins of rhyming mother-wits” of the previous generation) began what Willard Thorp billed in 1928 as “the triumph of realism.”<sup>2</sup> My concern, however, is with continuity rather than breakthroughs, for I wish to pose a question: Even if fourteeners, overt allegory, and onstage sermons did (more or less) disappear, was the break with the dramatic forms and procedures of the 1560s, 1570s, and early 1580s as severe as assumed in this formulation? To borrow from Mark Twain, has the report of allegory’s death in the drama been greatly exaggerated?<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), p. 252.

<sup>2</sup> *Tamburlaine the Great*, ed. J. S. Cunningham, Revels Plays (Manchester and Baltimore: Manchester University Press, 1981), Part 1, Prologue.1. Thorp, *The Triumph of Realism in Elizabethan Drama, 1558-1612*, Princeton Studies in English #3 (Princeton, 1928).

<sup>3</sup> The authors of two recent studies have argued for continuity rather than a clean break. In *The Persistence of Allegory: Drama and Neoclassicism from Shakespeare to Wagner* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), Jane K. Brown notes that “dramatic practice is learned at least as much from plays seen and read as from treatises” (1-2), but her section on “the indigenous tradition of morality play” in which *Everyman* is singled out as the form’s “most famous and typical exemplar” (46-47) presents at best a partial overview of the moral plays that would have been known to Marlowe and Shakespeare. Far more telling is Ruth Lunney’s formulation in *Marlowe and the Popular Tradition: Innovation in the English Drama Before 1595* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2002). Her goal is to offer an account of the transition from the moral drama to the plays that follow “in which the role of Shakespeare is neither central nor defining and Marlowe is the catalyst of change”; her concern “is less with any grand narrative than with observing the voices on the other side of Shakespeare, in dialogue with each other in the playhouse” (8-9).

My focus is upon the various means available to the playwrights—what I term the original *theatrical vocabulary*—to present ideas and abstractions onstage.<sup>4</sup> I do *not* have in mind soliloquies or other set speeches that clearly enunciate a Big Idea, devices that are readily recognizable to today’s reader, but wish to single out other less visible techniques that can enhance the presentation of key motifs or images. Except for a few notable exceptions (Revenge in *The Spanish Tragedy*, Rumor in *2 Henry IV*, Time in *The Winter’s Tale*), identifiable allegorical personae do not survive as part of the mainstream of Elizabethan and Jacobean professional drama. Moreover, I am well aware that the “triumph of realism” narrative and its various successors have won the battle for the hearts and minds of Shakespeareans. Nonetheless, my thesis is that in the 1590s and thereafter a post-allegorical mode of presentation or “residual” allegory (to borrow a distinction from Raymond Williams) *does* persist, albeit in adapted form, in plays such as *Edward II* that lack onstage abstract figures.<sup>5</sup> And thereby hangs my tale.

## I

Consider first two seventeenth-century allusions. First, in his collection of epigrams published in 1610, John Heath describes a foolish playgoer: “Now at the *Globe* with a judicious eye, / Into the Vice’s action doth he pry.”<sup>6</sup> Standing alone, this reference to a moral play Vice at the Globe in the first decade of the seventeenth century

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<sup>4</sup> For a full exploration of this term see my *Recovering Shakespeare’s Theatrical Vocabulary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

<sup>5</sup> In his *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), Williams distinguishes among *dominant*, *emergent*, and *residual* elements in a given culture. “The residual,” he argues, “has been effectively formed in the past, but it is still active in the cultural process, not only and often not at all as an element of the past, but as an effective element of the present. Thus certain experiences, meanings, and values which cannot be expressed or substantially verified in terms of the dominant culture, are nevertheless lived and practised on the basis of the residue—cultural as well as social—of some previous social and cultural institution or formation” (122).

<sup>6</sup> *Two Centuries of Epigrammes* (London, 1610), E3v. Here and with other quotations from old spelling texts other than *The Faerie Queene* (*Apius and Virginia*; *All for Money*; *Horestes*; Nashe; Quarto *Edward II*) I have modernized the spelling.

sounds anomalous to our ears. But in the same vein consider a passage some fifteen years later, the comments of Jonson's choric gossips in the second intermean of *The Staple of News* (1626). When Mirth defines Pennyboy Senior as the Vice Covetousness, Tattle objects that he lacks a wooden dagger and a fiend "to carry him away," but Mirth explains:

That was the old way, gossip, when Iniquity came in like Hocus Pocus in a juggler's jerkin, with false skirts, like the Knave of Clubs. But now they are attired like men and women o'the time, the Vices male and female! Prodigality like a young heir, and his Mistress Money (whose favors he scatters like counters), pranked up like a prime Lady, the Infanta of the Mines.<sup>7</sup>

Here Jonson is glossing his own play to explain how moral play personae are being clothed in "modern" (1626) dress. The old style Vice, who had snapped his wooden dagger at his victims until carried off by the Devil, now is "attired like men and women o' the time." In this formulation, "the old way" associated with figures like Covetousness, Iniquity, and Prodigality has been replaced by a new way that metamorphoses the old style allegorical figure into a contemporary social type (a young heir, a usurer) whose function in society is in some way analogous. One of the major writers of the period both remembers distinctive features from the moral-allegorical plays and, even more revealing, finds a way to incorporate some of those features into his own satiric strategy—as he also did with his inversion of the Vice's exit to Hell on the Devil's back in *The Devil Is an Ass* (1616).

Of significance here are various interpretative problems and anomalies that result from the presentation of allegorical figures, theses, and actions on the stage as opposed to

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<sup>7</sup> *The Staple of News*, ed. Anthony Parr, Revels Plays (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1988), second intermean, 5-20 (pp. 147-48). Dates attached to plays are taken from the third edition of Alfred Harbage's *Annals of English Drama, 975-1700*, rev. S. Schoenbaum, rev. Sylvia Stoler Wagonheim (London: Routledge, 1989).

on the page. Formulations like Spivack's about the degeneration or death of allegory in drama are based primarily upon reading rather than seeing the plays, a process that gives undue prominence to the speech prefixes in the printed texts. Consider some earlier and later figures that perform comparable functions. For a playgoer as opposed to a reader, how much actually would separate Fellowship (*Everyman*) or Riot (*The Interlude of Youth*) from later good fellows or riotous companions with names like Pistol and Bardolph? How different are the unnamed murderers of Clarence in *Richard III* or Banquo in *Macbeth* from the villains who kill Smirdis in *Cambyses*, even though the latter figures are labeled Murder and Cruelty? How large is the gap, again from the perspective of a playgoer, between the Good Counsel figure of the moral plays, usually dressed as a clergyman, and the many friars or moral spokesmen in later plays, figures like the Old Man in *Doctor Faustus* or Friar Francis in *Much Ado About Nothing*? In *The Castle of Perseverance* Greed is dramatized in the person of Avaricia, one of the seven deadly sins, but George Wapull displays this sin in *The Tide Tarrieth No Man* (1576) by means of a grasping usurer named Greediness who acts out the pernicious influence of the Vice. How different, then, would be a playgoer's experience of an actor playing a merchant or usurer named Greediness, whose behavior is linked to the central thesis of the play, from that playgoer's experience of an actor playing Corvino, the covetous merchant in *Volpone*, whose behavior is also linked to Jonson's satiric thesis about gold and human values? Especially in the moral plays from the 1560s and thereafter (as opposed to *The Castle of Perseverance*, *Everyman*, or *Wit and Science*), the names of various personae in the printed texts may cloak a similarity in kind between nominally

allegorical figures and later characters like Corvino, Parolles, or Kent, a similarity easily missed by the reader when dealing with playscripts designed for a spectator.

In singling out various anomalies or residual traces of allegory, my purpose is not to allegorize Marlowe, Jonson, and Shakespeare but to suggest how moral abstractions that leap out at us from printed speech prefixes can become considerably less abstract when conditioned by the realities of stage performance. When a human actor takes on an allegorical role, something immediately happens that distinguishes the event from *The Romance of the Rose* or *The Faerie Queene*, a distance that becomes even greater when the actor is playing not the concept itself (as with Goods or Good Deeds in *Everyman*) but a social type that acts out that concept (a greedy merchant, a pious clergyman, a conscienceless murderer, a riotous tavern companion). Consider too the corollary: that not only may the late moral plays have seemed less “allegorical” in the theatre but also that many supposedly verisimilar or “real” dramatic characters and actions in the age of Shakespeare may have had more in common with the moral dramatists of the previous generation than with Ibsen and Henry James. Is the appearance of Shakespeare’s Rumor and Time merely an anomaly or throwback (think too of the Good and Evil Angels in *Doctor Faustus*) or are such clear allegorical signposts still part of a functioning theatrical vocabulary, as evident in plays from the 1590s such as *A Knack to Know a Knave*, *Old Fortunatus*, *A Warning for Fair Women*, and *Two Lamentable Tragedies*?

## II

A comparable distinction between allegory on the page, where the only limits are those imposed by the poet’s imagination, and allegory on the stage arises from the actions or configurations that can be displayed by means of the resources of a

professional repertory company (as opposed to a no-expense-spared event designed to be performed only once such as a court masque or city pageant). A representative example of on-the-page allegory is found in the death of Error at the hands of the Redcrosse

Knight at the outset of *The Faerie Queene*:

Therewith she spewd out of her filthy maw  
 A floud of poison horrible and blacke,  
 Full of great lumpes of flesh and gobbets raw,  
 Which stunck so vildly, that it forst him slacke  
 His grasping hold, and from her turne him backe:  
 Her vomit full of bookes and papers was,  
 With loathly frogs and toades, which eyes did lacke,  
 And creeping sought way in the weedy gras:  
 Her filthy parbreake all the place defiled has. (1.1.20)<sup>8</sup>

Some play narratives do involve the killing of a monster, but even Thomas Heywood, the playwright most adept at presenting seemingly impossible-to-stage scenes, might find it daunting to present a dying monster that “spewd out” or vomited “great lumpes of flesh and gobbets raw,” “bookes and papers,” and “loathly frogs and toades, which eyes did lacke.”<sup>9</sup> Such details (that allude to the religious controversies of the sixteenth century) are important as a point of departure for a book devoted to Holiness but would seem to defy the practicalities of the Elizabethan stage.

Nonetheless, a comparable effect *can* be seen in several allegorical and post-allegorical plays. In a pivotal moment in R. B.’s *Apus and Virginia* (1564), the figures

<sup>8</sup> *Edmund Spenser’s Poetry*, ed. Hugh MacLean (New York: Norton, 1968).

<sup>9</sup> For a discussion of Heywood’s staging expertise see Alan C. Dessen, “‘The difference betwixt reporting and representing’: Thomas Heywood and the Playgoer’s Imagination” in *Acts of Criticism: Performance Matters in Shakespeare and His Contemporaries*, ed. Paul Nelsen and June Schlueter (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2006), pp. 46-57.

of Conscience and Justice are directed to “*come out of*” Apius as he leaves the stage under the influence of the Vice in order to seek out and ravish Virginia.<sup>10</sup> No indication is given as to how this effect is to be achieved onstage. Closer to Spenser’s vomiting Error is the genealogy sequence in Thomas Lupton’s *All for Money* (1576) where over the course of roughly 200 lines, Money begets Pleasure who begets Sin who begets Damnation.<sup>11</sup> The initial stage direction calls for “*a chair for [Money] to sit in, and under it or near the same there must be some hollow place for one to come up in.*” Money then “*feigneth himself to be sick*” and soon after “*Here Money shall make as though he would vomit, and with some fine conveyance Pleasure shall appear from beneath, and lie there appareled*” (202, 248, 278). The process is repeated twice more for Pleasure-Sin and Sin-Damnation, so that by means of “*some fine conveyance*” X can vomit forth Y, at least as part of a moral play narrative. Also relevant is Thomas Nashe’s account of an episode in a lost anti-Martin Marprelate play where Divinity appeared “*holding of her heart as if she were sick, because Martin would have forced her, but missing of his purpose, he left the print of his nails upon her cheeks, and poisoned her with a vomit which he ministered unto her, to make her cast up her dignities and promotions.*”<sup>12</sup> As in *Apus and Virginia*, how Divinity vomited or “*cast up her dignities and promotions*” onstage is not revealed.

I can provide no comparable onstage vomits from the 1590s and thereafter, but two sequences, each in a climactic position in its play, can display how such a device can

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<sup>10</sup> *Apus and Virginia*, ed. Ronald B. McKerrow, Malone Society (London: Oxford University Press, 1911). The full stage direction reads: “*Here let him make as though he went out and let Conscience and Justice come out of him, and let Conscience hold in his hand a lamp burning and let Justice have a sword and hold it before Apus’ breast*” (500).

<sup>11</sup> *All for Money*, ed. Ernst Vogel, *Shakespeare Jahrbuch* 40 (1904): 129-86.

<sup>12</sup> *The Works of Thomas Nashe*, ed. Ronald B. McKerrow, 5 vols. (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1910), 1:92.

be adapted to a post-allegorical mode. First, in the final segment of Middleton's *The Phoenix* (1604) the crafty and litigious lawyer Tangle enters "mad" (15.268.s.d.) to spout forth legal terms, so that Phoenix comments "He's been so long in suits that he's law-mad" (275-79).<sup>13</sup> Quieto binds the madman "With silken patience" and proceeds to "sluice the Vein" while stating: "Now burst out / Thou filthy stream of trouble, spite, and doubt," at which point Tangle raves: "O, an extent, a proclamation, a summons, a recognizance, a tachment, an injunction, a writ, a seizure, a writ of 'praisement, an absolution, a quietus est'" (301, 306, 308-13). The cure is completed when Quieto explains:

The balsum of a temperate brain  
I pour into this thirsty vein,  
And with this blessed oil of quiet,  
Which is so cheap that few men buy it,  
Thy stormy temples I allay. (319-23)

The "vomit" has metamorphosed into a madman's expulsion of legal terms so as to be suitable to post-allegorical theatre.

A better known version of the same effect is found at the end of Jonson's *Poetaster* (1601) in Horace's administration of an emetic to Crispinus who then in high comic fashion vomits forth not legal terms or books, papers, and frogs but gobbets of John Marston's vocabulary "able to bastinado a man's ears" (5.3.384).<sup>14</sup> At Tiberius' command, a basin is brought forth and the accused is set at a bar, so that, once the physic begins to work, Crispinus expels into the basin a series of words which then are repeated

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<sup>13</sup> *The Phoenix*, ed. Lawrence Danson and Ivo Kamps, in *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works*, ed. Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), , 91-127.

<sup>14</sup> *The Poetaster*, ed. Tom Cain, *Revels Plays* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1995).

by Horace, starting with “*Retrograde, reciprocal, and incubus* are come up” and climaxing with “O - *obstupefact*” (462-63, 515). As in *The Phoenix* an allegorical vomit has been adjusted so that words, not solid objects, are spewed forth in keeping with the legal and literary issues of the two plays. To see the transition from *All for Money* and a lost Marprelate play to these Middleton and Jonson scenes is to witness the movement from overt to residual allegory within the limits of what could be enacted in the professional repertory theatre.

### III

In addition to personae and actions, a third legacy of the allegorical drama is linked to dramatic structure. Most scholarly formulations draw upon early moral plays such as *The Castle of Perseverance*, *Mankind*, and *Everyman* and focus on the Humanum Genus protagonist and the *psychomachia* tug-of-war for his soul, but to dwell primarily upon this line of descent is to oversimplify the evidence and to ignore the Vice, the predominant figure in English drama in the generation before Marlowe and Kyd. To establish onstage a sense of England as a whole, some moral dramatists did present a central figure surrounded by good and evil advisors (as in *Respublica* or *Albion Knight*), but a more common choice was the presentation of a cross-section of society as victims of the Vice (*Like Will to Like*, *The Tide Tarrieth No Man*, *The Three Ladies of London*).

Many of the moral plays from the 1560s and 1570s thereby display a jesting Vice who for most of the play brandishes his dagger of lath and has his moments of fun and dominance only to be arrested or eclipsed in a second climactic movement that brings under control him, his weapon, and the anti-social force he represents. For example, in *The Trial of Treasure* (1567) the Vice Inclination is bridled early in the play by Just and

Sapience but released by Lust whose “inclination” then leads to his destruction; at the play’s climax the Vice is led in again bridled and shackled by Just who is awarded the crown of Felicity. In the final segment of Wapull’s *The Tide Tarrieth No Man* the same dagger used by Courage the Vice to dominate his victims through most of the play fails to protect its wielder when juxtaposed with the sword of God’s Authority and the Correction that accompanies it, so that, once the Vice has been taken off under arrest, Faithful Few can restore Christianity’s sword of Truth and shield of Faith to their pristine state, the culminating action of the play. The formula implicit in other moral plays is here spelled out in terms of two sets of weapons, two contrasting powers, and two phases of the action that, taken together, present one moral thesis.<sup>15</sup>

#### IV

The play that best illustrates Marlowe’s approach to residual allegory is not *Doctor Faustus*, with its Good and Evil Angels and, at least in the B-text, its heavenly throne and Hell-mouth, but *Edward II*, with its seemingly verisimilar world populated by English kings and other notables. Consider first the play’s three bishops. In his invaluable Revels edition Charles Forker notes that the 1594 Quarto designates the Archbishop of Canterbury in his various appearances simply as “Bishop” and that none of the three bishops in this play appears onstage with another, so that Marlowe “could perhaps have been using ‘*Bishop*’ generically for an actor who would play more than one episcopal part.”<sup>16</sup> The figure assaulted by Gaveston in the opening scene *is* identified as the Bishop of Coventry (see Q1 183-84; 1.1.173.s.d, 174); then, as Forker notes, the

<sup>15</sup> For a fuller discussion of this two-phased technique see chapter 2 of my *Shakespeare and the Late Moral Plays* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986).

<sup>16</sup> *Edward II*, ed. Charles R. Forker, Revels Plays (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), 9. Citations from the 1594 Quarto of *Edward II* are from the Malone Society reprint, ed. W. W. Greg (London: Oxford University Press, 1925).

figure who condemns the treatment of Coventry in 1.2 and 1.4 is labeled “*the Bishop of Canterbury*” at his initial entrance and “*Bish.*” thereafter.

My concern, however, is with the episcopal figure (again, readily identified by his costume) who appears in 5.1 to retrieve the crown from a reluctant Edward II. The initial stage direction is: “*Enter the king, Leicester, with a Bishop for the crown*” (Q1 2110-11; 5.1.0) and the three subsequent speech prefixes are “*Bish.*” (Q1 2149, 2203, 2210). In the next scene, no stage direction is provided for this figure’s reappearance to Mortimer and Isabella, but the queen offers her thanks to “gentle Winchester” whose immediate reply “The king hath willingly resigned his crown” (Q1 2312-14; 5.2.27-28) is labeled “*Winchester*” (his second longer speech is prefixed “*Bish.*” in Q1, 2316). As a result, editors understandably read the “Winchester” specified in 5.2 back into the personage who was left unidentified in 5.1.

Such concern with historical accuracy or on-the-page tidiness, however, may mask a distinctive onstage effect, for the playgoer watching Edward relinquish his crown sees not a named historical figure but rather an actor in a distinctive bishop costume. As noted earlier, in the Elizabethan moral plays verisimilar figures and allegorical labels are regularly telescoped together (as with Wapull’s Greediness the usurer) to highlight a major motif. A good example is provided by John Pickering’s *Horestes* (1567), for when the title figure asks for advice on how to revenge his father’s death, King Idumeus turns to a figure identified in the speech prefix as “*Councell*” and says: “My counciler how do you think, let us your counsell have, / How think you by this thing, the which Horestes now doth crave.”<sup>17</sup> Here a persona with the speech prefix *Councell* is identified in the

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<sup>17</sup> *The Interlude of Vice (Horestes)*, ed. Daniel Seltzer, Malone Society (London: Oxford University Press, 1962). Here I have modernized the spelling but retained the original spelling of *councell* and *councilor*.

dialogue as a “councilor” who gives “councell” (308-10). When Horestes exits with the Vice, Idumeus again asks: “My councell now declare to me, how think you by this wight” (340); later, after Horestes rejects the “counsel” of Nature not to kill his mother, he gets further advice from Idumeus:

Therefore take councell first before, thou dost any thing.  
 For councell as *Plato* doth tell, is sure a heavenly thing.  
 And *Socrates* a certainty doth say, councell doth bring.  
 Of things in doubt for *Livy* says, no man shall him repent,  
 That hath before he worked ought, his time in councell spent (580-84)

As used by this moral dramatist, Council-Counsel is a running motif spread among several speakers, including one labeled as Council, as when the king and his advisor exit with the line: “Come on my councell now from hence, we purpose for to wend” (641). In this onstage allegory an actor in an appropriate costume (as a courtier? a clergyman?) can simultaneously convey both the role of councilor to a king and the abstraction Counsel.

With the bishop in 5.1 Marlowe uses the same combination of the verisimilar and the abstract. In his long note Forker reviews the various candidates for this unnamed figure and concludes: “Probably Marlowe . . . originally had no particular bishop in mind for the retrieval of the crown but decided on Winchester for reasons of stage economy. Since the queen addresses Winchester by name in the following scene when he delivers the crown physically (5.2.27), it must also be Winchester who participates in the action at this point.”<sup>18</sup> But the *must be* of an editor, historian, or literal-minded reader may miss or blur the point and thereby, by prizing one kind of narrative-historical logic over Marlowe’s, mask a distinctive effect. What if this anonymous episcopal figure is wearing

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<sup>18</sup> Forker, note to 5.1.0 (270).

the same costume and perhaps is played by the same actor who represented the Bishop of Coventry who had been humiliated in 1.1?

What difference does the choice make? If the bishop who fetches the crown in 5.1 clearly echoes Coventry, he would then form part one of a one-two punch against Edward that replicates the humiliation, abuse, and stripping of honors from the earlier bishop in 1.1 where Edward had told Gaveston: “Throw off his golden mitre, rend his stole / And in the channel christen him anew” (1.1.186-87)—with the second blow in this sequence, the onstage shaving and bathing in channel water, to follow in 5.3. Such an echo or onstage rhyming action also follows from Edward’s failure to find sanctuary with the Abbot, so that his initial offenses against the clergy more clearly come back to haunt him. Yes, the 5.1 bishop does metamorphose into Winchester in 5.2, but that HC (i.e., Historically Correct) identification masks the potential effect of the unnamed bishop in 5.1 who, like Pickering’s Council figure, serves as both a functional social type (here an episcopal delivery boy) and an abstract embodiment of a religious dimension earlier abused by a frivolous, impolitic young king. In spite of the factual-historical differences important to an editor or historian, the momentary telescoping together of the two bishop figures *could* be an essential part of the play’s “imagery” (an adaptation of a device commonplace in the late moral plays), a use of figures of religion to body forth the role of Religion in the world of this play. The impulse to distinguish between the two bishops could therefore be counter-productive, a disservice to Marlowe’s strategy.

As a second example, consider a less than memorable moment a few scenes later. Even those familiar with this play may not remember the Champion who appears only at the end of 5.4 (the coronation of Edward III) to speak one four-line speech. Indeed, any

production today that is short on personnel will cut the figure entirely (at London's Bankside Globe in 2003 he was present but said nothing). The scene as a whole is preceded by 5.3, the shaving and washing in puddle water of Edward II, and is followed by 5.5, his murder. It begins with a Mortimer soliloquy that sets up the unpointed letter (1-21) followed by Mortimer's interview with Lightborn (21-45), after which comes another Mortimer soliloquy (46-70) expressing his confidence (or overconfidence). At this point the 1594 Quarto provides a massed entry for Edward III, the Archbishop of Canterbury (cited as "*bishop*"), the Champion, unspecified nobles, and Queen Isabella. After Canterbury starts the ceremony with "Long live King Edward," the Champion makes his one contribution:

If any Christian, Heathen, Turk, or Jew  
Dares but affirm that Edward's not true king,  
And will avouch his saying with the sword,  
I am the Champion that will combat him.

Mortimer responds: "None comes. Sound trumpets" and the boy-king adds "Champion, here's to thee" (5.4.71-77).

Clearly Edward III's "here's to thee" requires a gesture or action, whether a salute of some kind or, according to Forker's historical reconstruction of the coronation ceremony, a toast with a goblet, and/or the subsequent handing of a valuable object to the Champion (as opposed to a young boy-king handing over his beloved teddy bear or a dead gerbil).<sup>19</sup> Moments earlier in the same scene Mortimer had given a letter to Lightborn ("Deliver this to Gurney and Matrevis," 5.4.40) and then added "Take this" (42), for which Forker inserts a bracketed "*Giving a token.*" Although Forker's glosses

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<sup>19</sup> See Forker's long note to 5.4.70 (301).

and insertions make excellent sense, what interests me is an alternative rationale linked to what I take to be Marlowe's typically ironic, deflationary technique—here a playing with the notion of a “champion.” If Lightborn is handed a ring as token (“Take this”) and the Champion is handed a goblet (“here's to thee”), no emphatic link is forged between the two figures. In contrast, if both are handed the same object (a ring, a purse) in comparable fashion within forty lines of the same scene, some such connection can be *italicized*, even for a first-time viewer.

Why would such a link be suggestive or meaningful? To explore such a question one need look closely at the important role played by Edmund, Earl of Kent (Edward II's brother and Edward III's uncle). The figure identified as the Champion who speaks his four lines is part of a coronation that, as presented by Marlowe, is a hollow ceremony, as signaled by Mortimer's soliloquy that precedes this segment (e.g., “the queen and Mortimer / Shall rule the realm, the king, and none rule us” - 63-64) and reinforced by his dismissive “None comes. Sound trumpets.” The only figure who *truly* champions Edward the father and Edward the son is Kent who in 5.3 tries and fails to rescue his brother (“Lay down your weapons; traitors, yield the king!” - 55) and then, in spite of appeals from his nephew who has just been crowned, is haled away to his death. Kent sums up the family dilemma: “Either my brother or his son is king, / And none of both them thirst for Edmund's blood” (5.4.103-4). The absence of any true (as opposed to ceremonial) Champion is summed up in Edward III's speech as his uncle is dragged off the stage: “What safety may I look for at his [i.e., Mortimer's] hands, / If that my uncle shall be murdered thus?” (5.4.106-7). The boy-king *does* need a Champion, but the figure

who is publicly associated with that role is a ceremonial cipher, whereas the figure who actually champions his brother and nephew has failed, at the cost of his life.

Consider further the staging of Kent's exit from the scene and the play. He had entered under guard and departs in similar fashion (see 5.4.78.s.d., 105.s.d.); the soldiers who initially accompany Kent are slow to follow Mortimer's orders, but Kent's last line reveals that the soldiers eventually do comply (99, 101, 105). But what if the Champion, no longer a purely ceremonial figure, also participates in the halting off of Edmund? Such choosing of sides or potential rewards would follow from Mortimer's comments just before the coronation began ("Mine enemies will I plague, my friends advance, / And what I list command who dare control?" - 5.4.65-66). Does Marlowe's inclusion of this Champion simply reflect a desire for ceremonial authenticity (as implied in Forker's explanatory note) or may he be providing first an exponent and then a perverter of values essential for the health of this kingdom?

To return to my analogies, the Champion, who receives some object of value from Edward III, is, at least on the page, a ceremonial non-entity. Lightborn, who receives an object of value (a ring, purse, or jewel) from Mortimer—and subsequently is given a jewel by Edward II (5.5.83)—is a hit man, a murderous champion of Mortimer's cause (who, like Kent, receives death as his reward). Meanwhile, Edmund (the only true champion) and the two Edwards, father and son, are helpless against Mortimer despite the coronation Champion's rhetoric.

As I understand this scene, the ceremonial Champion is given his brief moment center stage not merely to reproduce a facet of the coronation but to highlight something missing from the world of the play. Forker's HC reading may be valid, but does it best

serve the imagery and linkages at the climax of this complex story? For me, the network of images and ideas is most fully realized if purses and/or rings are given to first Lightborn, then the Champion, and Edmund is haled off stage with the assistance of the Champion who, despite the reward received from the boy-king, follows Mortimer's commands. To invoke details from the historical record can be a compelling argument, but, as with the unnamed Bishop in 5.1, what if that invocation eclipses other links and images of equal or greater importance? As with the Council figure in *Horestes*, Marlowe here telescopes together a verisimilar figure and an abstraction so as to foreground onstage, albeit with residual rather than overt allegory, a concept of "champion" that contributes to our understanding of the final movement of this play.

Another unhistorical image that helps to explore the young king's inability to prevent the death of his uncle had been established earlier. Midway in the play the barons are about to execute Gaveston when they are confronted with Edward II's request, conveyed by Arundel, to see his favorite one last time. After some debate, these nobles honor Pembroke's pledge to comply with this request and then bring Gaveston back; they depart leaving onstage Pembroke, Arundel, Gaveston, and Pembroke's men. After Pembroke invites Arundel to his house and the invitation is accepted, the Quarto reads:

*Pembroke:* So, my lord. Come hither, James.

I do commit this Gaveston to thee;

Be thou this night his keeper. In the morning

We will discharge thee of thy charge; be gone.

*Gaveston:* Unhappy Gaveston, whither goest thou now?

*Exit cum servis Pen.*

*Horse-Boy:* My lord, we'll quickly be at Cobham.

*Exeunt ambo.* [Q1 1346-53; 2.5.104-10]

The stage direction then follows immediately: “*Enter Gaveston mourning, and the Earl of Pembroke’s men*” (Q1 1354-55; 2.6.0.s.d.).<sup>20</sup> Within a few lines Warwick and his company enter to reject James’s pleas and to whisk away Gaveston to his death; James can only comment “Come, fellows, it booteth not for us to strive. / We will in haste go certify our lord” (2.6.19-20).

Editors have puzzled over the presence of the speech prefix that gives one line to a “*Horse-boy*.” Indeed, one editor (Roma Gill) eliminated that speech prefix entirely, reassigning the line to Pembroke.<sup>21</sup> Most editors reprint the prefix and line with no explanation, other than to puzzle over to whom the various exit signals pertain. My understanding is that Pembroke and Arundel leave the stage together (“*ambo*”), and Gaveston departs with James and his retinue. But why does Marlowe call attention to the horse-boy who is not otherwise mentioned and indeed would have disappeared entirely from the play-text were it not for this one speech prefix?

To suspend for a moment the logic of realism-verisimilitude, consider the possibility that the otherwise unidentified James, in spite of the responsibility entrusted him, is not Pembroke’s senior retainer but is rather a youth dressed in a riding outfit; the horse-boy’s line then would be a parting address to his master as James follows Gaveston and the other servants offstage, with Pembroke and Arundel then leaving by another stage door. Indeed, the formal exit of the larger party need not be completed, for Gaveston’s group could go to a stage door, start to depart, and then return quickly, as if pursued by Warwick’s men. In this staging, James, attired as a horse-boy, would try in vain to protect

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<sup>20</sup> Forker’s three stage directions read: “*Exit [Gaveston] with Servants of Pembroke [including James]”; “Exeunt [Pembroke and Arundel, attended]”; and “Enter Gaveston mourning, and the Earl of Pembroke’s Men [four Soldiers including James]” (2.5.108, 109; 2.6.0).*

<sup>21</sup> See *The Plays of Christopher Marlowe*, ed. Roma Gill (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 293.

Gaveston but eventually must stand by helplessly when a superior force takes away his charge.

My purpose in belaboring the potential onstage image presented by this seemingly extraneous figure becomes clear when one returns to the similar situation facing the other boy in the play, Edward III (who may have been played by the same child actor). At the end of the coronation scene, in spite of the pleas of the newly crowned king, Mortimer sentences Kent to death, so that the stage direction reads: “*They hale Edmund Earl of Kent away, and carry him to be beheaded.*” The dialogue then reads:

*King:* What safety may I look for at his hands,

If that my uncle shall be murdered thus?

*Isabella:* Fear not, sweet boy, I'll guard thee from thy foes.

Had Edmund lived, he would have sought thy death.

Come, son, we'll ride a-hunting in the park.

*King:* And shall my uncle Edmund ride with us?

*Isabella:* He is a traitor; think not on him. Come. (5.4.106-12)

Here Edward III, rather than James, stands by powerlessly while Mortimer, rather than Warwick, takes away by force Kent, rather than Gaveston, to his death. To heighten the link, the players then or now need only have an attendant (or the queen herself) take off the young king's regalia during the speeches above and supply a riding costume, even a crop. A playgoer thereby would be presented with visual evidence of a recurring pattern whereby specious claims about the good of the monarch and the realm (as iterated by the barons and Mortimer) consistently can override honor, loyalty, and simple justice. On a deeper level Marlowe is exploring the image of the king as a rider who cannot yet

control his horse of state.<sup>22</sup> By one kind of logic, the entrusting of an important political prisoner to a horse-boy makes little sense, but, if the stage imagery of these two scenes is analogous, a larger theatrical logic could set up a meaningful effect. What at first appears to be an excrescent figure midway in the action may instead be both a foreshadowing of and a revealing key to a major moment in this rich, complex play.

The generic Bishop of 5.1, the Champion of 5.4, and the horse-boy-Edward III analogue are then linked to a climactic moment in the final scene where, hard upon the horrible death of Edward II, Mortimer too is confronted and executed. Of interest here is why, in Marlowe's unhistorical formulation, the boy-king, who had stood by helplessly in 5.4 while his uncle was haled away to his death, now has the wherewithal to bring down Mortimer and sequester his mother.<sup>23</sup> One explanation is provided by Mortimer's oft-cited speech in which he blames his fall on "Base Fortune" (5.6.58-65), but a closer look at the components of the sequence can provide additional insight.

The scene starts with Matrevis' revelation to Mortimer that Gurney has fled and will likely "[b]etray us both," but Mortimer compares himself to "Jove's huge tree" and rejects any such threat: "All tremble at my name, and I fear none; / Let's see who dare impeach me for his death" (5.6.8, 11-14). He then casually dismisses Isabella's news of

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<sup>22</sup> A good example of the horse-rider image applied to government is found in *Measure for Measure* where Claudio offers explanations to Lucio why the new deputy Angelo is rigorously enforcing a law that has long been neglected: "Or whether that the body public be / A horse whereon the governor doth ride, / Who, newly in the seat, that it may know / He can command, lets it straight feel the spur" (1.2.159-62). My citation is from *The Riverside Shakespeare*, rev. edition, ed. G. Blakemore Evans (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1997).

<sup>23</sup> Forker's detailed and revealing discussion of Marlowe's treatment of his sources (pp. 41-66) provides multiple examples of the dramatist's ability "to select, compress, rearrange, simplify, and shape" the "inchoate materials" from Holinshed and Stowe (p. 44). He notes that "only in 1330—three years into the reign of Edward III" did "the arraignment and execution of Mortimer for Edward II's murder" take place (p. 45) and that "[i]n Holinshed Kent is beheaded several years after the king's murder" and "[t]he boy king's attempt to save his uncle from execution (not in Holinshed) is Marlowe's own idea" (p. 57). He also characterizes figures such as the Mower ("an obvious personification of death") and Lightborn (who, "as his name suggests, is more devil than man") as "symbolic, even quasi-allegorical" (p. 60).

her son's reaction to his father's death ("The king is yet a child" - 17), though she responds:

Ay, ay, but he tears his hair and wrings his hands,  
 And vows to be revenged upon us both.  
 Into the council chamber he is gone  
 To crave the aid and succour of his peers." (18-21)

The Quarto stage direction that follows her speech reads: "*Enter the king, with the lords*" (Q1 2801) which Forker expands to "*Enter the King [Edward III] with the Lords [and Attendants]*" (23.s.d.).

Who are these "*lords*"? How many are included in this open or permissive signal? Since this scene is totally unhistorical (as opposed to the retrieval of the crown in 5.1 or the coronation ceremony in 5.4), an editor or literal-minded reader may treat these figures as mere super-numeraries (as with the comparable "*Nobles*" [5.4.70.s.d.] who were part of the group entry that began the coronation), a convenient theatrical shorthand or synecdoche for the "council chamber" and "succour of his peers" cited by Isabella. As with the horse-boy earlier, their two speeches are certainly not impressive: an encouraging "Fear not, my lord; know that you are a king" just after the group entrance; and (directed at Mortimer) "Why speak you not unto my lord the king?" (24, 37). Both speech prefixes are "*Lords*" in the Quarto but are usually changed to "*First Lord*" or something comparable by Forker and other editors.

Although seemingly inconsequential on the page, these lords may have been an integral part of Marlowe's summary formulation, so that their number (two? three? four?) and costumes could be significant. Starting in the first scene and extending through the first third of the play, Edward II's favoring of Gaveston had driven a wedge between the

king and his barons-nobles-lords (Marlowe uses all three terms interchangeably). The group entrance in 1.1 specifies four nobles: Lancaster, Mortimer Senior, Mortimer Junior, and Warwick; to this group 1.2 adds Canterbury and 1.4 adds Pembroke; after 1.4 Mortimer Senior disappears from the play and Canterbury does not reappear until the coronation in 5.4. Mortimer Junior, Lancaster, Warwick, and Pembroke are the four who take an oath “to defy the king” (2.2.109), are joined by the discontented Kent, parley with Arundel about the fate of Gaveston, confront the king and his forces, and enter in defeat in 3.2. At this point these lords, with the notable exception of Mortimer Junior, disappear from the play.

One highly ironic moment in this sequence warrants more attention. Edward II, overjoyed at the repeal of Gaveston (and unaware of the ulterior motives behind that repeal), offers rewards to his five nobles after his newly reconciled queen points out:

My gentle lord, bespeak these nobles fair  
That wait attendance for a gracious look  
And on their knees salute your majesty. (1.4.336-38)

A playgoer may note the irony in the barons’ kneeling in response to the king’s largesse, but Edward is oblivious. Moreover, Isabella’s summary, “Now is the king of England rich and strong, / Having the love of his renowned peers” (365-66), calls our attention to what could have been a snapshot of an ideal kingdom wherein king and peers are working in harmony, a snapshot known by the playgoer to be hollow and misleading. Like the moral dramatists, Marlowe has crafted a distinctive summary image of the situation in England but in a manner befitting the verisimilar surface of the world of his play.

Theatrically and historically, these barons (with the exception of Mortimer Junior) are gone by the coronation and the final scene - hence the unspecified “*Nobles*” and “*Lords*” in the Quarto. But that 1.4 configuration (hollow though it may have been), in which “these nobles fair” and “renowned peers” salute the reigning king “on their knees,” may resurface in the play’s final moments when the young Edward III enters not alone, as with the haling off of Kent in 5.4 (where the attendant nobles had no voice or active function), but with the backing of the unnamed lords (“Fear not, my lord; know that you are a king”; “Why speak you not unto my lord the king?”).<sup>24</sup> Some of the actors who had played the barons in the first half of this play may have already been recycled to play such figures as Rice ap Howell, Matrevis, Gurney, Leicester, and Lightborn, but whether by means of casting or costume (and here the possible presence of a generic Bishop figure should be factored in) a strong echo of the group in 1.4 at odds with Edward II that had kneeled in mock reconciliation can suggest the climactic presence under the previously impotent boy-king of a newly meaningful combination that can surprise and overcome Mortimer and Isabella.<sup>25</sup> The earlier hollow combination of king and peers which is superseded by the nobles rallying around Edward III corresponds to the two-phased movement of many moral plays noted earlier wherein the dominance of the Vice is superseded in the final movement by the emergence of figures with names such as Authority, Correction, and Justice who arrest or otherwise corral the previously

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<sup>24</sup> In addition, if one takes literally the Quarto’s speech prefixes for these two lines, they would be delivered not by a single speaker but by two or more “*Lords*,” a staging that could enhance the sense of unity (“Now is the king of England rich and strong, / Having the love of his renowned peers” - 1.4.365-66) as opposed to the division clearly visible during the reign of Edward II.

<sup>25</sup> For an alternative account of structural links in this play see Sarah Munson Deats, “Marlowe’s Fearful Symmetry in *Edward II*,” in “*A Poet and a Filthy Play-maker*”: *New Essays on Christopher Marlowe*, ed. Kenneth Friedenreich, Roma Gill, and Constance B. Kuriyama (New York: AMS Press, 1988), 241-62.

unstoppable force. Again, Marlowe has adapted an older theatrical vocabulary to his own purposes.

To conclude, Marlowe is of particular importance in any investigation of the post-allegorical mode in Elizabethan drama, for, as opposed to the sermons in theatrical form provided by playwrights from the 1560s and 1570s, he does not preach to his audience but rather dispenses with heavy-handed didacticism while still retaining residual elements of their symbolic-allegorical technique. He was therefore able to make use of an earlier Elizabethan theatrical vocabulary for his own distinctive sardonic or deflationary purposes and, in the process, both entertain and confound his playgoers. My goal is not to allegorize Marlowe's plays but to argue in favor of a mode of presentation that falls between the full scale allegory seen in *The Castle of Perseverance*, *Everyman*, and *Wit and Science* and the realism-verisimilitude taken for granted today. Verdicts such as "The Death of Allegory" and "The Triumph of Realism" may be premature.