RICE UNIVERSITY

Tamburlaine the Great: Triumph of the Will

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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ART

Thesis Director's signature:

Houston, Texas

May, 1967
Abstract

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The Renaissance interest in ontology expresses itself through its astrological, mythological, and cosmological views of the world. This concern for understanding the precise nature and function of the individual is thus particularly important in the drama of the era, which frequently focused on the problem of the individual—the problem of examining and understanding his precise nature as well as his precise role in the ordered world of the Renaissance. This thesis examines the ontological concerns of the Renaissance in general and of Tamburlaine the Great in particular in an attempt to demonstrate how radically at odds are the worlds, values, and premises of Part I and Part II.

Chapter One examines the Renaissance concern for ontology as it is expressed in astrology and mythology. The Renaissance emphasis on self-knowledge and on the proper balance of will and understanding is also examined as another manifestation of its ontological concern. Ovid's concept of metamorphosis is similarly discussed.

Chapter Two studies the intellectual environment of Christopher Marlowe. By training and temperament Marlowe was interested in the individual and in the
potentialities and limitations of man's being. His dramatic works are filled with mythological allusions and astrological references which reflect his ontological awareness.

Chapter Three examines Tamburlaine's ontological motivation in Part I. Its premises are that Tamburlaine is an earthly god who apotheosizes himself by means of the steadfastness of his will. His thirst for sovereignty and his obsession for conquest and power are discussed as emanations of his ontological desire to attain complete freedom.

Chapter Four compares the premises of Part II with those of Part I to demonstrate the thematic differences between the two plays. In Part II Tamburlaine is not a god but rather an agent of the Deity. It is significant, however, in light of the ontological concerns of Part I that Tamburlaine's death in Part II is not a retributive punishment for his sins but rather an ontological manifestation of his humanity.
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Chapter One: Ontology in an Ordered World

Only in the twentieth century have scholars come to realize the transitional and yet traditional nature of the Renaissance. For over two centuries that era—with men like Luther, Galileo, and Marlowe—was seen as revolutionary, radical, iconoclastic. Copernicus destroyed Ptolemaic astronomy, it was believed, at the same time that the market system was emerging from the feudal world of fief and serf. The Reformation attacked and defeated what had previously been blasphemous to question. The new order replaced the old in religion, economics, science. With upheavals in abstract and suprapersonal realms of thought, it followed that the individual's way of viewing himself in himself as well as in society concomitantly altered. Feudalism destroyed, its loyalties and interdependencies broken, the individual, willingly or not, had to rely on himself for survival. He had to rely on his own ego to find order in the chaos created by capitalism, Reformation, and nationalism. As private interpretation was the trend in religion, so individualism was the order of the era in society. So the theory said, anyway.¹

In a pantomime performed at the wedding festivities of the Duke of Burgundy, Charles the Bold (1447-77), and Mary of York (1446-1503), the hall was decorated with tapestries depicting the exploits of Hercules.² Hercules
also appears in the *Combat of Ratio and Libido* by the Italian sculptor Baccio Bandinelli (1493-1560). He is the champion of Virtue, united with Mercury, Saturn, and Jupiter against Cupid, Venus, and Vulcan, who represent Passion.³ Reason watches the battle from above—a gracious woman with one hand stretched over the defenders of Virtue in a blessing. With her other hand Reason thrusts a burning heart towards the defenders of Passion. At the same time she sheds light on Hercules and his comrades while covering Cupid, Venus, and Vulcan with dense clouds. The moral of the whole is made explicit by its legend: "O mortals, learn that the stars are as superior to clouds as Holy Reason is to base desires."⁴

In a study of Renaissance ontology the pagan gods such as Hercules are particularly important. Their frequent and pervasive appearances throughout all facets of Renaissance life illustrate the Renaissance's conceptual indebtedness to the Middle Ages. Intellectual interest had shifted from the general to the specific, from man as a species to man as an individual.⁵ Where the medieval era had relied on the pagan gods to portray religious dogma archetypally, the Renaissance "nationalized" the gods to aid in its examinations of the precise nature and function of the individual. In the Renaissance, therefore, ontological concerns express themselves in the more explicitly humanistic studies of the precise nature of man
as an individual. Despite its emphasis on the individual, however, the Renaissance was one with the medieval era in its cosmological and metaphysical concepts. Belief in the divine order of the world, for example, characterized the Renaissance no less than the medieval world. It is the emphases and areas of interest within the common theocentric framework that form an "intellectual line of demarcation" between the two.

An intense in being qua being and man qua man is incorporated in both the pagan and Christian mythologies of the era. In both the emphasis is most frequently on the individual and the individual's relationship to the cosmos. In other areas, too, a concern for ontology is similarly apparent. Astrology, for example, was particularly important to the Renaissance because it involved man's relationship to Fortune and correlated the physical with the spiritual. In a similar fashion Ovid's concept of metamorphosis as well as the Renaissance emphasis on self-knowledge may be seen to reflect an ontological concern for the precise nature of man.

Although nearly all the pagan gods survived in one way or another through the medieval era, to its latter years and to the earlier years of the Renaissance Hercules was one of the more popular. Frequently Hercules was seen as the epitome of the pagan virtues of strength, perseverance, and valour. Will as opposed to understanding
was his forte. In him will and being were synonymous. In its magnificence and power Hercules stood as an exemplar to all mortals. By emulating his strength man could approach if not attain divinity. Thus Hercules appears again and again in every facet of late medieval and early Renaissance life.

In 1510, for example, a Ferrarese embassy arrived in Rome to escort Lucrezia Borgia to Ferrara to marry Alfonso d'Este. One of the pageants performed in honor of the embassy depicted a Battle between Fortune and Hercules. Juno sends Fortune to fight her old adversary, but Hercules wins and imprisons Fortune. Only upon the promise that neither Juno nor Fortune ever interferes with the houses of Borgia and Este does Hercules set Fortune free. Here, as in the wedding festivities of the Duke of Borgia, Hercules controls destiny itself because of his steadfast will.

On a more serious level Hercules and Fortune are once more portrayed as enemies. In Giordano Bruno's Spaccio della bestia trionfante, written in 1584, Zeus denies Fortune's request that she be given Hercules' place in the heavenly constellations. Instead, Hercules' place is assigned to Valour, which is portrayed as the tamer of Fortune: "Valour is unyielding to vice, unconquerable by suffering, constant through danger, severe against cupidity, contemptuous of wealth." Valour, here equated with
steadfastness of will, defends man from evil and provides a means of controlling destiny similar to that provided by Hercules' example. The moral is clear: a strong will is necessary if man is to avoid the control of Fortune.

That Hercules appears in so many and such diverse areas of Renaissance life demonstrates how many medieval notions survived the onslaught of science and humanism and continued to explain and define the nature of man and the constitution of life. Unsuccessful in its early attempts to eradicate pagan mythologies, Christianity had gradually blended the accidents of paganism with its own customs and ceremonies. In the middle of the fourth century A.D., for example, the date of the Nativity was fixed as "the same day which had marked the birth of the Sun in the pagan religions, since the yearly course of each new sun has its beginning then." Pagan gods such as Juno and pagan heroes such as Hercules were euhemeristically portrayed as "merely earthly rulers, whom the gratitude or adulation of their subjects had raised to a place in heaven." Throughout the Middle Ages the human origin of the pagan gods was seen as parallel to the human origin of the Christian saints. Euhemerism constituted their "patent of nobility." Indeed, had not Cicero expressed his belief in euhemerism?--"Totum prope caelum...nonne genere humano completum est?" By emulating the gods--pagan though they be--man could apotheosize himself and
attain immortality. Indeed, down to Milton's time, Hercules was frequently seen as an archetypal Christ. His strength of will was seen as similar to the perseverance Christ manifested during His forty days in the desert and during His agony in the garden.¹⁴

Mythological characters were also seen as actual historical personages. Their exploits and achievements were equated with those of the heroes and villains of the Old Testament. In the Supplementum Chronicarum of Jacopo da Bergamo (1483), for example, Lot and Isaac are discussed immediately after the Ops, Caelus, Uranus, Vesta, and Semiramis and only a little before Cybele, Pallas, and Diana.¹⁵ Bruno Latini (1212-1294) in The Book of The Treasure places Hercules side by side with Moses, Solon, Lycurgus, Numa, Pompilius, and the Greek king Phoroneus as among the first legislators, who by instituting codes of law saved the nations of men from the ruin to which their own original frailty and impurity would have condemned them.¹⁶

The importance of the pagan gods in Renaissance life may be inferred from their ubiquity in the feasts, celebrations, and, in particular, the various literary works of the time. In this respect, as Jean Seznec says, "no break is discernible between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance; the same considerations which have protected the gods continue to assure their survival."¹⁷ With the increase of nationalism throughout Europe, for example,
the Renaissance was at least as obsessed as the medieval era had been with identifying pagan gods and heroes as the founders of the European nations and the fathers of their peoples. Merovingian scholars invented the legend that the Franks descended from the Trojan Francus just as the Romans had descended from Aeneas. In Illustrationes de Gaule et singularites de Troie, which achieved great popularity in the sixteenth century, Jean Lemaire de Belges (1473-c.1525) declares that the Bretons were descendants of Brutus, the Spaniards of Hesperus, the Italians descendants of Italus, and the Tuscans of Tuscus. A treatise written in the fifth century by Paulus Orosius which treated the past of myth and fable albeit unsympathetically went through twenty editions in the sixteenth century. National identity no less than personal identity fascinated the era which focused its intellectual energies on understanding the role of the individual in what it believed was an ordered cosmos. Individual nations corresponded to individual men. Apart from generic characteristics which every member of a group possessed, the individuating qualities of each of its members must also be understood and appreciated.

No less than his medieval ancestor the Renaissance man was concerned with the past as a key to understanding his own nature as well as the nature of the world in which he lived. As Ernst Cassirer puts it, the Renaissance was
"a time when intellectual forms dominated and filled life; a time when even festival pageants were influenced by the basic thoughts concerning freedom, destiny, and the relationship of man to the world." The fact that the pagan gods not only survived but actually thrived in the Renaissance, the fact that they were so well woven into every fiber of Renaissance life also demonstrates the Renaissance thirst for knowledge both about man's nature and about the potentialities and limitations of that nature. Thus the ubiquity of the pagan gods of euhemeristic species and the mythical heroes of suprahuman abilities.

This Renaissance fascination with the concept of man's identity is also reflected in the popularity of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, which was "probably the most commonly read and quoted work outside of the Bible." Disputations over transubstantiation alerted the Renaissance mind to its metaphysical implications, as did the problem of the hypostatic union. If bread and wine could be transformed into Body and Blood (as Christians had believed for fifteen centuries), was it not possible that man himself could be transformed into demon or deity? Were not Hercules, Venus, and Diana of mortal origin? Hamlet is a true Renaissance man in his interest in man's identity. In Act II he philosophizes to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern:

What a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason! How infinite in faculty! In form and
moving how express and admirable! In action how like an angel! In apprehension how like a god! The beauty of the world! The paragon of animals! And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust?"  

The opening line of his soliloquy in Act III is further evidence of the Renaissance concern with ontology: "To be or not to be—that is the question." 25 In Doctor Faustus an even stronger concern with ontology is apparent in Faustus's attempt to raise himself above the inherent limits of his mortal self. In the opening scene, it is true, he rejects philosophizing over "being and not being": "Bid Oncaymaeon farewell!" 26 What he is actually doing, however, is replacing disputation and dialectics with living and experimentation. That he has finally come to the point of abandoning philosophy, physics, and Divinity, as well as Aristotle's "Oncaymaeon," however, is evidence of his intense interest in knowledge and being per se:

> What will be, shall be! Divinity, adieu!  
> These metaphysics of magicians  
> And necromantic books are heavenly. 27

Faustus is an existentialist in his desire for involvement. Knowledge demands involvement—study alone is not enough!

Literary examples of the Renaissance concern for metamorphosis and metaphysics could be cited ad infinitum. One need only think of The Maid's Metamorphosis or Lyly's Love's Metamorphosis, for example. We know that the drama of the Elizabethan Era was primarily directed not towards a coterie audience like that of the Restoration Era, but towards a general audience, an audience comprised of every
segment of Elizabethan society. The fact that Elizabethan drama employs so many and such varied ontological concerns is also indicative of the great Renaissance interest in man as man as well as its fascination with being as being. Indeed, because the individual was forced to rely more on himself than his medieval ancestor had been, it was all the more necessary for him to understand not only his own nature but also the precise nature of his role in society. As we have seen, however, his life was still filled with what were basically medieval concepts and concerns and habits of mind. The Renaissance too viewed the world as ordered and theocentric. Its medieval legacy, furthermore, included the verbal tools, concepts, and syntax with which it attempted to understand a society very different in structure and power than that in which those tools had originated. The archetypes provided by the pagan gods have already been discussed. The rise of capitalism, the advent and aftermath of Reformation, and developing nationalism, far from eradicating medieval concerns about Fortune and man's place in a theocentric world, accentuated and "popularized" them. Ontological and theological concerns, formerly the domain of the philosopher and priest, became paramount in the lives of groundlings as well. In the medieval era, Jakob Burckhardt declares, "Man was conscious of himself only as a member of race, people, party, family, or corporation--only through some general cate-
In the Renaissance, on the other hand, "the subjective side... asserted itself... man became a spiritual individual, and he recognized himself as such." The scholastic problem of medieval times—the question of universals—was replaced by Renaissance concern for the particular and the individual. As Cassirer says,

There can be no doubt that the Renaissance directed all its intellectually productive forces towards a profound examination of the problem of the individual.

In addition to its interest in the euhemerism of the pagan gods, the Renaissance, particularly the Renaissance of sixteenth century England, was thus greatly concerned with astrology. Astrology dealt not only with the particular characteristics, physiognomic, moral, physical, of an individual, but, more importantly, it helped to correlate his life with the cosmic forces of the world he lived in. It provided a clue both to the identity of the self and to the meaning of the cosmos.

As both the medieval era and the Renaissance had accepted the legendary genealogies linking certain peoples with certain gods or heroes, so both eras believed in the divine origin of astrology. In the Chronicle of the Six Ages of the World Ado of Vienne (799-874) had declared that of all the gods Atlas was the greatest astrologer. This claim is echoed about seven centuries later by Jacopo da Bergamo (1434-1520). In his Supplementum Chronicarum (1483) Bergamo declares that it was Atlas who first taught
the Greeks astrology. Astrology and mythology—both of which work with man's nature and with man's role in the scheme of things—are appropriate areas of interest to the Renaissance world where the individual's importance increased daily. Mythology provided exemplary figures and heroic precedents to show the individual the potentialities of his own ego—to teach him how to attain Virtue and avoid Vice. Astrology provided a clue to Divine Will; it linked the microcosmic world of the individual to the macrocosmic world of God and king. Coupled with knowledge of one's self, astrological knowledge helped the individual to act in accordance with his own abilities and interests—in tune with the world around him.

One of the reasons that the Renaissance mind was acutely interested in the precise natures and functions of the planetary bodies was this belief in the correlation between macrocosmic and microcosmic occurrences. Chaos in the heavens reflected chaos in the state and chaos in the state reflected disorder in the individual. Then, too, there was the correlation between the gods, of human origin, and the stars, whose origin was directly attributed to God. Indeed, Cicero himself had declared "Tribuends est sideribus...divinitas" in the same work in which he expressed his belief in the mortal origin of the deities. Belief in the power of astrology thus was one of the dominating forces of the late pagan and early Christian eras. Seznec outlines these astrological beliefs:
The stars are alive: they have a recognized appearance, a sex, a character which their names alone suffice to evoke. They are powerful and redoubtable beings, anxiously prayed to and interrogated, since it is they who inspire all human action. They reign over human life and hold in their keeping the secrets of man's fortune and of his end. Benevolent or deadly, they determine the fate of peoples and individuals by the mere accident of their movements, their conjunctions and oppositions.35

Such strong belief in the power of the stars could not be destroyed by Christianity, which itself was full of astrological elements.36 Had not the Magi been led to the newborn Saviour by a great Star? Did not the sun darken and the earth shake at His death? Does not the Apocalypse promise a great Morning Star to shine over the Second Coming?37 Astrology was as much a part of Christianity as it had been of the old pagan creeds. Primarily because of its concern for the individual's relationship to fate, however, it is an intrinsic part of the Renaissance as well. Cassirer declares that

whenever one sought to explain the relationship between the Ego and the world, between the individual and the cosmos not through conceptual thought but through artistic feeling and emotion, the influence of the ancient world of myth became stronger and deeper. As these forces emerge more independently and express themselves more uninhibitedly in the Renaissance, the barriers set up by the Middle Ages against the system of astrology begin to fall more easily. The Christian Middle Ages were able neither to dispense with astrology nor to completely overcome it.38

Belief in the potency of the cosmic bodies consequently continued throughout the medieval era. Until the twelfth century, however, astrological study had been
limited to Latin or European treatises, such as Macrobius' commentary on Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis*. But with the Crusades and the introduction of Arab philosophy into Sicily and Spain which resulted from the Moslem invasions, Greek and Arab commentaries became available. According to Seznec, "the result was an extraordinary increase in the prestige of astrology, which between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries enjoyed greater favor than ever before." Astrology continued to thrive throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Pope Julius II, for example, chose his coronation date to accord with the calculations of his astrologers. Leo X established a chair of astrology at the Sapienza. Ficino's public skepticism to the contrary, in a letter to his friend Cavalcanti he complains of the malign influence of Saturn:

This melancholy temperament seems to have been imposed on me from the beginning by Saturn, set almost in the center of my ascendant ring, Aquarius, and being met by Mars in the same sign, and by the Moon in Capricorn—while looking toward the Sun and Mercury in the Scorpion, occupying the ninth zone of Heaven.

Martin Luther provides another example of the Renaissance discrepancy between public avowal and private belief concerning astrology. Although he publicly rejected astrology as fantasy, he nonetheless "admitted that the awe-inspiring conjunction of several planets in the constellation Pices which occurred in 1524 was a warning from heaven." Even Tycho Brahe (1546-1601), a devout Protes-
tant, believed in the evil influence of the stars. Astrology pervades every facet of Renaissance life. Calendars depicted planetary conjunctions and frequently were adorned with a combination of mythological and astrological illustrations:

In one of these astrological charts, we have the figure of a happy child, unconcernedly plucking flowers and paying no attention to the nine spheres which gravitate around him charged with their dread symbols. In their own way, these naive images raise the whole problem of necessity versus freedom of the will, the heart-rending conflict which Renaissance thinkers were to make so great an effort to resolve.

How were devout Christians able to believe in the doctrine of free will and yet at the same time hold that the stars exerted either an evil or a benign influence over their lives? The answer liew partly in the advance of "the worldly spirit" and "worldly culture" of that time and partly in the fact that in the Renaissance more than at any other time religious, political, and ethical views were inseparably mixed to form a unique intellectual compound. The basic explanation of how the Renaissance mind reconciled these two seemingly irreconcilable beliefs lies in the fact that, despite the increased emphasis on man, on the individual, the Renaissance continued to believe in the omniscience of the Deity and in what it believed to be the ordered nature of Creation. Despite Rabelais's scorn, pagan myths and pagan gods were frequently interpreted as prefigurations of Christ's teachings. Simultaneous belief
in both free will and astrology was possible because of the Renaissance belief that, just as the earth and men are subject to the stars (or planetary gods), so the stars in turn "are dependent upon a supreme will, of which they are merely the instruments." The *Urania* of Pontano (1426-1503) reconciles astrology with Christian dogma by declaring that "God created and assigned roles to the motivating Intelligences of the seven spheres." Belief in the correspondence between microcosmic and macrocosmic events thus received support from the Renaissance belief that the stars were agents of the Deity, providing man with clues about His Will, and hints about the future. Man was still free to disregard their portents if he so desired: "Inclinant astra, non necessitant."

Renaissance astrological beliefs are thus inseparably linked to Renaissance beliefs about the nature of man, and, equally important, to the Renaissance concept of cosmic and social order. A. O. Lovejoy and E. M. W. Tillyard have shown that the Renaissance was further joined to previous eras by the belief it shared with the medieval world in the doctrine of plenitude and in the concept of a great chain of being. To the Renaissance no less than to the medieval world the universe existed in an ordered hierarchy. Hamlet's "What a piece of work is a man," for example, is, according to Tillyard, 

in the purest medieval tradition: Shakespeare's version of the orthodox encomia of what man, created in God's image, was like in
his pre-lapsarian state and of what ideally he is still capable of being. It also shows Shakespeare placing man in the traditional cosmic setting between the angels and the beasts. Its concern with the ontological nature of man, in other words, is developed in terms of the traditional order pervading the cosmos. As Cassirer observes,

the thought and practice of the Renaissance, though marked by the greatest diversity and conflict in content, are nevertheless at one in... the systematic tendency, the common orientation of thought even in the most divergent fields. [That common orientation is] the attempt to give a new formulation of the universal and the particular and of the relation between them.

Despite their common intellectual heritage, however, the Renaissance does mark "an intellectual line of demarcation" from the medieval world for the Renaissance "separates the metaphysical world of transcendence from the scientific world of immanence." In The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy Cassirer illustrates this by contrasting medieval thought with "its notion of a universal hierarchy leading up to God" with the ideal of Renaissance thought which, while working with the same or similar concepts and beliefs, is "to understand the intelligible in and through the sensible—the universal in and through the particular." In medieval times absolute truth was not attainable through sensory perception: "in order to find an unchangeable, an absolute truth, man has to go beyond the limit of his own consciousness and his own existence. He has to surpass himself."
medieval era emphasized in the concept of the great chain of being were the general classifications of that chain and the common abstract characteristics of everything belonging to the same general classification. Even a man as close to the physical world as St. Francis writes a poem, *Cantico delle creature*, which is couched in a medieval, hierarchical, Neo-Platonic conception of the cosmos. ... The qualities attributed to each phenomenon in nature are either general and abstract [rather than individuating], or, if particular, could just as easily be used to describe some other form of being. They derive their value and applicability not from being intimately connected with or immanent in the things they describe, but rather from their association with another, usually a higher realm.

In the Renaissance, on the other hand, though the belief in the great chain is if anything even more pervasive, the emphasis is rather on the individuating characteristics of every living thing. Classifications and sub-classifications proliferate as do the correspondences between the structures of separate groupings. Every classification had its primate, for example, which was the highest in its own group and the closest in nature to the group immediately above it. Flying fish, for example, were frequently seen as the primate among fish since they were closest to birds.57

In addition to the notion of a primate within each classification, another attribute of the great chain of being was that it allowed every class to excel in a single particular. ... Stones may be lowly but they exceed the class above them, plants, in strength
and durability. Plants, though without sense, excel in the faculty of assimilating nourishment. The beasts are stronger than man in physical energies and desires. Man excels the angels in his power of learning, for his very imperfection calls forth that power, while the angels as perfect beings have already acquired all the knowledge they are capable of holding. The angels presumably excel God Himself in the faculty of adoration, for perfection and infinitude have nothing to adore.\textsuperscript{58}

The Renaissance emphasis on education and self-knowledge is a direct result of the belief that the quality which distinguishes man from all other forms of being is his ability to learn.

As a result of centuries of philosophical and theological discussion and disagreement, the developing humanism of the late medieval era turned the emphasis toward the other extreme of Thoreauvian simplicity.\textsuperscript{59} The Renaissance penchant for simplicity is apparent in its conception of the chain of being, the simplicity of which is reminiscent of the final centuries of the medieval era. Though the Renaissance world was still solidly theocentric, "it was a simplified version of a much more complicated medieval pattern."\textsuperscript{60} The hierarchical structure of the chain itself was straightforward in its fullness:

The chain stretched from the foot of God's throne to the meanest of inanimate objects. Every speck of creation was a link in the chain, and every link except those at the two extremities was simultaneously bigger and smaller than another: there could be no gap.\textsuperscript{61}

The Renaissance belief in the great chain of being, defining the precise nature of every existing thing, de-
veloped into a belief in the harmony and balance of creation. Cosmic order was seen as ordained by God. Tillyard uses Ulysses' speech on degree in *Troilus and Cressida* to explain the precise nature of this harmony:

Degree being vizarded,
The unworthiest shows as fairly in the mask.
The heavens themselves, the planets and this center
Observe degree, priority, and place,
Insisture, course, proportion, season, form,
Office, and custom, in all line of order.
And therefore is the glorious planet Sol
In noble eminence enthroned and sphered
Admidst the other, whose medicinable eye
Corrects the ill aspects of planets evil,
And posts like the commandment of a king,
Sans check to good and bad. But when the planets
In evil mixture to disorder wander,
What plagues and what portents, what mutiny,
What raging of the sea, shaking of earth,
Commotion in the winds, frights, changes, horrors,
Divert and crack, rend and deracinate,
The unity and married calm of states
Quite from their fixture! Oh, when degree is shaked,
The enterprise is sick!62

Since similar ideas occur in Spenser's *Hymn of Love*, in the first book of Hooker's *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, and in the preface to Raleigh's *History of the World*, there can be little doubt about the strength and seriousness the concept of cosmic order held for the Elizabethans: "Take but degree away, untune that string,/And hark, what discord follows."63 An ordered cosmos, an ordered state, an ordered self—these were signs that all was in concord with its Creator. Conversely,

If the Elizabethans believed in an ideal order animating earthly order, they were terrified lest it should be upset, and appalled by the visible
tokens of disorder that suggest its upsetting. They were obsessed by the fear of chaos and the fact of mutability; and the obsession was powerful in proportion as their faith in the cosmic order was strong.

The opposite of order was obviously chaos, and Nature thus assumed an importance which approximated that of the stars, for Nature too was thought to provide a means of understanding God's omniscient will. Through Nature man is able to regain the true self knowledge he lost when Adam sinned. Knowledge—particularly knowledge of the self—was thus far removed from vanity and was actually a prerequisite to the attainment of salvation.

Cassirer observes an early working out of the notion:

Poggio attempts a solution [to the conflict between astrology and free will] by asserting that each of the conflicting forces that mould human life will predominate over a period of human existence. The dangers threatening man from without (the forces of destiny) are strongest so long as man's true self has not yet been completely formed, i. e., so long as he is still in childhood or early youth. They retreat as soon as this self is awakened, and as soon as it is developed to full efficiency through the energy of moral and intellectual effort.

In the first part of Tamburlaine the Great Marlowe uses this Renaissance notion of the necessity of self-knowledge and self-advancement to explain psychologically Tamburlaine's insatiable desire for conquest. In the famous "aspiring minds" speech of Act II Scene vii, Tamburlaine declares that it is Nature herself that shows man how to conduct his life. Tamburlaine is truly of the Renaissance in believing that man's best course is observing, under-
standing, and obeying Nature:

Nature, that framed us of four elements
Warring within our breasts 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 always moving as the restless spheres,
Wills us to wear ourselves and never rest. 68

In The Jew Of Malta Machavel puts the matter most succinctly when he declares, "there is no sin but ignorance." 69

Concomitant to the Elizabethan idea of a great chain of being was the belief that all matter consisted of various combinations of the four elements to which Tamburlaine refers—earth, water, air, and fire. Knowing one's self—understanding the nature of man—thus entailed a knowledge of the four elements and of the various characteristics of each of them. Each element was associated with one of the four humours with which it shared a common quality. Earth and melancholy were both cold and dry; water and phlegm were cold and moist. Air and blood were hot and moist, while fire and choler were both hot and dry. When one of the four elements was predominant in an individual, his temperament was characterized by the humour which corresponded to that element. If there were an excess of earth in his constitution, for example, he was likely to be characterized by melancholy and somewhat reserved in temperament. Tillyard declares that
the elements were thought of through their effects. These effects working on a common substance were thought, in co-operation with stellar influence and the occasional extraordinary intervention of God, to explain the way the sublunary world was conducted.

To attain salvation man had to understand his own self and his own place in the universe. To understand his own self it was necessary to understand the humours and their correspondences. In a similar fashion, understanding man’s place in the universe entailed a thorough knowledge of the great chain of being no less than an understanding of the workings of the stars.

The Renaissance emphasis on learning also results from man’s desire to understand his own self as well as his place in the hierarchy of being:

What marks man from angel and beast is his capacity for learning: both his ‘erected wit’ in perceiving perfection and his aptitude for ‘nurture’ or education in raising himself towards it. . . . To learn was to exercise one of the great human prerogatives.

Bacon’s "Knowing Thyself" in The Advancement of Learning and Davies’ Nasce Tepsesum are two examples of the importance of this concept of self-knowledge.

But understanding alone was insufficient for salvation. Although, as Tillyard declares,

it was possible to make a wrong choice through an error of judgment, it was also possible for the will to be so corrupt as to go against the evidence of the understanding. One reason why Ovid’s words,

video meliora proboque
Deteriora sequor,

became a tag was that they expressed the consummation of corruption caused by the Fall.
had not the bad angels understanding of a degree greater than man could ever hope for? No, understanding by itself was not enough; man's will had to be strong like Hercules' if he were to act in accordance with the knowledge of his understanding. As man's understanding was increased through perception of the order of nature, so man's will was strengthened by faith. If one's understanding or will was seriously defective, if like Faustus, an individual "bid oncaaymaeon farewell," or if he were "pliant"\textsuperscript{73} like Edward II, then his life would be one of chaos.

It is significant that the greatest tragic heroes of Elizabethan drama reflect either a defect of understanding or a defect of will. Lear's ignorance of his own self (as well as of human nature) parallels Othello's ignorance of Iago's machinations as well as his inability to comprehend that it is possible for such "motiveless malignity" to exist. As Iago says, he "thinks men honest that but seem to be so."\textsuperscript{74} On the other hand, although Hamlet is basically melancholy in temperament while Macbeth is phlegmatic, both are defective in will and both must suffer the tragic consequences despite the fact that Macbeth seems culpable while Hamlet does not.

Most of the intellectual problems and concepts of the Renaissance resulted from the basic theocentrically of the era, from a cosmology basically the same as that of
medieval times. With the upheavals of the Reformation, however, the emphasis shifted to a greater concern for the individual's ways of attaining salvation. The old charts with their rigid reliance on grace had to be replaced by ones which started with the individual, which focused on his best course of action. No longer was the Deity a "given" entity to be accepted as presented. The Renaissance concern for astrology, cosmology, myth, metamorphosis, and education demonstrates its great interest in the ontological nature of man. Only through true self knowledge was man able to raise himself to a higher place on the chain of being, only with true understanding and steadfast will was he able to attain salvation. Being qua being and man qua man were perhaps the greatest intellectual problems and the most pervasive intellectual concerns of such an ordered and theocentric world.
FOOTNOTES

1 In *Reason and Revelation in the Middle Ages*, Etienne Gilson declares, "It is not unusual to distinguish three main periods in the development of Western thought. . . . [The second is] the Middle Ages, also called the Dark Ages, because from the rise of Christianity to the dawn of Renaissance, the normal use of natural reason was obscured by blind faith in the absolute truth of Christian Revelation. Philosophy then became a mere tool at the hands of unscrupulous theologians until at last, around the end of the fifteenth century, the joint effort of the humanists, of the scientists, and of the religious reformers gave rise to the new era of purely positive and rational speculation in which we still find ourselves engaged. . . . [This] is most certainly an unfair interpretation." (New York, 1938), pp. 3-4.


3 Ibid., p. 110. The plate of Combat of Ratio and Libido is on p. 113. The interpretation of the scene is Seznec's, with the exception of my remarks about the hands.

4 As translated from the Latin in Ibid., p. 111, note 112.

5 Charles Haskins declares that the greatest intellectual concern of medieval times was "the problem of universals." *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge, 1928), p. 349. The medieval emphasis on universals as well as the Renaissance emphasis on the individual is discussed more fully on pp. 15-17.

6 Ernst Cassirer contends that, although it is foolish to look for an end to the medieval world and a beginning of the Renaissance world, it is necessary to look for "an intellectual line of demarcation between the two ages." *The Myth of State* (Anchor Books, 1955), p. 163.

7 Herculean heroes of the Elizabethan Renaissance include Marlowe's Tamburlaine, Shakespeare's Antony, Shakespeare's Coriolanus, and Chapman's Bussy D'Ambois. Because of the great number of the connotations and characteristics which Hercules had accumulated by the late Renaissance, it is difficult to ascertain exactly what archetypal meaning is to be given an allusion in any specific work, or in any specific passage. In general, how-
ever, the Herculean hero is one whose "exploits are strange mixtures of beneficence and crime, of fabulous quests and shameful betrayals, of triumph over wicked enemies and insensate slaughter of the innocent... [his] career is always a testimony to the greatness of a man who is almost a god—a greatness which has less to do with goodness as it is usually understood than with the transforming energy of the divine spark." Eugene H. Waith, The Herculean Hero (New York, 1962), p. 16.


9 Ibid.

10 Seznec, p. 43.

11 Ibid., p. 12.

12 "The euhemeristic tradition remains a living influence throughout the Middle Ages, although it undergoes a total change of character. The human origin of the gods ceases to be a weapon to be used against them, a source of rejection and contempt. Instead, it gives them a certain protection, even granting them a right to survive. In the end it forms, as it were, their patent of nobility." Seznec, p. 13.

13 "Are not all of the near heavens... filled with (gods) of human origin?" De Natura Deorum, LCL. As quoted in Seznec, p. 12, note 5.

14 Waith notes that "the typologists made his benefactions into an analogue of the sacrifice of Christ." P. 43. Waith also notes that in one of Bishop Theodulph's poems Hercules is virtue itself while "elsewhere he is seen as Samson, David and even Christ." P. 39.

15 Seznec, p. 21.

16 Seznec, p. 18.

17 Seznec, pp. 20-21.


19 Ibid.


21 The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy, p. 74.
John W. Welz, "Metamorphosis and the Sixteenth Century," Mimeographed Lecture (Rice University, Fall, 1965), p. 3. Velz observes that Ovid's Metamorphoses was grist to the "mills of almost every Renaissance writer. Shakespeare, for one example, refers to or quotes Ovid in Venus and Adonis, Titus Andronicus, The Taming of the Shrew, Love's Labor's Lost, and the Sonnets. . . . There are literally scores of plays, narrative poems, and sonnets in the period which are based on passages in the Metamorphoses."

William Shakespeare, The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark in Shakespeare Major Plays and the Sonnets ed. by G. B. Harrison (New York, 1948). II, II, 315-320. Kenneth Clark, "Alberti and Shakespeare," TLS, March 26, 1931, p. 252 notices a similarity between Hamlet's "What a piece of work is a man" and the following passage from Leon Battista Alberti's "Della Tranquillità dell' Animo" (Op. Volg. I., 70): "a te'l corpo formosissimo più che agli altri animali; a te i movimenti atti e varii più che non sapresti desiderarli; a te ogni senso acutissimo, nettissimo; in te ingegno, ragion, memoria pari agli 'iddii immortali." "The 'Della Tranquillità dell' Anima,'" he declares, "was probably written in 1441. . . . It is known in four manuscripts, all in Florence. . . . but no doubt many manuscripts of Alberti's works reached England in the sixteenth century, and one of the largest collections of his manuscripts is in the Bodleian." The Renaissance was obviously very fascinated with the nature and identity of man.

Emil Mauerhof, "Briefe uber Hamlet," in Shakespeareprobleme (Kempten and Munich, 1905), pp. 59-274 believes that the "To be" soliloquy is primarily concerned with the concept of immortality, not with suicide. O. M. Pott points out that the opening line is similar to one in the Parmenides, which was well known to Bacon. "Parmenides Quoted by Hamlet," Shakespeariana, IV (1887), 510-512. W. W. Skeat sees a similarity between Hamlet's phrasing and lines 5637-96 of Chaucer's Rhetorica de Rhetorica. "The Speech in Hamlet, III, 1, 56ff," Athenaeum, August 8, 1891, pp. 203-4. Aut esse aut non esse was certainly very prominent in the Renaissance vocabulary.

Christopher Marlowe, The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus in Elizabethan and Stuart Plays ed. by Charles Read Baskerville et. al. (New York, 1934). Scene I, line 12. This edition reprints the 1604 edition. The line also appears, however, in the B-text of the 1616 quarto which is favored by F. S. Boas, Leo Kirschbaum,
and W. W. Greg as the more authoritative. In Irving Ribner's edition, Christopher Marlowe's Dr. Faustus Text and Major Criticism (New York: The Odyssey Press, 1966) the line reads "Bid on cay me on farewell."

Ribner's edition is based on the 1616 quarto. As Bullen noted, oncaymeon is a corruption of Aristotle's phrase for "being and not being." Were Faustus's oncaymeon translated into Latin, it would read "aut esse aut non esse," which in English is "To be or not to be."

27Christopher Marlowe's Dr. Faustus Text and Major Criticism, Scene 1, lines 49-51.


29Ibid.

30According to Haskins the question of universals is "the great problem of scholasticism." "The question of universals," he continues, "the central though not the unique theme of scholastic philosophy, is concerned with the nature of general terms or conceptions, such as man, house, horse. Are these, as the Nominalists asserted, mere names and nothing more, an intellectual convenience at the most? Or are they realities, as the Realists maintained, having an existence quite independent of and apart from the particular individuals in which they may be for the moment objectified?" P. 349, p. 351.

31The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy, p. 35.

32Seznec, p. 15.

33Seznec, p. 22.

34Seznec, p. 37.

35Seznec, p. 41.

36At first, Christianity tried to eradicate the pagan astrological beliefs. St. Paul scolded the Galatians for their continuing observance of "days and months and times and years" in honor of the "weak and beggarly elements" to which they had formerly been in bondage. Galatians 4: 9-10. Gradually, however, Christianity overcame pagan beliefs by assimilating them and altering them to its own benefit.
Seznec points out these and other astrological elements of Christianity on p. 43, note 24.

The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy, p. 99.

Ibid., p. 51.

Ibid., p. 52. Cf. Haskins, chapter ix, "The Translators from Greek and Arabic" for the history of the various astrological treatises.

Seznec, p. 57.

Epistolee (Florence, 1495), III, p. lxix, v. As quoted and cited in Seznec, p. 61, note 93. Cassirer notes that "Early Humanism brings no change in attitude toward astrology. . . . it is clear that [the] theoretical conviction, which [Ficino] struggled to reach, cannot change the essence of his feeling about life. . . . The wise man ought not to attempt to escape from the power of his star. Only one thing remains for him to do: to channel this power towards the good by strengthening in himself the beneficent influences that come from his star, and, whenever possible, rejecting the harmful ones." The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy, p. 100.

Seznec, p. 61.

Ibid., note 95. Seznec declares that in regard to astrology, "the Reformation brought no more essential a break [from the Middle Ages] than humanism had done."

Seznec, pp. 66-67.

"As we move further into the Renaissance, we feel more and more that the advance of the worldly spirit and of worldly culture strengthens the tendency towards the basic doctrines of astrology." The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy, p. 100.

In the Gargantua Rabelais questioned, "Croiez vous en vostre foy qu'onques Homere, escrivant l'Iliade et Odysee, pensant es allegories lesquelles de luy ont calvretre Plutarche, Heraclides, Ponticq, Rustatic, Pharmute, et ce que d'icelux Politien a desrobe? Si le croiez vous n'approchez ne de pieds ne de vains a mon opinion, qui deciete liceslas aussi peu avoir este songies d'Homere, que d'Ovide en ses Metamorphoses les Sacremens l'Evangile." As quoted in Seznec, p. 95. We have seen, however, that the Renaissance interpreted Hercules as an archetypal Christ, Rabelais's logic to the contrary. The Renaissance's views of the Christianity of the Aeneid, furthermore, may serve to show that Rabelais's reasonings
were, for the most part, ignored.

48 Seznec, p. 81. Salutati's essay, "De fato et fortuna" (1396) works out a similar notion. His position, according to Cassirer, is that "the stars possess no independent power; they may only be considered instruments in the hand of God." The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy, p. 100.

49 Seznec, p. 44. Cassirer sees Pontano as the culmination of Petrarch's De remediis utriusque fortunae, Salutati, and Poggio. The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy, p. 76.

50 E. M. W. Tillyard, The Elizabethan World Picture (London, 1943), p. v. Cassirer traces the Renaissance development of the notion of an ordered universe from Cusanus's De docta ignorantia with its belief that "no part in the whole cosmos is dispensable; each has its own special kind of activity and, correspondingly, its own incomparable value." The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy, p. 27.

51 Tillyard, p. 1.

52 Domandi's interpretation of Cassirer's basic position in his introduction to The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy, pp. vii-viii.

53 Cassirer, The Myth of State, p. 163.

54 Domandi's interpretation of Cassirer's views in his introduction to The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy, p. ix.


56 Domandi declares that "St. Francis of Assisi's Cantico delle creature may serve as a convenient example of the literary applicability of Cassirer's ideas." In his introduction to The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy, p. x. His analysis which I have quoted then follows.

57 Tillyard, p. 27. "Other primacies," Tillyard declares, "were God among the angels, the sun among the stars, justice among the virtues, and the head among the body's members." Pp. 27-8.
58 Ibid., pp. 26-27.
59 Gilson sees the devotio moderna as one "reaction from excessive speculation." P. 89. The phrase is the title of chapter ten of Christian Spirituality, II, by P. Pourrat, Christian Spirituality in the Middle Ages (Westminster, Maryland, 1953), pp. 265-285.
60 Tillyard, p. 2.
61 Ibid., p. 23, p. 25. Tillyard derives his description from Raymond de Sebonde's Natural Theology.
63 Ibid., I, iii, 109-110. Tillyard lists (p. 7) the Elizabethan works in which the idea of "degree" is prominent.
64 Tillyard, p. 13.
65 Ibid., p. 18. Tillyard cites Milton's On Time and Of Education to show the Renaissance emphasis on knowledge of nature as well as on knowledge of the self. In Paradise Lost, furthermore, Raphael's instructions to Adam entail an "orderly comning over the visible and inferior creatures." Pp. 18-19.
66 With the emphasis on man which resulted from belief in the great chain of being, a Browingesque belief in the efficacy of striving also emerges in the Renaissance. In contrast to the medieval world, the Renaissance attempted to seek knowledge through sensory perception. But, as Cassirer points out in The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy, "Man can only be certain that the sense world has form and shape if he continually gives it form. . . . He remains enclosed within his own being, never transgressing the limits of his own specifically human nature. But inasmuch as he develops and expresses every facet of his nature, man represents the divine in the form and within the limits of the human. Like every being, man has the right to fulfill and to realize his form. He may, he even must affirm this form, this limitation of his." P. 67. pp. 42-3. Later, however, this thought becomes "completely dislodged from its original religious grounding and, in fact, in conscious departure from it. The only passion that reigns in Bruno is the passion of the self-affirmation of the Ego, heightened to titanic and heroic proportion." Pp. 96-97.
67. The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy, p. 76.


69. The Jew of Malta in The Complete Plays of Christopher Marlowe, Epilogue, line 15.

70. P. 56.

71. Tillyard, p. 65. In addition to observing that "Erasmus has an eloquent chapter on self-knowledge in his Manual of the Christian Soldier," Tillyard notes that, according to Hooker, man is conspicuous "by seeking perfection through knowledge of things external to himself. Or, as we might put it, one of man's highest faculties is his gift for disinterested knowledge. It was through that gift that he might learn something of God. But there was another subject of understanding which, all were agreed, was paramount; and that was yourself. Here again was a peculiar human task: irrelevant to the angels because they knew themselves already and to the beasts because it was utterly beyond them. Far from being a sign of modesty, innocence, or intuitive virtue, not to know yourself was to resemble the beasts, if not in coarseness at least in deficiency of education. To know yourself was not egoism but the gateway to all virtue." P. 56.

72. Tillyard, p. 68. Cassirer points out that in his Oration on the Dignity of Man Pico della Mirandola holds that "what is required of man's will and knowledge is that they be completely turned towards the world and yet completely distinguish themselves from it. Will and knowledge may, or rather, must devote themselves to every part of the universe; for only by going through the entire universe can man traverse the circle of his own possibilities. [Underlining mine.]"

73. The adjective Gaveston uses to describe Edward II in his soliloquy at the end of Act I scene i of Marlowe's Edward II.

Chapter Two:

The Intellectual Environment of Christopher Marlowe

To what extent was Christopher Marlowe concerned with the Renaissance interest in ontology? How vigorously did Marlowe himself explore the potentialities of his own intellect and ego? Was Ovid's notion of metamorphosis also important to the author of Tamburlaine and Faustus? Marlowe's interest in mythology and astrology, to be sure, may be inferred from the great number of mythological allusions and astrological references in his drama. Is that knowledge an expression of his over-riding fascination with man and human nature? The best place to look for answers to these questions is, without doubt, in the plays themselves. The general tenor of Marlowe's mind, however, is reflected in the fervor and fullness of his life. That Marlowe was intensely interested in all intellectual matters is the inevitable conclusion of a study of such a life. The precise nature of his interest and his individual thoughts about man and God may then be examined in his drama.

Christopher Marlowe was born in 1564 in Canterbury, the son of a middle class shoemaker. When he was fifteen years old, he received a scholarship to the King's School, where he studied for one year. The curriculum for the fourth form (which Marlowe probably entered straight away) emphasized Latin syntax. Students were required to
be "practiced in poetic tales, the familiar letters of learned men, and other literature of that sort." In the fifth and sixth forms—both of which Marlowe probably completed—the rules of classical verse making and Latin oratory were taught. The thought and writings of Erasmus, Horace, and Cicero, among others, were also studied.  

In 1580 Marlowe received a Matthew Parker scholarship to Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, where he alternated study with sub rosa assignments in the secret service of the government. Subjects of the lectures which comprised the morning's studies included Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Logic, Mathematics, Philosophy, Divinity, and Dialectics. In 1584 Marlowe received his B. A., graduating 199 out of 231. One of the requirements for the B. A. is of particular interest to this study. Each Candidate for the degree was required to prepare three propositions "usually of a moral or metaphysical nature." These propositions had to be defended in debate against three students from other colleges of the university.  

By 1587 Marlowe had completed the requirements for the M. A. Because of the unsanctioned absences necessitated by his espionage work, however, (and because of the rumours which misconstrued his absences and declared that he had turned Catholic and had studied in a Jesuit seminary in Rheims), Marlowe was at first refused the degree. A letter from the Privy Council to the Cambridge
authorities cleared up the matter, however, and recommended that Marlowe be granted the M. A. because "it was not her Majesty's pleasure that anie one emploied as he had been in matters touching the benefitt of his Countrie should be defamed by those that are ignorant in th' affaires he went about."9

Marlowe's Cambridge years were filled not only with espionage and study but also with various literary endeavors. Ovid's *Amores* were of particular interest to the Parker scholar, and, despite the fact that the Cambridge authorities would have disapproved, Marlowe began to translate many of Ovid's poems while he was still an undergraduate.10 Another of the translations he completed at Cambridge was of Lucan's *Pharsalia*. This book was entered in the Stationers' Register on 28 September 1593 under the heading "Lucans first booke of the famous Civill warr betwixt Pompey and Cesar Englished by Christopher Marlow."11 Power and the confrontations of men of power had already begun to fascinate Marlowe's aspiring mind.

The first part of *Tamburlaine* probably belongs to Marlowe's Cambridge days as well.12 The preface to Greene's *Perimedes*, which was licensed 29 March, 1588, contains the words "daring God out of heauen with that Atheist Tamburlan."13 The prologue of the second part of *Tamburlaine* further supports the supposition that Marlowe
wrote the first part while he was still at Cambridge:

The general welcomes Tamburlaine receiv'd,  
When he arrived last upon the stage,  
Have made our poet pen his Second Part.  

Since both parts of the drama were completed and produced by 10 November 1587 by the Lord Admiral's company in London, and since Marlowe had remained at Cambridge until July, 1587, there can be little doubt that Marlowe commenced work on Tamburlaine and probably completed the first part while still in residence at Corpus Christi.

Marlowe was twenty-three years old when he left Cambridge for London. His political episodes, his various literary endeavors, in addition to his studies at the King's School and Corpus Christi--all are characteristic of a man involved in the intellectual currents of his day. That Ovid exerted a significant influence on Marlowe, for example, is only partly demonstrated by the translations he completed while still at Cambridge. Although no historical evidence has survived to show that Marlowe was also familiar with the Metamorphoses, such a conjecture receives support from Marlowe's translation of the Amores (which he titled Ovid's Elegies) as well as from the fact that the Metamorphoses enjoyed a phenomenal popularity during the Elizabethan Era. In Act V Scene vii of Dr. Faustus, moreover, Faustus' mention of Pythagoras' theory of metempsychosis comes from Book XV
of the Metamorphoses:

Ah, Pythagoras' metempsychosis, were that true,
This soul should fly from me and I be changed
Into some brutish beast. All beasts are happy,
For, when they die
Their souls are soon dissolved in elements,
But mine must live still to be plagued in hell. 19

Tamburlaine itself is filled with allusions to the Metamorphoses. In Act V Scene ii of Part I, for example, Tamburlaine is unmoved by the Damascus virgins, "Whose looks," Zenocrate tells us, "might make the angry god of arms/To break his sword and mildly treat of love."

(V i1263-264) This allusion to Venus' power over Mars significantly emphasizes Zenocrate's thematic importance while, at the same time, it enhances Tamburlaine's role; unlike Mars-Tamburlaine resists the claims of Venus and the virgins are slaughtered.

"The desires for power and knowledge felt by all of Marlowe's great protagonists," which Paul Kocher notices, 20 demonstrate how the concept of metamorphosis operates in Marlowe's dramatic works. Faustus and Tamburlaine (the two most obvious examples) are obsessed with the precise nature of their identities. Each insists on exploring and expanding the powers of his own ego, Faustus through necromancy and intellect, Tamburlaine through obdurate strength. Marlowe's principal characters, Kocher declares, "are but the embodiments of a craving for illimitable power in various forms." 20 To seek illimitable power each must undergo some form of metamorphosis, usually
a metamorphosis which is self-generated. Each must in some way become more than human. Such attempts to meta-
morphose oneself to a higher place on the chain of being were anathema to the Elizabethan moral code—the em-
embodiments of either explicit or implicit rebellions against God.

Criticism of Christianity, occasionally implicit, frequently explicit, is an important theme in each of Marlowe's plays. Such criticism probably reflects Marlowe's own atheistical beliefs. It certainly demonstrates his great knowledge of theology. Despite the fact that Marlowe was an Archbishop Parker scholar, he did not take Orders when he had completed his M. A. work at Cambridge. Wraight declares that

During his six and a half years of study at Corpus Christi there is no doubt that Marlowe had become steadily disillusioned by the limitations of such medieval learning as was offered by the schoolmen and university pundits, especially where theology was concerned. He had found it expedient to 'be a divine in show'; and to seek his 'world of profit and delight' secretly in his reading of the classics and the pursuance of his art. Indeed, whether Marlowe had ever seriously considered becoming a churchman is open to question. His study of Machiavellian principles had early taught him to use such means as providence offered to his own ends, and Archbishop Parker's grant was one of these. (p. 102)

Various anti-Christian tracts purported to be Marlowe's show a great familiarity with Biblical texts and theological doctrines. Many of Marlowe's enemies were quick to call their contemporary atheistic or blasphemous,
particularly when they were themselves suspect because of their familiarity with him. Thomas Kyd, who became one of Marlowe's fiercest rivals on the stage and his personal enemy as well, defended himself from charges of atheism and sedition by minimizing his association with Marlowe and by maximizing Marlowe's own "guilt."

Writing to the Lord Keeper after his arrest of 12 May 1593, Kyd declares "That I should loue or be familer frend w^ one so Irreligious were verle rare. . . .he was intemperate & of a cruel hart." The atheism was Marlowe's, not Kyd's:

., .He wold report St John to be our saviour Christes Alex J cover it with reverence and trembling that is that Christ did loue him with an extraordinary loue.
That for me to wryte a poem of St paulues conversion as J was determined
he said wold be as if J shold go wryte a book of fast & loose, esteming paul a Jugler.
That the prodigall Childes portion was but fewer nobles he held his purse so neere the bottom in all pictures, and that it either was a iest or els fewer nobles than was thought a great patrimony not thinking it a parable.
That things esteemed to be down by devine power might haue aswell been don by observation of men all which he wold so sodenlie take slight occasion to slyp out as J & many others in regard of his other rashnes in attempting soden pryvie iniuries to men did ouerslypp though often reprehend him for it. . . 23

Furthermore, Kyd declared, the papers found in his possession, described by the authorities as "vile heret- icall conceiptes denyinge the deity of Jhesus Christe o"
Savior" actually belonged to Marlowe.

Then, too, there is Richard Chomley, who was arrested because

he saith and verily believeth that one Marlowe is able to show more sound reasons for atheism than any divine in England is able to give to prove divinity, and that Marloe told him he hath read the atheist lecture to Sir Walter Raleigh and others.

In addition to the evidence provided by the arrests of Kyd and Chomley, however, there is mention of Marlowe's "atheism" in so many Elizabethan texts and papers that one must conclude that Marlowe was intensely interested in religion and theology and that he was unorthodox if not actually atheistic in his beliefs.

The "atheist lecture" mentioned in Chomley's writ of arrest is further evidence of Marlowe's intellectual prowess, since it links Marlowe with one of the foremost figures of the Era, Sir Walter Raleigh. There is no unanimity among critics on whether or not Marlowe and Raleigh were friends or even acquaintances. Some critics believe in the existence of a "School of Night," an intellectual group of Elizabethans who centered around Raleigh and Thomas Harriot, the renown mathematician.

There is evidence that both Marlowe and Raleigh attended the meetings of the clandestine "School" and, among other topics, discussed those of a religious or moral nature. Even those who accept its existence as fact, however, disagree about its precise nature and function. Wraight, for example, refers to the "School of Night" as "another kind
of university, more exclusive, stimulating, and more esoteric than any existing officially" (p. 132) and declares that Marlowe became a member shortly after leaving Cambridge. He sees the School as "the resort of free-thinkers," who "studied, discussed, experimented and earnestly sought to extend the bounds of scientific knowledge" (p. 133). From his comments the School emerges as rather formal—its meetings regularly scheduled and its members judiciously selected. Marlowe's patron, Thomas Walsingham, was also a member, Wraight believes, as were Henry Percy, the Earl of Northumberland, and Henry Brooke, eighth Baron Cobham. Along with Raleigh they were described by Lord Henry Howard as "the infamous Triplicity that denies the Trinity" (Wraight, p. 137). Others thought to be members were Sir George Carey, George Chapman, Richard Hakluyt, and Nicholas Hill.\(^{29}\)

M. C. Bradbrook also sees the "School of Night" as a formal intellectual fraternity centering around Sir Walter Raleigh. In addition to the members already mentioned, Bradbrook believes that Matthew Roydon and Willian Warner attended its meetings.\(^{30}\) The principal studies of the School are supposed to have been theology, philosophy, astronomy, geography, and chemistry. Bradbrook's study of the school relies on conjecture since no first hand records of its meetings have survived. "Such evidence as there is," she writes,
may be divided into two kinds: the writings of the school, and their reported speeches, their general reputation and the parodies of their doctrine which the rival group \[the Essex-Southampton circle\] put forth (p. 53).

Of particular interest to this study are Bradbrook's comments about the philosophical discussions of the school. Noting that Raleigh and Marlowe are characterized by both "an insatiate thirst for knowledge" and "a flexibility which allows the mind to adopt many different points of view" (p. 65), she declares that the School was especially concerned with epistemology and metaphysics. Stoicism was rejected as a guiding philosophy because

its contribution to the main stream of philosophic development was ethical \[rather than ontological.\]... The School of Night stressed its metaphysics, its most poetic and least philosophic aspect (pp. 69-70).

Astrology and astronomy (particularly the studies of Harriot) are further evidence of the school's concern for metaphysics (pp. 70-73).

Other critics, however, have doubted the very existence of such a school. All that can be proved, they contend, is that many of its alleged members knew some of the others and that occasionally some of them met for intellectual discussions. Kocher believes that

a close relationship of either Chapman or Roydon to Raleigh or to a school surrounding him is very far from being proved. They were close to each other, and Chapman was close to Harriot, but we are not dealing with syllogisms which can extend the intimacy any further. And
what of the Warner named by Kyd as one of Marlowe's friends? We are not even sure whether he is William Warner, the poet of Albion's England, or Walter Warner, the mathematician who was friend and editor to Harriot. In the latter case, nothing is known of his personal beliefs, certainly nothing to indicate that he was disposed to advanced religious speculation, although his interest in science may be taken for granted. .

In what sense, then, was there a Raleigh School of Atheism? Not in the sense that there was a tightly inter-related group. Not in the sense that they had a definite and uniform doctrine. The whole situation is much more amorphous. .

Instead of one attitude common to all we must understand extremes of temperament and creed. The only discoverable principle of unity among the several individuals is an earnestness of desire for knowledge (p. 17).

Nevertheless, whether or not the School of Night actually existed as a formal group is incidental to a study of Marlowe's intellectual concerns. That Marlowe was acquainted with—if not an intimate of—many of the foremost minds of his day, however, is agreed upon as fact by all of the critical disputants. The various references to his Treatises against Christianity and to his Atheistic lecture(s), furthermore, are evidence of his interest in theology and in man's place in the scheme of things. That Marlowe was involved in the intellectual as well as the political affairs of his day is indisputable. The precise nature of his intellectual attitudes and concerns, however, is chiefly of interest in so far as it is reflected in his drama. Rather than determining what exactly it was that Marlowe thought about ontology or religion and then seeing that those thoughts show up
in his drama, an analysis of Marlowe's drama may be more valuable if it is autotelically designed to determine the nature and degree of consistency of the intellectual values operating in any given work. Certainly there is a unique relationship between the work of art and the mind that created it: once the general tenor of that mind is understood, its specific beliefs are best obtained from the artistic work itself. Marlowe was educated through adolescence and young manhood to be concerned with the intellectual issues of the world he lived in. His public life is filled with action and danger, his private with unorthodoxy and daring. His friends were intellectual figures of every area of thought. His contemporaries testify to his avid knowledge of Machiavelli, Erasmus, Ovid, and Bruno. The general tenor of his mind is clear. The depth and complexity of his thought, however, live at their most eloquent in the objective context of his art.
FOOTNOTES


4 Steane, p. 11.

5 Wraight, p. 55.

6 Wraight, p. 85.

7 Wraight, p. 84. John Bakeless, Christopher Marlowe The Man in His Time (New York, 1937), pp. 74-75, writes, "These acts took place before an audience of graduates in a ceremony at which 'All and singular bachelors and questionists' appeared 'in their habits and hoods.' A Master of Arts presided. One of the respondent's philosophical propositions having been selected, he defended it in a Latin thesis, after which he suffered the ordeal of three separate Latin refutations, each by a different opponent. ... The successful questionists afterwards submitted 'supplicats'—both of Marlowe's have survived—in which they humbly 'prayed' that they might be admitted ad respondendum quaestioni before the Vice-Chancellor and the University Senate. The quaestio itself, an examination in Aristotle's Prior Analytics, does not seem to have daunted the budding dramatist in the least. A few years later, in writing Doctor Faustus, Marlowe makes his hero avow, in queer Latin and queerer Greek, a still queerer enthusiasm for this driest of philosophical treatises."

8 Paul H. Kocher, Christopher Marlowe, A Study of his Thought, Learning, and Character (Chapel Hill, 1946), p. 27.

9 Privy Council Registers, Elizabeth, VI, 381b, Public Record Office. As quoted and cited in Wraight, p. 88. See Leslie Hotson, The Death of Christopher Marlowe (1925), pp. 57-64, for the identification of the "Christopher Morley" of the Privy Council's letter as Christopher Morley and not his contemporary, Christopher Morley of Trinity College.
For the dating of the translation we have nothing but internal evidence. Boas notes that the "metrical evidence of run-on lines and feminine endings, and the closely knit texture of the phrasing, are marks of maturity" (pp. 43-44). At the same time, however, he declares that "The translation of a book of the De Bello Civili, line for line, would seem, like that of the Amores, to be a more likely enterprise for the Cambridge student than the London playwright" (p. 43). Tucker Brooke examines the metrical roughness of the work and declares "the boast that Lucan is 'translated line for line' is well justified, and the achievement is decidedly interesting; but it is accomplished often at so great a cost to English idiom and at such sacrifice of the translator's individuality as to make it even more likely the work of Marlowe's apprentice days than of the period of Hero and Leander." "The Marlowe Canon," PMLA, XXXVII (September, 1922), 396.

Brooke, pp. 390-391.

Ibid.


Boas, p. 27.

Steane, p. 13.

Wraight, p. 73. For a reproduction of the title page see p. 74.

See Chapter One, p. 8.


Kocher, p. 5. Bakeless declares that "Tamburlaine is a play on the theme of power, which obsessed the poor shoemaker's son so completely that it dominated almost everything he ever wrote. Tamburlaine deals with political and military power, the armed might of the conqueror. Doctor Faustus deals with power of the intellect, unlawful power through black magic. The Jew of Malta deals with the power of wealth, gained through unscrup-
ulous Machiavellian 'pollicie.' The Massacre at Paris returns again to the theme of political power to be attained by violence, as in Tamburlaine, and also by 'pollicie,' as in The Jew of Malta." P. 109.

Kocher calls criticism of Christianity "the most anxiously, skillfully, and passionately reiterated theme of dramatization." Pp. 4-5. Steane, however, feels that Kocher's claim "that such criticism is the most purposeful common concern of the plays seems... untrue: ... man's nature, its potentialities and limitations, has that place." Pp. 23-24. Since one cannot criticize Christianity unless he is aware of its teachings on the nature of man, and since the Christian metaphysic of the Renaissance placed man above the beasts but below the angels, Marlowe's criticism of Christianity is inseparable from his beliefs about man and man's potentialities. Kocher and Steane are really talking about the same thing.

As quoted in Boas, p. 242.

As quoted in Kocher, p. 25.

Boas, p. 111.

Kocher, p. 24, believes that "the story sounds likely enough, despite the obvious existence of a motive on Kyd's part for shifting the blame to a dead man. Marlowe probably was doing a bit of research for the treatise, which, according to several later reports, he wrote against Christianity." Steane, however, is more critical of Kyd's testimony: "The wretched man no doubt had the fear of the gallows, rack, pillory, and branding-iron before his eyes. ... The desperation of the grovelling (and he is servile, even for those days of necessary sycophancy) weakens the credibility of his testimony" P. 8. Since Marlowe and Kyd were sharing writing quarters at the time the treatise was written down, Marlowe certainly was familiar with its contents. Wraight identifies the work as that of "an anonymous heretical thinker designated under the name of Arrian... published in 1549" (pp. 237-238), though he then confuses it with the atheistical lecture Marlowe supposedly delivered to Sir Walter Raleigh. See p. 6.

Kocher, pp. 39-40, note 5.

Other evidence of Marlowe's atheism includes an entry in the commonplace book of the Kentish poet, Henry Oxinden. It says that Simon Aldrich, a Cambridge scholar from 1593 to 1607, told Oxinden "that Marlo who wrot
Hero & Leander was an atheist & had writ a booke against Scripture; how it was all one man's making, & would have printed it but could not be suffered. Mark Eccles, "Marlowe in Kentish Tradition," N & Q, CLXIX (1935), 58-61. In The Golden Grove (1600) William Vaughan speaks of "one Christopher Marlow by profession a playmaker, who, as it is reported, about 7 years ago wrote a booke against the Trinitie." Cf. Tucker Brooke, The life of Marlowe (London, 1930), p. 112. Then, too, there is the matter of the Baines note, which was prepared by a government informer and delivered to the Privy Council on the day before Marlowe's murder (Wraight, p. 302). It lists many of Marlowe's alleged atheistic beliefs, among them his supposed skepticism about Christ's divinity and virgin birth. Many of its charges are similar to those Kyd made on his arrest, but since Kyd and Baines with Richard Chomley, the charge that Marlowe was an "atheist" seems to be accurate.

28 Kocher, p. 8.

29 See M.C. Bradbrook, The School of Night (Cambridge, 1936), Chapter Two, "The Men." Wraight and Bradbrook are both somewhat casual with logic. Wraight is particularly prone to metamorphose conjecture into fact and, in one burst of enthusiasm, he has nearly every prominent Elizabethan included among the school's "members": "The fact that there were poets like Marlowe, Chapman, Drayton, Watson, Peele, Lodge, Spenser and Campion in this circle of intellectual thinkers and scientists was typical of the Elizabethan age." p. 55.

30 p. 8.

31 In The Jew of Malta Marlowe brings Machiavelli to the stage:

"We pursue
The story of a rich and famous Jew
Who lived in Malta. You shall find him still,
In all his projects, a sound Machiavel,
And that's his character. (Prologue, lines 5-9)
Machiavel himself enters later to present the tragedy and to entreat the audience to "grace him as he deserves, / And let him not be entertained the worse / Because he favors me." (lines 33-35).

Bruno visited England in the 1580's and addressed a group of prominent Elizabethans at the home of Fulke Greville (Wraight, pp. 164-167). According to Wraight, Bruno "opened up a new concept of the universe far beyond that of contemporary scientific thought: a universe stretching out to infinity and governed by an all-pervading deity."
Renaissance interest in the individual, in myth, in astrology, in knowledge of the self and of society stems from its ontological interest in the precise nature of man. By training and temperament Christopher Marlowe shared the Renaissance's concern for the limitations and potentialities of the individual. The ontological basis of that interest expresses itself in the astrological references and mythological allusions of his dramatic works as well as in Marlowe's complete understanding of the psychological workings of his characters. This ontological concern is of particular interest in the first of his dramas, Tamburlaine the Great, because Tamburlaine's world differs greatly from that of its author. Cosmological concepts such as the divine order of creation help to explain the Renaissance world but have little in common with Tamburlaine's non-Christian and less civilized cosmos. A careful examination of the ontological elements of the first part of the drama shows how Marlowe translated the Christian values of his world into the non-Christian context of Tamburlaine's cosmos. In this light, Tamburlaine's motivation and actions can be seen as pagan parallels of the Renaissance ethic which relied on Christian values to show the individual how best to achieve salvation.

It is true that Tamburlaine is basically choleric
in temperament and therefore characterized by a love of war, conquest, and cruelty.¹ But Tamburlaine is not merely a bloodthirsty barbarian intent on conquering the world. The primary motivation of his ambition is rather an intellectual and philosophical fascination with the concept of freedom. This primarily ontological concern expresses itself in Tamburlaine's pursuit of power and sovereignty as well as in the moral aspects of his character and actions. The astrological and mythological framework of the drama, furthermore, provides an appropriate setting for such an ontological motivation. The emphasis throughout the drama on Tamburlaine's "striving after knowledge infinite"—and on Tamburlaine's belief that he possesses true self knowledge—also helps to reveal the precise nature of his motivation. In conjunction with his confidence in himself, Tamburlaine's strength of will propels him to explore the potentialities of his own ego. In Tamburlaine's self-evaluation, he possesses knowledge of his own abilities and sufficient strength of will for him to successfully develop every facet of his being. In the Christian values of the Renaissance, Tamburlaine's will and understanding would have assured his salvation had they been as well developed as he believed. In the non-Christian world of the drama, however, they propel him onto a pagan equivalent of that course. Instead of Christian apotheosis through sal-
vation, Tamburlaine tries to immortalize himself by exploring and expressing every facet of his being. In so far as Tamburlaine is tragic, it is because of this magnificence of the hero's will. That his understanding was defective despite his regard for the exemplars furnished him by nature, however, is a judgment which can be rendered only from a Christian ethic, only from a cosmological view such as that which characterized the Renaissance.

The astrological framework of the drama calls attention to the ontological nature of Tamburlaine's motivation. In the first scene of the play Cosroe depicts his brother Mycetes as weak and insufficient:

"At whose birthday Cynthia with Saturn joined, And Jove, the Sun, and Mercury denied/To shed their influence in his fickle brain!" (I i 13-16). Mycetes himself declares, "thorough your planets I perceive you think/I am not wise enough to be a king" (I i 19-20). In contrast to Mycetes' weakness, however, is Tamburlaine's strength of will. Throughout the drama Tamburlaine declares that the stars testify to the magnificence of his powers as well as of his destined role of world conqueror. The Persian crown, he declares, is something "which gracious stars have promised at my birth" (I i 92). Cosroe believes that "Nature doth strive with fortune and his stars/To make him famous in accomplished worth" (II i 33-34). Already the pattern is emerging: those who oppose Tam-
burlaine have to overcome fate itself if they are to de-
feat the Sythian Shepherd. Tamburlaine has been favored
by the stars; his enemies have not. Cosroe himself is
aware of "all the stars that make/The loathsome circle
of my dated life" (II vi 36-39), but he nonetheless re-
solves to oppose Tamburlaine no matter "what star or state
soever govern him" (II vi 18). Before he commits su-
icide, Ayydas speaks of "the torments [Tamburlaine] and
heaven have sworn" for him (III ii 98). Zabina and Ba-
Jazeth rely on Mahomet, but Zenocrate declares that Tam-
burlaine is more powerful:

If Mahomet should come from heaven and swear
My royal lord is slain or conquered,
Yet should he not persuade me otherwise
But that he lives and will be conqueror.

(III iii 207-210)

After Tamburlaine has routed Bajazeth's army, Zabina and
Bajazeth curse their fortune. Bajazeth cries against
"sleepy Mahomet" (III iii 268) while Zabina laments,
"O cursed Mahomet, that maketh us thus/The slaves to
Seythians rude and barbarous!" (III iii 269-270). Tam-
burlaine, on the other hand, has been favored by the
stars. In Act III Scene iii he speaks of his "smiling
stars" (line 42). After his victory over Bajazeth, he
exclaims, "Smile, stars, that reigned at my nativity;/And dim the brightness of their neighbor" (IV ii 32).

When Tamburlaine's enemies predict that they will
destroy him, when they declare that the stars are on their
side, they inevitably are mistaken. Arabia, for example,
hopes that "Tamburlaine for his offenses feel/Such plagues as heaven...pour on him" (IV iii 45). Arabia's mind, furthermore, "presageth fortunate success" (IV iii 58) in his battle against Tamburlaine. Rhetorically addressing Tamburlaine, he exclaims "My spirit doth foresee/The utter ruin of thy men and thee" (IV iii 59-60). Despite Arabia's presagings, however, Tamburlaine is victorious and totally destroys the combined armies which oppose him. Throughout the first part, then, Tamburlaine's lofty statements about his destiny are given support by the favourable nature of his astrological characteristics. Those who oppose him, however, contend not only with their own ill-boding stars, but also, it would appear, with the gods themselves.

Tamburlaine's understanding of his own abilities and his belief that he is destined to conquer the world are also supported by the action of the play. Over and over again Tamburlaine proclaims that he is invincible and over and over again he annihilates those who oppose him. Despite his pastoral origin, Tamburlaine has been able to obtain true self-knowledge, it would appear, by having carefully observed and followed nature. Citing Jove as a precedent for his ambition, Tamburlaine declares that

Nature, that framed us of four elements,
Farring within our breasts for regiment,
Both teach us all to have aspiring minds.  
(II vii 17-20)

Coupled to Tamburlaine's apparent self-knowledge is his
steadfast will, which prevents him from altering his usual military practice of destroying any city which refuses to surrender within three days. Zenocrate, for example, pleads with Tamburlaine to spare Damascus:

Yet would you have some pity for my sake,  
Because it is my country's, and my father's!  
(IV ii 123-124)

Like Hercules', however, Tamburlaine's will is unalterable:

Not for the world, Zenocrate, if I have sworn.  
Come; bring in the Turk!  
(IV ii 125-126)

Indeed, it is ironic that Bajaseth believes that his three sons are braver than Hercules since his description of Hercules' militaristic exploits is also a portrait of Tamburlaine, the man who defeats and imprisons him. Bajaseth addresses his wife as the

mother of three braver boys  
Than Hercules, that in his infancy  
Did push the jaws of serpents venomous,  
Whole hands are made to grip a warlike lance,  
Their shoulders broad, for complete armor fit,  
Their limbs more large and of a bigger size  
Than all the brats y-sprung from Typhon's loins.  
(III iii 103-10)

The astrological framework of the drama supports the ontological nature of Tamburlaine's motivation since it focuses attention on the relationship between the individual (Tamburlaine) and the cosmos in which he lives. At the same time Tamburlaine's astrological characteristics show that in conquering the world Tamburlaine is actually expressing the total force of his ego. As Eugene Smith observes, "ruling the earth is not an end in
itself [but] a manifestation of the will to 'soar above the highest sort.' While those who oppose Tamburlaine are usually aware of the unfavorable portents of their stars, they are not aware of the higher nature of Tamburlaine's ambition and thus choose to ignore the astrological warnings provided by the stars. In that sense their destruction is self-generated.

The mythological framework of the drama also emphasizes the ontological nature of Tamburlaine's motivation. Tamburlaine is frequently compared to Jove, Hercules, Mars, and Jupiter. His exploits call to mind the exploits of various mythical heroes. Addressing his subordinates at the banquet which precedes his sacking of Damascus, Tamburlaine exhorts

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...let us freely banquet and carouse
Full bowls of wine unto the God of War,
That means to fill your helmets full of gold,
And make Damascus' spoils as rich to you
As was to Jason Colchos' golden fleece.
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(IV iv 5-9)

In Tamburlaine's non-Christian world, the various parallels between his actions and those of mythical figures such as Jason or Hydra help to explain his ambition as primarily the desire to explore and express every facet of his ego. By following the precedents of Mars, Jove, or Hercules, Tamburlaine borrows a dignity for himself and for his course of action which re-inforces his own self-estimate. As the pagan gods were believed to be of human origin, so Tamburlaine believes he can apotheosize himself
by attaining complete freedom.

That Tamburlaine as Marlowe portrayed him is characterized by an intellectual and philosophical fascination with freedom is readily seen by comparing Tamburlaine, Part I with its sources, Fortescue's translation of Mexia's *Sylva de varia lection, The Forest* (1571) and Perondinus's *Vita Magni Tamerlanis* (1551). While it is a mistake to identify Tamburlaine as but an alter ego of Marlowe, it is true that many of the aspects of Tamburlaine's character were provided not by history but by Marlowe's imagination. Whereas the Tamburlaine of both Mexia and Perondinus is little more than a unilateral, undeveloped character—a bloodthirsty barbarian—Marlowe sublimates Tamburlaine's character by emphasizing its intellectual and philosophical aspects. This emphasis results from two alterations of his sources: One, Marlowe gave less importance to Tamburlaine's militaristic traits; two, he created a personification of Tamburlaine's quest for the unattainable in Zenozrate.

In "Tamburlaine and Marlowe" Leslie Spence discusses the first of these changes. After demonstrating that Marlowe used many of the historic characteristics of "Timure the Lame," Spence declares

*This is not to say that Marlowe used everything in the histories without selecting for his purpose. It is obvious that he emphasized the spiritual. From Perondinus's details of Tamburlaine's dexterity he might have developed a champion who would rival in prowess Scott's*
Richard Coeur de Lion; instead, he allows Tamburlaine only one fight on the stage. Perondinus's detailed picture of Tamburlaine's appearance he so used that physical height and breadth emphasize in Tamburlaine loftiness of mind and largeness of personality.

Even in Tamburlaine's military conquests, Marlowe stressed the spiritual aspect of dominance. The idea of conquest as an enterprise involving geographical details, conquered territories, and leaderless peoples, and calling for physical endurance and military manoeuvres, he subordinated to the conception of conquest as an emanation of the conqueror's spirit, a crystallization of Tamburlaine's ambition.

Such an alteration of emphasis, however, does not prove by itself that Tamburlaine's motivation has anything of the intellectual or philosophical. It does, on the other hand, support the contention that Tamburlaine's motivating force is actually that of ambition and not, as in his sources, exclusively one of combat and bloodletting.

It is in examining Marlowe's portrayal of Zenocrate, and in analyzing Tamburlaine's reaction to her, that the true nature of this ambition is assayed and the intellectual and philosophical aspects of Tamburlaine's character partially revealed. It is important to keep in mind here that none of Marlowe's sources mention a character such as Zenocrate. An examination of her portrayal and function in the drama, therefore, is of primary importance in determining the true motivation of Marlowe's Tamburlaine.

In Act I Scene ii both Tamburlaine and Zenocrate are first introduced, and, although Tamburlaine has just
captured Zenocrate, he already is captivated by her beauty and grace. Tamburlaine declares that Zenocrate's...

Fair face and heavenly hue
Must grace his bed that conquers Asia.

Nine lines later he offers to make her "Empress of the East." In the same scene he expresses his love and devotion to her:

Zenocrate, lovelier than the love of Jove,
Brighter than is 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.

Already Tamburlaine believes that he truly knows himself. His reference to his "gracious stars" shows the strength of that self-evaluation while astrologically endorsing his ambition.

Although Zenocrate is his captive, Tamburlaine does not force his love upon her but swears by heaven in the last scene of the play that he has treated her honorably: "And for all blot of foul in chastity/I record heaven her heavenly self is clear" (V ii 427-428). Indeed, it is through Zenocrate that Tamburlaine first feels compassion and so spares her father's life. Zenocrate, then, plays a key role in the play. She loves and is loved by Tamburlaine; she is valued more highly by Tamburlaine than his "kingly crown," and through her Tamburlaine first experiences the gentler emotions of love and compassion. As Maith observes, "the inclusion in his
nature of the capacity to love is a characteristic Renaissance addition to the classical model of the Herculean hero.⁷

A closer analysis of Zenocrate's role, however, reveals a greater complexity of her dramatic function. Zenocrate actually symbolizes the beauty which Tamburlaine partially pursues in striving after "knowledge infinite." It is in this regard that Zenocrate reveals the philosophical aspect of Tamburlaine's character. In spite of his fixation with conquest and power, Tamburlaine nonetheless recognizes Zenocrate's higher worth. Yet, despite his formidable powers of force and persuasion, she disdains to live with him. In representing the values of beauty—the claims of Venus as opposed to those of Mars—Zenocrate embodies and concretizes Tamburlaine's metaphysical aspirations just as Tamburlaine's obsession for crowns is a manifestation of his ontologically motivated fascination with the concepts of power and freedom.

In commenting on Tamburlaine's famous speech of Act II Scene vii, Una Ellis-Pevenson declares that Marlowe has broken faith with his idea in portraying the end of Tamburlaine's ambitions as "the sweet fruition of an earthly crown":⁸

TAIL. 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 emperial heaven,
Moved me to manage arms against thy state,
What better precedent than mighty Jove?
Nature, that framed us of four elements,
Warring within our breasts for regiment,
Both teach us all to have aspiring minds.
Our souls, whose faculties can comprehend
The wondrous architecture of the world,
And measure every wand'ring planet's course,
Still climbing after knowledge infinite,
And always moving as the restless spheres,
Mills us to wear ourselves and never rest
Until we reach the ripest fruit of all,
The perfect bliss and sole felicity,
The sweet fruition of an earthly crown.

Ellis-Fermor declares that "we go back to the lines about the 'faculties' of the soul and take care never again to link them with what follows." To Tamburlaine, however, the "faculties of the soul" are best expressed by attaining complete sovereignty, which he equates with complete power—"The sweet fruition of an earthly crown."

His remarks about knowledge, nature, and the faculties of the soul are in fact consistent with his desire for an earthly crown. They serve to explain the ontological basis of that desire, moreover, for they reveal the philosophical and intellectual aspects of his mind. To truly explore every facet of his being, Tamburlaine believes that he must be totally free from the control of everything extrinsic to his ego. As Waith observes, Tamburlaine extols 'the sweet fruition of an earthly crown' not because anything the earth has to offer has final value for him, but because domination of the earth represents the fulfillment of his mission—the fulfillment of himself.
Enid Welsford also examines the philosophical traits of Tamburlaine's character. Marlowe's world conqueror, she contends, is essentially a poet whose quest for an 'earthly crown' is really only an inadequate and unhappily chosen symbol for the pursuit of an unattainable beauty.

Welsford certainly misstates her case when she calls Tamburlaine's "earthly crown" an "unhappily chosen symbol." Her comments do remind us of the more philosophical aspects of Tamburlaine's mind, however, and they help to explain the thematic importance of Tamburlaine's love for Zenocrate. By declaring that Zenocrate is more valuable than his earthly crown (I i 90-92), Tamburlaine forces us to recognize the philosophical nature of that ambition.

That Tamburlaine is motivated by great ambition is obvious from even a superficial reading of the play. The precise nature of that ambition, however, is difficult to ascertain because Marlowe's Tamburlaine is a more complex figure than either of the Tamburlaines of his sources. Certainly his choleric characteristics reveal themselves again and again. So spectacular are Tamburlaine's physical actions that it is easy to err as Tamburlaine's enemies err and see but the militaristic traits of the world conqueror. A close examination of Tamburlaine's musings and actions, however, shows that Tamburlaine's ambition is primarily an attempt to obtain
complete freedom and sovereignty, to be controlled by nothing, not by kings, not by gods, not by fates. Tamburlaine's motivating force is an ontological inquiry into the potentialities of his own being.

The ontological basis of Tamburlaine's motivation emerges as early as the second scene of Act I. In his second speech of the play, Tamburlaine declares, "I love to live at liberty/. . .And must maintain my life exempt from servitude" (I ii 26-30). His thoughts themselves are "co-equal with the clouds" (I ii 65) and Zenocrate observes Tamburlaine's desire for immortality, for freedom even from death, when she pleads for her release, "Even as thou hop'at to be eternized/By living Asia's mighty emperor" (I ii 72-73). In the same scene, furthermore, Tamburlaine echoes Zenocrate's words, exclaiming, "May we become immortal like the gods!" (I ii 201). In addition to these explicit references, Marlowe emphasizes Tamburlaine's ontological fascination with the concept of complete freedom by means of Tamburlaine's obsession with chains, manacles, and slavery (I ii 148-8; 174; 254; etc.).

Act I Scene ii is particularly important because it is the scene in which Tamburlaine first appears. It is no accident that it is filled with references to the Renaissance's concern for the ontological nature of man since that same concern is Tamburlaine's primary motivation.
Tamburlaine, for example, is particularly interested in his own identity. Although he was born a shepherd, he sees himself in the role of a god. Throwing aside his shepherd's clothing, he metamorphosizes himself into a godlike figure. The mythological parallel is apparent and Tamburlaine himself is well aware that "Jove sometime masked in a shepherd's weed" (I ii 199).

Tamburlaine's astrological comments also emphasize the importance of his relationship to the cosmic forces of the world he lives in. The relationship between Tamburlaine and fate which they amplify is particularly interesting in that while Tamburlaine is depicted as guided and protected by fate, he is also presented in control of fate, above the influence of the stars. Cosroe, for example, declares that Tamburlaine is favored by the stars: "Nature doth strive with fortune and his stars/To make him famous in accomplished worth" (II i 32-33). Tamburlaine himself declares, "For fates and oracles [of] heaven have sworn/To royalize the deeds of Tamburlaine" (II iii 7-8). His "smiling stars," furthermore, "gives him assured hope/Of martial triumph ere he meet his foes" (III iii 41-43). Though Tamburlaine here sees himself as favored by fate, he also declares that destiny is under his control: "I hold the Fates bound fast in iron chains,/And with my hand turn Fortune's wheel about" (I ii 174-5). In Act II, further-
more, he boasts, "with our sun-bright armor as we march,/We'll chase the stars from heaven" (II iii 21-22). To further complicate his relationship to fate, Tamburlaine also identifies himself as fate for, he declares, "my words are oracles" (II iii 102).

These seemingly contradictory presentations of Tamburlaine's relationship to fate are parallel to his relationship to the gods, in particular, to his relationship to Jove. As Frank B. Fieler observes,

Tamburlaine's pride becomes correspondingly greater until toward the end of the play he openly defies the power of God. The dramatist points up the development of his hero's pride in the repeated references to Jove. In the earlier parts of the play, Tamburlaine refers to Jove as his protector, but by the fourth act when Zenocrate pleads with him to spare Damascus, Tamburlaine swears that, "were Egypt Jove's own land,/Yet would I with my sword make Jove to stoop" (IV iv 75-76). In the final act, he fancies himself so powerful that a "pal and wan" Jove fears that Tamburlaine will "pull him from his throne" (V i 390-391). As early as Act I Scene ii, however, Tamburlaine is presented in opposition to the gods. Theridamas, for example, declares, "His looks do menace heaven and dare the gods" (line 156). In Act II Scene vi, furthermore, Cosroe refers to Tamburlaine's

...giantsly presumption
To cast up hills against the face of heaven,
And dare the force of angry Jupiter.
(lines 2ff)

In answer to Cosroe Meander says that Tamburlaine is actually of divine—or demonic—origin:
Some powers divine, or else infernal, mixed
Their angry seeds at his conception,
For he was never sprung of human race.
(lines 9-12)

Tamburlaine has it both ways. Though he sometimes portrays himself as under the favorable influence of the stars, he actually believes he is beyond their control. Though he is sometimes presented as under the protection of the gods, he actually believes he is a god himself. By means of these parallel relationships Marlowe again illustrates the ontological nature of Tamburlaine's ambition. Though Tamburlaine will act under the auspices of fate or of Jove, he refuses to allow himself to be controlled—or to be thought to be controlled—by either. Even the gods cannot interfere with his designs "he dare so doubtlessly resolve of rule" (II vi 13):

Though Mars himself, the angry god of arms,
And all the earthly potentates conspire
To dispossess me of this diadem,
Yet will I wear it in despite of them,
As great commander of this eastern world.
(II vii 58-62)

As Philip Henderson observes,

Tamburlaine...illustrates the victory of the imagination over the material world, the heroic will that transcends human limitations and aspires to the divine. Again and again, he is compared to the sun in glory. He is the "chiefest lamp of the earth" and has his "rising in the east." He "rides in golden armour like the sun" and challenges the power of Jove. The whole of the first part of Tamburlaine is bathed in the golden, ethereal glow of the conqueror's semi-divine aspiration and pride of life.12
Marlowe again emphasizes this fate-Jove parallel in portraying Tamburlaine as the "Scourge of God." The belief that great conquerors who ravaged the earth were actually ministers of God, sent to punish the wicked and test the faithful, was common in the literature of the Renaissance. As the Wrath and Scourge of God, therefore, Tamburlaine actually is a mere slave to the Almighty. The motivating force of his conquest and cruelty is not his ontological fascination for the concepts of man and freedom, but, on the contrary, it is God's manifesting His omniscience and omnipotence. As Faustus believes Mephistophilis is his servant, so Tamburlaine thinks that fate is his servant and that the gods themselves are under his control. This irony, however, does not become clear until the second part of Tamburlaine where the defects of Tamburlaine's understanding are elucidated. If the irony were apparent in the first part, Marlowe's portrayal of the world conqueror would be confusing and contradictory. On the one hand, Tamburlaine's thirst for sovereignty would appear to be the primary motivating force of the play. On the other, however, Tamburlaine's role as the Scourge of God would infer that the primary motivating force is actually the omnipotent will of the Deity, who causes Tamburlaine to conquer and terrify in order to punish and purify.

In the context of the first part, however, Tam-
burlaine's relationships to the Deity are more complex than such a linear equation. To the portrait of Tamburlaine as the Scourge of God, Marlowe fuses elements of Tamburlaine as the anti-Christ. His flaunting of Jove, furthermore, jar with the notion that he acts *in loco dei.* Then, too, Tamburlaine possesses unbridled ambition, politically as well as socially, which in no way were acceptable to a Renaissance audience, raised in a society which emphasized the divine order of creation.

In discussing the ethical meaning of Tamburlaine, Roy W. Battenhouse contends that the Elizabethans believed ambition such as Tamburlaine's to be a sin. Frank B. Fiebler supports Battenhouse's contention and argues that attempting to raise one's social position was almost as bad as attempting to dethrone a king; in each case the social order was being disrupted. The Elizabethans were understandably suspicious of anyone showing signs of social ambition. The very fact that Tamburlaine was attempting to change the position God had assigned him was a direct insult to the Creator's wisdom. Though Tamburlaine was presented before persons many of whom were behaving with all the will to rise that characterized the rollicking Simon Eyre who a little later enlivened the Shoemaker's Holiday, yet even these could be expected to recognize ambition as the hallmark of the doomed villain.

Such an attitude toward ambition reflects the Elizabethans' faith in an all-powerful and intervening God as well as in the order of His creation. Battenhouse observes that "in Plutarch... Renaissance moralists found the attractive theory that a sinful act at the very moment of its com-
mitting engenders within itself its own punishment."17

Thus, had Marlowe's Tamburlaine conformed strictly to Ren-

aissance moral beliefs in Part I, the hero would have been

punished in the first part of the drama itself for his un-

bridled ambition, for his cruelty, and for his immoral con-

quests. Not even the Scourge of God can rebel against God's

order.18 Paul Kocher notices this dilemma and argues for

the removal of all Christian connotations in interpreting

Tamburlaine's role as the Scourge of God:

If Tamburlaine's designation of himself as God's

Scourge is taken with its usual Christian con-

notations, it contradicts his view upon God and

man as previously determined. For as against a

god of merely naked power it opposes the Christian

God of justice and mercy, and against a univer-

sal law of strife for mastery it sets the law of moral

obligation. To be sure, Tamburlaine regards

himself as privileged to commit any cruelty in his

function as divine avenger, but under this theory

what he punishes is sin against the moral order.

Is it certain, however, that Marlowe intends the

conception of Tamburlaine as Scourge to carry

with it these Christian connotations? May not

all of Tamburlaine's religious ideas be harmo-

nized by simply amputating the Christian ap-

pendages and considering him as a servant of a

deity who is Power without Justice and who

punishes disobedience in man merely because dis-

obedience is rebellion, regardless of fictions

about right and wrong?19

Such an amputation of Christian connotations, however,

removes the importance and purpose of Tamburlaine's role

as the Scourge of God because it does not reconcile Tam-

burlaine's ambitions of complete freedom to his subser-

vient nature as the Scourge and Wrath of God, even if that

God be non-Christian. At the same time it lessens the im-

pact of Tamburlaine's will and understanding, since it was
a Christian ethic which emphasized the proper development of them both. The emphases throughout the play on the divine nature of kings, furthermore, and on the sacredness of the social order which Tamburlaine challenges in attacking them also necessitates an audience-awareness of Renaissance cosmological beliefs.

Fieler provides a more comprehensive solution to the dilemma that Tamburlaine is both Scourge of God and challenger of His divine order. He contends that Marlowe portrays Tamburlaine as the Scourge of God in order to expiate many of his offenses:

Characterizing Tamburlaine as an ally to the Christians and God's scourge of infidels is a calculated attempt to make the audience disregard the fact that Tamburlaine has waged offensive war against a legal monarch.

Kocher also believes that Tamburlaine's role of Scourge is primarily an attempt to enlist sympathy for Marlowe's hero:

To enlist sympathy for Tamburlaine's attack on Bajazeth, Marlowe had only to show him as a rescuer of Christian slaves tortured in the galleys of the bragging Turkish despot. Incidentally, Marlowe's transfer of the Scourge of God role to this episode from the scene of slaughter at Damascus, where it is given in all the sources, is another indication that he means it to enhance Tamburlaine's good name.

Willard Thorp is won over by this "calculated attempt" to win sympathy for Tamburlaine, though he apparently is unaware of the consciousness of the effort:

Viewed as the first audiences saw him, there is no reason why retribution should overtake Tamburl-
laine. True he is magniloquent, ruthless when crossed, exultant over his victims, but his excesses find redemption in his regard for Christianity, his charity toward capitulants, and the fact, established by tradition and insisted upon by Marlowe, that he was the Wrath of God incarnate. 22

Marlowe's portrayal of Tamburlaine as the Scourge of God is not a direct identification, therefore, but rather a useful mask which Tamburlaine uses to advance his reputation of invincibility and terror and to further his self-apotheosis. At the same time, it is a device which Marlowe uses to enable the audience to applaud and admire Tamburlaine's career.

Certainly this latter purpose is reflected in Tamburlaine's forcing Bajazeth to lift his siege of Constantinople:

\begin{verbatim}
BAJ. ... We hear the Tartars and the eastern thieves,
Under the conduct of one Tamburlaine,
Presume a bickering with your emperor,
And thinks to rouse us from our dreadful siege
Of the famous Grecian Constantinople.
\end{verbatim}

(III i 2-7)

Then, too, Tamburlaine declares that he will free the Christian captives from Bajazeth's galleys (III iii 44ff). While Marlowe uses the motif of the Scourge of God in portraying Tamburlaine, however, he simultaneously portrays Tamburlaine as rebellious and ambitious. Not only is Tamburlaine God's Scourge, he is also God's Scourger. As Douglas Cole points out,

Tamburlaine orders a massacre of innocents, swears oaths by Mahomet, makes claims of world mastery and of superhuman powers. ... Tam-
burlaine succeeds in the purpose of his mas-
sacre, turns his connection with Mahomet into
one of daring defiance, and fulfills most of
his martial boasts.  

In defiance of Renaissance moral beliefs, however, Tam-
burlaine remains unpunished throughout the play (Part I).
Even more blasphemous and rebellious aspects of Tambur-
laine's character are elucidated by this double role.
Few Elizabethans would object to a Pagan conqueror
blaspheming a Pagan god, though they would certainly con-
demn Tamburlaine's unbridled ambition and his irreverence
toward authority. Tamburlaine's boasting that his
"thoughts are co-equal with the clouds" and his frequent
declarations of divinity are also inimical to Renaissance
moral and cosmological beliefs.

Lest Tamburlaine's flaunting of Jove and Mahomet
by considered too scanty evidence for judging him a
blasphemous rebel, however, Marlowe provides further
testimony by providing Tamburlaine with specific char-
acteristics of the Anti-Christ. Battenhouse observes
that Tamburlaine's great banquet is a conscious parody of
the Last Supper:

 Fundamentally, Tamburlaine's banquet is Paganism's
unconscious travesty of the Lord's Supper. The
meal has sacramental pattern. First come "Full
bowles of wine Unto the God of war." Then is
brought in "a second course"--pastries in the
shape of crowns. Tamburlaine, the tyrant-Lord,
hands this worldly-bread to his lieutenant dis-
ciples. At the same time he invests them with
titles promisory of the rewards they are to have
for service in his kingdom; and he exHORTS them
to the pagan virtues of "valour" and "magna-
nimity." Then, invoking "holy Fates" (Paganism's counterpart to Christian Providence), he goes forth to his triumph by the sword (counterpart of the Christian cross.)

Tamburlaine's treatment of his subordinates, his shepherd origin, and Zenocrate's virginity further develop this blasphemous role. Douglas Cole observes, furthermore, that

the tyrant Herod, with his extravagant boasts and cruel deeds [as presented in the mystery plays] has been seen as a dramatic prototype of Marlowe's Tamburlaine.

The fact that Tamburlaine drives Bajazeth and Zabina into atheism also re-inforces the Anti-Christ elements of his portrayal.

Tamburlaine's similarities to the Anti-Christ may be compared to the blasphemous travesties of Christian ritual in Doctor Faustus. Faustus seals the contract with Lucifer which he has signed in blood with the "Consummatum est" that Christ uttered immediately before expiring on the cross (II i 73). As Leo Kirschbaum has shown, the irony of Faustus's actions is frequently at his own expense. The audience accepts the premises with which Marlowe has constructed the tragedy:

Outside the theatre, we may mightily agree or disagree with the eschatology inherent in Doctor Faustus. But in the theatre, as we watch the play, we understand and accept (if only for the nonce) that man's most precious possession is his immortal soul and that he gains Heaven or Hell by his professions and actions on earth.
Accepting these premises, the audience is aware of the irony of Faustus' ignorance of the true meaning of his words and actions. In Tamburlaine, Part I, however, Tamburlaine's belief that he is a god does not appear to be ironic because in his non-Christian world there is no punishment for what would be sins in the context of a Christian value system. Part I ends on the highest note: Tamburlaine "takes truce with all the world" (V ii 471) and is ready to solemnize his marriage with Zenocrate. Throughout the first part of the drama Tamburlaine's self-estimate seems to be an accurate appraisal of his abilities. It is in the second part of the drama that Marlowe breaks faith with the premises of the first part. He introduces the Christian ethic of his own time into Tamburlaine's non-Christian world. Tamburlaine's understanding is then shown to be defective and Tamburlaine consequently "falls" because he is a man, not a god. Without the hindsight afforded by Part II, Tamburlaine's actions and aspirations of Part I cannot be considered ironic. In the context of Part I there is no way for the audience to know that Tamburlaine will fall. The premises are rather that he is as powerful and godlike as he believes. The Christian ethic of the audiences who watched the first performance may have disturbed them that Tamburlaine frequently violated the moral code of their world, but there is little in the play which sug-
gested that Tamburlaine was as subject to it as they were. Even so, by means of the Scourge of God motif Marlowe allowed those who judged Tamburlaine not on the values of his world but on those of their own to excuse his attacks upon social order. When Tamburlaine depicts himself as the Wrath and Scourge of God, he in no way believes that he is subject to divine will, for he sees himself as beyond the control of outside forces. In the second Part of the drama, however, Marlowe replaces the iconoclastic premises of Tamburlaine's world with the traditional cosmology of the Renaissance. Tamburlaine is then shown to be subject, as every mortal is subject, to the omniscience and omnipotence of the Deity. This shift in premises in no way removes the Christian connotations from Marlowe's portrayal of Tamburlaine as the Scourge of God in Part I. It does make clear, however, that those connotations are not the premises describing Tamburlaine's world, but rather a convenience to those in the audience who were unable to separate their subjective standards of conduct from the non-Christian and pre-Renaissance world of Tamburlaine the Great.

In examining Tamburlaine's role as Scourge of God it is only logical to expect that Marlowe would go the one remaining step and endow Tamburlaine with characteristics of a god itself—or of the God Himself. Such a portrayal would complement Tamburlaine's rebellion against all
authority and would support his role of Anti-Christ:

And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against
God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle,
and them that dwell in heaven (Revelations, 13: 6).

Certainly Tamburlaine is presented as superhuman, charac-
terized by an unbridled ambition for complete sov-
erignty. That Tamburlaine does set himself up as a/the
god is immediately apparent. He declares that he is master
of fate and destiny; he compares himself to Jove over and
over; he appoints kings and distributes crowns. He de-
clares that death is his servant, patiently waiting on
the tip of his sword for commands:

. . . Behold my sword! What see you at the point?
. . . There sits Death, there sits imperious Death,
Keeping his circuit by the slicing edge.

(V 11 46ff)

Driving Bajazeth and Zabina into atheism and slaughtering
the suppliant virgins, he sets himself up as a/the deity
whose will is unalterable, whose force is invincible.

It is true, however, that Tamburlaine believes

a king is superior to a god:

A god is not so glorious as a king.
I think the pleasure they enjoy in heaven
Cannot compare with kingly joys in earth.
To wear a crown encased with pearl and gold,
Whose virtues carry with it life and death;
To ask and have, command and be obeyed;
When looks breed love, with looks to gain the

Such power attractive shines in princes' eyes!

(II v 56-65)

Tamburlaine has a hyperbolic imagination but he suffers
from limited vision. Tamburlaine overlooks the fact that
both Jupiter and Christ are "kings" as well as gods. His
reasons for preferring kingship to godhood, furthermore, show that it is the concept of power which Tamburlaine seeks in striving after an "earthly crown." It is power over life and death, complete freedom and sovereignty, and obedience and adulation which Tamburlaine desires.

When Tamburlaine expresses his contempt for the crown, it is because he desires not the physical object itself, but rather the power which it symbolizes. "If I should desire the Persian crown," he boasts, "I could attain it with a wondrous ease" (II v 75-76). Twenty lines later he says he will "Make but a jest to win the Persian crown" (II v 97-98). In Tamburlaine's famous "aspiring minds" speech of Act, therefore, his great intellectual and philosophical powers—implicit in such phrases as "thirst of reign," "aspiring minds," "measure every wand'ring planet's course," and "knowledge infinite"—are ...irely consistent with the purpose of them all, "The sweet fruition of an earthly crown." From his first appearance on the stage, Tamburlaine does thirst for sovereignty. He loves "to live at liberty" (I ii 25) and "must maintain [his] life exempt from servitude" (I ii 31). To Tamburlaine, particularly to the Tamburlaine of Acts I and II, an earthly crown is sovereignty, is complete freedom. Once he has experienced military success and has enjoyed several earthly crowns he lessens their importance, rebels against Jove, and expropriates divine characteris-
tics. Tamburlaine’s pursuit of complete freedom indeed is intellectual and philosophical in the way in which he regards and analyzes it. His speech is filled with statements about freedom and sovereignty; he constantly alludes to fate and to God, and he expresses himself with references to slavery, manacles, and chains. He is fascinated by crowns as the symbols of that which he seeks, and, by distributing them to his subordinates (I” iv 130ff), he equates himself with God.

This obsession with power leads Tamburlaine on his campaign of world conquest and demands that his will, like that of Hercules, be unalterable. He is unmoved by the pleas of the Damascous virgins, "whose looks," according to Zenocrate, "might make the angry god of arms/to break his sword and mildly treat of love" (V ii 267-8). He imprisons Bajazeth in a cage, and, for his entertainment, keeps him starving during the great banquet of Act IV. In this way he repays Bajazeth for having boasted that

[Tamburlaine] shall be made a chaste and lustless eunuch,
And in my sarell tend my concubines. (III iii 77-8).

Tamburlaine thus carries out his own prophecy that

...every common soldier of my camp
Shall smile to [Bajazeth's] miserable state.

(III iii 85-6)

Imprisoned, Bajazeth is living proof to Tamburlaine of his power, and Tamburlaine is intellectually as well as phys-
ically delighted with Bajazeth's plight.

The tragedy of Tamburlaine the Great indeed results not from the cruelty or baseness of Tamburlaine's character—for it is impossible for a totally base character to be tragic—but from the magnificence of his aspirations and will. The grandeur of Tamburlaine's mind, his sensitivity to beauty, his thundering mythological similes, his devotion to his subordinates, his unalterable will—all reflect the ontological motivation of his ambition for he is primarily concerned with exploring the potentialities of his own ego. The discrepancy between the verbal and presentational images of the play—between the grandeur of Tamburlaine's ambition and the gruesomeness of his actions—points out the irony inherent in the humanity of the would-be god. As Part I concludes, however, that discrepancy is lost sight of in the magnitude of Tamburlaine's conquests and in his desire to replace conquest with government. The irony of his humanity is not developed in the first part because its premises are not that Tamburlaine is human and therefore fallible but rather that he can and does apotheosize himself by exploring and expressing every facet of his being. In the second part of the drama the limitations rather than the potentialities of his humanity are delineated and the tragedy of the overreaching hero brought into sharp focus:

Simply stated, Marlowe wished to impress upon his audience the vision of a magnificent human
being who acted in a way unqorthy of his own greatness--a man capable of mounting the highest possible level of achievement, but perverting that capability by mistaking what constitutes the highest perfection available to man. And herein lies the tragedy of Tamburlaine the Great.
FOOTNOTES


3 Ibid.

4 Leslie Spence analyzes these sources in "Tamburlaine and Marlowe," PMLA, XLIII (Sept., 1927), 604-622.

5 The first of these changes is noted and discussed by Leslie Spence. Frank B. Pieler, Tamburlaíne, Part I and Its Audiences (Gainesville, Florida, 1961), p. 3, declares, "There is nothing in Marlowe's sources that describes such a character as Zenocrate, or suggests that the Tatar had any capacity for the pure love the dramatic hero gives her."

6 Spence, pp. 606-607.

7 Waith, p. 72.

8 Una Mary Ellis-Fermor, Christopher Marlowe (London, 1927), p. 29.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid., p. 67.


12 Pieler, p. 21.


17 Battenhouse, p. 100.
Fredson Bowers, "Hamlet as Minister and Scourge," PHIL, LXX (Sept., 1955), 740-749, discusses the differences between the notions of Scourge and Minister. The Scourge was a damned soul used by the Almighty to punish the wicked. Thus the Scourge was dispensed from following the ordinary moral strictures. In Part I, however, although Tamburlaine refers to himself as the Scourge of God, his actions are not punishments. Since there is little relation between those actions and the usual actions of a Scourge, it is apparent that Tamburlaine merely uses the motif to further his own ambitions. In Part II, on the other hand, Tamburlaine constantly re-iterates that he is God's Scourge and that there can therefore be no end to his bloodletting. Because a Renaissance audience would have been aware that Scourges were damned, Tamburlaine's identification of himself as Scourge in Part II was one more ironic element in his attempt to immortalise himself. Since the motif is not emphasized in Part I and since Tamburlaine's actions there are clearly ordained by his own will, the irony does not become apparent until Part II. In Part I Tamburlaine says that he is the Scourge of God; in Part II Tamburlaine actually believes that he is the Scourge.

19 Kocher, pp. 80-81.
20 Fielet, p. 56.
21 Kocher, p. 184.

24 Battenhouse, p. 155.
25 In Part II, Tamburlaine pierces his side with a sword and tells his sons to put their hands into the wound. The episode seems a conscious travesty of Christ's telling Thomas to put his hand into His pierced side.


28 "One cannot ignore the ironic contrast between the magniloquent words in which Tamburlaine expresses his achievement and the macabre sight which defines it in visual terms: Bajazeth dead in his cage, Zabina lifeless beneath it, Arabia's bleeding corpse. Marlowe's last scene thus accepts the paradox of the inhuman effects of Tamburlaine's superhuman ambitions, a paradox which is more of a problem than a resolution." Cole, p. 102.

29 Fieler, p. 64.
Chapter Four: Tamburlaine, Part II:

"The Scourge of God Must Die."

The emphasis of the first part of Tamburlaine the Great is on the magnificence of Tamburlaine's aspirations and on the potentialities of his ego. In the second part of the drama, however, the emphasis is rather on Tamburlaine's humanity and its inherent limitations. Although Part II does not conform exactly to the format of a morality play, its presentation of Tamburlaine's relationship to the Deity differs considerably from the ambivalence portrayed by Part I. Tamburlaine there emphasizes the magnificence of his own powers and frequently threatens the gods themselves. Although he refers to himself as the Scourge of God, he actually believes that he is above the control of the Deity just as he is above the control of the stars. In Part II, however, Tamburlaine becomes obsessed with the notion that he is the Scourge of God, and he actually sees himself as a submissive servant of the Deity:

Tam. ... I execute, enjoined me from above, To scourge the pride of such as heaven abhors; Nor am I made arch-monarch of the world, Crowned and invested by the hand of Jove, For deeds of bounty or nobility: But since I exercise a greater name, The scourge of God and terror of the World, I must apply myself to fit those terms, In war, in blood, in death, in cruelty, And plague such peasants as resist in me The power of heaven's eternal majesty.
From the death of Zenocrate to Tamburlaine's death in the final scene of the play, Tamburlaine presents himself not as "co-equal with the clouds," but rather as subject to the omniscient will of the Deity. In contrast to Part I, where Tamburlaine portrayed Jove as "fearing my power" (V ii 390), the Tamburlaine of Part II sees himself as one of Jove's subordinates. In Act I Scene vi, for example, he declares,

\[
\text{Such lavish will I make of Turkish blood,} \\
\text{That Jove shall send his winged messenger} \\
\text{And bid me sheathe my sword and leave the field.} \\
(I \text{ vii} 37-40)
\]

He refers to Zenocrate as "divine" (II iv 17, 21, 25, 30, 33), but he recognizes the fact that she cannot escape death. When she dies, he goes berserk and cries that "amorous Jove hath snatched my love from hence" (II iv 107). Over and over again he refers to himself as either "the Scourge of Jove" (IV iv 24) or as "the Scourge of the immortal God" (II iv 30; IV ii 70). He will chastise the world, he exclaims, until Jove orders him to cease:

\[
\ldots \text{till by vision or by speech I hear} \\
\text{Immortal Jove say 'Cease, my Tamburlaine,'} \\
\text{I will persist a terror to the world.} \\
(IV \text{ ii} 124-126)
\]

In Part II Tamburlaine does not present himself as a god, but rather as a servant of the gods, as the "messenger of mighty Jove" (V i 92). Indeed, before he dies he urges his men to worship the Christian God—"The God that sits in heaven. . . /For He is God alone, and none but
As Helen Gardner observes,

"The theme of the first part of Tamburlaine is the power and splendour of the human will, which bears down all opposition and by its own native force achieves its desires...[but] the theme of the second part is very different. Man's desires and aspirations may be limitless, but their fulfilment is limited by forces outside the control of the will. There are certain facts, of which death is the most obvious, which no aspiration and no force of soul can conquer."

Because the Tamburlaine of Part II actually believes he is an agent of God, his motivation is significantly different from his ontological motivation of Part I. Part I's emphasis on the intellectual and philosophical aspects of Tamburlaine's mind is replaced with Part II's emphasis on the physical energies he expends in his role as Scourge. To a much greater degree than was true in Part I, the Tamburlaine of Part II is insatiable in his thirst for blood and conquest.

Douglas Cole notes that in Part I Tamburlaine's wrathful glaring at Agydas—"without a single accompanying word"—was sufficiently terrifying that it caused Agydas to kill himself. With this one exception, the Tamburlaine of Part I hardly had any occasion to become angry, so assured was he at all times of overcoming all obstacles...Tamburlaine in Part I, for all his grandiloquence, had no occasion to raise his voice in fury; in Part II his wrath becomes extravagantly voluble."
Tamburlaine's speeches in Part II, filled with the physical details of war and death, show how obsessed Tamburlaine has become with the notion that he must scourge and punish the world. He describes the glories of combat to his sons with all the gusto of a Hector:

    I'll have you learn to sleep upon the ground,
    March in your armor thorough watery fens,
    Sustain the scorching heat and freezing cold,
    Hunger and thirst, right adjuncts of the war,
    And after this, to scale a castle wall,
    Besiege a fort, to undermine a town.
    Hast thou not seen my horsemen charge the foe,
    Shot through the arms, cut overthwart the hands,
    Dyeing their lances with their streaming blood?

(III ii 55-60; 103-105)

When Zenocrate asks Tamburlaine,

    . . .when wilt thou leave these arms
    And save thy sacred person free from scathe
    And dangerous chances of the wrathful war?

(I iv 9-11)

Tamburlaine's reply reflects none of the motivation for freedom and power which so brilliantly characterized his speeches in Part I. He will quit making war, he answers her,

    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.

(I iv 12-15)

In Part I Tamburlaine conquered and destroyed because he was striving after "complete sovereignty." In Part II, however, his motivation is not philosophical or ontological. His warmaking now is "wrathful" because Tamburlaine envisions himself as the Scourge of God. There
can be no end to his combat and bloodletting.

The victims of Tamburlaine's cruelties in *Part I* are depicted in such a way that Tamburlaine's actions are expiable. Bajazeth and Zabina, for example, are no less barbarous than Tamburlaine:

Bajazeth. Let thousands die! Their slaughtered carcasses
Shall serve for walls and bulwarks to the rest.
(I: III iii 138-139)

Zabina. Let all the swords and lances in the field
Stick in his [Tamburlaine's] breast as in their proper rooms!
At every pore let blood come dropping forth,
That lingering pains may massacre his heart
And madness send his damned soul to hell!
(I: V ii 162-166)

Bajazeth's pomposity and Zabina's curtness, moreover, further prevent the audience from identifying with them, or from overly pitying their suffering. Mycetes, the king of Persia, is depicted in such a way that Tamburlaine's rebellion wins the sympathy of the audience, even though it is a rebellion against a legal monarch and the order of his kingdom. Mycetes is weak, bathetic, and incompetent: the stars themselves show that he is not fit to rule:

At [his] birthday Cynthia with Saturn joined,
And Jove, the sun, and Mercury denied
To shed their influence in his fickle brain!
(I: I i 13-15)

Only when Tamburlaine conquers Zenocrae's homeland and slaughters the Damascus virgins does Tamburlaine demonstrate a cruelty worthy of the Scourge of God. Even
in that episode, however, Marlowe emphasizes the unalterable nature of Tamburlaine's will to lessen his responsibility for his actions. When the virgins visit Tamburlaine to plead for mercy, he laments

Alas, poor fools, must you be first shall feel
The sworn destruction of Damascus?
They know my custom; could they not as well
Have sent ye out when first my milk-white flags,
Through which sweet Mercy threw her gentle beams,
Reflecting them on your disdainful eyes,
As now when fury and incensed hate
Flings slaughtering terror from my coal-black tents
And tells for truth submissions comes too late?
(I: V i 2-10)

It is significant, too, that Marlowe's Tamburlaine does not here refer to himself as the Scourge of God as do the Tamburlaines of his sources. The destruction of Damascus is not so much a punishment for its sins against God as it is retribution for its recalcitrance against Tamburlaine. Waith observes that in Part I Tamburlaine's first three enemies are individuals of increasing stature, but the Governor of Damascus and his allies, the Soldan and Arabia, are none of them imposing figures. Instead, the city of Damascus becomes the collective antagonist, to which Tamburlaine opposes his personal will.

The divine justice he administers is his own.

In Tamburlaine, Part II, however, Tamburlaine's enemies are not the foolish Bajozeth, the spiteful Zabina, or the weak Mycetes. In contrast to the pomposity of his father, Callipine is characterized by a force of personality very similar to that which Tamburlaine exhibited throughout Part I. As Tamburlaine had
persuaded Theridamas to join him in Part I, Callipine persuades Almeda that he was "born to be monarch of the western world" (I iii 3) in Part II. Callipine's persuasiveness is reminiscent of Tamburlaine's, as his good faith towards Almeda is reminiscent of Tamburlaine's loyalty to Theridamas. In Part I Tamburlaine tells Theridamas, "Then shalt thou be competitor with me" (I ii 207). In Part II Callipine promises Almeda, "Thou shalt be crowned a king, and be my mate" (I iii 66).

Gasellus, Orcanes, and Uribassa are also shown to be honorable and manly. Confessing that "We all are glutted with the Christians' blook" (I i 14), Gasellus persuades Orcanes and Uribassa to conclude a pact with Sigismund, the leader of the Christians. Orcanes is persuaded, and swears by Mahomet that he will "live at truce" with the Christians (I ii 53):

By sacred Mahomet, the friend of God,
Whose holy Alcoran remains with us,
Whose glorious body, when he left the world,
Closed in a coffin mounted up the air
And hung on stately Mecca's temple roof,
I swear to keep this truce inviolable.
(I ii 60-65)

Sigismund also confirms the truce with an oath:

By Him that made the world and saved my soul,
The Son of God and issue of a maid,
Sweet Jesus Christ, I solemnly protest
And vow to keep this peace inviolable.
(I ii 56-60)

Both Orcanes and Sigismund have sworn by their gods, Orcanes by Mahomet, and Sigismund by Christ. When Sig-
ismund breaks his oath, however, when he leads his armies against Orcanes, Orcanes pleads not to Mahomet, but to Christ to punish Sigismund's blasphemy:

Thou Christ that art esteemed omnipotent, 
If thou wilt prove thyself a perfect God, 
Worthy the worship of all faithful hearts, 
Be now revenged upon this traitor's soul, 
And make the power I have left behind—
Too little to defend our guiltless lives—
Sufficient to discomfort and confound
The trustless force of those false Christians. 
To arms, my lords! On Christ still let us cry, 
If there be Christ, we shall have victory. 
(II ii 55-64)

When Sigismund and "the false Christians" are defeated, Sigismund himself recognizes the divine justice of Orcanes' triumph:

... God hath thundered vengeance from on high
For my accursed and hateful perjury. 
O just and dreadful punisher of sin! 
(II iii 2-4)

Orcanes' devotion to Christ—"in my thoughts shall Christ be honored" he vows after his victory (II iii 32)—serves to undermine Tamburlaine's role as Scourge of God. In Part I Tamburlaine's opponents were infidels and, by emphasizing that Tamburlaine would liberate their Christian slaves, Marlowe allowed his audiences to applaud Tamburlaine's victories, even though they were against legal monarchs. In Part II, however, Tamburlaine's enemies are not the unsympathetic figures of Part I, but rather men such as Orcanes and Callapine, both of whom recognize the power of the Christian God. As Scourge of God, Tamburlaine believes he must "scourge
the pride of such as heaven abhors" (V ii 74). Orcanes and Callapine, however, have not been portrayed to be "such as heaven abhors." Until they are actually defeated by Tamburlaine, the premises of the second part seem to be that they will punish Tamburlaine for his blasphemy against God and his cruelty toward man. The fact that Tamburlaine defeats and imprisons them, therefore, does not seem to be related to his role of Scourge of God. What their defeat serves to emphasize is what Tamburlaine himself emphasizes in nearly every one of his major speeches in Part II: Tamburlaine is invincible in battle and insatiable in his thirst for blood and combat. The fact that Callapine and Orcanes are sympathetically portrayed illustrates the thematic inconsistency of the premises with which Marlowe constructed the second part. No longer can the audience condone Tamburlaine's cruelty or applaud his successes, but he nonetheless triumphs over all who oppose him. If Tamburlaine is to be considered as an agent of the Deity—as the Scourge of God—the reactions of the audience would seem to be limited to feelings of awe and horror. But there is little consistency to Tamburlaine's portrayal as Scourge, and little moral benefit to be gained from observing his campaigns of combat, cruelty, and conquest, since all whom he encounters are indiscriminately destroyed.
The fact that there is no causal relationship between Tamburlaine's actions and his "fall" further obfuscates the thematic structure of the second part. Even though Orcanes and Callipine recognize the power of Christ, they are defeated and imprisoned by Tamburlaine. When Tamburlaine attacks them, he also attacks the social order of their kingdoms since they are legal monarchs. Zenocrate's death, however, is not related to Tamburlaine's military campaigns, nor does Tamburlaine's own death occur until long after Tamburlaine's victory over Callipine and Orcanes. In contrast to Sigismund's death, moreover, Tamburlaine's death does not cause him to ask forgiveness of the Almighty for whatever sins he may have committed during his lifetime.12

If Tamburlaine's death is not related to his blasphemous estimate of himself (Part I), nor to his attacks upon the social order upheld by monarchs such as Bajazeth, Mycetes, Callipine, and Orcanes, exactly how can his death be explained in the context of his career? It is clear that Tamburlaine's death is inconsonant to the premises and values of Part I. Although Tamburlaine occasionally refers to himself as favored by the stars and gods in Part I, his usual estimate of himself is that he is superior to the stars and beyond the control of any forces extrinsic to his own ego. At the end of Part I he swears by Hercules, symbol of unalterable will,
that he "takes truce with all the world" (V ii 466) and that he will replace conquest with government. The premises of Part I are that Tamburlaine can apotheosize himself by exploring every facet of his ego, and death itself is depicted as a servant of the "earthly god" (V ii 46ff). Suffering and sorrow, defeat and disappointment, are reserved for his opponents. Clearly the Tamburlaine of Part I can not himself experience either suffering or death for he has raised himself above their control. 13

In Part II, however, Tamburlaine resumes his military career without explanation, in spite of the unalterable vow with which he ended Part I. The splendour which surrounded him in Part I is gone. Lacking its "aspiring" qualities, his speeches in Part II concentrate on the physical details of combat and bloodshed. No longer does he refer to "knowledge infinite," "aspiring minds," or maintaining his life "exempt from servitude." Instead of striving after complete sovereignty, Tamburlaine pursues a course of never-ending conquest because he believes he must scourge and punish the world. No longer does he see himself as a god, but, on the contrary, he constantly refers to the omnipotence of the Deity he serves in his scourging role. Whereas the premises of the first part were that Tamburlaine was a god in the magnificence of his will and the power of his
ego, those of Part II are that Tamburlaine is a human being whose magnificence and power are manifestations not of his own divinity but rather of the Divinity and Omnipotence of the God Who rules him.

In the context of Part II, therefore, there is no emphasis on Tamburlaine's blasphemous self-estimate of Part I, and, consequently, no causal relation between it and Tamburlaine's "fall." The premises of Part II, rather, in emphasizing that Tamburlaine is human, themselves explain why death must overcome the Tartar conqueror. Death is an inherently human condition—a part of man's ontological nature. The Tamburlaine of Part II is a man, not a god, and, as a consequence of his humanity, "death cuts off the progress of his pomp" (Prologue, 4.).

Despite the fact that the Tamburlaine of Part II sees himself as the Scourge of God, despite the fact that he thereby knows he is controlled by God's will, Tamburlaine refuses to accept Zenocrate's death, just as he refuses to accept the shortcomings of his sons. He pathetically cries out against death, but his curses are to no avail:

What, is she dead? Techelles, draw thy sword And wound the earth, that it may cleave in twain And we descend into th' infernal vaults, To hale the Fatal Sisters by the hair And throw them in the triple moat of hell, For taking hence my fair Zenocrate, Gasane and Theridamas, to arms!
Raise cavalieros higher than the clouds,  
And with the cannon break the frame of heaven.  

(II iv 96-104)

Theridamas points out the ridiculousness of Tamburlaine's anger as well as the impotence of his humanity:

Ah, good my lord, be patient. She is dead.  
And all this raging cannot make her live.  

(II iv 119-120)

The nobility of Tamburlaine's enemies and their reverence for Christianity help to illustrate how different the theocentric world of Part II is from the Tamburlaine-centered world of Part I. Before Tamburlaine can make his entrance, Marlowe portrays the valor and honor of Callipine and Orcanes. As Douglas Cole observes, by opening with the episode of Orcanes' victory over the false Christians

Marlowe establishes at the very start a broad vision of the universe which looks beyond mere human agency for the source of suffering. The dramatic effect of the action is to put the responsibility for the outcome of the battle on a power that transcends the human contestants, in this case, the power of Christ.  

But even when Tamburlaine appears on stage in Act I Scene iv, it immediately becomes apparent that he is not the ontologically motivated hero of Part I. Echoes of that ontological motivation survive in Part II, but they are undercut by Tamburlaine's belief that he must scourge the earth until "heaven shall cease to move on both the poles" (I iv 12). His desires for immortality are similarly ironic, for they now center on his sons (V iii 175). By constitution and temperament, however, Tamburlaine's
sons are ill disposed for continuing Tamburlaine's divine mission:

Tam. Water and air, being symbolized in one, Argue their want of courage and of wit; Their hair, as white as milk, and soft as down— Which should be like the quills of porcupines, As black as jet, and hard as iron or steel— Bewrays they are too dainty for the wars; Their fingers made to quaver on a lute, Their arms to hang about a lady's neck, Their legs to dance and oaper in the air, Would make me think them bastards, not my sons. (I iv 24-32)

Indeed, Tamburlaine becomes so incensed at Calyphas that he stabs him to death (IV ii). His other sons, Amyras and Celebinus, pompously boast of their bravery, but do little to substantiate their hyperbolic promises. It is not incidental that in Part II it is Callipine, not Tamburlaine, who speaks of "eternizing" himself.16

Because Tamburlaine so frequently refers to himself as a servant of some divine power, his inability to accept his death is pathetic rather than heroic as was his impotent rage at the death of Zenocrate. "Shall sickness prove me now to be a man," he asks (V iii 45)? Like Everyman he appeals to his friends for aid: "Ah, friends, what shall I do? I cannot stand./Come, carry me to war against the gods" (V iii 51-52). As Theridamas had pointed out Tamburlaine's inability to prevent Zenocrate's death in Act II, he points out the impotence of Tamburlaine's humanity in Act V:

Ah, good my lord, leave these impatient words Which add much danger to your malady. (V iii 54-55)
The limitations rather than the potentialities of Tamburlaine's humanity are thus emphasized throughout Part II. In Act I Scene iv of Part II, the scene in which Tamburlaine first appears, Tamburlaine himself alludes to his own mortality by advising his sons:

   My royal chair of state shall be advanced;  
   And he that means to place himself therein,  
   Must armed wade up to the chin in blood.  
   (I iv 82-85)

When Zenocrate dies, moreover, he declares that he shall keep her "Embalmed with cassia, ambergris, and myrrh,/  
Not lapped in lead, but in a sheet of gold" (II iv 130-131). She will not be buried, he says, until he himself has died: "And till I die thou shalt not be interred" (II iv 132). In Act V Scene iii, soon after boasting that he will march against the power of heaven, he tells Techelles, "I shall die" (V iii 66). No longer does Tamburlaine control the stars as he had in Part I, but, on the contrary, he is subject to their direful influence. Theridamas speaks of the "feeble influence" of Tamburlaine's favorable stars, and Techelles calls on the "powers that sway eternal seats" to "Be not inconsonant, careless of your fame,/. . .Triumphing in his fall whom you advanced" (V iii 21-23). Tamburlaine's physician explains Tamburlaine's condition in terms of his constitutive elements and warns him, "this day is critical" (Viii 91). And finally, as Waith observes, "his death proves that in Part II he does not control the fates as he had in Part I."
Because the Tamburlaine of Part II recognizes his own mortality, because he has been unable to prevent Zenocrate's death "in whose being [he] reposes [his] life" (II iv 48), he is not convincing or even impressive when he declares that "sickness or death never can conquer me" (V i 220). Similarly, when Theridamas declares that Tamburlaine controls "death and the Fatal Sisters" (III iv 54), the audience cannot help but remember Tamburlaine's impotent rages against the "Fatal Sisters" when Zenocrate died (II iv 99). Somehow some of the characteristics of the Tamburlaine of Part I have slipped into the theocentric world of Part II. Because Tamburlaine recognizes his own humanity and mortality, such characteristics are inconsonant to its premises.

Tamburlaine's death is thus explicable only in the context of Part II since its premises emphasize that he is not divine. Although there is no relation between Tamburlaine's deeds and his "fall," his death nonetheless corresponds to the de casibus pattern of tragic reversal. As its Prologue makes clear, the "murderous Fates throws all his triumphs down" (line 5). In Part II Fortune does, as Callipine prophesies, "retain her old inconstancy." Its moral, as Gardner observes, is "the medieval one of the inevitability of death." If Part I is read as the first half of one unified tragedy, however,
the knowledge that Tamburlaine does die significantly alters the statements Part I makes about Tamburlaine's ontological strivings and self-apotheosis. If Part I and Part II are considered as halves—not wholes—then the premises of Part I must be seriously qualified to provide for Tamburlaine's ultimate "fall." Considering each part as a separate entity with separate premises clears up many of the inconsistencies which emerge when both parts are united to form one ten act tragedy. The potentialities of man's nature which Tamburlaine so brilliantly explores in Part I are thus counterbalanced by the inherent limitations depicted in Part II. In Part I Tamburlaine believes he is a god—above the control of Fortune. In Part II he recognizes his humanity and its inherent mortality. Because both parts deal with the ontological nature of man, it is fitting that Tamburlaine's death is not a retributive punishment for his sins, but rather an ontological expression of his humanity.
FOOTNOTES


2 Christopher Marlowe, Tamburlaine the Great: Part Two in The Complete Plays of Christopher Marlowe ed. Irving Ribner (New York, 1963), V ii 73-83. All quotations from Part II are from this edition.

3 Although Battenhouse sees Tamburlaine's burning of the Koran in Act V Scene i as blasphemous and attempts to correlate it with Tamburlaine's death, Tamburlaine's actions there are further evidence that he recognizes the Christian God and none other:

   In vain, I see, men worship Mahomet.
   My sword has sent millions of Turks to hell,
   Slew all his priests, his kinsmen, and his friends,
   And yet I live untouched by Mahomet.

   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.

   (V i 177-183)


6 Ibid., pp. 103-104.

7 Ribner's note to i 13-15 reads, "The personality of Mycetes is explained in 16th century astrological terms. Cynthia (the moon) was a traditional symbol of change and fickleness, Saturn of stupidity. The magnanimity of Jove, the artistic nature of Apollo (the sun) and the wit of Mercury have had no share in his composition." Johnstone Parr analyzes Mycetes' horoscope and concludes that "Anyone with knowledge of and faith in astrology would point unhesitatingly to Mycetes' weak mentality and vacillating activities as being a result of the malignant conjunction of Saturn and Luna in his natal horoscope." Tamburlaine's Maledy and Other Essays on Sixteenth Century Astrology (University of Alabama Press, 1953), p. 29.

   Paul Kocher sees these character portrayals as conscious attempts to win sympathy for Tamburlaine: [Mar-
lowe] so presents the rebellions of Tamburlaine, first against Mycetes and then against Cosroe, as to win the favor of the audience for both. This difficult feat he performs by making Mycetes a brainless idiot incapable of the throne and a butt of scornful laughter. The welfare of Persia requires his overthrow. Justification of Tamburlaine's rising against Cosroe is achieved mainly by giving him a magnificent first word in his plans to 'Ride in triumph through Persepolis' and an even more magnificent last word in his vindication against the dying curse of his antagonist: 'Nature that fram'd us of four elements...'. The strategic placement and irresistible eloquence of these speeches justify him as nothing in the sources ever could. By such arts does the dramatist make palatable even the cardinal crime of rebellion." Christopher Marlowe (Chapel Hill, 1946), pp. 183-184.

3 See Chapter Three, p. 70, footnote 21.


10 In III i Orcanes refers to Callipine as "Callapinus Cyricelipes, otherwise Cybellius, son and successive heir to the late mighty emperor Bajazeth, by the aid of God and his friend Mahomet" (III i 1-3). In III v a messenger addresses Callipine as "God's great lieutenant over all the world" (III v 2).

11 "By the third act, when Callipine has been crowned Emperor of Turkey, and kings have sworn allegiance to him, he is confidently hoping, and we are fearing (since Marlowe's hero has our sympathy), that through him Fortune 'will now retain her old inconstancy' and show it upon Tamburlaine. But Marlowe builds up the force of Callipine only to make it come to nought in pure fiasco." Willard Parmhem, The Medieval Heritage of Elizabethan Tragedy (Berkeley, 1936), p. 372. Kocher, pp. 95-96, however, sees Orcanes' Christianity as blasphemous: "Marlowe redeems himself superficially by having Orcanes appeal to Christ...but even in this act of atonement lurk new sins. Orcanes reverts twice to the gibing little 'if' clause: 'If there be a Christ, we shall have victory' (II, ii, 39 and 64)." Orcanes' 'if' clauses, however, are not hypotheticals in the context of his speech. He prays to Christ, wins the battle, and credits Christ with the victory. Kocher does forget his biographical biases, however, in then noting the essentially orthodox nature of Orcanes' portrayal of God: "Commentators have seen in these lines [II ii 47-53] every sort of esoteric, subtle, new doctrine. But the plain fact is that although the poetry here is extraordinary, the doctrine is not. The most orthodox Elizabethan Anglican could immediately subscribe to it." P. 97.
"Sigismund comes to his senses, is repentant for his sin, and has hope therefore of a second life through God's mercy. By contrast, the manner in which Tamburlaine meets the fact of defeat and death is conspicuously pagan." Battenhouse, p. 253.

"Part I of the drama ends, however, without visible prospect of Tamburlaine's fall. His victorious return from battle against the Souldan seems to confirm the view that he can bind fast Fortune's wheel." Battenhouse, p. 252. Cole, p. 87, observes that in Part I "there is no defeat or destruction that he must undergo, no physical or mental anguish that he displays. The major burden of the play, as most critics have remarked, is the sensational revelation of Tamburlaine's superhuman character and ability."

Tamburlaine's proposed descent into hell is another echo of the supernatural role he played in Part I. It combines elements of the Orpheus legend with those of the Alcestis myth. In recounting the latter, Euripides portrays Hercules' grabbing Cerberus by the hair. Tamburlaine's threat to "hale the Fatal Sisters by the hair" is possibly an allusion to Hercules' actions. As Theridamas quickly points out Tamburlaine's helplessness, however, the allusion becomes ironic. The entire episode serves to illustrate that in Part II Tamburlaine is not superhuman and that his boasting that "Sickness and death never can conquer me" is simultaneously pathetic and absurd.

Before his forces meet Tamburlaine's, Callipline declares, "This is the time that must eternize me" (V 11 54).

In his note to line 91 Ribner points out that "Medicine and astrology were closely linked" and that Tamburlaine is now under the control of the stars because on that day they were not in a proper conjunction for effecting a cure. Farr analyzes Tamburlaine's "malady" and concludes that "his illness occurs at a time when the stars, previously favorable to his fortunes, are in some way conspiring against his state. His catastrophe is, therefore, precipitated not only by the 'tragic flaw' in his character but also by his astral destiny." P. 23.

Waith, p. 66.

Farnham, however, sees Tamburlaine as "a rebellious violation of all that De Casibus tragedy had set
out to convey." P. 369. In contending that Tamburlaine "is Fortune's master to the last" (p. 370), however, Farnham neglects to explain Tamburlaine's anger at Zeno-crate's death except to note that "Zenocrate's death merely produces 'impassionate furie' and a further display of grandeur, an out-facing of death itself with the preservation of her embalmed body 'not lapt in lead but in a sheet of gold' as a royal memento." Farn-ah similarly sleights Tamburlaine's own death: "He dies in the fullness of years, but he never falls, and no one need feel that his end is other than 'prosperous.'" (P. 369). Farnham thus explains neither Tamburlaine's unwillingness to accept death nor the statements in the Prologue.


21. Battenhouse's final word is that "Certainly these ten acts of Tamburlaine offer one of the most grandly moral spectacles in the whole realm of English drama." P. 253.

Part I and Part II are generally considered to be separate plays because of the initial statements of Part II.

The general welcomes Tamburlaine received,
When he arrived last upon our stage,
Hath made our poet pen his Second Part.
(Prolo-ue, 1-3)

Host critics, therefore, see Part I and Part II as separate plays because 'the Prologue to Part II infers that it was written to capitalize on the popularity of Part I. As Helen Gardner says, "it usually is regarded as an inferior sequel to the first part, not as the second half of a ten act tragedy." P. 18.
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Errata

P. 3. line 9. For an intense read an intense interest
P. 11 line 21. For geneologies read genealogies
P. 12 line 22. For tribuends read tribuenda
P. 14 line 28. For Pices read Pisces
P. 15 line 18. For liev read lies
P. 15 line 24. For irreconciliable read irreconcilable
P. 15 line 25. For the, read that.
P. 25, line 11. For himslef read himself
P. 28 f.n. 24, line 18. For Bodlean read Bodleian."
P. 28 f.n. 25, line 1. For uber read Uber
P. 30 f.n. 42, line 10. For himslef read himself
P. 34 line 19. For Cante- read Canter-
P. 36 line 23. For liscensed read licensed
P. 39 line 21. For a eivine read a divine
P. 39 line 32. For ans read and
P. 45 line 8. For itslef read itself
P. 53 line 2. For Sythian read Scythian
P. 60 line 12. For formididable read formidable
P. 80 line 1. For ungowthry read unworthy
P. 87 line 4. For owrd. read world.
P. 87 line 8. For schorning read scorching
P. 90 line 12. For block" read blood"
P. 92 line 13. For block read blood
P. 93 line 9. For milirary read military
P. 97 line 21. For bethetic read bathetic
P. 104 f.n. 19 line 9. For sleights read slights