

## Errata.

p. 5, l.21	delete "an" from "existence of an independent criteria"
p. 5, l.22	replace "is" with "are" in "criteria that is not designed"
p. 5, l.27	delete "the" from "in the both"
p. 5, n.20	replace "suffice" with "sufficient"
p. 18, l.6	replace "sketches" with "sketch"
p. 31, l.3	replace "less stress is paid to" with "there is less emphasis on"
	and replace "more to" with "more on"
p. 31, l.13	delete "a" from "a Dryden"
p. 54, l.27	insert "be" into "one must be equally careful"
p. 57, l.5	delete "the" from "with our the unfolding"
p. 59, l.23	replace "cause" with "causes"
p. 66, l.27	delete "but" and replace "are" with "being"
p. 71, n.47	replace "suffice" with "sufficient" and delete subsequent "of"
p. 77, l.5	replace "than" with "as"
p. 77, n.80	replace "who" with "whom"
p. 82, l.5	replace first "are" with "is"
p. 82, l.23	replace "for" with "with"
p. 83, n.107	replace "criteria" with "criterion"
p. 88, l.4	replace "has" with "have"
p. 90, l.19	delete "he"
p. 92, n.139, l.5	replace "is" with "are"
p. 96, l.8	replace "are" with "is"
p. 96, l.12	replace "are" with "is"
p. 100, l.1	replace "is" with "are"
p. 100, l.14	replace "makes" with "make"
p. 101, l.1	replace "develops" with "develop"
p. 101, l.16	replace "on" with "to"
p. 105, l.20	replace "has" with "have"
p. 105, n.197, l.2	replace "come" with "comes"
p. 105, n.198	replace "advances" with "advance"
p. 106, n.201, l.6	replace "to be" with "is" and "with" with "to"
p. 107, l.18	replace "is" with "are"
p. 107, l.20	insert comma after "her"
p. 107, l.22	replace "The former" with "Mecenas and Agrippa"
p. 108, l.3	replace "admissible" with "admitted"
p. 119, l.6	replace "The former" with "Clytus"
p. 120, l.26	replace "is" with "are"
p. 124, n.73, l.5	replace "have" with "has"
p. 126, l.17	replace "for" with "to"
p. 127, l.5	replace "reveals" with "reveal"
p. 30, n.105, l.3	replace first "in" with "to"
p. 143, l.28	replace "are" with "is"
p. 144, l.14	replace "was" with "is"
p. 144, l.15	add "to commit" into "then to commit suicide"
p. 145, l.2	replace "suicides" with "commits suicide"
p. 248, l.16	add "a" into "than a supernaturally"
p. 248, l.16	replace "phenomena" with "phenomenon"
p. 250, l.4	replace "is" with "are"
p. 253, l.15	replace "the former" with "ambivalent villains"
p. 254, l.6	replace "unrepentance" with "lack of repentance"
p. 254, l.26	replace "with" with "on" (both occasions)

2475/4248

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REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY  
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THE CHARACTEROLOGY  
OF NATHANIEL LEE;  
OR, STUDYING LEE'S STUDY OF  
CHARACTER.

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This thesis is submitted to the Department of  
Literary, Visual and Performance Studies  
in the Faculty of Arts, Monash University,  
in fulfillment of the requirement for the  
degree of Doctor of Philosophy, May 2004.

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## Summary

Current critical opinion holds that Nathaniel Lee is a derivative exponent of the conventional mode of characterisation employed in the heroic plays of the 1660s, a genre that had encouraged the creation of melodramatic type-characters lacking in complexity. The simplistic assessment of this facet of his dramaturgy does a great injustice to his considered investigation of character, and to the moral, social, psychological, philosophical and political issues that he raises. As part of what the thesis argues is a verisimilar approach to character, Lee 'adulterates' his heroes, making them less exemplary, and 'ameliorates' his villains, making them less despicable. By developing, transforming and transcending the conventions of the heroic play, Lee was able to produce complex studies of the human condition. What begins as subtle modification of traditional heroic types in his early plays, leads in his later dramas to a characterology and typological pantheon distinct from that of the earlier heroic playwrights.

Because dramatic characterology is an area that has been largely ignored in literary criticism, the analysis of specific characters has hitherto been conducted in the absence of clear criteria. This thesis begins with an evaluation of the contemporary and modern theories concerned with the creation and analysis of dramatic character and then proceeds to derive a methodology that may be applied, not only to the dramatic works of Lee, but to all dramatic works of the pre-modern era. It provides a variety of touchstones for assessing particular representations so as to determine their efficacy and merit relative to other examples. Part two of the thesis applies the methodology to the characters of Lee's plays, as well as examining the various approaches and categories used by the playwright in the production of his characters. An attentive analysis of Lee's representations reveals that his typology is much more complex than has been documented—that, for instance, he produces several types of heroes, villains and lovers. Overall the thesis argues that Lee was a particularly talented characterologist, designing verisimilar entities that are psychologically and morally complex, effective, affective and engaging, and amongst the most fascinating representations of later seventeenth-century drama.

## Acknowledgements

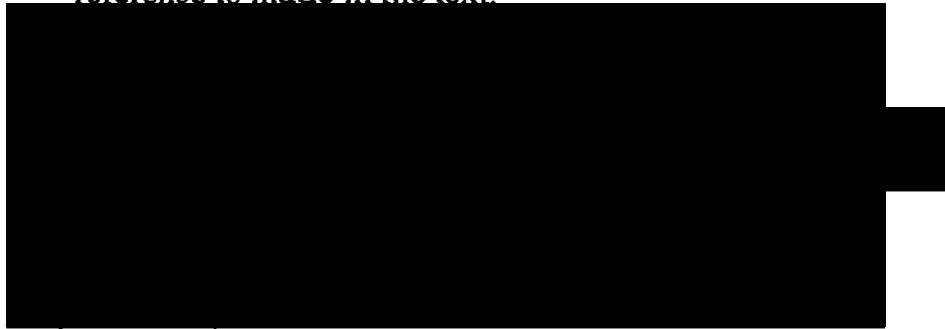
As Lulu sang in the movie *To Sir With Love*, "how do you thank someone / Who has taken you from crayons to perfumes?" It isn't easy but I'll try. Firstly my thanks goes out to my mother Beverley, my father Paul and my stepfather Ian for helping me to overcome the many long, dark nights of the soul where the light at the end of the tunnel appeared to be the headlamp of an oncoming train. My profound gratitude also goes to my mentor Professor Harold Love without whose guidance and direction I doubt that this thesis would have been written, and most assuredly not in the manner that it now appears. I am indebted to Monash University for providing me with a Monash Graduate Scholarship, and the Research Graduate School for the allocation of a travel grant to enable me to conduct vital research in the United States and Great Britain. Numerous libraries have provided me with invaluable assistance and access to rare books and theses; my thanks to the Matheson library, Monash (particularly Richard Overell and the Rare Books department, and the staff of the Multimedia department), as well as the staff of the Folger Shakespeare Library, the Library of Congress, the British Library, and the libraries at Yale, Harvard, Cambridge (particularly the Wren library, Trinity College), Oxford, Dublin and Edinburgh universities. Last but not least I would also like to thank Dr Peter Groves for his assistance in determining several of the terms that have been instituted in this work. Without the aid of all of these individuals and institutions I would not now be able to present this modest offering. As always, I remain

Your Most Humble  
and Obedient Servant

Anthony W. Butler.

## Statement

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other institution, and I affirm that to the best of my knowledge contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text.



Anthony W. Butler, B.A. (Hons.).

## Introduction: The Characterological Fallacy.

To suggest that the tragic dramatists of the late Carolean period (1674-85) are poorly regarded as creators of complex characters would be a spectacular understatement. Entrenched opinion holds that these playwrights merely conform to the conventional mode of characterisation employed in the heroic plays of the 1660s. That genre had encouraged the production of simplistic type-characters with exaggerated human traits, protean or melodramatic figures lacking individuation, coherence, intricate motivation, moral and psychological complexity and ethical development—in essence substantive verisimilitude.<sup>1</sup> Eric Rothstein, for instance, suggests that the tragic playwrights abandoned any notions of substantive identity.<sup>2</sup> Philip Parsons argues that interiority is unnecessary because the characters are not conceived of as individuated personalities but as personified moral traits.<sup>3</sup> To Laura Brown the characters of pathetic tragedy are not autonomous individuals with verisimilar psychologies, but simply functional generators of affective action.<sup>4</sup> And Candy Schille maintains that the dramatists produce emotive speeches not to delineate character, but to establish a moral and psychological gestalt.<sup>5</sup> It is assumed that the heroic-cum-tragic dramatists are not concerned with profound studies of character or subtle ethical distinctions but only with the production of grand operatic episodes.<sup>6</sup> Any discernible subtlety in characterisation is at best viewed as superficial, at worst as evidence of inconsistency and therefore defective artistry. For the most part anomalous aspects are simply ignored because they do not fit the preconceived, stereotypical profile.

This attitude towards the characterological aspect of dramaturgy in the 1670s remains virtually unchallenged and adversely affects the analyses of Lee's characters.<sup>7</sup> Thomas Stroup's thesis is a case in point. In *Type-characters in the Serious Drama of the Restoration*, Stroup catalogues the various representative types that appear in the heroic plays of William Davenant and John Dryden, extending that analysis to include the figures created by Lee and Thomas Otway.<sup>8</sup> His opinion of Lee's characters as heroic types carries over into the edition of Lee's works that he produced with Arthur Cooke. Nor are they alone in this assumption.

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<sup>1</sup> This is a term used by Yvonne Tucker to assess whether a character acts in a believable manner (p.4). That is, it attempts to establish whether a particular character is realistic and 'human-like', or at least as credibly anthropomorphic as was possible within the constraints of a stylised medium that permitted only subtle changes.

<sup>2</sup> Rothstein, p.130.

<sup>3</sup> Parsons, "Restoration Tragedy as Total Theatre", in Love (ed.), *Restoration Literature*, p.42.

<sup>4</sup> L. Brown, pp.99-101.

<sup>5</sup> Schille, pp.34-5.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Dobrée, p.118; Beal, p.11; Hunt, pp.6-7; Flores, p.2.

<sup>7</sup> 'Characterology' refers here both to the production, and to the study, of character.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Stroup, *Type-Characters*, pp.1ff.

Mahmoud Hasan maintains that Lee's characters are cast in the common mould and show little or no development, despite the critic's evident admiration for them.<sup>9</sup> Yvonne Tucker states that most of his characters are based on heroic types, although she does admit that they are unconventional.<sup>10</sup> For others Lee is not only a derivative characterologist, but is not even a particularly proficient example. Douglas Beers claims that most of Lee's characters degenerate into mere puppets with one controlling vice or virtue.<sup>11</sup> H.M. Sanders suggests that there is no delicate shading in his characters.<sup>12</sup> Bonamy Dobrée charges him with shadowy generalisations, lack of realism, and inability to present genuine conflict, subtle emotion and inner states of mind.<sup>13</sup> William Van Lennep repeatedly criticises Lee for his poorly individuated figures and indecorous departure from his sources.<sup>14</sup> Others suggest that Lee is not even concerned with consistent representation. Laura Brown incessantly refers to his "causal neglect of character consistency".<sup>15</sup> And to Erwin Wong, coherence was, for Lee, not an issue because he was only interested in representing concepts of madness.<sup>16</sup> Of all of these critics only Tucker provides specific criteria for the analysis of Lee's characters; yet even her model is limited by her considering only a small segment of his characters (and one that is not necessarily representative), as well as her ignoring several important issues of characterology—such as the functional and symbolic roles of characters. Nor is her typology comprehensive enough to account for the depth and breadth of Lee's pantheon of representations.

The conventional view of Lee's characterology does a great injustice to his considered investigation of character, and to the moral, social, psychological, philosophical and political issues that he raises through those figures. Whilst his characters are to a degree stereotypical, this is equally true of all dramatic characters. Yet to apply the standards of a heroic typology as the be-all and end-all of the analysis—as is all too often the case—is inappropriate for several reasons. Despite the arguments of the likes of Beers ("Lee was one of the most conspicuous adherents of the heroic school"), Dobrée (that he is the "most completely 'heroic' of all heroic writers") and Ham (that "in Lee the heroic instinct was...deeply bred") that Lee was a

<sup>9</sup> Hasan, p. 126.

<sup>10</sup> Tucker, pp. 15–6. Like Stroup, Tucker lists the following characters as "conventional heroes"—Britannicus, Massanissa, Massina, Hannibal, Caesario, Marcellus, Alexander, Lysimachus, Ziphars, Adrastus, Gandia, Cleve, Theodosius, Varanes, Titus and Crispus (p. 72). Most of these characters are never again mentioned in the thesis, as if this one reference is enough to constitute a comprehensive analysis. This is especially heinous given that her survey purports to be a characterological analysis of Lee's plays.

<sup>11</sup> Beers, p. 139.

<sup>12</sup> Sanders, p. 497.

<sup>13</sup> Dobrée, pp. 111, 115, 128.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Van Lennep, *Sources*, pp. 1ff.

<sup>15</sup> L. Brown, pp. 75, 80. So as to (over)emphasise her belief in the inconsistency of Lee's characterisation, Brown uses this word, and its cognates, in relation to his figures a startling 14 times on one page (p. 27) alone!

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Wong, pp. 3, 37.

thoroughgoing heroic dramatist, his plays are distinctly 'unheroic' in that he consciously rejects the heroic ethos.<sup>17</sup> This aspect of his drama has been examined in recent years by Russell Hunt who states that "by modifying both the character and the world, Lee creates scepticism about all the values of the heroic drama".<sup>18</sup> Peter Verdurmen concurs, noting that Lee purposely undermines the heroic code by demonstrating that the martial and amatory prowess of which the protagonists boast either is specious or belongs to the past.<sup>19</sup> By developing, transforming and transcending the conventions of the heroic play Lee was able to create complex studies of the human condition. The principal characters are torn between conflicting passions and obligations (as in the heroic plays) but the results of these conflicts are revealed to be vastly different both from the heroic genre and between those plays dealing with the same theme because of the dramatist's very different interests. What begins as subtle adulteration or amelioration of conventional heroic types in Lee's early works, is compounded in his later dramas to create a characterology distinct from that of the earlier heroic playwrights, as well as a pantheon of unorthodox characters. These changes stem from his unconventional view of the heroic code, and from a desire to produce credible human figures that are neither absolutely virtuous nor vicious, and to provide insight into the internal workings of their minds. These aspects, coupled with an affinity with Jacobean tragedy rather than Caroline tragi-comedy, are evident from his first play.

Most now accept that Lee was instrumental in shifting from the heroic drama to an affective form of *de casibus* tragedy. The return to blank verse, the encouragement of intense pathos-laden episodes, the focus upon the domestic problems confronting a monarch, the irreconcilable conflict between private and public roles, and between conflicting moral positions, are all significant aspects of the new genre. Yet critics repeatedly underestimate or ignore the importance of these characterological changes. Most significant of these is the reintroduction of the Aristotelian concept of the tragic protagonist, a deeply flawed figure that does not appear in heroic drama. Whereas the aim of the heroic play had been to present pristine heroes that make impeccable decisions—characters who are worthy of admiration and imitation—the purpose of tragedy is to present imperfect figures who make fatally erroneous choices, as well as vulnerable and pathetic figures, all of whom are intended to elicit pity and fear. This pity consists in the realisation that goodness and/or greatness has been damaged or destroyed by vice. Lee's tragedies focus upon the corruption of a great hero, and of the state as a result, because of his immoderate desires.

<sup>17</sup> Beers, p. 119; Dobrée, p. 111; Ham, p. 45.

<sup>18</sup> Hunt, p. 111.

<sup>19</sup> Verdurmen, p. 81. In his analysis of *The Rival Queens*, George Brauer also refers to Lee's attempt at "de-heroisation" (p. 44).

Perhaps the most obvious difference between Lee's plays and the heroic genre is that, with the exception of his satiric comedy *The Princess of Cleve* and his final play *Constantine*, all of his dramas end with the deaths of all the principal figures. Not only do the supposed villains and villainesses die (others even survive, as further evidence of the 'unheroic' nature of Lee's dramaturgy), but so do many of the supposedly virtuous characters. I use the term "supposedly" deliberately to emphasise the fact that the determination of a character's role, function or status in Lee's plays is never as simple or self-evident as is often assumed. To claim a specific character as a "heroic hero", "passionate villainess", or "calculating villain" (to use a few of Stroup's categories), often oversimplifies the characterisation, especially in the absence of a determination of the extent to which the character conforms to, or differs from, the standard (and exactly what the standard is). A study of Lee's characters reveals that he employs several different approaches in the creation of character in his dramas, each producing different types of character; the 'atypical' method (and character), the 'distypical' style (and character), and the traditional stereotypical approach (and figure). Within each approach there are also varying degrees of typification—so to refer to a specific character as a stereotype may well be correct, yet does not indicate how individuated that stereotype is or differentiate between an extensively particularised type and a messenger who speaks just one line of dialogue. As I shall demonstrate, individuating a type foundation is an integral aspect of the atypical and distypical methods. It is therefore inaccurate to reduce an atype or distype to membership of a single typological category without quantification. At best we can, and should, only loosely affiliate characters that have similar characteristics into a class. Moreover, these classes need to be more thoroughly defined than the broad categories that have previously been established, so as to distinguish between characters within a class who are evidently more dissimilar than similar. Attention to the similarities and differences between characters of a certain category reveals that there are several sub-types that need to be defined—that there are several types of heroes and heroines, villains and villainesses, lovers, and so on. Not all 'villains' are the same—Lee's Petronius is as different from his Machiavel as Machiavel is from Cassander, in the same way as Shakespeare's Iago is as different from Macbeth as he is from Shylock. To categorise Lee's Machiavel with Shakespeare's Shylock would be ridiculous: they may share a few characteristics, but that is the extent of their conformity. However, this is not to suggest that a typological assessment of character is redundant, quite the contrary. A typology is a fundamental part of a characterological analysis, but it is only a *part*, not the totality, of an analysis. The examination also needs to reflect the manner in which a character differs from the type category. Many characters transcend the

boundaries of a single type or are founded upon more than one category. This is especially true for those figures who are particularised through moral and psychological complexity.

Part of the need for a more comprehensive typology stems from the fact that Lee's characters are particularly enigmatic or ambivalent, by which I mean they cannot easily be judged as morally good or evil. This is because elements are continually introduced that qualify or contradict our impression of the character, an impression often dictated by an intuitive assessment of the character as being of a certain type.<sup>20</sup> Lee's figures are most often portrayed neither as paragons of virtue nor as exemplars of vice; they are, like all human individuals, depicted as neither black nor white, but in varying shades of grey. As part of his verisimilar approach to character, he adulterates his virtuous characters, making them less absolutely exemplary, and ameliorates his villains, making them less than wholly despicable. Lee's practice is not so much to change his central themes from play to play but rather to change the kinds of characters who are affected by the same fundamental problems thus illustrating the differing ways in which people react to these dilemmas. By varying the characters whilst repeating popular themes he was able to capitalise on the dramatic tastes of his audience (Lee was nothing if not pragmatic) whilst avoiding tiresome repetition. It is through his realistic treatment of the psychopathology of internal and external conflict in the presentation of human suffering, frustrated love, and impotence in the face of hostile forces, that Lee reveals his cynical view of human nature, and laments the absence of moderation.

To date the analysis of dramatic character, including Lee's, has been conducted without the existence of an explicit criteria against which those representations should be gauged, especially independent criteria that is not designed to support a specific argument. Thus the purpose of this survey is twofold—to conduct a theoretical examination of dramatic characterisation, and to provide a practical approach for analysing those representations—as well as an analysis of Lee's characterology (that is a study not only of his characters, but also a study of his own study of character) using that methodology. Each of these aspects has been sadly neglected to date, and so I hope to redress the imbalance and create interest in the both of these fields of inquiry. The thesis is divided into two sections: part one (chapters one and two) uses an account of the historical approaches to the creation of character as the basis for the development of a modern methodology for analysis; part two (chapters three through six) applying that methodology to Lee's plays. Chapter One focuses upon theories of dramatic characterisation from the classical, medieval, Renaissance and Restoration periods. It examines

<sup>20</sup> Character foundation is an aspect that will be considered in Chapter One. It is suffice to mention here that dramatic characters invariably begin the play as an example of a type, enabling the audience to come to a rapid understanding of the character without the need for a lengthy introduction. This allows the dramatist to proceed with plot and character elaboration.



the stereotypical foundation from which complex characters are derived, as well as examining ways in which they are elaborated by 'rhetorical' factors such as the passions (including the ruling passion) and the character flaw. Chapter Two is devoted to an examination of a range of modern theoretical perspectives on character. Because characterology is an area that has been ignored in literary criticism, with much of the limited attention it has received being dedicated to character in the novel, it will be necessary to evaluate the disparate theories to arrive at a methodology that can be applied, not only to the dramatic works of Lee, but to all dramatic works of the pre-modern era. The methodology provides a variety of criteria against which to assess a particular characterisation so as to determine its efficacy, and to permit a comparison of similar figures to determine the relative merits of each. Part two applies the tenets and methodology of part one to the characters of Lee's plays, examining the various approaches (atypical, distypical, and stereotypical) used by the playwright in the production of specific characters. It is here that I provide a typological definition and analysis of the different sub-categories of heroes, villains and lovers.<sup>21</sup> Chapter Three is concerned with his early plays—*Nero*, *Sophonisba* and *Gloriana*—which provide examples of his characterological foundations; chapter four with a study of his developing characterology in *The Rival Queens*, *Mithridates* and *Oedipus*; chapter five with his characterologically sophisticated plays *Cæsar Borgia*, *Theodosius* and *Lucius Junius Brutus*; and chapter six with his French plays (*The Massacre of Paris*, *The Princess of Cleve* and *The Duke of Guise*) and his final dramatic production *Constantine the Great*. An attentive consideration of all of the relevant characterological aspects to Lee's plays should demonstrate exactly how skillful and artistic Lee was as a producer of verisimilar characters that are psychologically and morally complex—entities that are effective and affective and who engage our interest. Many deserve to be judged amongst the best examples of the Carolean period, some even being worthy of comparison with the greatest characterisations in pre-modern English drama.

<sup>21</sup> The typology appears in the later chapters rather than in the section on methodology (as one might expect) so as to capitalise on the presence of an appropriate Leean example of each specific type. This is intended to assist in explaining the definition of that type—the best way in which to explain the definition of a "saddened lover" is to define the type during the analysis of an appropriate Leean example of that type. The definitions of the various categories also appear in the glossary at the back of the thesis.

## PART ONE: THEORIES OF CHARACTEROLOGY.

### Chapter One. Traditional Theories of Dramatic Characterisation.

As an aid to understanding the practice of seventeenth-century playwrights in conceiving and constructing dramatic characters, it will be helpful to consider the theories of characterology current at the time. These were eclectically derived from the classical accounts of Plato, Aristotle, Theophrastus, Cicero, the anonymous author of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, Horace, Quintilian, Hermogenes, Aphthonius and Priscian, the medieval writings of Isidore of Seville, Matthew of Vendôme, Geoffrey of Vinsauf and John of Garland, and the Renaissance studies of Erasmus, Richard Sherry, George Puttenham and the Italian critics of the Cinquecento. By the Carolean period the principal ideas of these theorists would have been fairly familiar to most poets, if not through a study of the works themselves, then through an acquaintance with more recent recapitulatory discussions of the subject, especially those of Lee's friend and collaborator John Dryden. Those poets who received a formal education, in particular, would have used some of the classical treatises as textbooks, ensuring a practical familiarity with that tradition.<sup>1</sup> It is not suggested that even the well-educated Lee would have been familiar with some of the more esoteric studies, or of the complex definitions of certain terms, some of which continue to be the subject of intense debate—the function of this chapter is to illustrate the development of fundamental ideas with which he was assuredly well-acquainted, and which influenced his practice as a dramatist, as it would have done that of his contemporaries. A thorough analysis of the history of characterology will also help to establish a critical vocabulary for use in the later chapters of this study.

#### The Character.

The complex theories of dramatic characterology disseminated in the treatises of the later seventeenth century derive from two distinct methods of creating character suggested by the classical authorities. These approaches are discussed under the slightly differentiated terms of the 'Character' and the 'Charakter', before proceeding to an analysis of the contemporary theories. A 'character' as described here refers to those literary entities who have certain requisite qualities that have been extensively defined and which can be abstracted in analysis.

The term refers to heterogeneous (individuated/atypical) dramatic creations, that stand in contradistinction to the stereotypical "*charakters*", a term I have derived from the title of Theophrastus' study of type-characters. The defined qualities of the "character" are first recorded in Aristotle's *Poetics*, the foundational treatise on dramatic theory, and are augmented in Cicero's *De Inventione*, the anonymous *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, Horace's *Ars Poetica*, Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria* and Priscian's *Institutio de arte grammaticae*. Whilst only certain characters in a given work are strongly individuated, it will become increasingly evident throughout the course of the analysis that *all* dramatic characters are, to varying degrees, both homogenous and heterogeneous, typical and atypical.

The central tenet of the *Poetics* is that art imitates nature, and—with particular emphasis upon poetry—that the object of *mimesis* is man. Man is described as a product of three distinct factors, *ethe* (his characteristic moral qualities and dispositions), *pathe* (his emotions) and *praxis* (his actions and behaviours).<sup>2</sup> Having drawn this distinction, Aristotle can more specifically assert that the object of poetic imitation is *praxis*—the imitation of man *in action*, and that tragedy is an imitation of that action when that action is of a certain gravity (1448a1; 1449b25). Action "implies personal agents, who necessarily possess certain distinctive qualities both of character [*ethos*]<sup>3</sup> and thought [*dianoia*]", for it is through these elements that action is presented (1449b36). Tragedy is composed of six elements—plot, character, diction, thought, spectacle and song (1450a9-10). Plot is, in essence, "an imitation of an action that is complete, and whole...[and] which has a beginning, a middle, and an end" (1450b24-8), diction, "the expression of meaning in words" (1450a13-6), and spectacle and song dramaturgical embellishments (1450a16ff). Whilst plot (*mythos*) is given the preeminent position in the division, it is *ethos* and *dianoia* that receive the most attention in the treatise. "Character" is described as the way in which "we ascribe certain qualities to the agents" (1450a5-6) and "that which reveals moral purpose, showing what kinds of things a man chooses [*proairesis*] or avoids" (1450b8-9). In other words, *ethos* is the agent's moral fibre, his inherent habits and tendencies, and his disposition towards certain virtues and vices. *Dianoia* is described as the agent's intellect—his capacity for thought—as well as the revelation of the ethical qualities manifested in the play through the agent's speeches (diction) and actions.<sup>4</sup> Out of this brief definition a complex Aristotelian character begins to emerge as a combination of the innate dispositions and the psychological state (or states) he presents; that is, he is an

<sup>1</sup> Lee himself attended Charterhouse and Trinity College, Cambridge, graduating with a B.A. in 1668/9.

<sup>2</sup> 1447a28. The standardised Bekker system of numeration is used for all of Aristotle's texts. The English translation of the *Poetics* is from the Butcher edition.

<sup>3</sup> Singular of *ethe*.

<sup>4</sup> Butcher notes that the text makes no specific reference to *dianoia* being embodied in action (p.341); however, this was most likely either an oversight or simply held to be axiomatic.

amalgam of appetitive and intellective characteristics. The presence of the latter is perhaps the most fundamental distinction between atypical characters and stereotypical '*charakters*', as shall be discussed in due course.

Next Aristotle examines the character of the ideal tragic protagonist, whose characteristics could be (and often were) applied to the several principal characters of multi-plot English drama. At 1452b28ff Aristotle states that the protagonist should be neither a paragon of virtue (we do not feel pity for the misfortunes of the saintly, but rather admire their fortitude) nor of a vicious disposition—neither pity nor fear (*carthasis*) is inspired when a vicious character suffers a reversal of fortune (*proairesis*). This is not to suggest that he must be ordinary—quite the contrary. He must be similar (*homoios*) to ourselves, but also magnified to a greater level in stature (1453a6ff). The similarity to ourselves ensures our appreciation of his human nature and ordinary virtue, leading us to associate with him and with his misfortune because it could easily be ours. But he must also be more noble and heroic than we, so that his suffering is grander and more pitiable. The misfortune that lies at the heart of tragedy afflicts the protagonist principally because of his *hamartia*.

Like many of the prominent Aristotelian terms, the exact meaning of *hamartia* has been the subject of considerable debate. S.H. Butcher insists that it is more complex than simply an act (or acts) committed in ignorance.<sup>5</sup> It also applies to acts committed because of an error in judgement, either with knowledge of the particular circumstances (which implies a degree of culpability) or without (which does not), as well as acts that are conscious and intentional but not premeditated, like those committed in the heat of anger or passion. This complex understanding of the term would have been foreign to seventeenth-century dramatic theory, which viewed *hamartia* as a fundamental and dominant character flaw, such as hubris, ambition or ungoverned passion, which caused the character to make erroneous choices. A broad rather than a narrow interpretation is to be encouraged, because sometimes acts committed by a character do not arise from a fundamental flaw in his or her identity.<sup>6</sup> In critical analysis the *hamartia* of the protagonist is often considered, yet the central figures are not the only characters in the play to have (and display) *hamartia*. For *hamartia* (as it was understood by the Caroleans) is a defect of character that creates action, and action is not always created by the protagonist, nor is there only ever one action taking place in a drama (despite Aristotle's objection to the idea of multi-plot tragedy). Because all human beings are flawed creatures, even minor characters have *hamartia*, despite the fact that they may not make choices in the drama. A catalogue of the *hamartias* of Shakespeare's characters alone would be

<sup>5</sup> Butcher, pp.317-9.



considerable; those of Lee's characters will be examined in due course as an integral aspect of dramatised character.

But Aristotle has not yet finished his analysis of the agent (*prattontas*) of the drama. In fact his qualitative analysis of character at 1454a16ff was to be one of the most influential theories of characterisation in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. For a character to be effective, four aspects must be satisfied; every agent must be *chrestos*, *harmottos*, *homoios*, and *homalos* (1454a16-28). In context the exact meaning of the term *chrestos*—which literally means “good”—is ambiguous, but today the moral connotation of the term is either diminished or repudiated entirely. The problem stems from the fact that Aristotle makes it evident that inferior and base characters should also be *chrestos*, which makes a strictly moral interpretation untenable. Some modern critics, such as Butcher and Halliwell, suggest that goodness arises from sublimity—that regardless of the moral imperfections of the characters, they impress us with their nobility and grandeur.<sup>7</sup> Others such as Telford and Davis argue that the term is effectual, and that a character is effective if his actions are seen to follow from what he is; that goodness means being relative to the standards that constitute the type of character presented.<sup>8</sup> That is, a character must conform to his or her class, type or function—a king should be good at governance, a villain at villainy, a sycophant at flattery, a slave at servitude, and so on. This is not the appropriate forum for a thorough examination of the debate, but it is important to understand the ways in which these terms were perceived by the numerous sixteenth and seventeenth-century translators and commentators on Aristotle's treatise, principally those of the Italian Cinquecento,<sup>9</sup> Daniel Heinsius, and the French and English neoclassicists.

The Cinquecento critics almost universally accepted the strictly moral connotation of the term. As a result of the recent rediscovery of Aristotle's text,<sup>10</sup> these commentators attempted to marry his quadripartite division with Horace's more familiar “Art of Poetry”.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>6</sup> In Lee's plays Statira's refusal to see Alexander, Ziphare's marriage to Semandra and Crispus' to Fausta are all examples of hamartia, but not of a character flaw, or even a choice made based on a defect in character.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Butcher, p.233; Halliwell, p.158.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Telford, p.112; Davis, p.77.

<sup>9</sup> The term *Cinquecento* is used generically to describe the sixteenth-century Italian literary theorists. It includes commentaries by Francesco Robortello (1548), Vincenzo Maggi (1550), Pietro Vettori (1560), Julius Caesar Scaliger (1561), Antonio Sebastiano Minturno (1563), Lodovico Castelvetro (1570 and 1576), Alessandro Piccolomini (1575) and Antonio Riccoboni (1585), to name but a few of the more celebrated examples I have consulted.

<sup>10</sup> Until the end of the fifteenth century few critics would have ever read Aristotle's treatise on poetry. Although Averroes' imperfect commentary had appeared in 1481, it was not until Giorgio Valla's Latin translation was published in 1498 that interest in this text began.

<sup>11</sup> In his *Ars Poetica* Horace had stated that in characterisation the poet must “[a]ut famam sequere aut sibi convenientia fingere” (l.119—“either follow tradition or invent what is self-consistent”), “servetur ad imum, qualis ab incepto processerit, et sibi constet” (ll.126-7—“maintain consistently through to the end the way in which the character was initially presented”), and “notandi sunt tibi mores” (l.156—“note and follow the manners of each age/type”). The English translation derived from the Fairclough edition (pp.460-3).

Because Horace's position does not exactly equate with Aristotle's, many of the critics opted for an either/or approach to the terminology of the *Poetics* (as will be seen in reference to *harmottos* and *homoios*), or simply ignored Aristotelian distinctions that conflicted with Horace's. A few exceptions notwithstanding, the general consensus of the sixteenth century Italian critics is that “goodness” has a moral connotation, as it serves the belief that poetry is meant to be didactic and therefore those characters imitated must be virtuous.<sup>12</sup> This position is markedly different from that of the French and English neoclassic critics of the following century, and of Daniel Heinsius' *De tragoediae constitutione*. This treatise, first published in 1611 as an addendum to his edition of the *Poetics* (1610), acted as a bridge between the Formalist critics and the Cinquecento.<sup>13</sup> He argues that the first part of the quadripartite division of “manners”<sup>14</sup> does not require that all characters be virtuous, rather that both the virtuous and vicious characters be well represented (II; XIV). In France the first extant discussion of this issue appears in a letter written by Jean Chapelain in 1623 in which is said that:

happenings attributed to an evil nature, even though they are evil in themselves, must be called good since they are proper to the person... Otherwise, in making a poem, the poet would be forced to shape it entirely of virtuous people, which is against usage and against reason.<sup>15</sup>

Pierre Corneille combined the two theoretical positions, claiming that *chrestos* alludes both to the sublimity and the effect of the character. Attempting to reconcile Aristotelian rules with his own dramatic practice, Corneille came to the conclusion that “goodness” did not refer to rectitude but rather the “brilliant and elevated character of a criminal or virtuous habit”.<sup>16</sup> René Le Bossu, in his *Traité du poème épique* (1675), defined this term as “poetical goodness” so as to discriminate it from the moral connotation of the term.<sup>17</sup> Poetical goodness requires that a character be well represented; an agent can be morally evil but providing that he is *effectively* represented in that evil, he is poetically good. This position is equated with Horace's “*notandi*

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Weinberg, pp.93; 419; 465-6; 480; 490; 522-3; 537; 588; 669.

<sup>13</sup> Sellin, pp.xiii-xv.

<sup>14</sup> Heinsius interprets *ethos* as *mores*, a term which is regularly translated into English as “manners”. This does not equate with the common connotation of polite social conduct, but rather with our concept of character. He himself explains that “manners” differ in individuals by virtue of their moral habits, passions, nationalities, ages, and fortunes (XIV), and it is this connotation of the term that is used by the Restoration critics, as shall be demonstrated in due course.

<sup>15</sup> Chapelain, “His Opinion of the Poem ‘Adone’”, trans. by Schier, in Elledge and Schier (ed.), p.24.

<sup>16</sup> Corneille, *Premier Discours: De l'Utilité et des Parties du Poème Dramatique* (1660), trans. by Beatrice Stewart MacClintock, in Clark (ed.), p.106.

<sup>17</sup> Le Bossu, in “W.J.” (trans.), IV.iv (p.171); IV.vi (pp.177-80). This position is reiterated by John Dennis in his “Remarks on... Prince Arthur” (1696) where he states that “[b]y Goodness, I do not mean a Moral Goodness; for the Manners may be Poetically Good, tho' they are Morally Vicious. The Manners then are Poetically Good, when they are well mark'd; that is, when the Discourse and the Actions of the Persons which are introduc'd, make us clearly and distinctly see their Inclinations and their Affections, such as they are, and make us judge by the

*sunt tibi mores*".<sup>18</sup> Shortly thereafter John Dryden interpreted *chrestos* as "apparent", in the sense of being a clear revelation of character through speech or action.<sup>19</sup> The first translation of the *Poetics* into English was published in 1705, together with a translation of André Dacier's notes from his *La poétique d'Aristote*, first published in Paris in 1692. Like his immediate predecessors, Dacier also interprets *chrestos* as poetical goodness.<sup>20</sup> Thus the general consensus of translators in the seventeenth-century was that *chrestos* was a poetical, rather than a moral, term; it required that all characters be effectively represented, regardless of whether they were the protagonist or were minor figures. Ironically it was a Cinquecento dramatist and critic, Giovanni Battista Guarini, who best summed up this position, stating that "*Non è dunque suo fine d'imitare il buono, ma di bene imitare*"—the end of the poet is not to imitate the good, but to imitate well.<sup>21</sup>

Whilst the other three elements are not quite as problematic as the first, they have nevertheless attracted some debate. *Harmottos* is generally held to refer to the fact that a character must act appropriately to his type—a subject emphasised by Horace and others through the doctrine of *decorum*. Halliwell suggests this view derives from a belief in a link between character and environment (the "objective conditions of life, including age, sex, social origins and status"), adding that this position was comprehensively covered by Aristotle in his *Rhetoric* (1388b and 1408a) as well as being a commonly held view in the ancient world.<sup>22</sup> Difficulties only appear with regard to this term when it is held to be in contrast to *homoios*, rather than both being requisite (along with the first and last) in all characters, as Aristotle clearly intended.

Aristotle had already explained *homoios* (at 1453a5) as pertaining to the agent's similarity to ourselves, because it is through association and identification with the protagonist that we experience the pity and fear that produces *catharsis*. However, again with but a few dissenters, most of the Cinquecento critics ignored Aristotle's explicit definition, and interpreted "likeness" as a reference to characters based upon a mythical or historical figure being portrayed as that figure was familiarly understood. In the event that a character was wholly invented and had no literary forebear, he must then be "appropriate" (*harmottos*) to the

Goodness or the Pravity of those inclinations, what good or what evil Resolutions they are certain to take" (II.ii, pp.44-5).

<sup>18</sup> Le Bossu, note to IV.iv (p.171). See note 11 regarding Horace's "Epistle to the Piso's on the art of poetry". Dryden also makes this connection in "The Grounds of Criticism in Tragedy" (*Works*, xiii.235). All citations of Dryden in the survey are derived from the California edition.

<sup>19</sup> Dryden, "Grounds" (*Works*, xiii.236). Dryden's editor, Maximillian E. Novak, notes that he interprets *chrestos* in this sense so as to amplify Aristotle's argument at 1450b8-11 that character is revealed through the choices made in speech and/or action. Thus Dryden is said to be stressing "the need for clarity in indicating the motivations, passions and ethical positions of characters" (*Works*, xiii.540n.235:1'-8).

<sup>20</sup> Dacier *et al.*, xvi.1, pp.249, 243n.10.

<sup>21</sup> Guarini, "Il Verato secondo... in difesa del Pastor Fido" (1593, p.66), cited in Weinberg, pp.29-30.

type of character presented instead. Despite its inaccuracy, this interpretation continued to be accepted throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Da Brescia appears to have been the first to adopt this strictly Horatian position; as early as 1518 he was arguing that a character must either be like his foundation or else appropriate if he was fictitious.<sup>23</sup> This led to the so-called either/or interpretation of Aristotle's definition of character. Later, Corneille was to reassert this position claiming that a character needed to be "equal" (like) to the known figure upon whom he was based, or alternatively, if he were fictitious, he must be "seemly" (appropriate) instead.<sup>24</sup> Dacier rejects Corneille's view, but his resolution is not Aristotelian either. He argues that both elements must be present in known as well as invented characters, and that when a famous figure is historically represented contrary to his type (for example, an emperor who does not act the way an emperor should) then it is the responsibility of the poet to dissemble his faults so as to make them less offensive to his position. Dryden mediates between these extremes in maintaining that a known character must be traditionally represented, or at least in no way contrary to that tradition.<sup>25</sup> This position conforms with that of Le Bossu, who holds that an historical figure must be represented according to the known facts about him.<sup>26</sup> Regardless of the Cornelian and Dacierian variations, the consensus of the seventeenth-century translators is that *homoios* refers to characters based on mythical or historical figures being represented according to the established tradition, as distinct from the true Aristotelian position.

The last category (*homalos*) refers to consistency: that the character should remain consistent to the type established for him throughout the play, and that he not deviate from the pattern generated unless for a specific effect. Le Bossu equates this with Horace's "[s]ervetur ad imum / Qualis ab incepto processerit & sibi constet—As you begin, so keep on to the end", as does Dryden.<sup>27</sup> On this point most translators agree, and the position fairly self-evident. Thus, in the late seventeenth century, *chrestos* was equated with poetical goodness—of a character being effectively represented regardless of his moral position; *harmottos* was equated with *decorum*—of the character being appropriate to the type he is representing; *homoios* was associated with resemblance—of the character being accurately represented in relation to his

<sup>22</sup> Halliwell, p.159.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Da Brescia in Weinberg, pp.92-3.

<sup>24</sup> Corneille in Clark, p.107; Dacier, p.267. See also note 11 on Horace's claim that one must follow tradition or invent what is self-consistent.

<sup>25</sup> Dryden, "Grounds" (*Works*, xiii.235).

<sup>26</sup> Le Bossu, IV.iv (p.172). Exactly how he, and those who share his opinion, would have dealt with the issue of diametrically opposed attitudes towards a famous figure, like those presented by Plutarch and Quintus Curtius on the actions of Alexander the Great, remains a mystery.

<sup>27</sup> Le Bossu, note to IV.iv (p.172); Dryden, "Grounds" (*Works*, xiii.236). This particular translation of Horace is provided in the Dacier edition (p.242n.8).

mythical or historical foundation; and *homalos* with consistency—that the character remain consistent to his own characteristics throughout the play.

Cicero, the anonymous author of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, Quintilian, and Priscian all augment the Aristotelian foundation by categorising the attributes which constitute a literary character. In the first book of *De Inventione* (c.86BCE), Cicero concludes that there are eleven factors that make one individual—*nomen*, *natura*, *victus*, *fortuna*, *habitus*, *affectio*, *studia*, *consilia*, *facta*, *casus* and *orationes*. *Nomen* ("name") is an axiomatic element of individuality—it is the most fundamental method by which we are differentiated. *Natura* ("nature") is more complex, and relates to such things as one's sex, race, place of birth, family, age and those qualities (strengths and weaknesses) of mind and body that are given to one by nature—what might be termed genetic predispositions (I.xxiv.35). These stand in contradistinction to those habits which are acquired (*habitus*), and which are discussed below. *Victus* refers to one's "manner of life", and covers elements such as one's upbringing, in what tradition and under whose direction, what teachers one had in the study of the arts, one's friends, occupation and the management of one's assets, and one's behaviour in the home environment (I.xxv.35). Under "fortune" (*fortuna*) is assessed whether one is rich or poor, free or enslaved, private citizen or public official, and, in the case of the latter, whether that post was acquired honestly or disreputably, whether one is famous or not, what sort of children one has, and if the character is deceased, the nature of one's death—for example, whether harmoniously and peacefully, or in a state of disharmony and regret (I.xxv.35). *Habitus* refers to one's acquired habits, specifically skills and knowledge that are not given by nature but acquired through rigorous training and practice (I.xxv.36). *Affectio* (or "feelings") pertains to the temporary changes of mind or body due to some cause—such as joy, desire, fear, vexation, illness and weakness (I.xxv.36). *Studia* (or "study") refers to the devotion to an academic pursuit that brings pleasure, for example, philosophy, poetry and/or mathematics (I.xxv.36). *Consilia* (or "purpose") is the deliberate plan to commit, or not commit, an action (I.xxv.36). The final three categories, *facta* (achievements), *casus* (accidents), and *orationes* (speech), are considered under their past, present and future tenses: what he did, what happened to him, and what he said; what he is doing, what is happening to him, and what he is saying; and what he is going to do, what is going to happen to him, and what he is going to say.<sup>28</sup>

A few years after Cicero's treatise the anonymous *Rhetorica ad Herennium* presented fifteen separate attributes divided into three principal groups—i) external circumstances

<sup>28</sup> I.xxv.36. The influence of Cicero on the production of poetry can be seen in the emphasis placed upon his categories in the *Ars versificatoria* (c.1175) of Matthew of Vendôme (I.xli; I.lxxvii-lxxix; I.cxxv), and in the *Parisiana poetria* (c.1220) of John of Garland (VI.394-413), both of which were widely influential treatises on the composition of poetry.

(descent—*genus*, education—*educatio*, wealth—*divitiae*, kinds of power—*potestates*, titles to fame—*gloriae*, citizenship—*civitas*, friendships—*amicitiae*), ii) physical attributes (agility—*velocitas*, strength—*vires*, beauty—*dignitas*, health—*valetudo*), and iii) qualities of character (wisdom—*prudentia*, justice—*iustitia*, courage—*fortitudo*, temperance—*modestia*), as well as their antitheses (III.vi.10-viii.15). Regrettably, very little commentary is provided with these categories (in part because the text is corrupt at this point), yet it is possible to see some affinity with sections of the Ciceronian taxonomy. Other terms are reasonably self-explanatory.

The third major Latin work on rhetoric, Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria* (95CE), includes a similar taxonomical analysis of the individual. It contains sixteen commonplaces—birth, nationality, country, sex, age, education, constitution, fortune, condition, disposition, occupation, ambition, history, passion, design and name. Birth (*genus*) refers to one's resemblance to one's ancestors, in the sense of having a genetic predisposition to act in a similar manner (V.x.24). Nationality (*natio*) is considered to be a factor on the basis that different peoples have collective characteristics and dispositions. Country (*patria*) refers to the laws, customs and institutions of the homeland, all of which affect the development of the individual (V.x.25). Sex (*sexus*) is included as a factor on the basis that, for example, "a man is more likely to commit a robbery, a woman to poison". Age (*aetas*), is similar to sex in that certain groups in society are deemed to act in predictable manners, such as, for instance, the supposed penchant of old men for lechery. Education and training (*educatio et disciplina*) pertain to the level and method of one's instruction. Under bodily constitution (*habitus corporis*), Quintilian argues that certain physical traits incline one towards certain behaviour; that, for instance, beauty is an argument for lust, strength for insolence, and their opposites for reverse kinds of conduct (V.x.26). Different types of behaviour are also expected depending upon one's fortune (*fortuna*), a category that also includes the calibre of one's friends. Condition (*condicionis etiam distantia*) is commensurate with Ciceronian *fortuna* and refers to one's status, whether famous or obscure, public official or private citizen, free man or slave, married or single, parent or child. Natural disposition (*animi natura*) refers to one's innate habits and tendencies and is comparable with Aristotelian *ethos* (V.x.27). Occupation (*studia*) is self-evident, whilst ambition (*quid adfectet quisque*) refers not to one's desires, but rather to the way that one wishes to be perceived (V.x.28). History (*ante acta dictaque*) alludes to one's past life, as one's present character is, in part, a product of one's past actions. Passion (*commotio*) refers to the presence and effect of temporary emotions such as anger or fear. Design (*consilia*) refers to one's past, present and future intentions. The last category (*nomen*) refers both to one's name and to one's renown (V.x.30). Notably Quintilian's classification



differs from Cicero's and that of the anonymous *Rhetorica* in that most of his categories are intimately linked with the theory of decorum. There is no implication in the earlier texts that characters should act in a specific way: they merely record the constituent parts of the individual personality. While for the earlier writers one's age or fortune do not necessarily predispose one to act in a specific way, Quintilian holds that the possession of an attribute will inevitably result in a particular kind of behaviour.

The last of the classical treatises to provide a taxonomy of attributes is Priscian's *Institutio de arte grammaticae*. As Ernest Gallo notes, Priscian presents the most complete repertoire of commonplaces. These are subdivided into those which are intrinsic (race, city, family, marvels attending birth, manner of life, education, the nature of body and soul—to be treated "per divisionem"—offices held, and deeds) and those that are extrinsic (kindred, friends, wealth, family, fortune, longevity, the nature of the omens attending their death, who slew them, what happened after their death, their children, and oracles which were spoken concerning their final resting place).<sup>29</sup> Although it is possible to see a blurring of distinctions in some of the categories, the important thing is that *all* of these factors contribute to one being regarded as a particularised, heterogeneous entity. Whilst not all elements need to be present in a character for him to be regarded as atypical, the presence of some of the attributes results in a degree of individuation, regardless of the fact that the character also shares characteristics with generic groups or types.

In the 'character' tradition it is possible to see that all dramatic figures (and by extension *all* literary characters) in varying degrees display some or all of the facets that make up personality. They are a combination of their *ethos* and their *dianoia*, they have an innate, and inherently destructive, character flaw (*hamartia*)—although minor characters are unlikely to reveal theirs—and are (or should be) *chrestos*, *harmottos*, *homoios* and *homalos*. In addition they would have most (if not all) of the attributes recorded by Cicero and his followers. This provides a basis for individuation; and yet, for all this, it is equally important to note that these characters are built upon, and out of, a stereotypical foundation, their individuality arising from a *particular* combination of shared elements.

#### The Charakter.

Whilst the 'charakter' type as a literary genre is regarded as originating with the *Charakteres* of Theophrastus, the tradition can be traced to his mentors Plato (in the *Republic*) and Aristotle (in his *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Rhetoric*). The adoption of the stereotypical 'charakter' in

<sup>29</sup> Priscian, VII.20-4, cited in Gallo, pp. 179-80.

Greco-Roman comedy is an early dramatic manifestation of this tradition. The practice of personifying moral traits, and of restricting characters to generalised types, is mirrored in many works of the Middle Ages. Instructions for the composition of these *charakters* were provided in numerous treatises produced on the subject during the period, as well as in the study of rhetoric in the educational institutions. Such diverse genres as the medieval 'Estate' books, the allegorical figures of the Morality plays, the depictions of *charakter* in satirical poetry, and in the seventeenth-century character books, all present 'charakters' of the stereotypical 'Theophrastan' kind. Increasing subtlety in the development and presentation of the moral, social and psychological types assisted dramatists in producing more complex characterisations.

As part of his analysis of the four imperfect types of society—timarchy, oligarchy, democracy and tyranny—in the *Republic*, Plato provided sketches of the type of individual that epitomised each society, and contrasted the tyrant with his antithesis, the Philosopher-Ruler, who constituted the fifth type (VI; VIII-LX). The notable difference between the Platonic and the Theophrastan types is that, whilst the latter are based around one character trait, the former possess numerous characteristics, both virtuous and vicious. This has the effect of presenting a character that, whilst remaining a type, displays a multi-dimensionality not generally associated with the tradition of the 'charakter'. This is a quality the Platonic types share with the Aristotelian.

Aristotle's conception of *ethos* is by no means restricted to the *Poetics*, being also explicated in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (*ethics* being literally the study of *ethos*) and in the *Rhetoric*. The central argument of the former is that all virtues have attendant vices that are the excess (*hyperbole*) or deficiency (*ellipsis*) of the virtuous equilibrium (*mesotes*) (1104a10-26; 1106a24ff). For example, courage (*andreia*) is the virtue to which both rashness (*thrassaia*—excessive courage) and cowardice (*deilia*—the lack of it) are equally offensive vices. Character stereotyping arises from the various virtues and vices being personified, most notably in the "Magnificent Man" and "Magnanimous Man".<sup>30</sup> He continues this practice in the *Rhetoric* in providing sketches of characters representing the three ages of man—Youth, Prime and Old Age—and of those men who possess nobility, wealth and power (1388a32-1391b7). However, like the Platonic types, the 'charakters' in the *Rhetoric* tend to be more general than particularised. That is, the 'charakters' produced are examples of a general class, rather than of specific individuals within the class. Being a youth or being wealthy are categories so broad as

<sup>30</sup> Whilst some of the types are reduced to one line maxims, on average the analyses are of about a paragraph (three or four sentences) in length. *Megaloprepia* and *Megalopsuchia* are the notable exceptions, both receiving considerable attention (1122a19-1125a34).

to make it difficult to build a literary 'charakter' upon; whilst being a coward or a boaster can, and did, provide sufficient features to support dramatic rendition.

This specificity of trait is nowhere better displayed than in the *Charakteres*. The earlier treatises had provided Theophrastus with the foundation for his work, which takes a character trait and personifies it.<sup>31</sup> The thirty sketches that form this study are all taken from the vices, each sketches having two main sections—the trait which typifies the character (such as Flattery, Ambition, Arrogance, Cowardice etc.), and an analysis of the nature and habits of that 'charakter'. Editors later added a witty maxim or anecdote to conclude each description. As John Smeed points out, these 'charakters' are not presentations of complex personalities, they are personified exaggerations of a social, moral or psychological idiosyncrasy.<sup>32</sup> They were particularly popular in the 'New' Greek comedy of Menander (who is said, by Diogenes Laertius, to have been one of Theophrastus' students) and his contemporaries, and in the Roman comedies of Plautus and Terence based on them. These Latin dramatists were to be a major influence on drama, and dramatic characterisation, from the Middle Ages onwards. Each of their 'charakters' is a clearly discernible stock type introduced in a stock situation, and allowed only a modicum of individuation. They have provided dramatic staples like the braggart soldier, wily parasites, greedy pimps and panders, shrewish wives, lascivious old men, and lovelorn youths. Terence acknowledges the use of stereotypes in the prologue to *Eunuchus* when he states that:

[t]he author admits that he has transferred these characters from the Greek play [of Menander] into his *Eunuch*... If he is not allowed to make use of the same characters as other writers, how can he still bring on a running slave, virtuous wives and dishonest courtesans, greedy spongers and braggart soldiers? How can he show substitution of a child, deception of an old man by his slave, love, hatred, and suspicion? Nothing in fact is ever said which has not been said before.<sup>33</sup>

*Comoedia palliata* is thoroughly dependent on generalities—there are, as Walter Forehand notes, "old men, young men, slaves, matrons and courtesans; but no carpenters, insurance salesmen, maniacs, or the like".<sup>34</sup> He adds that stereotyping allowed the audience to recognise all of the agents of the drama for what they were, permitting the dramatist to proceed directly

to an elaboration of character and plot.<sup>35</sup> This is true of drama in all periods, but whilst the elaboration of character in Greco-Roman comedy is minimal, it was to be a substantial component of seventeenth-century drama, particularly the serious variety.

Despite the fact that Theophrastus' treatise is unlikely to have been widely known in England prior to Isaac Casaubon's Latin translation of 1592, most characters in medieval literature are presented as generalisations of a type. As with the classical period, character in the Middle Ages developed upon the parallel lines of the realistic (character) and the typological (*charakter*): poets like Chaucer, Langland and Gower present both kinds. Warren Ginsberg divides medieval character into the literal and the exemplary, with the latter verging on personification.<sup>36</sup> Whilst in antiquity characters were identified by their ruling passions, in the Middle Ages the passion itself came to be impersonated. Edmond Faral has noted that medieval writers were more concerned with the moral, social and psychological categories to which people belonged than with presenting complex heterogeneous characterisations.<sup>37</sup> Frederick Tupper agrees, suggesting that Chaucer (and other poets) failed to give personal names to their characters because of the medieval preference for the typical and universal, rather than the atypical and specific.<sup>38</sup> Chaucer's characters nevertheless combine the homogenous and the heterogeneous, displaying too much individuation to be truly typical, but also retaining a level of typicality which includes the denial of personal names. Because the figures in the *Canterbury Tales* are identified by their social role, they display more multi-dimensionality than types based purely upon a governing trait. Social characterisation of this type derives from the medieval tradition of the 'Estates', in which the three feudal classes, nobility, clergy and commons, and their sub-classes are depicted.<sup>39</sup> Ruth Mohl suggests that a common feature of this genre is the association of the seven deadly sins with specific estates, in particular the pride and lust of the nobility, the greed and gluttony of the clergy, and the sloth, envy and anger of the commons.<sup>40</sup> Individuals are identified by their social role, that role with a particular estate, and that estate with the particular sins that its members are deemed to be naturally disposed towards. Occasionally even the vices themselves are personified to accentuate the argument.

The two dramatic forms of the Middle Ages—the 'Miracle' and 'Morality' plays—both present typological characters. David Leigh notes the use of four devices in medieval drama

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p.122.

<sup>36</sup> Ginsberg, p.78.

<sup>37</sup> Faral, *Arts Poétique* (1958, p.79), cited in Ginsberg, p.79.

<sup>38</sup> Tupper, pp.13-7.

<sup>39</sup> John of Garland provides a slight variant on the estates theme, describing the "*Tria Genera Personarum et Tria Genera Hominum*"—three kinds of characters and the three types of men, as being *curiales* (courtiers), *ciuiles* (city-dwellers) and *rurales* (peasants) (l.124-6). Under *curiales* he includes both the clergy and the nobility.

<sup>40</sup> Mohl, p.257.

<sup>31</sup> Although the English word "character" is etymologically derived from the Greek word "*charakteres*", the term actually equates to "trait", whilst "character", in the modern sense, is derived from the connotation of the word "*ethos*". Thus, as Rusten notes, Diogenes Laertius gave this treatise the title "*ethikoi* [character] *charakteres* [traits]" (p.47).

<sup>32</sup> Smeed, p.2.

<sup>33</sup> Terence in Radice (ed.), p.29. As Herrick notes, Terence also provides a catalogue of character types in the Prologue to his *Self-Tormentor* (the slave on the run, the irate old man, the greedy parasite, the shameless informer and covetous pander) to which Calphurnius, a fifteenth-century commentator, added the forsworn pander, the burning lover, the cunning slave, the mocking lady-love, the forbidding wife, the indulgent matron, the scolding uncle, the helpful crony, the man of war, the stiff-necked parents and courtesans (pp.147-8).

<sup>34</sup> Forehand, p.121. For this reason characters have to be distinguished by their place of origin, as in the *Andria* of Terence, and Plautus' *Peenulus*.

that led to the production of "nonliteral portrayal of character[s]"—the anthropomorphisation of God and spirits, the division of commoners into 'good' and 'evil' groups, the typification of characters based upon their social status, and the personification of abstract concepts.<sup>41</sup> This is certainly true of ancillary characters, but the protagonists of the miracle plays are often more complex. Being based upon historical figures, they are meant to be individuated entities, whilst also being symbolic of some religious principle, an example being the depiction of Mary Magdalen as the epitome of the repentant sinner.<sup>42</sup> As Stanley Kahrl argues, the cycle plays individuate and particularise the historical characters they present, whereas the moralities universalise their characters in order for the audience to identify with them, and with the doctrinal message being conveyed.<sup>43</sup> As a result the characters in the morality plays are presented either as universalised types or as personified abstractions of human qualities and moral traits.<sup>44</sup> The universalised type is differentiated from the more specialised one in that the latter is defined by some social or idiosyncratic element. Universalised characters like Everyman, Humanum Genus and Mankind are intended to represent *all* mankind, and are distinct from characters that represent a social or professional group within society, such as those of the *Canterbury Tales*. The moralities also present the personifications of general human qualities like Beauty, Strength and Wisdom, and of moral traits, in particular the cardinal and theological virtues and the deadly sins.

During the sixteenth-century the revival of the epigram in its classical form encouraged the production of generalised portraits. The models for this genre were provided by Horace's Usurer, Miser and Bore, Martial's hypocrites and pretenders, and Juvenal's women and parasites.<sup>45</sup> Like the dramatic and estate literature of the Middle Ages, epigrammatic poetry centred upon a systematic examination of the vices.<sup>46</sup> The epigram in English begins with Sir Thomas More's *Epigrammata* in 1518.<sup>47</sup> In this collection he presents personified abstractions—such as Childhood, Manhood, Old Age, Death, Fame, Time and Eternity—as well as numerous examples of social satire, the common proposition of this genre. As T.K. Whipple has noted, the epigram flourished in cultured literary circles, such as those of imperial Rome, Bourbon France and Augustan England, where the foibles, vices and idiosyncracies of

sophisticated society could be exposed.<sup>48</sup> This genre continued to be embraced throughout the sixteenth century in collections by Robert Crowley, John Heywood and Edward Guilpin, furthering a tradition established by the Roman satirists and maintained by More. The discovery, and popularity, of the Theophrastan 'charakter' sketch helped to reinvigorate the medium, and exercises in the production of these sketches assisted in the creation of the dramatic types, especially the "humours" character.

The production of Theophrastan stereotypes also formed part of formal education from the Middle Ages to the Restoration and beyond. Despite the unfamiliarity of the *Charakteres*, even in the educational community, until the end of the sixteenth-century, the rhetorical treatises used in the curriculum (Cicero, Quintilian, Hermogenes, Aphthonius, Priscian, Isidore and others), as well as the classical and medieval literary tradition, provided familiar models for character typology. The classical curriculum, which formed the basis for the degree of the Bachelor of Arts at the two English universities, required a study of the seven liberal arts, which were subdivided into the trivium (grammar, logic and rhetoric) and the quadrivium (arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music).<sup>49</sup> As part of the former, students would have become intimately acquainted with rhetorical and poetical treatises of the classical and medieval periods. Some of these works simply provide the terminology and definitions of this science, whilst others, like Hermogenes' *Progymnasmata*, are textbooks that supply regimented exercises which students are required to master. The first dissertations to provide a critical terminology are Demetrius' *On Style* (c. early 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE) and the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*. The former uses the Greek term *prosopopæia* (προσωποποιία) to describe both the delineation of humans, and the personification of abstractions (§265); the latter transplanting the Latin term *conformatio*.<sup>50</sup> Quintilian reverts to the Greek nomenclature in his analysis, explaining *ethopæia* (ἠθοποιία) as the orator's imitation of another person's characteristics (IX.ii.58), while *prosopopæia* extends the purely verbal rendition to a physical dramatisation.<sup>51</sup> Hermogenes adds to the latter the humanising of abstracts.<sup>52</sup> In the Middle Ages *prosopopæia*

<sup>48</sup> Whipple, p.284.

<sup>49</sup> Jewell, pp.19-20.

<sup>50</sup> IV.iii.66. The orator also introduces the terms *effictio* and *notatio* to describe the portrayal of the external (physical) features of a person, and the internal (psychological) features respectively (IV.xlix.63-1.63; li.65). John of Garland (c.1220) echoes this division of *effictio* and *notatio* in his *Paristana poetria* (VI.365-70). He also notes that "conformatio" is an alternative term for "Prosopopeye" (VI.379-80).

<sup>51</sup> IX.ii.29. Elsewhere Quintilian notes that the term *ethos* is applied to those scholastic exercises concerned with the portrayal of stereotypes (VI.ii.17).

<sup>52</sup> Hermogenes' "Preliminary Exercises" presents twelve exercises in rhetorical composition, beginning with the simple (fable, narration, anecdote) and proceeding to the complex (characterisation, description, thesis and proposal). The ninth exercise "Characterization" (Περὶ ἠθοποιίας) is "the imitation of the character of a person assigned, e.g., what words Andromache might say to Hector. (The exercise is called) *prosopopæia* when we put the person into the scene, as Elenchus in Menander, and as in Aristides the sea is imagined to be addressing the

<sup>41</sup> Leigh, "The Domsday Mystery Play", in Taylor and Nelson (ed.), p.264.

<sup>42</sup> Nicoll, *World Drama*, p.153.

<sup>43</sup> Kahrl, p.103.

<sup>44</sup> Mackenzie, pp.4-9.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Boyce, p.92; Smeed, pp.10-1; Whipple, p.288.

<sup>46</sup> Whilst the term 'epigram' can be used to describe quite diverse types of poetry, it is, in this sense, restricted to the dominant satirical type; a style that produced the collections of More, Crowley, Heywood and Guilpin, amongst others.

<sup>47</sup> Hudson, pp.23ff.



came to refer specifically to the personification of abstracts. Isidore of Seville, in the second book of his *Etymologiae* (pre-636), describes this term as portraying inanimate objects as characters, and providing them with the power of speech; *ethopœia* retained its classical connotation.<sup>53</sup> This position is echoed by Geoffrey of Vinsauf (c.1200) and John of Garland (c.1220).<sup>54</sup> Yet by the early sixteenth-century Erasmus is using the term *prosopographia* (προσωπογραφία) to describe the dramatisation of abstracts like Famine, Envy and Sleep, in contradistinction to *prosopopœia* which he applies to the representation of real persons.<sup>55</sup> Towards the end of the century (1589) George Puttenham inverted these terms, using *prosopographia* to describe the dramatisation of real people, while "prosopopeia" was once again used for the representation of abstractions.<sup>56</sup> In this he seems to be following Bullinger's distinction in the *Sermonum decades quinque* (1552), which had been translated into English two years earlier, where *prosopographia* is described as the "picturing or representing of bodily lineaments", and *prosopopœia* "is where those are brought in to speak that do not speak".<sup>57</sup> Regardless of the exact choice of terminology, training in both practices formed part

Athenians. The difference is plain; for in the one case we invent the words for a person really there, and in the other we invent words for a person who was not there" (trans. Baldwin, *Medieval Rhetoric and Poetic*, p.34).

<sup>53</sup> II.xiii.1-xiv.2; xxi.32; xxi.40; xxi.45.

<sup>54</sup> Geoffrey of Vinsauf describes *prosopopœia* as being the granting of the power of speech to inanimate objects, such as earth, the city of Rome, the holy rood and Nature (*Poetria Nova* [c.1200], II.461-531; 1272-4; 1416-27; and *Documentum* [post 1200], §23-4). This he distinguishes from the delineation of character at lines 1267-9 of the earlier text, and again at lines 1370ff, where he provides a Theophrastan 'charakter' sketch of a lazy man. John of Garland supports this interpretation of "prosopopeya", providing an example of when earth complains to Jove about Phaeton's fire in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (IV.373-5). These philosophers all follow Priscian's definition, which is explained by Richard Rainolde in his *Foundacion of Rhetorike* (1563), as being speech given to something which does not naturally have that power (Fol.1).

<sup>55</sup> Erasmus, in Knott (trans.), pp.582-7. This position is supported by Thomas Sebillet in his *Art poétique* (1548, II.viii, trans. Clark, p.53). A rather idiosyncratic example of the Renaissance taxonomy of rhetorical terms is provided by Richard Sherry in *A Treatise of the Figures of Grammer and Rhetorike* (1555). He describes *prosopopœia* as a comprehensive term of explanation for all character delineation, which is subdivided into six categories: *characterismus* ("the expression or painting out, eyther of the body or mind"), *prosopographia* (the description of feigned people or inanimate objects), *ethopœia* (the personification of moral traits), *pathopœia* (the "expression of vehemente affections and perturbations"), *serminocination* (where the feigned person speaks for himself) and *mimisis* (where the feigned person both speaks and acts) (Fol.xliii-xlvi). This perspective does not appear to have been widely adopted, given that it contradicts the conventional position.

<sup>56</sup> Puttenham says of *prosopographia* that "these be things that a poet or maker is wont to describe sometimes as true or naturall, and sometimes to faine as artificiall and not true. viz. The visage, speech and countenance of any person absent or dead: and this kinde of representation is called the Counterfait countenance: as Homer doth in his *Iliades*, diuerse personages: namely *Achilles* and *Thersites*, according to the truth and not by fiction. And as our poet *Chaucer* doth in his *Canterbury tales* set forth the Sumner, Pardoner, Manciple, and the rest of the pilgrims, most naturally and pleasantly" (pp.199-200). This is contrasted with "prosopopeia" ("or the Counterfait in personation"), which immediately follows: "But if ye wil faine any person with such features, qualities and conditions, or if ye wil attribute any humane quality, as reason or speech to dombe creatures or other insensible things, and do study (as one may say) to giue them a humane person, it is not *Prosopographia*, but *Prosopopeia*, because it is by way of fiction, and no prettier examples can be giuen to you thereof, than in the *Romant* of the rose translated out of French by *Chaucer*, describing the persons of auarice, enuie, old age, and many others, whereby much moralitie is taught" (p.200).

<sup>57</sup> Bullinger, p.613. Coke is still using "prosopography" to describe the dramatisation of persons in his *Art of Logick* in 1654 (p.212), and Hédelin's *La Pratique du Théâtre* (1657; translated 1684), holds that "prosopopœa's" (sic) apply to figures "that are not, and makes dumb things speak" (III, 54). It should be noted,

of the curriculum in rhetoric and poetics. As part of their education, students were expected to compose their own character sketches. Boyce correctly notes that the doctrine of decorum, combined with this rhetorical training, encouraged the production of 'charakter' types,<sup>58</sup> but it also assisted dramatists to develop patterns for the composition of complex characters. That is, the oratorical practices of *ethopœia*, *prosopographia* and *prosopopœia* encouraged the creation of both typical and atypical characters.

Thus by the time that the Casaubon translation of Theophrastus appeared, there existed in England a culture of 'charakter' stereotyping. The popularity of Theophrastus led to a spate of imitations, the most notable being those of Joseph Hall, Sir Thomas Overbury and John Earle. However, the imitations were considerably more diverse and complex than the foundation. A prominent development of the new 'charakter' sketch is the revelation of inner character. Theophrastus' types do not possess any internal complexity for the simple reason that they are based upon one dominant moral or psychological trait, whereas the later writers admitted social and professional types that allowed for richer development. The characterisation of social types (as can be already seen in Chaucer's pilgrims) permits a depth of character not present in the personification of a single disposition. In the *Scholar's Guide*, Ralph Johnson describes how to compose a 'charakter' sketch, which should involve a degree of individuation:

#### A Charakter

A Charakter is a witty and facetious description of the nature and qualities of some person, or sort of people.

#### RULES for making it

1. Chuse a Subject, viz. Such a sort of men as will admit a variety of observation, such be, drunkards, usurers, lyars, taylors, excise-men, travellers, pedlars, merchants, tapsters, lawyers, an upstart gentleman, a young Justice, a Constable, and Alderman, and the like.
2. Express their natures, qualities, conditions, practices, tools, desires, aims or ends, by witty Allegories, or Allusions, to things or terms in nature, or art, of like nature and resemblance, still striving for wit and pleasantness, together with tart nipping jerks about their vices or miscarriages.
3. Conclude with some witty and neat passage, leaving them to the effect of their follies or studies.<sup>59</sup>

Johnson reveals that the object of 'charakter' sketching as it was perceived at this time was to reveal the "natures, qualities, conditions, practices, tools, desires, aims or ends" of 'charakters'. The allocation of several qualities to a 'charakter' distinguishes Johnson's model from the Theophrastan type based on a single dominant feature.

however, that *prosopopœia* is also being used occasionally to describe the depiction of different types of persons, rather than of inanimate objects, as Ralph Johnson records in his *Scholar's Guide* (1665, p.15).

<sup>58</sup> Boyce, p.28.

<sup>59</sup> Johnson, p.15.

The incorporation of diverse elements into a sketch provided an excellent model for how complex dramatic characters might be developed, for, rather than having monotonous repetitions of "The Drunkard", we now find "A Drunken Dutchman Resident in England", a figure that, by incorporating several distinctive elements, begins to individuate the type. Should such a character appear in a play and be provided with dialogue (which, as Aristotle argues, is the expression of *dianoia*, which in turn reveals *ethos*) and with some, or all, of the elements which Cicero and his fellow rhetoricians claim make one distinctive, then even greater individuation occurs, despite the stereotypical foundation on which the character is constructed. This applies as much to the characters of serious drama as those of humours and manners comedy. Even complex personalities such as Hamlet are, to a certain extent, stereotypes. By presenting the Prince of Denmark at the outset as a typical brooding malcontent, Shakespeare was able to proceed to a rapid elaboration of plot and character through action from that foundation. This practice has been consciously or unconsciously adopted by dramatists of all periods.

#### The Dramatic Agent.

Seventeenth-century England saw a burgeoning interest in characterology as part of a wider attention to literary theory. Not only was the study of character examined by several critics, but the terms used in their analyses were often applied in the literature. Among the prominent writers who display an interest in this topic are Shakespeare, Jonson, Davenant, Dryden and Thomas Rymer.<sup>60</sup>

In poetry terms like 'character', 'humours', and 'manners' have clear established meanings. In the Tudor period (1500-1603) for instance, the word "character" is used in two predominant senses; i) either as a distinctive and individual mark (such as a person's handwriting or a unique mark), or ii) as a description of another individual (such as their internal and external qualities and features, as well as their reputation).<sup>61</sup> But of the 779 usages of "character" extracted from the LION database in the years between the accessions of James I and Charles II, over half appear to refer to the second (figurative) Tudor sense, with

<sup>60</sup> It is pertinent to note that I have arbitrarily restricted my analysis to those works that appear up to the death of King Charles II (1685). Because the reigns of James II and William and Mary are outside Lee's period of dramatic production, any post-Carolean theories are anachronistic. Having said this, there are a few exceptions that have been included where they support the existing position and demonstrate the continuity of perspective.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. OED "Literal senses" (in particular 1a and 3c) for definitions of the former, and the "Figurative senses" (particularly 9, 11, 13a and 14a) for the latter. Textually it is often difficult to abstract an isolated meaning given that the term can have multiple connotations in the one usage, whether intended or not. A dramatic agent discussing the 'character' of another may be referring to any or all of the latter meanings. Assessment of a connotation therefore tends to be general rather than specific.

approximately another hundred employing the new Theophrastan sense of the term.<sup>62</sup> By the Restoration the first (literal) connotation is all but obsolete,<sup>63</sup> the Theophrastan '*charakter*' sketch is becoming exhausted as a genre, and almost all the 1180 examples refer to the second connotation of the term as a description of another entity. Semantic specialisation also occurs in the usage of the word "humour". Throughout both the Tudor and Stuart periods, "humour" is used predominantly as a reference to a temporary mental disposition—individuals were 'of a particular humour' or inclination, in the same way as they are now described as being 'in a particular mood'.<sup>64</sup> By contrast the Galenic physiological sense of the term is almost always referred to in the plural.<sup>65</sup> The most complex of the three terms is "manners". Throughout the period it retains a comprehensive, all-encompassing meaning that combines a person's character, behaviour, disposition and conduct, both moral and social. It is particularly in literary criticism that this last term is most clearly defined, and in which the meanings of the others are confirmed.

Before turning to the critical writings, two dramatic works are worthy of particular attention. One of the most succinct analyses of persona is presented in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. As G.M. Pinciss notes, Hamlet tells Horatio that men's character can be traced to three principal sources, their inherited natures ("in their birth"—1.4.25), their temperament or disposition ("By the o'ergrowth of some complexion"—1.4.27), that is, an imbalance in the humours, and their customary pattern of behaviour ("by some habit"—1.4.29). Dramatic character so conceived arises from individual personality and conduct.<sup>66</sup> Arguably the most celebrated analysis of characterisation appears in the induction to Ben Jonson's *Every Man Out of his Humor* (1600). In his discussion of the term "humor", Asper explains the Galenic sense of the term, before adding that it can be applied metaphorically to the persona's ruling passion:

so in euery humane bodie  
The choller, melancholy, flegme, and bloud,  
By reason that they flow continually  
In some one part, and are not continent,  
Receiue the name of Humors. Now thus farre  
It may by Metaphore applie it selfe

<sup>62</sup> The analysis of the use of these terms in English literature is derived from a random sampling of about one-third of those recorded on the LION database. These figures are necessarily imprecise due to the fact that some works may not be recorded on the database, and also because reprints of a text are sometimes included.

<sup>63</sup> It should be noted, however, that, when pluralised, 'characters' strongly retains a literal meaning: over two-thirds of the 728 examples up to the Restoration appear to be of this type, and around half of the 513 examples in the last forty years of the century.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. OED definitions 4, 5 and 6. Again it is often difficult to abstract these definitions in a text, due to the intended or accidental multiplicity of meaning. There are 6956 references to "humo(u)r" in the two hundred year period examined, within which this meaning appears to have been almost unanimously adopted.

<sup>65</sup> The 2887 LION references to "humo(u)rs" in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries seem to be fairly equally divided between the physiological and dispositional senses of the term. The latter meaning develops out of the former.

<sup>66</sup> Pinciss, p.2.



Vnto the generall disposition,  
As when some one peculiar qualitie  
Doth so possesse a man, that it doth draw  
All his affects, his spirits, and his powers  
In their confluxions, all to runne one way,  
This may be truly said to be a Humor (ll. 107-118).

Humours theory held that the admixture of the four bodily fluids in an individual created a disposition that was either sanguine, phlegmatic, choeric or melancholic; but, as Spingarn notes, Jonson extends this to relate not merely to the general dispositions of men, but to a characteristic that distinguishes the specific character from all others.<sup>67</sup> Further, in the prologue to *The Alchemist* (l.9), in the induction to *The Magnetick Lady* (p.7), and in his translation of Horace's *Ars Poetica* (ll.453-8), Jonson specifically equates humours with manners.<sup>68</sup> His interpretation of 'humours' was to become the accepted standard throughout the century.<sup>69</sup>

The first known critical examination of character in English appears in the Preface to Davenant's *Gondibert* (1650). He states that "the Characters of men (whose passions are to be eschew'd) I have deriv'd from the distempers of Love and Ambition" (p.19), and clarifies this by adding that "the distempers of Love and Ambition are the only Characters I design'd to expose as objects of terrour" (p.21). These statements reveal two significant points; firstly that to him 'character' does not refer to the agent *per se*, but rather to the passion which dominates his or her personality, and secondly that love and ambition are the principal passions to be represented in heroic poetry.<sup>70</sup> Davenant's protégé, John Dryden, provides a fuller analysis of dramatic characterisation. His study begins with *An Essay of Dramatic Poesy*, published in 1668. Through the voice of Lisideius, Dryden provides a definition of drama as a "*just and lively Image of Humane Nature, representing its Passions and Humours, and the Changes of Fortune to which it is subject; for the Delight and Instruction of Mankind*" (xvii.15). Neander adds that "the Soul of Poesie...is [the] imitation of humour and passions...[that is] the

<sup>67</sup> Spingarn (ed.), *Critical Essays, Volume I*, pp.lvi-lix.

<sup>68</sup> Redwine, pp.xxvii-xxix.

<sup>69</sup> For example, in Sir William Soames' translation of Boileau's *Art poétique* (1674; trans. 1683, and revised by Dryden) it is said that "Nature in various Figures does abound; / And in each mind are diff'rent Humors found" (Canto III, p.50). Congreve echoes Jonson's interpretation in a letter to John Dennis "Concerning Humour in Comedy" (July 10, 1695; published 1696): "Humour is neither Wit, nor Folly, nor Personal Defect, nor Affectation, nor Habit...[but is rather a] singular and unavoidable manner of doing, or saying any thing, Peculiar and Natural to one Man only, by which his Speech and Actions are distinguish'd from those of other Men" (in Dennis (ed.), p.90).

<sup>70</sup> On the latter point, Edward Phillips adopts an almost identical position in his preface to *Theatrum Poetarum* (1675). He states that "[n]ext to the Heroic Poem, if not as some think equal, is Tragedy, in conduct very different, in height of Argument alike, as treating only of the actions and concerns of the most Illustrious Persons...the chief parts thereof are the *ήθος* & *παθος*, by which latter is meant that moving and Pathetical manner of expression, which in some respect is to exceed the highest that can be delivered in Heroic Poesie, as being occasioned upon representing to the very life the unbridled passions of Love, Rage, and Ambition, the violent ends or down falls of great Princes, the subversion of Kingdoms and Estates, or what else can [be] imagined of funest or Tragical" (sig.\*\*\*1v.\*\*\*2r).

humours of our Comedies, or the Characters of our serious Playes".<sup>71</sup> Dryden's distinction between humours and passions in dramatic characters equates to that often drawn between the supposed typicality of comic characters and the atypicality of those that appear in the various forms of serious drama. Later this distinction is extended through a reference to Greco-Roman drama:

In their new Comedy...the Poets sought indeed to express the *ήθος*, as in their Tragedies the *παθος* of Mankind. But this *ήθος* contained only the general Characters of men and manners; as old men, Lovers, Servingmen, Courtizans, Parasites, and such other persons as we see in their Comedies...among the *English* 'tis otherwise: where by humour is meant some extravagant habit, passion, or affection; particular (as I said before) to some one person: by the oddness of which, he is immediately distinguished from the rest of men...The description of these humours, drawn from the knowledge and observation of particular persons, was the peculiar genius and talent of *Ben. Johnson*.<sup>72</sup>

An additional distinction between the agents of comic and serious drama is social. Comedy is the realm of common people and ordinary diction whilst tragedy is a "representation of Nature...wrought up to a higher pitch...[in which the] Plot, the Characters, the Wit, the Passions, the Descriptions are all exalted above the level of common converse, as high as the imagination of the Poet can carry them, with proportion to verisimilitude" (xvii.74). The characters of epic and tragic poetry are demonstrated to be similar, differing principally in the way in which the character is revealed; tragedy through dialogue and epic chiefly through narration (xvii.75).

A decade after the publication of the *Essay*, Dryden produced, in quick succession, two commentaries on the subject of dramatic characterisation, the so-called *Heads of an Answer to Rymer* (1677-8), and "The Grounds of Criticism in Tragedy" which formed part of the preface to his *Troilus and Cressida* (1679).<sup>73</sup> In the former, Dryden argues that, in addition to effecting an Aristotelian *catharsis* of pity and terror, tragedy should aim to "reform Manners by delightful Representation of Human Life in great Persons, by way of Dialogue" (xvii.86). As stated earlier, 'manners' in this sense does not refer to polite social conduct, but rather is

<sup>71</sup> Works, xvii.44. Hume notes that, according to the theory shared by Neander and Lisideius, literature consists of a heightened imitation of the passions and humours that constitute human nature (*Dryden's Criticism*, p.204).

<sup>72</sup> Works, xvii.60-1. Dryden's distinction between *ethos* and *pathos* recalls Quintilian who notes that emotions fall into these two categories; *pathos* representing the vehement (and temporary) passions, and *ethos* the temperate (and permanent). He goes on to state that sometimes these two categories can only be distinguished in terms of degree; that, for instance, love is both an ethical and pathological emotion, depending upon the intensity. And it is the intensity of *pathos* that is the fitting subject of tragedy, whilst the habits of *ethos* are more suited to comedy (VI.ii.8ff).

<sup>73</sup> Despite the fact that the "Heads" was not published until 1711 (in the preface to Jacob Tonson's edition of *The Works of Mr. Francis Beaumont and Mr. John Fletcher*, pp.xii-xxvi), it does reveal his immediate critical attitude to characterisation at a time in which serious drama was turning away from the heroic and returning to what could loosely be described as a 'neo-Jacobean' style. Given that this position is repeated in "The Grounds of Criticism" two years later, the two works are examined together to demonstrate his attitude towards characterology at this time.

equated with classical decorum: the "[d]ecency of the Characters in Speaking or Acting what is proper for them, and proper to be shewn by the Poet" (xvii.190). Not only is the encouragement of virtue, and the hindrance of vice, the proper end of this genre, but along with evoking pity and terror, the aim of poetry is to present all of the passionate commonplaces like joy, anger, love and fear.<sup>74</sup> The "Grounds of Criticism" reveals Dryden's close affinity with Aristotle's *Poetics*, and presents his most thorough analysis of manners. It begins with an echo of the Aristotelian argument (1452b30-1453a12) that

the Hero of the [tragic] Play be not a Villain: that is, the characters which should move our pity ought to have virtuous inclinations, and degrees of morall goodness in them. As for a perfect character of virtue, it never was in Nature; and therefore there can be no imitation of it: but there are allays of frailty to be allow'd for the chief Persons, yet so that the good which is in them, shall outweigh the bad; and consequently leave room for punishment on the one side, and pity on the other.<sup>75</sup>

Here Dryden indirectly emphasises the need for ἀμάρτια, pointing out that even heroes need to be illustrated as flawed individuals. This position differs markedly from the Formalist doctrine that held that the hero was to be idealised, so as to be the suitable object of imitation. But now dramatic characters are to display "the beauties or imperfections of the manners", which are "understood to be those inclinations, whether natural or acquir'd, which move and carry us to actions, good, bad, or indifferent in a Play; or which incline the persons to such, or such actions" (xiii.234). He adds that

[t]he manners arise from many causes: and are either distinguish'd by complexion, as choleric and phlegmatic, or by the differences of Age or Sex, of Climates, or Quality of the persons, or their present condition: they are likewise to be gather'd from the several Virtues, Vices, or Passions, and many other commonplaces which a Poet must be suppos'd to have learn'd from natural Philosophy, Ethics and History; of all which, whosoever is ignorant, does not deserve the Name of Poet (xiii.235).

Thus the manners of an agent are seen to be a product of the Galenic humours, of the types of attributes recorded by the Greco-Roman rhetoricians, and of the pathetic passions from which

<sup>74</sup> *Works*, xvii.186. John Milton had previously expressed this view of the passions in his essay "Of that Sort of Dramatic Poem which is called Tragedy", which forms part of the preface to *Samson Agonistes* (1671): "Tragedy, as it was antiently compos'd, hath been ever held the gravest, moralest, and most profitable of all other Poems: therefore said by Aristotle to be of power by raising pity and fear, or terror, to purge the mind of those and such like passions, that is to temper and reduce them to just measure with a kind of delight, stirred up by reading or seeing those passions well imitated" (p.3).

<sup>75</sup> *Works*, xiii.232. This is a position which Dryden expounds throughout his critical treatises, having already expressed the opinion that literary characters must display human passions and frailties in his essay "Of Heroique Playes" prefixed to *I Conquest of Granada* (1672). Formalist critics had argued for exemplary characterisation, or at the very least, the deliberate avoidance of any revelation of offensive traits. Whilst Dryden does argue that vices should be diminished, he does not agree that they should be hidden altogether, as perfect characters fail to elicit *catharsis*. This position is reiterated in "The Parallel betwixt Painting and Poetry", prefixed to his translation of Dr Fresnoy's *De Arte Graphica* (1695), where he states that there is nothing perfect in nature, and dramatic characters should not be portrayed in this way because they are meant to be representations of human nature (*Works*, xx.47-8).

the person's ruling disposition is derived.<sup>76</sup> Having provided a definition of the term, Dryden proceeds to an analysis of the four elements of manners, being Aristotle's quadripartite division of *ethos*, and which need not be repeated here. Still to complete his analysis, he adds that

[f]rom the manners, the Characters of persons are deriv'd, for indeed the characters are no other than the inclinations, as they appear in the several persons of the Poem; a character being thus defin'd, that which distinguishes one man from another... A character... cannot be suppos'd to consist of one particular Virtue, or Vice, or passion only; but 'tis a composition of qualities which are not contrary to one another in the same person: thus the same man may be liberal and valiant, but not liberal and covetous; so in a Comical character, or humour, (which is an inclination to this, or that particular folly) Falstaff is a lyar, and a coward, a Glutton, and a Buffon, because all these qualities may agree in the same man; yet it is still to be observ'd, that one virtue, vice, and passion, ought to be shown in every man, as predominant over all the rest (xiii.236).

As with Davenant, the term 'character' does not refer to the dramatic agent *per se*, but rather to what we might term the overall 'nature' of the agent; for example, if Iago is a villain, then being a villain is his 'character'.<sup>77</sup> This same position had been expressed by René Le Bossu in his *Traité du poème épique* in 1675, which directly influenced Dryden. Le Bossu argues that the manners are to be understood as the natural or acquired inclinations (that is the passions), and it is the presence of a general and universal passion, such as anger or lust, which is held to be the principal character of a person.<sup>78</sup> In addition to this ruling passion, each agent must possess numerous other qualities so as to be distinguished from the other persons of the text (XI, p.197). Thus he concludes that the character of a hero is composed of three sorts of qualities; the ruling passion, the supplementary passions, and also valour, which is the one common trait of all heroes (XI, pp.198-9). All other characters must have both the dominant and related dispositions so as to be distinguishable from one another.

Excepting Dryden, the most influential critic of the Carolean period is undoubtedly Thomas Rymer. Unlike the Poet Laureate, Rymer wrote only one play (the rather pedestrian *Edgar*), and his fame rests wholly upon the success of his literary criticism, produced in three

<sup>76</sup> On this point Dryden states that "[u]nder the general head of Manners, the passions are naturally included, as belonging to the Characters. I speak not of pity and of terror, which are to be mov'd in the Audience by the Plot; but of Anger, Hatred, Love, Ambition, Jealousy, Revenge, &c. as they are shown in this or that person of the Play" (*Works*, xiii.240). He retains this position throughout; in the preface to *Fables* (1700) he again defines manners as being "under which name I comprehend the passions, and, in a larger sense, the descriptions of persons, and their very habits" (*Works*, xiii.240).

<sup>77</sup> Elsewhere Dryden gives examples of 'character' as being the anger of Achilles, the piety of Aeneas, and the sacrifice of Iphigenia ("The Parallel betwixt Painting and Poetry", *Works*, xx.53). Congreve, in his analysis of humour, arrives at a similar position when he notes that anger has a different effect on different people, some laugh, some remain silent and others react loudly ("Concerning Humour in Comedy", in Dennis (ed.), p.92). Their differing reactions are deemed to be a result of their differing humour, which can be seen to equate with Dryden's understanding of character.

works—his translation of René Rapin's *Reflexions sur la poétique* (1674), and his *Tragedies of the Last Age* (1677) and *A Short View of Tragedy* (1692). As an adherent of the French neoclassical attitude towards drama, he held that tragedy must be both ordinary and sublime, that it must not only raise pity and fear, but also admiration, whilst simultaneously remaining verisimilar.<sup>79</sup> The requirements of probability and decorum are the two principles upon which the rigid rules of Formalist criticism are founded, and also the bases upon which Rymer's critical theory, including that of dramatic characterisation, is formed. These stringent regulations required that a character belonging to a given type or class must conform absolutely to the ideal of that type or class, regardless of whether or not actual individuals manage (or managed) to attain that ideal.<sup>80</sup> Of course, such a position condemns most Shakespearean characters because they are unconventional and indecorous, as were those of his imitators, both pre- and post-Interregnum.

Rymer's first foray into criticism came in his *Reflections on Aristotle's Treatise of Poesie, By R. Rapin* (1674). "The Poet represents the *minds* of Men by their *Manners*", he translates, "and the most general Rule for painting the *Manners*, is to exhibit every person in his proper *Character*" (p.36). These manners must be consistent with the age, sex, quality, employment and fortune of the individual, as is explained in the second book of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and in Horace's *Ars Poetica*.<sup>81</sup> It is through the passions that the manners are most effectually revealed (p.58). In *The Tragedies of the Last Age*, he adds that

Comedy... was to represent things worse then the truth. History was to describe the truth, but Tragedy was to invent things better then the truth. Like good Painters they must design their Images like the Life, but yet better and more beautiful then the Life. The Malefactor of Tragedy must be a better sort of Malefactor then those that live in the present Age. For an obdurate impudent and impenitent Malefactor can neither move compassion nor terror; nor be of any imaginable use in *Tragedy* (p.36).

Because this work is rather more evaluative than descriptive, Rymer makes little attempt to explain how character is to be composed, other than to say that the poet must use reason and follow nature. Nature, for him, is to be idealised, so as to represent universal possibilities, rather than the specific incidents of history (pp.109-10). Again 'manners' is shown to be a 'distinctly decorous category, Rymer emphasising that the audience should be able to

<sup>78</sup> Chapter IV, pp.159-60. Page numeration is derived from the English translation of the text (*Monsieur Bossu's treatise of the epick poem*, 1695).

<sup>79</sup> Zimansky, p.xxv.

<sup>80</sup> In this respect the neo-classicists differ from their Aristotelian foundation in that the Greek philosopher argues that poetry should reveal what might happen, whereas the Formalists insist that poetry must teach us what should happen. This led to the crystallisation of the theories of Aristotle and Horace into inflexible regulations that required poetic characters to be produced and judged by impractical standards.

<sup>81</sup> p.38. This definition recalls Heinsius who argues that manners differ in individuals according to their moral habits, passions, nationalities, ages and fortune (*De tragoediae constitutione*, XIV). He also specifically refers to Horace, and to the second book of the *Rhetoric*, in his explanation.

distinguish between the characters through their behaving appropriately to their type. This is also a central concern of his final contribution to literary criticism, *A Short View of Tragedy*. Curt Zimansky notes that less stress is paid to idealised characters in this study, and more to the typical and average, with more emphasis upon probability in characterisation than on moral ideality.<sup>82</sup> Nevertheless, regardless of whether the standard is ideality or typicality, Shakespeare's characters remain indecorous, Iago being singled out as an example because he does not behave like a typical soldier (VII, pp.93-4). Yet, by these standards, most of Shakespeare's tragic protagonists would be unacceptable, as would those of his contemporaries, and his followers. Whilst such neoclassical tenets may have been applicable to French drama, and even to English heroic drama, they were, and remain, inappropriate criteria for judging the drama of the pre-war period, and the "pathetic" tragedies of the mid-1670s and of the 1680s, created by a new generation of dramatists (particularly Lee, Otway and Banks) and a Dryden whose own attitude towards serious drama was changing.

### Conclusion.

Although there is frequent inconsistency in the use of terminology by the poets and critics alike, manners can be seen to be the comprehensive and all-encompassing term for what we would now describe as 'character'. It is held to be a combination of the Galenic humours, of the attributes recorded by the Greco-Roman rhetoricians, and of the passions, including the mandatory ruling disposition. Regardless of whether it is styled 'manners', 'humours', or 'character', it is evident that it is held to be a confluence of traits particular to the individual dramatic character. So by the time that Nathaniel Lee commenced his career as a playwright, a complex theory of dramatic characterology was in existence; a tradition whose broad conclusions would have been familiar to him from a wide variety of sources. Aristotle's description of the agent as a combination of his *ethos* (the appetitive habits and dispositions) and his *dianoia* (his intellect), combined with the requirement that his manners be *chrestos* (effectively represented, whether he be virtuous or vicious), *harmottos* (appropriate to his type), *homoios* (like his mythical or historical foundation) and *homalos* (consistent), and that the character present *hamartia*, provided a theoretical basis for the tradition. In practice this complex figure would be formulated out of a stereotypical foundation; drawn from a moral, social or psychological type, so that the audience might come to a rapid understanding of that character without the need for a lengthy introduction, and thus enable the dramatist to proceed to elaboration of plot and character. To this foundation the dramatist should add some or all of

<sup>82</sup> Zimansky, pp.xxvii-xxviii.



the rhetorical commonplaces recorded by Cicero and his followers, as well as elements of the Galenic humours and the pathetic passions, one of which should be accentuated as that character's ruling disposition. Together all of these elements help to present the agent as a complexly individuated atypical figure who is also, paradoxically, an example of a particular type (or types) of character. That this was Lee's intent is suggested not simply by his presumed familiarity with contemporary and earlier theoretical traditions of characterology, but by his practice as a dramatist, as will be examined in the following chapters.

## Chapter Two. Modern Theories of Dramatic Characterisation.

The preceding chapter examined the tradition that would have assisted the Carolean dramatists in the production of character, but the presence of certain commonplaces in a representation is in itself insufficient to determine the efficacy of the depiction. To determine the success of a representation it is necessary to ascertain exactly what a character is, and how superior examples are to be distinguished from less accomplished ones. Yet the concept of character resists definition, partly because conceptions of character differ from one genre to the next, and partly because theorists approach character on a spectrum from autonomous and verisimilar human simulacra through to being nothing more than an artificial aggregate of functional signifiers. Thus, it is necessary for me to impose certain limits on my approach. Firstly, character in this study refers to pre-modern dramatic examples. In fact, the categories and terms that I have created, adapted or borrowed, all have dramatic works of the seventeenth-century in mind. The model is also specifically directed towards a textual analysis of character and so generally ignores performative aspects of the medium. I am not concerned with whether a particular character was written with a specific actor in mind, because the textual information provided by and about the character may transcend what could be realised in a specific performance.<sup>1</sup> Mine is also a mimetic and trait-based approach to character, based on a close analysis of textual references. For this reason I have adopted the trait-based analyses of character posited by Seymour Chatman, Fernando Ferrara, Uri Margolin and Bert States, combined with the taxonomical categories introduced by Baruch Hochman, complemented by a few of my own. The approach is a pragmatic and eclectic one, and does not belong to any particular critical school, but rather attempts to embrace those elements from each that seem to me to be the most illuminating. It is intended to provide one possible set of criteria against which one can evaluate the efficacy of character; it is a methodology, not *the* definitive one. This methodology needs to proceed from the first principles of character.

### Defining Character.

<sup>1</sup> That particular characters were written for specific actors, performers with an acknowledged skill in portraying certain character types, is not in dispute. However this does not invalidate the possibility that the characterisation may transcend the type foundation, and that the complexity may not be realised in performance, or if the critic allows the actor to influence his or her assessment of the character. In fact, every aspect of a visual presentation has the potential to undermine the subtle complexity of an author-oriented construction. For instance, an actor may accent certain speeches whilst omitting or varying others, and his or her facial expressions and bodily gestures may either consciously or unconsciously undermine what is being said. Even the actor's dress is capable of evoking an inaccurate image. Wearing black, which conventionally connotes villainy, for example, may prejudice the assessment of a character who is not meant to be viewed as an unqualified villain.

In the Oxford English Dictionary the meanings of the signifier "character" fall into two broad categories: literally (and etymologically) it is a distinctive mark, letter or symbol (the word "character", for instance, has nine characters), and figuratively it refers to a person and/or to that person's traits, dispositions and/or reputation.<sup>2</sup> It is the figurative sense of the term that most literary criticism employs. Apart from references to the Theophrastan 'charakter', and to Aristotelian *ethos* (character as the moral qualities and dispositions, which form part of one's entire identity), this term and its cognates are similarly defined in most literary dictionaries.<sup>3</sup> Essentially character is held to be the aggregate of traits (dispositions, attitudes, properties) that shape the identity of those creatures (figures, agents, persons) which appear in works of literature, and who are presented anthropomorphically.<sup>4</sup> More precisely, they are imaginary anthropomorphic simulacra that may be hypothesised as existing in real life. Philosophically they are the results of a pretence by dramatists that they are presenting substantively verisimilar individuals. Margolin, perhaps, describes literary characters best in defining them as "nonactual" individuals who inhabit a nonactual world, and who have human-like properties (actantial or locutionary, physical, social, behavioural and mental) and who may be ascribed interiority (the revelation of inner thought).<sup>5</sup> Presentation of these endowments is achieved through a combination of three methods; i) through action (plot), ii) through dialogue (both interpersonal speech—what the characters say to others, and what is said about them—and intrapersonal monologue), and/or iii) through narratorial exposition (the last of which is usually absent from the dramatic medium). Characterisation through action is cumulative, whilst when conducted through dialogue and exposition it is more immediate and less equivocal.

E.M. Forster's binary division of character in *Aspects of the Novel* is often used as a basis for the discussion of character.<sup>6</sup> Here characters are described as being either "flat"

<sup>2</sup> Cf. OED Literal senses 1-7, and Figurative senses 8-19. Definition 3a—"A graphic symbol standing for a sound, syllable, or notion, used in writing or in printing; one of the simple elements of a written language; e.g. a letter of the alphabet"—exemplifies the former, definition 9—"The aggregate of the distinctive features of any thing; essential peculiarity, nature, style; sort, kind, description"—the latter.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Thrall and Hibbard (rev. Harmon and Holman, 2000, 8th ed.), Shipley (1970, 3rd ed.), Yelland, Jones and Easton (1950), Sylvan, Berman and Burto (1964), Shaw (1972), Fowler (1987, 2nd ed.), Anderson and Eckard (1977), Baldick (1990), Hawthorn (1994, 2nd ed.), Henry (1995), Childers and Hentzi (1995), Murfin and Ray (1997) and Abrams (1999, 7th ed.). It is notable that, despite being so fundamental to the analysis of literature, numerous editors and authors of guides have avoided any attempt to define character. Scott (1965), Beckson and Ganz (1975), and Cuddon (rev. Preston, 1998, 4th ed.), only refer to the genre of Theophrastan character, and Orr (1991), Dupriez (trans. Halsall, 1991), Harris (1992), and Lentricchia and McLaughlin (1995) provide no entry at all.

<sup>4</sup> Chatman cogently points out that every character has at least one trait, being derived from the action that s/he performs: it is implicit in the *nomina agentis*—one who commits murder or usury is (at the very least) murderous or usurious (p.109). Gerald Prince succinctly defines character as "an existent endowed with anthropomorphic traits and engaged in anthropomorphic actions; an actor with anthropomorphic attitudes" (p.12).

<sup>5</sup> Margolin, "Introducing and Sustaining Characters", p.108; "What, When, and How of Character", p.455.

<sup>6</sup> Forster, pp.75-85.

(stereotypes constructed around a single dominant trait) or "round" (a believable confluence of personality traits—some of which may appear to be contradictory; three-dimensional individuals, complex in temperament and motivation, who are represented with subtle particularity). The behaviour of a flat character follows a predictable pattern, whereas round characters sometimes act unexpectedly, yet always credibly. "Flat" is not a pejorative term, for it is sometimes preferable to build a character around a single dominating attribute. Likewise, a character may be either passive or active. Passive (or static) characters do not mature psychologically. Things happen to them rather than resulting from their thoughts and actions. Active (or dynamic) characters, on the other hand, are changed by actions and experience. One objective of works in which dynamic characters appear is to reveal the consequences of these actions. While complex characterisation is likely to emphasise a dominant trait, it will also attempt a synthesis of individual, typical and universal characteristics.

One of the most thorough definitions of character is that provided by James Garvey, in "Characterization in Narrative", in which he proposes sixteen aspects of character in the novel, several of which are applicable to dramatic figures:

D.5. Characters (including narrators and audiences) are characterized by being invested with attributes.

D.6. Characters may be characterized in differing degrees or in differing dimensions...

D.7. Characters may change in their attributes...[and such change] may be sudden or gradual.

D.8. Different characters have different degrees of centrality in the narrative. The traditional distinction of main, subordinate, and incidental characters may not be ideal...but some account must be taken of relative centrality or marginality.

D.9. Characters may be pitted against one another. Any two characters who differ in a common attribute (e.g. honesty) are naturally opposed to each other, though such opposition need not also entail active plot-conflict...

D.10. Characters may be grouped...

D.11. Characters may come into conflict with one another or with external forces...Conflicts can occur with institutions...or with mysterious forces...as well as with other characters.

D.12. A character may be individual and/or representative. [In regard to the latter they may] have symbolic or allegorical status...[and] may or may not be recognizably individual.

D.13. An attribute may arise in a character either directly [through narratorial exposition]...or indirectly [through action and dialogue]...Even the most trivial detail may provide relevant material for characterization. Thus we must take account of textual deep structures in reckoning attributes...

D.14. Both the narrator and participants of the story may explicitly state attributes of themselves and others.

D.15. These characters may be unreliable in regard to the attributes they suggest.

D.16. Attributes may arise indirectly by the means indicated above in D.13.

<sup>7</sup> This is an abbreviated quotation of Garvey, pp.66-8, 73.

Some of these points are of particular importance to my study, and will be attended to at greater length, particularly those relating to traits, character centrality, and the thematic dimensions of character.

#### Non-mimetic Theories of Character.

Definitions like those provided by Forster and Garvey reflect a mimetic, or representational, view of character. From this perspective characters are viewed as autonomous existents or, at the very least as imitating real people.<sup>8</sup> But literary characters are not simply self-governing individuals with definable traits and dispositions, they are also conceptual constructs, textually invented by an author for some ulterior purpose. They are properly a combination of three important components—the semiotic (textual), the mimetic (representational) and the thematic (referential). Within the disparate theories of literary character four models have been distinguished according to which characters are i) biographical or psychological manifestations of the author's mind, ii) thematic functions of the text in which they appear (the embodiment of some proposition or assertion), iii) functional constructs (where the concentration is upon the role that the character fulfills in the text), or iv) pseudo-existents (the mimetic view).<sup>9</sup> These models should not be seen as mutually exclusive, but as variant positions that critics may choose to adopt depending upon their particular aims and interests, albeit that a minimal identification with the mimetic position is a prerequisite for thematic and semiotic analyses. After all, a character is certainly capable of being an individuated, self-referential entity whilst simultaneously being the embodiment of an idea.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> The mimetic view of character dominated criticism up until the advent of Formalism (whose adherents ignored the characters of literature in favour of thematic and structural interests). Before Formalism critics presented the essentialist-humanist argument that literary characters are representations of autonomous human or human-like beings. Forster, for example, uses the term "homo fictus" to describe literary characters so as to differentiate them from their "cousin[s]" homo sapiens (p.63). Other exponents include the early Friedrich Nietzsche (*Birth of Tragedy*, 1871, in Levy (ed.), p.66), Luigi Pirandello (*L'umorismo*, 1908, in Illiano and Testa (trans.), p.86), August Strindberg ("Memorandum to the Members of the Intimate Theater from the Director" (July 26, 1908), in Johnson (trans.), p.29) and T.S. Eliot (*Elizabethan Essays*, 1930, p.122). In effect, whenever an analyst uses a third-person pronoun to describe a character, or uses a character's personal name without placing it in inverted commas, that critic has credited the character with quasi-humanity and has assumed a mimetic theory of character.  
<sup>9</sup> Cf. Wilson, "The Bright Chimera", pp 730-6; Margolin, "What, When, and How of Character", pp.454-7. Margolin replaces the biographical/psychological view with the alternative that character is the topic entity of a discourse (governed by text linguistics).

<sup>10</sup> Samuel Taylor Coleridge, for one, argues this to be preferable: "[t]he ideal [character] consists in a happy balance of the generic and the individual. The former makes the character representative and symbolical, therefore instructive; because, *mutatis mutandis*, it is applicable to whole classes of men. The latter gives it *living* interest; for nothing *lives* or is *real*, but as definite and individual" (*Biographia Literaria*, 1817, Vol.2, Ch.23, pp.263-4).

Since the 1930s literary criticism has been predominantly non-mimetic.<sup>11</sup> Whereas neo-classical criticism viewed characters as representative of general human types and roles, and romantic critics (such as A.C. Bradley) individualised them, most subsequent schools have displaced character from the centre of critical attention. Non-mimetic theorists hold character to be merely a functional aspect of the structure of the text.<sup>12</sup> Following the Aristotelian position, structuralists and post-structuralists subordinate characters to plot, viewing them as a function of the tale, rather than as psychological entities who can be assessed in and of themselves. The foundation for this position is Vladimir Propp's *Morphology of the Folk Tale*, first published in 1928. According to this thesis, characters are not the locus of interest; attention properly resides in the plot, which can be seen to have a determinate structure of events of which the character is a function. Characters are what they do, being reduced to one of seven possible functional types: heroes, villains, princesses, false heroes, donors, helpers or dispatchers.<sup>13</sup> Individual characters are so unimportant to the analysis of the tale that one character may be interchanged with another without affecting the structure.<sup>14</sup> As Robert Higbie suggests, in non-mimetic criticism characters are defined *syntactically* (in terms of their relation to the work) rather than *semantically* (in terms of their relation to reality).<sup>15</sup> To these critics, the idea of character as a heterogeneous psychological entity, able to be thought of as independent of the confines of the text, is erroneous. Characters exist only in their relationship to the other characters, and in their function as activators of the action of the story.

But, as Chatman correctly points out, the role that a character plays in the plot is only part of what interests the audience.<sup>16</sup> We appreciate character traits for their own sake, including some that have little or nothing to do with the unfolding narrative. Tzvetan Todorov goes some way towards an acknowledgement of this fact. He moderates the Proppian position by distinguishing two broad categories of text—those which are plot-centred (or "apsychological") and those which are character-centred ("psychological").<sup>17</sup> When a trait is

<sup>11</sup> Alan Sinfield notes that in the 1930s character criticism was repudiated by G. Wilson Knight, L.C. Knights, Muriel Bradbrook and Lily B. Campbell (p.57). However Elinor Fuchs traces the changing attitude to the 1890s when symbolist playwrights all but formally announced a loss of interest in the principle of character as the agency of dramatic structure (p.22).

<sup>12</sup> As Charles Lyons describes it, "the character *per se*, operates as a symbol, sign or trope among other symbols, signs or tropes that must be translated within the terms of the perceived substructure" (Lyons, in Redmond (ed.), p.29).

<sup>13</sup> Propp, pp.79-80. It is important to remember that Propp was referring specifically to the fairy tale, so his types are not necessarily applicable to other genres. In the narratology of Algirdas Griemas an "acteur" (the term used to describe a character) is an individuated manifestation of one or more "actants"; six basic categories of fictional role common to all stories, and which are paired in binary opposition—subject (sujet) and object (objet), sender (destinateur) and receiver (destinataire), helper (adjuvant) and opponent (opposant). "Acteur" is often used in preference to "character" in structuralism and narrative semiotics.

<sup>14</sup> Propp, p.87.

<sup>15</sup> Higbie, p.13.

<sup>16</sup> Chatman, p.112.

<sup>17</sup> Todorov, *Poetics of Prose*, pp.66ff.

presented in the former its consequence follows immediately—there are no unacted-upon motives or traits. But psychological narrative manifests a trait in different ways. If the narrative statement “X is jealous of Y” occurs in a psychological narrative, X may react in any number of ways. But in an “apsychological” narrative there is only one reaction—to hurt Y. Todorov claims that “apsychological” characters are deprived of choice, and become mere functions of the plot (concurring with the original structuralist position).<sup>18</sup> They do not have “character”, in the sense of personality, but “as soon as psychological determinism appears in the text, the fictional character becomes endowed with character: he acts in a certain way, *because* he is shy, weak, courageous, etc.”.<sup>19</sup> The division between “psychological” and “apsychological” is not strictly comparable with individual and type, though they will often equate. Principally the category is concerned with the central characters and their responses to given choices. Stereotypical characters will generally make predictable choices, but just because a character is centrally located, naturally portrayed, and psychologically accessible does not mean that s/he will act psychologically; s/he may prove to be “apsychological” in that his or her choices are always influenced by his or her ruling disposition. Jonsonian ‘humours’ characters are “apsychological” in that we anticipate their responses to given situations, because their ruling disposition makes their actions self-evident.

The ideal critical approach would seem to be one that combines both the functional and representational perspectives. Each position is inadequate in itself, but when one combines the analysis of character as a psychological entity with the analysis of character as a function of the text, one arrives at a model that permits a more accurate determination of the efficacy of the representation. The mimetic approach advances a realistic, psychological model of character, but has the disadvantage that those characters who fail to meet the criteria will be dismissed as badly represented. The benefit of the structuralist position is that it concentrates upon these same functional (“apsychological”) characters, and has the advantage of seeing them as functions of the larger whole and defined by their relation to it. However, if conventions of mimesis are ignored and the syntactic aspect of character emphasised, then the analyst overlooks the fact that many characters are indeed endowed with interiority, and transcend the function that they perform in the narrative. Thus, an amalgamated position, as part of an eclectic theory that includes other perspectives (such as psychoanalytic, biographical and marginal positions) is of value. James Phelan has suggested that non-mimetic theories are not

<sup>18</sup> I do not entirely agree with this position. I would suggest that the “apsychological” character always has an option; s/he can choose to do nothing. The fact that the “apsychological” character chooses to do what s/he does, does not mean they s/he has been deprived of choice, rather that s/he is *predictable* in the choice that s/he makes. This aspect of character will be discussed in detail in due course.

<sup>19</sup> Todorov, “Reading as Construction” (trans. Marilyn A. August), in Suleiman and Crosman, pp. 76-7.

always competitive and that each could be used for a different critical purpose.<sup>20</sup> I would go further and argue that they can, to an extent, be used coadjutantly when, and if, the occasion warrants.

### The Trait in Characterisation.

It has already been proposed that the basic unit of character is the trait. Given this, the analysis of a particular character should properly begin with an examination of that character’s traits, requiring an understanding of the concept itself. Once a character has been completely realised in the text s/he is presented to us as an aggregate (or, as Chatman describes it, a “paradigm”) of traits. A trait can be defined as a predicate, feature or attribute which is applied to the character through an explicit or implicit reference in the text, and which can be isolated and analysed in exegesis. The psychological analysis of trait provided by Gordon Allport, in his essay “What is a Trait of Personality”, is cited by Chatman as being of particular relevance to literature. Four of Allport’s eight properties of trait are emphasised:

2. A trait is more generalized than a habit...[and is rather a system] of interrelated habits...[4.] in order to know that an individual has a trait it is necessary to have evidence of repeated reactions which, though not necessarily constant in type, seem none the less to be consistently a function of the same underlying determinant...5. [t]raits are relatively independent of each other...[and] 7. [a]cts, and even habits, that are inconsistent with a trait are not proof of the non-existence of the trait...there may be opposed integrations, i.e., contradictory traits, in a single personality...[and that] there are instances of acts that are unrelated to existent traits, the product of the stimulus and of the attitude of the moment.<sup>21</sup>

Texts demand of the audience the capacity to recognise certain habits as symptomatic of a trait. The repetition of those habits brings about this recognition. Traits in literary characters also tend to be cognate, and our perception of these characters involves a tendency to infer potential traits from those that are presented in the text. Characters convey an impression of substantiality even in the course of the briefest depiction. Literature has the capacity to charge limited quantities of information with a sense of significance and to consolidate them into patterns of meaning. This capacity leads the audience to conceive of holistic constructs based on molecular information.

Fernando Ferrara suggests that traits can be discovered “originally” (supplied by the character himself, or by other characters), “semiologically” (from such things as linguistic style or gestures), and/or “physically” (a character’s physical state may mirror his psychological

<sup>20</sup> Phelan, p. 8.

<sup>21</sup> Allport, pp. 368-71.



state, a prime example being Shakespeare's Richard III).<sup>22</sup> Traits are either intrinsic or extrinsic in nature, that is, they either provide details about the characters in isolation (about their physical and/or mental characteristics; particulars such as the commonplaces catalogued by the Greco-Roman rhetoricians), or they refer to the relationship of the character to his or her context (to the other characters, and/or his or her society). Further, it is axiomatic that there are no random incidents, insignificant details or irrelevant habits or traits presented in a characterisation. Not only are the details that exhibit character unrandom, but the identity of the character lies in these same patterns of behaviour.<sup>23</sup> Where a trait or habitual pattern of behaviour is presented which seems to be inconsistent with other aspects of a character, then it is necessary to discover the unity that underlies the seemingly contradictory traits. Complex characters are often portrayed as so subject to conflict that they appear discontinuous; but regardless of how discontinuous they seem, there is almost always an underlying coherence. Traits so contradictory as to suggest discontinuity are most likely to appear only in the principal characters, and are often designed in such a manner as to encourage the reader or spectator to resolve the apparent inconsistency. The issue of coherence is one that I will return to in due course.

But to return to Allport's seventh point, how exactly do we determine which are the inherent traits of a character and which are "the product[s] of the stimulus and of the attitude of the moment"? Bert States suggests that one of the main limitations of the trait-based approach to character is that a good deal of human behaviour cannot be accounted for under the category of traits, because a pattern of behaviour may simply be the result of the immediate situation, and not an habitual disposition.<sup>24</sup> This is one way of accounting for contradictory traits. Using Hamlet's self-evident acts of cruelty as an example, he argues that this is not an inherent (*dispositional*) trait of his character but rather a *conditional* aberration brought about by the immediate situation. His cruelty, like Othello's jealousy, is not causal but responsive. It cannot be assigned to the same dimension of character to which we would assign his generosity, his contemplative quality, his passion, his nobility, and his sensitivity, all of which are held to be

<sup>22</sup> Ferrara, p.258.

<sup>23</sup> Many critics have emphasised the unrandom nature of character traits. Barroll has suggested that what one finds in literary works are not randomly gathered human traits but patterns of activity, and that such patterns will adhere to these general principles which the poet assumes to govern human activity (p.8). Leo Bersani claims that "[b]ehaviour...is continuously expressive of character. Apparently random incidents neatly carry messages about personality" (p.53). Wilson agrees, suggesting that the meaning of character lies in the structure or principle of organisation behind the unrandom detail of characterisation. This is thought of in two ways—the "constitutive" categories of experience (such as the character's feelings and thoughts), and the organisation of values that underlie the character's actions. In the latter, characters may be thought of as expressing, or embodying, values; when one identifies those values, the actions may be explicated ("On Character", p.195).

<sup>24</sup> States, *Hamlet*, pp.37-9.

dispositional attributes of character.<sup>25</sup> It is between these dispositional traits and his cruelty—and its cognates, such as his self-isolation, his irony etc.—that we may locate the central tension of Hamlet's character. This, he suggests, can be compared with what deconstructionists might term an 'aporia' in Hamlet's character, or a 'site' where two different patterns of behaviour meet.<sup>26</sup>

### Personality States.

Although I find States' division of dispositional and conditional useful, I disagree with his suggestion that conditional behaviour is not characteristic of an entity. Ferrara's formulation of trait should help to clarify my position. He argues that traits are presented to the audience at the surface structure of the text. In contradistinction, the personality of the character is determined at the middle structure. It can be determined by isolating the principal traits from those that are contradictory, and thus enable the identification of the inherent type of the character.<sup>27</sup> At the deep structure one finds the set of values (attitudes and beliefs which are environmentally, socially and/or culturally conditioned) which form the identity of the character (at the middle structure) and which are revealed through characteristic traits at the surface structure.<sup>28</sup> The separation of conditional from dispositional behaviour occurs at the middle structure, the latter enabling one to determine the type foundation of the character, whilst the former helps to ascertain the *identity* of the character, which lies in a position between the type foundation and the (temporary, conflict-ridden, "out of character") personality who is presented to us in the text. But one can go further and suggest a fourth position, which splits the personality into pre-conflicted and conflicted positions. These equate with the dispositional and conditional aspects of trait. The identity properly resides between these two personality positions.<sup>29</sup> Thus every

<sup>25</sup> However it should be noted that certain historical interpretations—for instance the 'mad' Hamlet of the nineteenth-century popular stage, or the 'anthropological' Hamlet of the same era that saw him as a semi-savage medieval Dane—have placed the cruelty at the centre of the character and made the nobility the aberration.

<sup>26</sup> This position reiterates Todorov's tenet that "[c]haracter is a compromise between difference and repetition" ("Reading as Construction" (trans. Marilyn A. August), in Suleiman and Crosman (ed.), p.77).

<sup>27</sup> The isolation of the principal traits from those that are contradictory, not only reveals what Ferrara terms the personality (which I alternatively term the *type foundation*), but also what I refer to as the character's *normative personality*.

<sup>28</sup> Ferrara, pp.253ff.

<sup>29</sup> Identity has interested philosophers from Heraclitus, Parmenides, Zeno, Plato, Aristotle, Democritus and Epicurus, through Descartes, Leibniz and Locke, to Kant, Frege and Hume, and for most it is seen to be that which is permanent amidst change, and involves a recognition of this permanence. My position concurs with Locke's argument in *An Essay concerning Humane Understanding* which holds identity to be a comparison of the "very being" of a thing, observed existing at a determinate time and place (what in literature I would call the *normative personality* state) with the same thing existing at another time and space (the *circumstantial personality* state) (Book IV, Chapter i, Section 4, p.261). Identity has been termed "personal identity" ("[a]ny individual, whether an inanimate thing, a living organism or a conscious self, is identical in so far as it preserves from moment to moment a similar structure"), or "self" ("the quality of uniqueness and persistence through



literary character is potentially quintuple, being a composite of the two personality positions—the pre-conflicted *normative personality* (the character as s/he is familiarly known to the other characters of the play) and the conflicted *circumstantial personality* (the “out of character” character, affected by current events)—and the *identity* (his or her true self, which underlies the common (dispositional) and the (supposedly) contradictory and/or conditional traits), as well as the *type foundation/s* (the stereotypical basis or bases for the characterisation) and the *function/s* (the role/s performed in the narrative structure).<sup>30</sup> The ruling disposition (that is the dominant trait of character, as well as its cognates) invariably reflects the *normative personality* position, although this may not necessarily be apparent at the outset. That is, a character may be represented as being governed by his ruling disposition from the beginning of the play (such as Lee’s Nero, or Shakespeare’s Iago and Gloucester), in which case it is already *normative*, or the disposition may acquire dominance in the course of the action, in which case it is a *circumstantial personality* position which becomes *normative* because it is permanent (or seemingly so, in the event of an eventual restoration of the pre-conflicted state). Characters like Lee’s Poppea and Theodosius are examples of the latter, as are the Macbeths. This *normative personality* cannot be equated with the *identity* because those traits that appear as a result of the conflict are ever present (albeit latent) aspects of the identity. The habit (trait, property) of cruelty in Hamlet is an integral aspect of his identity from the beginning of the play. These traits are certainly *less* characteristic of him, but being less characteristic is obviously not the same as being *uncharacteristic*. Cruelty is not a commonly presented aspect of his pre-conflict personality, yet his propensity to act in this manner is always there, otherwise he would never have acted this way regardless of the stimulus.<sup>31</sup> The distinction between States’ position and mine is small but significant. Cruelty is, in effect, “in his nature” though not overtly so. It is not simply a situation-specific aberration. It is a tendency to which he has always been potentially subject, given the appropriate circumstances. It may not be part of his common behavioural patterning (the revelation of his *normative personality*), but it is nevertheless “characteristic”.

changes...[t]he metaphysical principle of unity underlying subjective experience” (Ledger Wood, “Personal Identity”; Ralph B. Winn, “Self”, in Runes (ed.), pp.245, 304). Identity is the term used in the OED (2a) to define this position, and is used henceforth to describe this aspect of a character, so as to differentiate it from the two personality positions.

<sup>30</sup> Whilst contradictory behaviour is not strictly or necessarily conditional, it stands in contradistinction to the normative characteristics of the persona, and as such is grouped with the conditional in opposition. Contradictions of this nature apply to characters who do not undergo a permanent change in personality state (and who are referred to below in reference to the *ruling* (dominant) and *servile* (dominated) *personality* states), as well as those peripheral characters who say or do something which is slightly inconsistent with the otherwise consistent characterisation. Where inconsistency occurs the analyst is invited to seek a deeper understanding of the character.

<sup>31</sup> In this one thinks back to Todorov’s argument that, in a given situation, the “psychological” character can act in one of several possible ways. The fact that Hamlet acts cruelly indicates that it is in his nature to do so. He is not compelled to act in that way (as a humours character is), but is nevertheless guided by his identity to a limited number of choices. A different character in the identical situation would act differently because his identity is different, and as such would be guided to a different number of choices.

In effect, to say that a literary character’s actions or behaviour is “out of character” is fallacious, because s/he is simply acting unlike the personality state that is familiar to the individual making the statement (be they another character or a critic).

The *circumstantial personality* cannot be equated with the identity either, because elements of the character’s *normative personality* are suppressed in this emotional state. Here the difference is again marginal but important. In the analysis of character, one must firstly consider the agent as two separate character states—the *normative* and *circumstantial* positions—between which the *identity* resides.<sup>32</sup> When Hamlet is acting cruelly (his *circumstantial personality*) his character is inconsistent with the *normative personality* that is the pre-conflict Hamlet, yet both of these seemingly contradictory states are elements of the one *identity*, albeit with an awareness that his generosity is a stronger innate tendency than his cruelty. Technically speaking there are several Hamlets presented to us in the play—the *normative* Hamlet, the *circumstantial* Hamlet, and the Hamlet *identity*, as well as the type/s that he represents, and the role/s that he performs in the structure of the text. It is necessary for the analyst to separate these Hamlets so as to assess more accurately the Hamlet that underlies them.

There is one other important aspect of *identity* to consider, that being the struggle between the *ruling* (or dominant) and *subordinate* (or dominated) *personality* states. The *normative* and *circumstantial* personality positions are permanent (or seemingly permanent) changes in the nature of a character. That is, in most instances, a virtuous character succumbs to vice, and then embraces this new position entirely. Distinct from this are those occasions in which a character temporarily oscillates in his or her *normative* (or *circumstantial* *normative*) position. The ruling disposition (and its cognates), which reflects a character’s *ruling* personality state (or which comes to dominate the character’s personality as a result of circumstances) is in perpetual conflict with the antithetical traits for psychic dominance. That is, there is a constant Manichæan battle fought in the character’s psyche between virtuous and vicious dispositions. Normatively, the *ruling* dispositions will be in the ascendant; however moments of vacillation (such as a villain suffering from a bout of conscience, or a hero being tempted to act viciously) allow the subordinate personality to ascend and the *ruling* personality temporarily to recede. Only when and if such a vacillatory change becomes permanent can it be deemed to be a *circumstantial* change in personality state. These positions are indicative of a complex characterisation, particularly with those characters who do not undergo a major (life-changing) conflict in a play (remaining *normative* throughout, such as Lee’s Nero and

Shakespeare's Iago), and who might otherwise be considered melodramatic or one-dimensional because they do not seem to undergo change.<sup>33</sup>

#### Criteria for Character Analysis.

Uri Margolin's constitutive conditions for characterisation, in his essay "Introducing and Sustaining Characters", are particularly helpful in recognising the various character states. He argues that the minimal conditions for textual individuals are i) existence, ii) individuation, iii) uniqueness, iv) paradigmatic unity, and v) syntagmatic unity.<sup>34</sup> Existence (or extensional dimension) refers to the requirement that all characters must be established uniquely, stably and unequivocally; the basic criterion for which is the provision of a proper name, pronoun or definite noun phrase. The second criterion, "individuation" (or intensional dimension), attempts to determine the traits that constitute the particular character. Establishing the existence of a character is a necessary but by no means sufficient condition for characterisation. Identification and qualification of the bare particulars is essential. The text should accordingly ascribe to the agent some traits, attributes and characteristics. The degree of ascription can vary enormously from a single brief predication—just enough to distinguish him or her from all others—to a substantial composite of complex signs.

But characters do not exist in isolation. As such they should not only be characterised individually, but also related to and differentiated from one another. This leads to the third necessary condition for constituting character: differentiation. Differentiation implies that sufficient detail exists to distinguish each individual in the text from the others. In the economy of literary texts, a property of a character can be seen to be significant only if it is differentiated, that is if it (or its opposite) belongs to at least one other character as well.<sup>35</sup> Between any two individuals there must be at least one difference that makes it possible to distinguish them. Since the same character may be related to other characters, each confrontation between the given character and another will bring out different aspects of the

<sup>32</sup> I refer to two positions—one normative and one circumstantial—here for ease of reference. Nevertheless it is possible for a character to undergo several changes in circumstantial personality state in a text. The character's identity underlies all of the presented positions.

<sup>33</sup> This is what I refer to as the "developmental fallacy"—the misguided notion that a character must undergo change to be considered efficacious. Several skillfully rendered characters show no such change (Shakespeare's Iago and Richard III are cases in point); yet similarly depicted characters by Lee, like Nero, Cassander and Pharnaces, have been repeatedly criticised for being melodramatic and lacking in complexity, without any explanation and contrary to the evidence of the text, as I shall demonstrate.

<sup>34</sup> Margolin, "Introducing and Sustaining Characters", pp. 111-21.

<sup>35</sup> This position is based upon the assumption that some properties of character are extraneous, a position with which I disagree, arguing for the equal importance of all data relating to character. I do concur with Margolin's suggestion that properties can be detected when contrasted with the same, or inverse, properties in another. These

given character. Moreover, the juxtaposition of character along shared semantic axes is indispensable for perceiving the absence of certain traits in a given character. This absence is best discerned when the trait appears in another character whose function in the text is to act as a foil to the first character.<sup>36</sup>

Paradigmatic or simultaneous unity of features determines what type category the character belongs to. That is, a character's properties should be amenable to ordering into a general pattern that defines the sort, type or category to which the individual belongs. The various traits explicitly or implicitly ascribed to a character should first be named and accumulated. This procedure yields an aggregate of properties with which to identify and differentiate the character. Margolin provides a schema that requires one to i) sort, group, and classify the available traits into categories according to semantic relevance or homogeneity (what Allport calls "the same underlying determinant"), ii) infer cognate traits based upon those initially provided, iii) hierarchically order the properties into central and peripheral (dispositional and conditional, ruling and subordinate, dominant and dominated), iv) arrange the categories themselves using the foregoing binary (the core features of the central category can be seen to be the core features or essential properties of the character), and then v) totalise the resultant set of categories into a type of person.

Whilst the first four categories by Margolin apply to individuals in a single text, the fifth (syntagmatic continuity) is concerned with the identification of the same character across several texts. Continuity can be assessed on the degree of change in the core properties of the character, with the extent of modification ranging from non-existent to comprehensive. Zero change occurs when the character remains constant throughout the several texts. This yields the so-called static character who presents no continuity problem, since his or her subsequent states are nothing but the reiteration of his or her initial one. In all other cases there will be a degree of change in the dispositional traits of the character over the course of the several texts. Following zero change is found ii) the permanence-amidst-change model in which some of the core features of the individual, especially those which constitute his or her "essential properties", remain constant, in which case change is merely variational and does not endanger the individual's identity or continuity. Next comes iii) singular progressive or "processual"

traits are significant, but nevertheless other traits that are not differentiated are equally significant, owing to the fact that they have been either consciously or unconsciously selected for inclusion in the text.

<sup>36</sup> This has been emphasised as far back as Schlegel in 1808, who claimed of Shakespeare that:

[i]f the delineation of all his characters, separately considered, is inimitably bold and correct, he surpasses even himself in so combining and contrasting them, that they serve to bring out each other's peculiarities. This is the very perfection of dramatic characterisation: for we can never estimate a man's true worth if we consider him altogether abstractedly by himself; we must see him in his relations with others; and it is here that most dramatic poets are deficient. Shakespeare makes each of his principal

change, where some of the essential properties of the character in the first and last text display a marked difference. Change here is gradual, continuous and "semantically related", by which is meant that the core property (ruling disposition/normative personality state) is inverted or removed. This change only occurs once in the course of the text. Semantically related change can also be iv) punctual, involving change in some or all of the essential core properties of the character across successive texts. Here the individual seems to be two incompatible or even contradictory characters in terms of their property gestalt, although each character may itself possess inner coherence and constitute a unified paradigm of traits. The two radically different character phases are often separated from one another by a crisis event. To preserve continuity we should be able to unify the two characters by means of a second-level paradigm, regarding them as variants of a more abstract dynamic model lying somewhere between the two—that which I term the *identity* of the character. Finally v) abrupt, semantically related change may be iterative. In this case the life course of the individual falls into two alternating series of person states, in that s/he oscillates rapidly and repeatedly between the opposing positions. These figures could properly be described as schizophrenic. Change of this nature is held to be the absolute lower limit of diachronic continuity.

#### Hochman's Taxonomy.

Margolin's systematic analysis of trait is an invaluable basis for the assessment of character, but is insufficient in itself for determining the efficacy or otherwise of a representation. That is, it does not provide any objective criteria for the determination of whether a character is i) an effective or defective example of a characterisation in and of itself, and ii) whether it is better, worse or commensurate with a similar representation. Baruch Hochman's categories provide useful criteria for evaluating character, and guidelines for a working approach to analysis. In *Character in Literature* he proposes eight categories that describe various aspects of character, as well as their antitheses—i) stylisation (and naturalism), ii) coherence (and incoherence), iii) wholeness (and fragmentariness), iv) literalness (and symbolism), v) complexity (and simplicity), vi) transparency (and opacity), vii) dynamism (and staticism), and viii) closure (and openness).<sup>37</sup> The first refers to the level of typicality of a character. The example he uses is that Anna Karenina is less stylised in presentation than Catherine Earnshaw, and Catherine less than Estella in *Great Expectations*. Yet, despite the subjective and intuitive basis of the

characters the glass in which the others are reflected, and by the like means enables us to discover what could not be immediately revealed to us (p.268).

category, it does have merit as an evaluative criterion. Stylisation is dependent on the norm from which the depiction deviates; that norm being the presentation of human qualities—appearance, actions, thoughts, responses, aspirations—that approximate our normative expectations of real people. He adds that a fundamental element of naturalistic portraiture (by which is meant the opposite of a stylised representation) is what could be called the synecdochic aspect of character.<sup>38</sup> The vividness of Anna Karenina's presentation, for example, depends to a considerable extent on the vividness of the presentation of the characters who interact with her. The scale of stylisation ranges from minimal to maximal. The former equates to a naturalistic portraiture of character, and the latter to a stereotypical representation.

However, two aspects of this category seem to me to have been overlooked, the first being the need for intermediate positions on the scale, positions which could be termed modest, medial and substantial. Whilst it would be absurd to assess the level of a character's stylisation as a percentile for instance, an intuitive evaluation based on a quintuple scale of minimal, modest, medial, substantial and maximal stylisation would be of benefit.<sup>39</sup> Secondly, in dramatic works especially, a character's position on the scale of stylisation is likely to be relative to his or her centrality in the text. Hamlet, for example, is the most minimally stylised character in *Hamlet* because he is the most prominent. In all works of literature we perceive some characters as being close to the centre, and others as peripheral to them. The prominent characters are the focus of the work, to the extent that the play, particularly in tragedy, is often named after them. The protagonist is the object of the work; the text exists to reveal him or her, and his or her story.<sup>40</sup> S/he is flanked by characters of lesser complexity and greater typicality on a gradation that is relative to their functional importance to the plot. Unlike the protagonist, they are, as W.J. Harvey puts it, "a means to an end rather than an end in [themselves]".<sup>41</sup> These characters usually serve compositional as well as thematic purposes; the progressive diminution of prominence heightens the complexity of the central character who can thus be experienced in all of his or her vividness. In a letter dated 27 October 1888, Anton Chekhov said of characterisation that:

from a crowd of heroes and half-heroes, one takes only one character...[and] puts that person against the background and draws only that character, emphasizing it; and the

<sup>37</sup> Hochman, pp.89-140. Whilst most of his categories are applicable in themselves, I have combined the categories of "complexity" and "transparency" into one entitled "accessibility", and have discounted the final division ("closure"), which is inapplicable because it does not actually deal with the qualities of character.

<sup>38</sup> States suggests that "it is an elementary law of analysis that characters are made of each other and that the illusion of discrete individual character is, in some degree, a perceptual compromise...[t]o confront character properly, then, we must keep one eye on the group and one eye on the individual, who is in a sense always a synecdochic extension of the group" (*Hamlet*, pp.xix-xx).

<sup>39</sup> It is important to remember that, like Forster's flat characters, maximal stylisation is not a pejorative or inferior position, because these characters have important functions in a text.

<sup>40</sup> Harvey, p.56.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p.58.



others are scattered about the background, like small coin, and the result is something like the canopy of heaven: one large moon and a mass of very tiny stars around it.<sup>42</sup>

The idea of a central character to whom all others are revolving satellites seems to me to be particularly insightful. From this position character depth and complexity can be seen to diminish the further the satellite figure is from the protagonist. Thus the protagonist (who is, or should be, the most minimally stylised) is more complex and fully developed than the intermediaries (who are modestly and/or medially stylised), who are themselves more complex than the background or choral figures (being substantially and/or maximally stylised).<sup>43</sup> And prominence is not simply a matter of the number of lines spoken by the character. As States cogently points out, Hamlet's centrality is not simply a matter of his time on stage or of the number of lines he speaks, but of his constantly being the subject of the other characters' lives. All of the characters behave in terms of him, and everything that occurs happens with him in mind. Using as an example Laertes' speech to Ophelia before his departure for Paris, States notes that of all of the possible topics that they could have discussed, they discuss her relationship with the Prince.<sup>44</sup> Obviously, one could claim that some instances do not concern him (such as Polonius' subsequent speech to Laertes, or the arrangement to have Reynaldo spy upon him) but in general the rule holds true.

Characters also possess varying degrees of coherence. Hochman correctly notes that literary characters need not *appear* to be presented consistently, but are nevertheless likely to be so in their underlying identity. This is, as I have already suggested, an intrinsic quality of literary discourse. Stereotypes have another kind of coherence arising from the trait that dominates their character. The scale of this category interweaves with that of stylisation (as do all the other categories), so that highly coherent characters may be either minimally or maximally stylised, and so too those who are incoherent. At the minimal end of the scale can be found those characters who appear to be almost two different persons, and who lack any perceivable unifying principle (a schizophrenic character) except for their name or title. At the maximal end are those figures whose coherence is posited on one thoroughly dominant trait

<sup>42</sup> Chekhov, "Letter to A.S. Souvorin" (October 27, 1888), in Kotliansky and Tomlinson (trans. and ed.), pp. 127-8.

<sup>43</sup> The tripartite division used here is that suggested by Harvey, who further subdivides the intermediate category into the "card" (the comic "character", such as Falstaff and many of the Dickensian types) and the Jamesian ficelle (the "foil" types, such as conspirators, confidants, counsellors and rivals) (pp. 58ff). These characters are most likely to be found in a medial position of stylisation. Located between the protagonist and these intermediaries, there is (in tragic drama at least) a "secondary" category where one would find the modestly stylised characters. The deuteragonist (often the subject of the sub-plot), antagonist and lover (heroine) are secondary figures, placed just beneath the protagonist in terms of depth, complexity and textual exposure, and just above the intermediaries with regard to same. David Fishelov's (p. 426) quadripartite division of "pure" individual, type-like individual, individual-like type, and "pure" type are comparable gradations of character, and provide useful descriptive terms.

<sup>44</sup> States, *Hamlet*, p. 59.

that precludes complexity (which is itself dependent on the conflict of traits). Allegorical and stereotypical characters fall into the latter category. They are highly stylised in ways that assert the characters' coherence but do not suggest any particularised psychological basis for it. Whilst Hochman does not posit an ideal position on this scale, it would seem to be medial. An effective, minimally stylised character, consistent and coherent in his or her underlying identity, would most likely be found at this location.

In discussing his third category, Hochman argues that we experience wholeness (which he also describes as dimensionality) in a character when his or her qualities cohere in such a way as to convince us that the fragment we are given is representative of the whole. Accordingly the audience is supposed to feel that the characterisation is an exhaustive account of the character. I am inclined to disagree, maintaining that ideally there should remain an impression of something more. The greatest literary characters defy all claims of being comprehensively understood, and impress us not by their unity but by their superfluity. After all, the reason why they continue to be the subject of critical attention is that they cannot thoroughly be explained. Hochman does admit that there can be no wholeness of character in the sense of exhaustiveness, but in employing this sense he is specifically referring to our lack of a thorough knowledge of a character's prior existence. He suggests that it is the more prominent figures who impress us as possessing wholeness. They do so despite the fact that they are caught up in situations that fragment them, often by stirring up conflicts that serve as the occasion for, and centre of, the actions in which they figure. Minimal wholeness is felt to be normative for many minor characters, Hochman suggesting this to be the possible basis for Harvey's distinction between the protagonist and the envioning figures. The latter do not convey a sense of wholeness that ampler presentation, with its teleological thrust and its complex motivation, gives to the central figures. A central tenet of this category, in my opinion, is the level of predictability in a character; the extent to which the entity is capable of surprising us in his or her behaviour, and thus suggesting him- or herself to be elusive. Coherence is thus intimately associated with typicality and the extent to which the character conforms to, or transcends, his or her foundation. Although unstated by Hochman, there is presumably a scale of wholeness, where maximal wholeness is felt to cohere with minimal stylisation and vice versa; however, I would argue that minimal stylisation would ideally equate to a medial wholeness, because of the character's elusiveness. Minimal wholeness equates to a minimal understanding of the character as a particularised entity, such as the background figures who are represented typically and with scant individuation. We understand their type and/or function, but they are thoroughly unfamiliar to us as heterogeneous psychological entities: for example the messenger is comprehensible as a messenger, but as an

individual he is obscure. Along the scale, modest implies a limited knowledge of the character; at this location would be found those agents who are slightly more individuated stereotypes, such as the lesser intermediary figures. The medial and substantial positions are the most important of the scale as it here that the enigmatic characters are discovered, the two being differentiated principally by the extent of that elusiveness. Here are found those (mostly principal) characters who are substantially individuated in the text, receiving the most dialogue and are represented with the least typification. At the medial position are found the most enigmatic (and most atypical) characters, whilst at the substantial position are those who are more typified but who are nevertheless slightly irregular (the median between the central and maximal positions with regard to typicality and elusiveness). Thereafter typicality rises to a second peak at the maximal position where the entity is comprehensively familiar. This position is reserved for those principal characters who are unlikely ever to surprise us in their behaviour, because they are thoroughly stereotypical (such as 'humours' characters), and always act accordingly. They are extensively elaborated entities (unlike the stereotypes at the minimal end of the scale), yet their unswerving typicality makes them wholly familiar and completely predictable.<sup>45</sup> On the minimal and modest side of the optimal position are those minor stereotypes who remain unfamiliar because of the lack of textual attention which might otherwise dilute the stereotype, and on the substantial and maximal side are those principal stereotypes whose familiarity is partial or all-consuming because the textual attention accentuates the typification. All that separates the minimal peak from the maximal is the amount of the text devoted to (and about) the latter to confirm that the type is in fact the whole.

"Literalness" (which should more appropriately be referred to as "symbolism") arises from the fact that characters can be both literally individuals as well as being symbolic of something else. Further, they can be seen as more or as less literal (self-referential, distinctively themselves) and as more or as less symbolic of something else—such as qualities they embody, types they exemplify, or ideas they represent—upon a scale between the poles. The distinction between the tragic hero and the allegorical figure like Everyman exemplifies this division, with most characters being located somewhere between the two. Hochman points out that it is obvious that self-referential and symbolic characters exist in the same work, but it is less evident that both qualities may inhere in a single character. However, as I have argued in the previous chapter, the combination of individual and type in the one character is in fact the very basis of all characterisation; every character is, to varying degrees, both literal and

<sup>45</sup> Minimal (choral, stereotypical, unfamiliar as an entity) is less than (>) modest (intermediary, slightly individuated stereotypes, yet still remote as entities), which is less than (>) medial (the most enigmatic and individuated characters), which is greater than (<) substantial (principals who are elaborate, slightly stereotypical,

symbolic. No scale is advanced by Hochman for this category but is nevertheless requisite, again ranging from minimal symbolism (exemplified by the minimally stylised protagonist), through modest, medial and substantial to maximal (exemplified by allegorical figures, such as Everyman).

I am of the opinion that the next two categories "complexity" and "transparency" coalesce, as both are concerned with elements of interiority. Of the former, the initial distinction between complexity and simplicity is drawn from Harvey's distinction between central and secondary characters. Hochman argues that Chatman's paradigm of traits does not adequately account for complexity because it is the representation of higher degrees of inner tension and contradiction that produces greater complexity, rather than the fact that one character is compounded of more traits than another. This may well be true, but what Hochman overlooks is that the two are usually commensurate—the more in conflict and contradictory the character, the more traits are likely to have contributed to the revelation of that complexity. These characters will invariably be provided with numerous internal monologues (soliloquies and asides) which reflect their innermost thoughts and feelings, as well as their interiority being presented through what I term 'internal dialogue', that is dialogue held between a principal and his or her 'partisan/s' where the accent is on the revelation of the principal's mental state.<sup>46</sup> To a lesser degree internal dialogue also occurs between principals, particularly those with mutual affection, such as the conventional friends of heroic drama (Theodosius and Varanes are an example in Lee's plays). Maximally stylised characters tend to be simplistic—the simplicity which substitutes a part for the whole, endowing them with one dominant trait (and its cognates) and dealing with those traits grotesquely. These characters are unlikely to deliver many (if any) monologues. In essence this category can be said to be a division between those characters who are in conflict (and who are likely to be presented with greater psychological depth through internal mono- and/or dia-logue) and those who are not. Hochman's category of "transparency" is complementary in that it is concerned with the extent to which the audience is provided with access to a character's motivation. It is normally the case that stereotypical characters are less transparent as to motive than are naturalistic ones.

elusive and unpredictable), which is itself greater than (<) maximal (central characters, predominantly stereotypical and wholly familiar).

<sup>46</sup> The *raison d'être* of the partisan character is to act as a 'sounding board', to converse with their principal and allow those characters to enunciate their thoughts and opinions for the benefit of the audience. Thus the disciple provides an alternative format for what is effectively an internal monologue by the principal. The thoughts and opinions of the disciple are often nothing more than those of the principal enunciated by another voice. The partisan's other principal function is expository, revealing the current situation and providing pertinent background information for the benefit of the audience. They almost always enter and exit with the principal to whom they are attached, unless serving as a messenger for that character. This category has been created to distinguish the "confidant" (such as Horatio to Hamlet) from a fervent and militant adherent of a (vicious) cause,

Yet minimal stylisation is no guarantee of accessibility, nor does the use of techniques like the soliloquy ensure access. Even when we are provided with access to their motives, these often seem insufficient to explain the character's actions. The motivation of Shakespeare's Iago is a case in point. Gaps in our knowledge of the character's motivation can prove to be a mark of great literature.<sup>47</sup> Hochman is correct in declaring that it is the inability to know with certainty the reason for action and choice that is one of the bases of great tragedy, a foundation that operates together with constellations of motives that sustain the obscurity. Given that these two categories are complementary, a united category entitled "accessibility" seems appropriate. And, as with all the other categories, this too should be assessed upon a quintuple scale.

A distinction has already been drawn between dynamic and static characters. 'Dynamism' refers to the extent to which characters develop or change in the course of a play. I see this as a matter of whether or not they achieve a level of *anagnorisis*.<sup>48</sup> Dynamic characters can be equated with Forster's round characters; complex figures who undergo crises of experience, and who adapt in response to them. To differentiate this category from the term 'dynamism' as a reference to a character being active, I have renamed it *anagnorisis*. Those characters who do not change or adapt in response to circumstances are static. Some characters achieve partial self-discovery, whilst others make profound life-changing discoveries. Thus the scale for this category ranges from zero development (the thoroughly static character), through minimal to maximal *anagnorisis*. But one must be careful to ensure that it is the character that has developed and not the plot.<sup>49</sup> Self-discovery is usually associated with the Aristotelian

such as Buckingham (prior to his rehabilitation) to Richard III. To group Horatio and Buckingham together would be erroneous.

<sup>47</sup> The difference between a character's motivation being elusive (as is Iago's), which is a mark of great literature, and being unintelligible (which is, more often than not, simply the absence of an explicit motivation) and indicative of failure, is likely to result from an insufficient analysis of character by the reader. A familiarity with the true nature (identity) of the character should elicit an educated speculation as to motivation, in the absence of an explicit revelation. For instance, a character's ruling disposition is evidence of motivation, even if the character does not enunciate the reason for his or her actions. A text can only really be considered a failure on the grounds of motivation if no reasonable speculation as to motivation is possible (and this is only likely to be the case if the characterisation is incomprehensible, and works in defiance of these touchstones). The need to speculate as to motivation does imply that the characterisation belongs at the minimal end of the scale, whilst explicit and incontrovertible motivation belongs at the maximal end.

<sup>48</sup> My definition of *anagnorisis* (self-discovery) is more expansive than Aristotle's limited definition. His explanation of this term is restricted to the discovery of the protagonist's real identity (such as the discovery of Oedipus' parentage and crimes). This Aristotelian definition of the term overlooks self-awareness of the cause of one's downfall, and of regret and rehabilitation over one's actions, which have been added to the category as relevant aspects. Since many otherwise ideal tragic hero/ines may not make a self-discovery in the Aristotelian sense, it is not an absolute prerequisite for a character to be classed as a tragic hero.

<sup>49</sup> States has cogently noted that the suggestion that a character "develops" is often inaccurate, because what has actually developed is the events of the plot and therefore the extent of our knowledge of the character (p.5). The habit is, to all intents and purposes, always present in the character, all that has changed is that events have led to a manifestation of that particular trait. For example, Achilles does not "develop" anger when Agamemnon takes Briseis, nor does he "develop" obstinacy when asked to rejoin the war effort. These are dispositions to which he has always been subject, and which manifest themselves as a result of a given situation arising. This is not to suggest that characters never display psychological and/or moral growth in a text; but one must be careful when determining *anagnorisis* that it is the character not the plot that has developed.

tragic hero, the character who is an essentially good but flawed entity whose hamartia leads to a reversal of fortune, suffering, contrition and occasionally *anagnorisis*. An interrelated aspect of self-discovery is the expression of contrition by the character. Whilst some characters come to understand why they acted (that is, they become aware of their hamartia, the cause of their actions), others do not but still regret their behaviour. This constitutes a form of development (that is moral rehabilitation), and so belongs at the lower end of the scale.

#### Additional Categories.

One aspect of characterisation that continues to be neglected relates to the extent to which a character imitates or distorts the source materials. Characters in the first category I term "derivative", with the polar opposite being "transformative", on a scale ranging from maximal to minimal derivation. Under this category the analyst would be concerned with the degree to which the author adopts or adapts his or her source materials, as a possible prelude to an analysis of why these materials were transformed. It is sensible to assume that those characters who differ markedly from their historical and fictive prototypes do so for a specific reason, and it is therefore the responsibility of the analyst to determine that reason. After all it is much easier to follow one's sources than to depart from them—to contradict one's sources is to invite criticism, and so there needs to be a valid reason for doing so. Unfortunately, in the past critics have tended to see such changes as defects, and evidence of inferiority. Van Lennep's thesis on Lee is a case in point, criticising the plays because they fail to follow the sources closely enough (in regard to both character and incident).<sup>50</sup> This view patently fails to appreciate that changes of this nature are very often deliberate. In this case the reason should be evident in the text. Whilst there is often no irrefutable proof that the author had read a given source, the critic must resort to educated conjecture, based on factors like the availability of the text (that is, if it had been regularly reprinted like North's Plutarch; whether the source had been printed in the period just preceding the work; whether the source itself is celebrated; or if the source is concerned with a celebrated figure or incident), as well as commonly held notions about the characters (in the event that they are well known mythical or historical figures). Sources scoring highly on these criteria are more likely to have been read by dramatists whose occupation depends upon producing works that are relevant, appeal to the audience, are concerned with familiar incidents and individuals, and who have a professional need to seek

<sup>50</sup> Van Lennep is only one in a long line of critics who have attacked Lee on this point. Rochester was the first, vilifying him for making "temp'rate Scipio, fret, and rave / And Hannibal, a whining Amorous slave" ("An Allusion to Horace. The 10<sup>th</sup> Satyr of the 1<sup>st</sup> Book", 1680 [11.37-8], p.42). Most playwrights have come in for similar unjustified criticism at some point in time.



out sources of inspiration. Obviously this category specifically applies to those characters who have a literary foundation, and discounts those who are wholly invented (although even wholly invented characters are often influenced by previous characters who exhibit similar characteristics). In the event that a character is wholly invented, then this category is obviously not applicable, and an analysis of the character would not be adversely affected by its omission.

An additional category arises from the extent to which a specific character conforms to, or differs from, conventional examples of the various roles that s/he performs in the text. It is, for instance, concerned with determining whether a given king represents the typical image of a monarch, and, in the event that he does not, the extent and the purpose of unconventionality. Conventionality refers both to the *societal* and *functional* role/s of the character, on a scale from minimal to maximal. The societal role/s are position/s that the character holds in the "nonactual" world, such as being a king, queen, prince, general, counsellor or soldier. Function applies to the actantial role/s that the "acteur" performs in the tale—such as being the helper, opposer, sender, receiver (in a Proppian or Griemasian sense), or the more traditional typological roles like hero, villain, revenger, malcontent, foil etc.<sup>51</sup> A character who differs markedly, and is unpredictable, is likely to be of greater interest to the reader and critic than one who conforms to expectation. These characters tend to be of interest because they stimulate the audience to question why they are deviant. Hamlet is, as usual, an excellent example. He is not a typical revenger (who is a man of action) because he is rendered impotent by his conflict, nor is a vacillating madman the conventional image of a prince. Rather than detracting from his character, the deviation from the norm increases the interest.

When assessing conventionality one must resort to the familiar standards from which deviation is demonstrable. To a seventeenth-century playwright, the conventional image of a king would have been the stereotypical representation presented in the fictional (principally the heroic plays) and factual (ideological and philosophical) literature that examines kingship. However, one must equally careful not to succumb to what could be termed the "stereotypical fallacy". For a character to belong to a particular type s/he must have certain characteristics in common with all other examples of the type. Yet there is a tendency in criticism to focus on one well-known character, making him or her the exemplum of the type, and then to enrol all

<sup>51</sup> Where a character presents several examples of this criteria (or any other), each example is to be assessed separately. That is, when a character has more than one functional role or major source of derivation, each should be assessed independently rather than seeking a compromise between the disparate positions. For instance, if there are two sources of derivation (such as Plutarch and Quintus Curtius presenting opposing images of Alexander the Great), one of which is of substantial, the other of modest, influence, each must be recorded rather than simply presenting an combined assessment of medial. The analysis of the character would need to emphasis both sources and highlight the extent to which the dramatist derives his influence from each.

other characters with similar characteristics into that category.<sup>52</sup> Often, however, characters so grouped are more notable for their differences than their similarities. Using Dryden's Almanzor as an example, Selma Zebouni demonstrates the stereotypical fallacy. Almanzor's distinctive features, such as his ranting, are considered to be typical of the hero of the heroic play.<sup>53</sup> Yet of Dryden's other protagonists, only two of five are ranters, and one of those (Maximin) is clearly not a hero. On this basis, ranting can not be considered to be a characteristic of the heroic protagonist. Neither can courage, since several of the villains are as courageous as the heroes. It is equally inappropriate to conclude that the protagonist of the play is the "hero", and his antagonist the "villain". Just because a character is similar to another, does not mean that they are the same in all respects, and can be summed up under a generic term. The principal characters of a play should not be generalised in such a manner: however, the minor characters will rarely provide enough individuality and distinction to be separable from their type foundation, and as such would not be an example of the stereotypical fallacy. It is, however, fallacious simply to reduce a principal figure to a type, and imply that the analysis is comprehensive. That is not to suggest that one cannot demonstrate that a character is modelled upon another (such as Lee's Machiavel being derived from Shakespeare's Iago), but this does not make them identical in all respects (and therefore to be summed up under the title "villain"), only similar in some of them. Having said this, it is permissible, even necessary, to group similar characters together under a general category, but one must also illustrate how the specific character differs from other figures within that class. A typological analysis of a playwright's "heroes" will usually reveal that s/he produces several distinct types of hero. In Lee's case, we will consider how different types of heroes deal with the common themes and problems that permeate his plays.

### Choice and Character.

Freedom of choice is another important aspect of character, particularly in relation to those characters that are the focus of the work. In *The Tragic Sense of Shakespeare*, John Lawlor notes that characters fall into two groups, depending upon the power and the field of choice; between the ability to choose and the things that there are to choose between. "Dramatic characterization", he states, "can therefore be thought of as operating in two phases; firstly, the character must be introduced as a particular sort of chooser, one more disposed to certain

<sup>52</sup> Stroup's doctoral thesis exemplifies this approach.

<sup>53</sup> Zebouni, pp.20ff.

choices than to others: and secondly, he must be established as such".<sup>54</sup> Harvey adds that the basic choice is the "either/or" situation, where the choice is between two options.<sup>55</sup> Thus the simplest type of chooser is the "Either/Or" character. From this may be derived the simplest form of dramatic action, that in which the "Either/Or" character is confronted with the either/or situation. Alternatively the "Either/Or" character is faced with several options. These choices usually only apply to the principal characters, are often the subject of their thoughts, and occur at significant occasions such as the long, dark night of the soul. I would, however, suggest that the simplest type of choice is actually the one that is not a choice at all. This is the type of choice that "apsychological" characters make; they are free to make a choice, but will always make the one that accords with their ruling (appetitive) disposition. One could say that they always take the "either" option, never the "or". But to return to the either/or option, this choice can actually be much more complex than it seems, because it may involve *hamartia*. Oedipus, for example, only faces either/or options (stay or leave Corinth, kill or avoid the strangers at the crossroads, marry or reject Queen Jocasta, find or ignore the murderer of Laius etc.), where the "or" is an unappealing one. But does this make him "apsychological"? I do not believe so, because he is not following an appetitive disposition. His is a contemplative, rather than an instinctive, error.<sup>56</sup> He believes that he is acting correctly, but is inadvertently acting incorrectly. This differs markedly from acting upon a dispositional impulse that is vicious rather than virtuous. The result may have been the same in any event, but because his motives are virtuous we are sympathetic to his plight, whereas we would have been repelled had his motives been corrupt. When one considers that those characters who cause the events of the plot may also be "psychological" or "apsychological", then one arrives at four types of choosers—the causative "psychological" chooser (a deliberately provocative character; henceforth referred to as a "provocator" for ease of reference), the responsive "psychological" chooser (a "responder"), the causative "apsychological" chooser (hereafter termed an "instigator" for the purpose of differentiation), and the responsive "apsychological" chooser (a "reactor").<sup>57</sup> The choices of the former two are deliberative, the latter two impulsive. The one

<sup>54</sup> Lawlor, p. 112.

<sup>55</sup> Harvey, pp. 144-5.

<sup>56</sup> In the previous chapter I noted that *hamartia* can apply either to an act committed because of an error of judgement (either with or without knowledge of the particular circumstances), or to an act that is conscious and intentional but not deliberate, such as those committed in the heat of anger or passion (p. 8). The former I have termed *deliberative* (the error occurring after having been considered), the latter *impulsive* (the error occurring as a result of being influenced by a ruling disposition). The latter choices are likely to follow immediately the situation presenting the choice, whilst the former are delayed by the vacillating process of thought, which is revealed to the audience through interiority. The deliberative figure meditates over what is to be done while the impulsive character acts without reflection.

<sup>57</sup> The legal distinction between murder and manslaughter provides an excellent example; the former is pre-meditated (and so would be enacted by a *provocator*), the latter is committed impulsively and without consideration (and so would be enacted by an *instigator*).

remaining issue is whether the character is initially seen to be acting causatively or responsively; that is, whether they are instigating or perpetuating action.<sup>58</sup> For example, does Oedipus instigate, or perpetuate, the situation when he chooses to leave Corinth? Does Iago cause the events of *Othello*, or is he responding to what he perceives to be Othello's prior causation? The answer has to do with the virtuousness of the motivation, and with our the unfolding of our knowledge of the character, which helps to reveal the sincerity and validity of that motivation. We see Oedipus' choice as responsive because he is attempting to prevent a catastrophe (such motivation is self-evidently benevolent); moreover his behaviour throughout the play is essentially admirable. In contrast, Iago's choice would be seen as causative because his motivation is dubious, and because his behaviour (particularly to Roderigo, who is unrelated to any dispute that he may have with Othello) demonstrates his malevolent nature. There is however a need for a fifth category for those virtuous characters who create a chain of events during the course of the play, which is not a response to a given situation (and is therefore not perpetuative). A common example is the decision by the heroine to adopt male dress to test her lover's fidelity. This action cannot be deemed causative, because it is not a product of vicious intent, nor is it responsive, because it does not perpetuate an existing chain of events, but rather creates an additional one. As such, causative action needs to be further subdivided into viciously based causative action and virtuously based causative action, the latter characters being referred to as "initiators".<sup>59</sup> Of course the actions of an initiator are invariably deliberative, and thus no apsychological category is deemed to be necessary. It is important to add that a specific character may be indicative of more than one category (that is s/he may be a responder, reactor and initiator) at different times in the same text, and in such instances one must defer to the most common tendency; for example if the character is in general more often a responder than a reactor, or more a reactor than an initiator, then the former designation is to be adopted as the norm. Nevertheless, each of the various types will need to be explicated in the analysis. In saying this, I am not attempting to link dramatic initiative to the possession of virtue or vice nor do I suggest that, because a character is virtuous s/he will invariably make responsive choices. Rather the purpose of instituting these terms is to assist in the description and evaluation of the types of choices that a particular character makes. This enables a greater distinction to be made between otherwise seemingly comparable figures, as well as providing another avenue for the analysis of character that may well uncover interesting details that might otherwise have been overlooked. As is the case with

<sup>58</sup> Whilst it can be argued that all choices are causative in the sense that they cause subsequent actions or choices, these are differentiated from those which set events in motion. I term such choices perpetuative in that they consciously or unconsciously perpetuate events that have already been instigated.



all of the criteria, this aspect is designed to assist in the production of a more thorough analysis of every aspect of character.

### Signs and Character.

The examination of signs is also of particular importance to the analysis of character. Signs are those verbal and visual details presented in the text that reveal a character's habits and traits.

Elder Olson describes a sign as being either complete, incomplete or multiple in nature:

A complete sign is one single thing, such as a trait, emotion, a physical condition, the probability of an act, and so on. An incomplete sign is one which requires conjunction with other signs to complete its implication. A multiple sign is one which, itself single, permits a number of inferences, either all at once or successively. For example, from one remark we may infer at once a whole group of traits, perhaps even the whole character; or our inferences may be successive, as when the remark leads us to infer an emotion from which we infer a desire from which we infer character from which in turn we infer a probability of action.<sup>60</sup>

Complete signs are expository in nature, intended to reveal either plot information (a remark may simply present facts pertaining to the immediate situation; intelligence provided by messengers is a prime example) or may reveal basic character information such as common habits and traits, psychological or physical data, or moral and/or ideological values and beliefs. These are the types of information that are unlikely to cause the reader any consternation. Incomplete signs may subsequently be completed (when the requisite information is provided), or they may remain incomplete, in which case the sign might more properly be referred to as *ambiguous*. Along with inferential (multiple) signs, ambiguous signs require the most attention, and are the locations at which the reader is invited to seek a deeper understanding of the character. It is the responsibility of the analyst to locate and highlight these irregular signs, rather than rejecting or ignoring them where they contradict the established pattern of character, as is so often the case.<sup>61</sup>

One location at which irregular signs are likely to appear are those sites at which a moral reading of a character invites a psychological one. Robert Langbaum's readings of Aeschylus' *Oresteia* are a compelling case in point.<sup>62</sup> A moral reading of a text (and, by extension, the characters within it) is dependent upon a sympathetic understanding of the

<sup>59</sup> Another (rare) example of virtuous causative action would be Lear's questioning of the extent of his daughter's love at the beginning of Shakespeare's play. This action instigates events but is not viciously based.

<sup>60</sup> Olson, pp. 104-5.

<sup>61</sup> The division of complete and ambiguous signs corresponds with Todorov's partition of facts into those which are signified (understood) and those which are symbolised (requiring interpretation) ("Reading as Construction", p. 73).

<sup>62</sup> Langbaum, pp. 217-23.

world-view to which the characters and events adhere. Thus from the perspective of the ancient Greek world, Orestes is totally justified in taking revenge upon his mother for murdering Agamemnon in retaliation for sacrificing their daughter Iphigenia, and because of his infidelity whilst campaigning. Clytemnestra's motives are demonstrated to be inadequate, because to the ancient Greeks a husband's betrayal of his wife is less offensive than a wife's of her husband, and because a father might legitimately take the life of his daughter whereas it is the vilest of crimes for a wife to kill her husband and king. A son's obligations to his father and monarch far outweighed those to his mother and queen, regardless of the mitigating circumstances. It is for this reason that Orestes is only temporarily tormented by the Furies before being divinely exonerated, whilst his mother must suffer execution at the hands of her own child for her crimes.

However if the same text is read from a psychological perspective, it can produce a vastly different conclusion. When a moral code is called into question (because, in the modern world, one is held to be equally obligated to both parents), discrimination between the murders committed by Clytemnestra and Orestes cannot be made. The very quality that elevates Orestes morally (that he acts for an abstract reason of justice) degrades him if one does not sympathise with the ethical position, for he strikes us as heartless and unforgiving. From this perspective the son's murder of his mother is likely to seem more repugnant than the wife's murder of her husband because it is more unnatural. On the other hand, Clytemnestra, who is degraded morally because she acts out of lust and self-interest, gains in the psychological reading. She becomes the existential heroine, and the play her tragedy—the tragedy of a wife torn between a lover and an absent and unfaithful husband, and a mother whose grief over the murder of her daughter cause her to become a murderess herself, and who is eventually murdered by her own son.

The text may assert a preferred moral solution, particularly in pre-modern drama where poetic justice is to be secured. But one can and should consider character from both positions, revealing the manner in which the character is likely to have been perceived by a contemporary audience, as well as providing a modern alternative reading. In fact I suspect that the ambiguity caused by unconsciously reading a character from both standpoints simultaneously is one of the main reasons why we feel uneasy when we experience an unfathomable sympathy for villains despite ourselves—we may dislike or even detest them, but nevertheless cannot help but find them appealing or sympathetic. Often internal evidence will lead to such an impression. In the case of Clytemnestra, for example, it is the revelation of her grief and the justifiable provocation for her action that leads to such a reading; in, say, an Ajax or Shylock it is the unfair treatment they have received; Shakespeare's Richard III becomes a villain because

of his deformity; Marlowe's Doctor Faustus and Shakespeare's Macbeth have moments of indecision and remorse, even Marlowe's Mephistophilis provides a hint of genuine regret in his frank admission about Hell.<sup>63</sup> These are but a few of the innumerable examples. Whilst the moral position is often presented in terms of black or white (right or wrong, virtuous or vicious), a psychological reading of a character can reveal the causes that underlie his or her actions, and can transform a melodramatic villain into a complex psychological case study. Reading in this manner can rest upon the smallest of details, such as a solitary comment or detail revealed about the character which seems to be inconsistent with the characterisation as otherwise presented. Even when we are supposed to endorse the moral position, a psychological reading can result, because the text unconsciously invites it. Reading in this manner never justifies the actions of the character, but it does help us to understand them, and to reveal their "humanness". Obviously I am not referring to a reading of the character of the tragic protagonist (those virtuous characters who make errors of judgement) but rather those characters who deliberately and consciously embrace vice (the antiheroes—like Faustus, Macbeth and Richard III—and the antagonists). After all we are supposed to feel sympathy for the fallen hero, but not for the villain. However, a reading which treats such characters as psychological entities, rather than functional automatons, can lead to this. The "aporias" at which evidence of their complexity is provided are the locations at which the true efficacy of these characters is revealed. They are the cause of consternation, because they make one aware of the psychological complexity of the character, and so individuate the stereotype. Where evidence of this nature is presented it invites the analyst to consider the character from both a moral and a psychological perspective, as the character of Clytemnestra does Langbaum.

#### Verisimilitude and Conflict in Characterisation.

Two other aspects of character require attention in an analysis—the first being whether the character acts in a believable manner, the second relating to the type of conflict represented. Tucker succinctly refers to the first aspect as "substantive verisimilitude", and claims that believability is contingent upon "accuracy and vividness of detail", the manifestation of a principal trait, and "allusiveness"—a hint of greater complexity, aspects that form part of the

criteria considered above.<sup>64</sup> Most importantly, verisimilitude is dependent upon the character being accountable for his or her actions, itself dependent upon demonstrable evidence that the character has freedom of choice.<sup>65</sup> When a character has no autonomy, he or she becomes melodramatic. Like complexity, verisimilitude in drama is intimately linked with, and often arises from, internal conflict. As with the various types of choices that a character can make, there is more than one type of conflict s/he can face. As Nicoll cogently notes, a conflict can be either external or internal—the former dealing with a struggle between two physical forces, the latter concerned with the psychological struggle carried on in the mind of the character, a conflict not of force with force, or mind with mind, but of emotion with emotion, and thought with thought.<sup>66</sup> Characters can therefore be separated into those who are verisimilar—because they present "psychological determinism" as Todorov describes it, and are likely to experience internal conflict—and those who are melodramatic.<sup>67</sup> However, as previously stated, characters that are one-dimensional should not be seen as inferior simply because they are stereotypical, as it is appropriate for certain characters, particularly minor functionaries, to be produced in this manner. However those principal characters who are melodramatic and who do not undergo psychological conflict are likely to be viewed as inferior, and justifiably so.

#### Conclusion.

The method of examining character here described is based on a molecular analysis of traits, and of the signs presented in the text. One should firstly isolate, classify and group the character's habits and traits according to the underlying determinants, infer cognate traits based upon those that are provided, group the determinants into ruling and subordinate (dominant and dominated), arrange the categories into a hierarchy, and totalise the categories into a principal character type—one of the various kinds of hero/ines (tragic or Aristotelian, heroic or Herculean, exemplary and victimised) or villains (calculating, tragic, dispositional and victimised), as well as any of the supplementary categories to which s/he may belong, such as the various lover types (distressed, enervated, saddened and pathetic) and the societal and

<sup>63</sup> Me[ph.]. Why this is hel, nor am I out of it:  
Thinkst thou that I who saw the face of God,  
And tasted the eternal ioyes of heauen,  
Am not tormented with ten thousand hels,  
In being depriv'd of euerlasting blisse:  
O Faustus, leaue these friuolous demaunds,  
Which strike a terror to my fainting soule (sig.B2v).

<sup>64</sup> Tucker, p.4.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p.8. Tucker claims that the choice must be one that is more substantial than a simple love versus honour conflict because that love robs the hero of reason so that he can no longer make rational choices (p.9). However Lee's emphasis on the internal conflict created by this dilemma often makes the hero and heroine a "psychological" rather than "apsychological" chooser, and so provides him or her with autonomy, as I shall demonstrate in due course.

<sup>66</sup> Nicoll, *Dramatic Theory*, pp.40-4.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. pp.37-8.

functional types (the soldier-counsellor, the pander, the rival friend and so on).<sup>68</sup> By grouping the properties into dispositional and conditional one should be able to differentiate the two personality states (normative and circumstantial) in those characters that are in conflict. Throughout this procedure the critic should also be conscious of the irregular signs which aid in the discovery of the contradictory positions in the otherwise unconflicted characters, and which imply the presence of traits inconsistent with a typified representation. Determining the unity that underlies the pre- and conflicted (normative and circumstantial), and common and contradictory (dominant and dominated) personality positions enables one to discover the *identity* of the fictional individual.

Having defined the character one can then proceed to an evaluation. Here the categorical touchstones are of use. An assessment of the extent to which a character is stylised, coherent, whole, symbolic, accessible, derivative and conventional, on a scale ranging from minimal, through modest, medial, and substantial to maximal, should be conducted. In addition the analysis should illustrate whether or not s/he achieves a degree of *anagnorisis*, the type of chooser s/he is, whether s/he undergoes internal conflict, is autonomous and so accountable for his or her actions, all of which are indicative of substantive verisimilitude. Each of these elements contributes to a determination of the efficacy of the characterisation. It is vital to remember that these categories are descriptive; there is no claim to superiority in any position within a category. Each character has his or her place and function in the work, and can be highly effective and successful in that respect. Further, labeling a character in a category is relative, not absolute. A character who is minimally stylised by the criteria applying in one work may only be medially stylised when compared with a character from another work, for example, Lee's Nero and Shakespeare's Hamlet are both minimally stylised in their respective texts, but are obviously not equally stylised. There is a clear difference in the degree of skill used to render these two characters, but differentiating between the merits of, say, Lee's Cassander and Machiavel is less easy. An application of the touchstones will not only assist in a more comprehensive analysis of the character, but will also assist in determining both the merits or defects of a characterisation, and its superiority or inferiority when compared with

<sup>68</sup> The various heroic, villainous and lover groups will be discussed at the appropriate location in the text where an example is available for illustration. A definition of each is also available in the glossary. Here it is suffice to say that I refer to what I term the "principal character type" (PCT) as applying to the major characters belonging to one of the heroic or villainous categories. Within this type a character may also belong to one of the various lover categories, as well as one or more of the societal and/or functional types such as the "lady in waiting", "counsellor", "messenger", "father figure" et cetera. These are more appropriately *functions* than *types*, forming just one part of the PCT in a principal figure, as is the case with being an example of one of the four groups of lovers. For example, Clytus in *The Rival Queens* is a "counsellor" (and an analysis would disclose this) but this merely forms part of his overall "tragic hero" type; Ziphars is an "enervated" lover, but this forms part of his PCT of "victimised hero". All principal characters (primary, secondary and major intermediaries) fall into one of

other, similar characterisations. Thus, there are five main aspects which need to be considered in the analysis of each and every character: the various traits (particularly, but not restricted to, the ruling disposition, and his or her hamartia), the various changes in personality state that s/he undergoes, the principal character type (and the supplementary groups to which s/he belongs), the structural criteria (the touchstones), and the degree of typicality in the representation (whether the character is atypical, distypical or stereotypical). Several of these points, which have as yet not been discussed, will be defined at an appropriate example so as to provide a specific context for the definition. These definitions are also readily available in the glossary.

Although my method may seem to be a reductive and intuitive checklist approach to the analysis of character, I see it as preferable to those theories that do not provide a consistent system of determining value (both in determining whether a particular character is effectively represented, as well as comparing that character with similar representations), especially those which are dismissive of the significance of character (such as the non-mimetic theories), or which concentrate upon one theoretical aspect at the expense of all others (and which choose to study only those works or characters that particularly suit their argument).<sup>69</sup> This approach provides criteria that will enable an objective assessment of dramatic character, and provide a system by which characters can be gauged both as an entity and against other entities so as to determine which are superior and which inferior. By so doing it attempts to remove some of the subjectivity of critical analysis. It is an approach that will no doubt validate the perceived value of characters like Hamlet, but may also reveal the merits of many characters that have hitherto remained neglected, or which have been dismissed as trivial, uninteresting, stereotypical or poorly represented. Whilst my aim is to use the approach on Lee's characters, I believe it can and should be applied widely in pre-modern serious drama. The method is neither exhaustive nor definitive, but I do not believe that there are any glaring omissions. It is designed to be functional, rather than strictly theoretical. What was needed was a rating system that would compare apples with apples, and pears with pears, so to speak. In the past criticism has not necessarily done this. My approach endeavours to determine which are apples and which are pears, so that one can proceed to a determination of which are the good apples and which the poor. The above criteria will enable an evaluation of which "apple" characters are better than others. It challenges the analyst to consider each and every character from all of the criteria, rather than applying different touchstones to different characters as is often the case.

the two broad categories of hero or villain, and into a sub-category thereof, whilst also being examples of a (or several) functional or societal type/s, and perhaps a lover type as well.

<sup>69</sup> Whilst the assessment of the various criteria is, to a degree, based on intuition, but is also based upon considered reasoning.

However, whilst being aware of the functional value of peripheral characters, our interest is usually in the psychological depth of character, and it is upon those main characters that the focus of attention should centre. The methodology is principally intended to provide the means for indicating which of two similar characters is superior and why. Just because a character is the protagonist of a work does not necessarily mean that he is a great character if he is poorly represented (which, in my view, has little to do with stylistics, and more to do with being poorly stylised, incoherent, fragmentary and inaccessible, as will be revealed when characters are tested against the touchstone criteria). Ultimately the purpose of the criteria is to focus attention upon the various aspects of character that are often overlooked so as to highlight the skill or deficiency of the characterisation. Most characters will be found in the expected positions on the categorical scales, and tend to be of little critical interest as a result. But those characters that are unpredictable are of great interest because they represent the effective and defective examples. When characters fail to live up to expectations (such as the protagonist who is not the most minimally stylised, or is not dynamic, accessible etc.), they demonstrate their inferiority. Additionally, it is important to note that there are always exceptions to the rules, characters who are inconsistent because they are say, maximally stylised yet also highly dynamic, or minimally stylised and highly symbolic. Such characters tend to be of great critical interest for the very fact that they are exceptional.

## PART TWO: LEEAN CHARACTEROLOGY.

### Chapter Three.

#### Characterological Foundations : *Nero to Gloriana*.

##### The Tragedy of Nero, Emperour of Rome (by May 1674).

The Lord Chamberlain's warrant dated 26 November 1674, for plays acted by the King's Company between 26 March and 10 November of that year, records that Lee's first play was performed before royalty on 16 May, the crown having paid £10 to the company for its production.<sup>1</sup> Stroup and Cooke suggest that it was acted several times during the season, but agree with Van Lennep that it was only moderately successful.<sup>2</sup> The publication of the play does, however, suggest a degree of popularity. It was printed on four separate occasions (1675, twice in 1696, and in 1735), details on the title-page of the last edition ("As it is Acted at the Theatres") suggesting at least one revival in the mid-1730's.<sup>3</sup> Significantly the play led to the production of *Piso's Conspiracy*, an adaptation of the anonymous *The Tragedy of Nero* (1624), by the rival Duke's Company at Dorset Garden in November 1675. This suggests that Davenant's troupe were endeavouring to compete with its popularity by providing a similar offering. Given that their production occurs eighteen months after the premiere of Lee's work, it further suggests that *Nero* had earned a place in the repertoire, and had been revived on at least one occasion to that date. Of the numerous possible sources available to Lee, he is probably only indebted to Tacitus' *Annals*,<sup>4</sup> Suetonius' *De vita Caesarum*,<sup>5</sup> and the anonymous tragedy of 1624 from which there are several evident borrowings.

The general consensus amongst Lee's critics is that the characters of *Nero* are melodramatic and poorly represented; at best little more than slightly individuated examples of typical heroic characterisations, without anything approaching what could be termed 'depth'. Mahmoud Hasan, Thomas Stroup and Arthur Cooke, James Leach, Russell Hunt, Antony Hammond, J.M. Armistead, and Richard Brown all refer to the fact that the characters are

<sup>1</sup> L.C. 5/141, p.73, cited in Nicoll, pp.344-5.

<sup>2</sup> Van Lennep, *Sources*, p.68; Stroup and Cooke, *Works*, I.21. Others consider it to have been thoroughly unsuccessful; Hunt states that it was "not a success" (p.48), and Melicent Huneycutt that it was a "critical failure" (p.96). The fact that it was performed before Charles II is by no means a slight accomplishment for a dramatic debutante, and itself attests a degree of success.

<sup>3</sup> According to the Term Catalogues the play was first published during Trinity term on 19 June 1675 (Arber (ed.), I.211).

<sup>4</sup> Translated into English by Richard Grenewey in 1598 with numerous reprints. In any event, as a graduate of the University of Cambridge (Trinity College, B.A. 1668/9) Lee would have been fluent in Latin.

<sup>5</sup> Translated into English by Philemon Holland in 1606 and more recently in the anonymously translated John Starkey publication of 1672.



simplistic, conventional and unrealistic.<sup>6</sup> To a degree this is correct (being in part an inevitable result of the production of dramatic characters—as I have argued in Chapter Two—and partly because of the inexperience of the playwright), yet these assessments also do Lee an injustice. There is depth and complexity in his characters, as well as an evident intent to present psychological conflict within the individuals, albeit awkwardly produced at certain pivotal moments. In fact a more adept application of this very style of characterisation in his later works would result in the production of some of his most successful, popular and critically admired characters. Regrettably those moments where Lee complicates the depictions continue to be ignored. If one accepts that the amelioration is part of a larger design for the character, one discovers that the representations are not one-dimensional. Nero, the character considered to be most at fault, gains most from an appreciation of this design.

Critics have repeatedly emphasised that a major problem of the play is its thoroughly unconvincing protagonist. The emperor is perceived as a typical heroic character who lacks dimension, acts without any valid justification other than desire, experiences no conflict between virtue and vice, and is caricatured to such an extent that he fails to maintain even a modicum of substantive verisimilitude.<sup>7</sup> There has been a tendency to conclude that because Nero is evil at the beginning of the play, and remains so at the end, that he is without dimension. His supposed lack of depth has led several critics to conceive him to be evil incarnate,<sup>8</sup> focussing on the (admittedly numerous) satanic references in the text, as identifying the essence of the character, rather than being descriptive of an (albeit significant) *aspect* of his character. Being evil is a major component, but is not the sum total of, his character: he is evil, not Evil.

Several elements undermine the supposedly conventional and one-dimensional heroic portrait. Firstly Nero is portrayed as distinctly unheroic—the antithesis of a heroic character. His pretensions to heroism are continually undermined by reality. His megalomaniacal delusions of divinity indicate that he aspires to the superhuman status of a Tamburlaine or Almanzor, but the absurdity of his claims are demonstrated by his inability to implement them. Notable examples include his proposal to resurrect Poppea, and his misguided belief in his ability to single-handedly quell the insurrection.<sup>9</sup> Leach emphasises that as early as this play Lee contrasts the heroic world of Parthia where heroes like Alamander may exist, with the

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Hasan, p.125; Stroup and Cooke, *Works*, I.22; Leach, p.212; Hunt, pp.49, 53, 54, 58; Hammond, *Development*, p.503; Armistead, *Nathaniel Lee*, p.32; R. Brown, "Nathaniel Lee", p.116.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Van Lennep, *Sources*, p.91; Stroup and Cooke, *Works*, I.22; Tucker, pp.18, 20, 26; Hunt, pp.55-6; Kastan, p.128; Armistead, *Nathaniel Lee*, p.33; Wong, p.69.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Hasan, p.127; Tucker, p.18; Hunt, p.57; Armistead, *Nathaniel Lee*, pp.33, 73; "Occultism", p.63.

<sup>9</sup> David Kastan (p.130) correctly notes that the rant which most critics have condemned in the play should be seen as contributing to this unheroic characterisation, especially given that much of the fustian belongs to this character.

sordid reality of Rome where heroism is impossible.<sup>10</sup> Key to the 'unheroic' representation of the emperor is the subtle introduction of characteristics that are inconsistent with the "heroic villain" type exemplified by Dryden's Maximin.<sup>11</sup>

Armistead says of Nero that he is "the exemplar of every conceivable sin: atheism (I.ii.31-2), boundless pride (I.ii.28, 62), towering presumption (I.ii.93; V.iii.190), hedonism (I.ii.140-1), cruel inhumanity (the murders), civic irresponsibility (V.ii.46), and anti-rationality (I.i.163-4)".<sup>12</sup> Actually these are but a fraction of his many vices. Throughout the text, Nero is described as, describes himself as, or demonstrates himself to be tyrannous,<sup>13</sup> monstrous/bestial,<sup>14</sup> satanic/demonic,<sup>15</sup> incestuous,<sup>16</sup> dissolute, egomaniacal, impetuous,<sup>17</sup> easily flattered,<sup>18</sup> contemptuous (1.1.58-9; 71-2), megalomaniacal,<sup>19</sup> irreligious,<sup>20</sup> insane,<sup>21</sup> cruel,<sup>22</sup> macabre of wit,<sup>23</sup> hedonistic,<sup>24</sup> deceitful (1.1.149-50), brazen (2.3.129), angry,<sup>25</sup> insensate,<sup>26</sup> impatient,<sup>27</sup> destructive,<sup>28</sup> obstinate,<sup>29</sup> vicious (2.4.13), corrupt,<sup>30</sup> profligate,

<sup>10</sup> Leach, p.50.

<sup>11</sup> Nero is felt to be based on, and comparable to, Dryden's Maximin; cf. Van Lennep, *Sources*, p.91; Stroup and Cooke, *Works*, I.21; R. Brown, "Nathaniel Lee", p.116. This subject has received considerable attention, especially in the manner in which Lee's character differs from Dryden's; cf. Hammond, *Development*, p.505; Hunt, pp.54-6; Leach, pp.179-80.

<sup>12</sup> Armistead, *Nathaniel Lee*, p.34.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Dedication (line 12); 1.1.100, 125; 2.1.8, 19; 5.2.20, 24; 5.3.203, 241. The terms under which I have listed the traits and aspects are loose guides only, as many of the traits blend into, and are cognate with, others which are grouped separately. For instance Nero is described in the text as being "unnatural" in three different respects—firstly in that he incestuously rapes his mother (Oedipal), in that he orders her death (because of his paranoia), and in his attempts to circumvent the laws of nature (in the sex-change of Sporus, which is properly an example of his megalomania). So although these could be grouped together, they are separated because they are examples of a more specific aspects of his personality; that is his Oedipal complex, his insanity, and his megalomania, albeit that each can still be seen to meld into one another, in much the same way as the colours of a rainbow are both distinct and integrated.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. 1.1.115, 132, 141; 2.1.4, 2.3.88, 128; 4.1.24, 25b-6.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. 1.1.65, 119; 1.2.43, 84-6; 2.1.1, 15; 2.2.20-3; 2.3.97, 129-32, 134; 4.1.21; 4.3.59; 5.2.22, 29-30.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. 1.1.50, 94, 142, 146-8.

<sup>17</sup> Excepting his inability to act on his desire to kill Britannicus (1.1.101a, 102-4).

<sup>18</sup> Cf. 5.2.22-3, coupled with his evident desire to be addressed as "Dread Sir" which appears regularly throughout the play (1.1.58, 105; 1.2.89; 4.1.5).

<sup>19</sup> Nero's delusions of divinity are separated into his pretensions to divinity and his blasphemous (irreligious) attitude to the gods. This represents a distinction between his delusions of having absolute power (which is grouped as megalomania), and of his defiance of the gods (which is irreligious), being two distinct and different things. Cf. 1.1.85-90; 1.2.26, 28, 34, 35ff, 65-9, 71-83; 3.2.108; 5.3.189ff.

<sup>20</sup> He is blasphemous (defiant of divine authority—1.2.84; 2.3.97; 2.3.130-2; 3.2.108; 5.3.188, 228), atheistic (1.2.31-2; 5.3.220), and agnostic (5.3.231), at different times. In his speech at 5.3.220ff he oscillates between all three positions!

<sup>21</sup> He is paranoid (1.1.51, 74, 156-7), disturbed (2.3.19-21), and eventually clinically insane (5.3.180ff).

<sup>22</sup> Cf. 1.1.46, 94; 5.3.182-3, and references to barbarism (1.1.117, 126; 2.1.1)

<sup>23</sup> Cf. 1.2.7-9; 2.3.133-4, 136.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. 1.2.137; 2.1.21-2; 3.2.92; 5.2.46-9.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. 4.4.43-4, 55; 5.3.166-7, 170-6.

<sup>26</sup> In the various senses of being indifferent (1.1.71-2, 123-4; 2.3.19-20, 22), impious (in that he orders the death of his own mother—1.1.50, 94), and callous (2.3.137, 149).

<sup>27</sup> He is intolerant (of criticism—1.1.49; of sage advice—1.1.49, 76, 99; 1.2.22, 2.1.14; of intellectuals—1.1.163, 168-9; and of opposition—2.3.82; 5.2.26-7), as well as being impatient (1.1.73, 133-4, 151; 5.3.177-8) and irrational (1.1.49; 2.3.98; 5.3.182-4, 185).

<sup>28</sup> Yet it should be noted, even stressed, that Nero's decision to burn Rome is a response to the fact (as Drusillus notes) that the *mobile vulgus* had tried to burn down his palace (4.4.48). His is, quite literally, a decision to fight

"Eclips'd",<sup>31</sup> malevolent,<sup>32</sup> hubristic,<sup>33</sup> irresponsible,<sup>34</sup> melancholic,<sup>35</sup> Phaetonic (4.4.57), and Promethean.<sup>36</sup> This is the vast extent of his ruling personality, but there are clear indications in the text that this is not the sum total of his character. He is also displayed as a devoted and passionate lover; is subject to bouts of conscience and doubt; is capable of, and suffers, the most abject humiliation; and had once been a virtuous and noble ruler. These aspects reveal more about his identity than does an extensive analysis of his numerous vices (which appears to be the usual approach).

To date his love for Poppea has received little attention, and when it has, is felt to be nothing more than an example of his hedonism. Leach claims that his protestations of love in 3.3 are used to promote his libertine ends; that his submission to her is mere pretence and her power non-existent.<sup>37</sup> This is true of certain statements made in this scene (most notably his threat of rape at lines 45-6,<sup>38</sup> and his dubious promise to suicide after having consummated his desire for her—11.77-8), but intermixed with this rakish seduction is a subtle shift towards genuine affection. It is important to remember that Nero's lust for her begins long before he meets her, the germ of a base pursuit has been fermenting in his psyche since being implanted by Petronius at 1.2. Thus he is initially attempting to seduce an unknown object of desire simply to satisfy his carnal lust, but in getting to know her his attitude changes from lust to love, a change which is seen to have been effected by the beginning of act four. Within 3.3 there are already several hints of an unconscious development of affection. At line 30 Nero

fire with fire (4.4.56). It is true that Caligula had suggested this course of action earlier in the scene (1.15), but his was only one suggestion amongst many, including plagues and other forms of destruction.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. 1.1.72, 85ff, 112.

<sup>30</sup> In his being corrupt, and as the corrupter of Poppea and attempted corrupter of Octavia (2.3.121-4; 3.3.1ff).

<sup>31</sup> He is described in images of darkness. These images (reflecting the absence of light) are used to portray Nero as the antithesis of the virtuous monarch and/or the virtuous individual to whom solar images are both generally (in other works of literature) and specifically (in this text) applied. Cf. 1.1.44-5, 146; 4.1.49-56.

<sup>32</sup> However, Nero's hate really only ever extends to Britannicus (2.3.74; 5.2.18)—his other victims are eliminated for differing reasons. He does despise the people of Rome (in true Caligulan fashion), but hate is probably too strong a word for his contempt for them. Britannicus alone is worthy of his hatred.

<sup>33</sup> He is overconfident/arrogant—4.4.54; 5.2.40-2, 44, fearless/excessively courageous (4.3.40-2), and excessively proud—1.2.44, 70.

<sup>34</sup> That is in regard to his responsibilities as monarch—1.2.136; 4.4.56; 5.2.46-9.

<sup>35</sup> Erwin Wong cogently notes that Nero suffers from the clinical symptoms of melancholy: fear, anxiety, suspicion and lust (p.66). Citing Burton (*Anatomy of Melancholy*, pp.659-84) he suggests that Nero's sexual desires and paranoia are indicative of blood adustion (a particular kind of melancholy); the excess of blood contributing to debauched and violent behaviour. Added to his sanguinous humour imbalance is an excess of phlegm, evidenced by his muttering at 2.3.19-21 (p.68).

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Armistead, *Nathaniel Lee*, pp.35-6.

<sup>37</sup> Leach, pp.201-2.

<sup>38</sup> Assuming that one accepts this is what he means, which is not necessarily evident. Poppea's response is not one of horror and revulsion (even a lascivious woman would be appalled by such a threat, not entranced), which suggests that it may not have been a threat, but rather an implication that the strength of his love for her would compel her to remain. It is of course also possible (even likely) that he does mean the threat of rape, and that she misconstrues it to mean that the latter.

admits to being "happy", a state which one suspects is rarely achieved.<sup>39</sup> The second reference is to his "thawing soul" (3.3.46), suggests a changing attitude, despite being immediately followed by his threat of rape. A third example occurs when he states that "Joy has my Soul distrest" (3.3.91). This suggests that joy and happiness are alien to his soul (that is his normative, ruling personality), and which can be seen to be contrasted with the "joy" he feels at seeing a blood-soaked Drusillus at 4.4.46. The presence of an alien euphoria suggests that he is beginning to evince a genuine affection for her. Whilst it is true that these are awkward attempts at character development, they are indicative of an intent to present a shift in Nero from base and vicious desire towards pure and virtuous affection. To aid in the revelation of this shift, these moments are augmented by speech that is less bombastic than elsewhere in the play (and more in keeping with the lover), and by his subsequent behaviour towards her.

His affection is illustrated by the fact that, despite his vehement hatred of Britannicus, a simple request from Poppea to spare his life is no sooner asked than granted (4.1.5-6). Whilst he does recall that hatred, it is Britannicus' diatribe, and accusation of murder, against him that instigates a resumption. He even warns Britannicus to desist (giving him every opportunity to avoid a renewal of hostilities—4.1.31, 32-4, 36), but by now Nero's anger is aroused, his ruling personality state regains ascendancy, and the animosity is resumed. This leads to the slaughter of Cyara (who has the audacity to involve 'himself' in their dispute),<sup>40</sup> and the emperor's request to Petronius to dispose of the prince. Poppea recollects his vow, and he again promises to take no action against Britannicus (4.1.84-5), but it is clear that now he is amusing her, and has no intention of keeping his vow. Nevertheless he has Petronius dispose of Britannicus in such a way as to provide him with plausible deniability, suggesting that he wishes to avoid her censure, otherwise he would have simply murdered him in public, as he does everyone else who incurs his displeasure.

Another indication of his devotion to Poppea is his willingness to suffer the most abject humiliation in order to save her life. His supplication in the final scene of the play is another aspect of the text that has received almost no critical attention. The fact that he is willing to twice kneel before a negro slave, to submit to his taunting, and to witness his beloved manhandled and attacked, is to undergo an inordinate amount of humiliation for one who is the ruler of the empire, and a self-proclaimed living god. Evidently Lee wanted to demonstrate that he has at least one admirable quality, and is not entirely reprehensible.

<sup>39</sup> Whilst it could be argued that "[t]hen I am happy" is a reference to a possible future state (that is, "[t]hen I would be happy"), it is equally likely to refer to a present state of happiness.

<sup>40</sup> Despite Nero's conscience struggling against his desire to act upon this very impulse.

As with his capacity for love, Nero also displays a capacity for doubt. Despite Tucker's assertion that the emperor never undergoes a struggle between good and evil,<sup>41</sup> there are four separate occasions in which the otherwise decisive figure undergoes bouts of conscience. Each of these allusions is brief (at most four lines of dialogue), yet they reveal cogitative conflict and thus greater depth of character. The first occurs after Britannicus has pleaded for the life of Agrippina, and amidst Nero's emphatic refusal, the emperor suddenly asks "why, with you, do I capitulate?" (1.1.92). He does not yield, but this line suggests a brief moment of doubt over his decision.<sup>42</sup> The next occurs in 2.3 when Nero, observing Britannicus, declares "He dyes" (1.82) but this is no sooner affirmed than he questions the decision ("Why, with dull thoughts, do I my fancy pall?"—1.84). Like the first occasion, the doubt is no sooner enunciated than overcome, but it again evidences a moment in which the virtuous aspect of his identity attempts to assert control. The last two examples occur in close proximity, demonstrating a longer period of consternation, and the most evident example of conflict. On this occasion it is Cyara, begging him to spare the life of Britannicus, that causes Nero to doubt his resolve:

If I gaze long, I shall my nature lose:  
Midst of my full career, I stop and muse.  
Whence does this poor unworthy pause proceed?  
Can I repent my rage? No, he shall bleed...  
Shall I be branded with the name of good?  
Begone, thou soft invader of my blood (4.1.57-60, 75-6).

Despite all of these examples being excessively compressed, awkwardly introduced and insufficiently maintained, they are nevertheless evident of a characterological design.<sup>43</sup>

The last of the paradoxical aspects of Nero's character is the briefest, but possibly the most significant. Early in the first scene of the play Nero is referred to as having once been a noble and virtuous ruler. Otho states that:

Nothing appears, alas, as heretofore;  
The darkness of his [Nero's] horrid vices, have  
Eclips'd the glimmering rays of his frail virtue.  
His cruelties, like birds of prey, have pick'd  
All seeds of Nobleness from his false heart;  
And now it lyes a sad dull lump of earth,  
Impatient of wise counsel, and reproof (1.1.43-9).

<sup>41</sup> Tucker, p.20.

<sup>42</sup> In action this line would probably be accentuated by a long pause, and possibly by his walking across the stage with a concerned look upon his face, before suddenly overcoming his doubt and emphatically asserting that "My word's an Oracle, and stands her Fate".

<sup>43</sup> Instances like these suggest to me that Lee, in his inexperience, was attempting to do too many things at once; he appears to be trying to produce complex character conflict whilst simultaneously trying to proceed rapidly through what amounts to too many events, and as such causes everything to be excessively compressed, and allows no aspect of the play the opportunity to develop to its potential.

Nero has clearly not always been evil, but has gradually become so. This speech invites us to seek an understanding of why such a change takes place. And the cause, like the results, is revealed in the text.

So how do we reconcile the two sides of his character? By concentrating upon a trait of his character that has been almost completely ignored: his petulance.<sup>44</sup> His over-indulgence has been the root cause of his corruption, his desire for 'more' remains unchecked, and is even encouraged. A perfect example is the incestuous rape of his mother; because there is no blocking mechanism (such as an opposer, or the fear of sanction, censure or ostracisation) to prevent it, it is possible to fulfil this (supposedly infantile) desire. When urged to act, he does so. In effect he is a victim (possibly the greatest victim) of the endemic corruption of the Imperial court; a court which indulges his every whim, no matter how outrageous.<sup>45</sup> It is, as Otho suggests, a poisonous and:

fatal circle;  
Upon whose Magick skirts, a thousand Devils,  
In Chrystal forms sit tempting innocence,  
And beckon early Virtue from its Center (2.2.20-3).

The allusion to "early Virtue" recalls to mind his previous reference to Nero's "frail virtue", intimating that the emperor's goodness have been drawn from him as a result of his exposure to that environment. His virtue is never allowed to develop because the court promotes and fosters vice, and indulges his every whim resulting in his megalomania and eventually his complete insanity.<sup>46</sup>

Although I have examined Nero at greater length than might seem necessary, this analysis is intended to draw the reader's attention to the intricacy of Lee's characterisation. Not only is Nero Lee's first attempts at characterisation, but is also his first attempt at creating a complex atypical character.<sup>47</sup> Lee's ameliorated depiction invites a psychological reading of the character and a deeper understanding of his situation, although it obviously does not excuse his behaviour. This makes the emperor Lee's first example of what I classify as the 'ambivalent tragic villain', a figure rendered slightly sympathetic because he is a victim of manipulation and the corruption of his environment.<sup>48</sup> From a purely mechanical perspective,

<sup>44</sup> Tucker was the first to make note of his petulance in passing (p.19), but made no further analysis of what is arguably the most fundamental aspect of his character.

<sup>45</sup> It is important to remember, as the title informs us, that this play is the *tragedy*, not the *history*, of Nero. That this is a *de casibus* tragedy is an aspect which is overlooked in analysis.

<sup>46</sup> The introduction of the ghost of Caligula is significant in this respect, because the former emperor's excesses and madness (4.4.18) were legendary. Cf. Suetonius, "Caius Caesar Caligula", IV.22ff.

<sup>47</sup> A discussion of this term will take place at the conclusion to the chapter at pages 111-3. At this point it is suffice to note that atypical characters differ from stereotypes because of the emphasis placed upon their internal conflict precludes us from reducing them to a type. Nero is an example of a modestly atypical representation.

<sup>48</sup> The 'ambivalent tragic villain' is one of four types of villains. It pertains to those characters that are manipulated into vicious behaviour because their fundamental flaw (hamartia) is exploited. These figures are



the emperor is an apsychological causative chooser (an instigator),<sup>49</sup> who is minimally stylised,<sup>50</sup> substantially coherent,<sup>51</sup> substantially whole,<sup>52</sup> medially symbolic,<sup>53</sup> substantially accessible,<sup>54</sup> substantially derivative,<sup>55</sup> medially conventional,<sup>56</sup> and static—that is, he does not undergo any *anagnorsis*. As the inaugural example of Lee's characterology, and for the subtle complexity introduced into a heroic foundation, the figure of Nero is worthy of greater credit than has been granted to date.

The corruption of the court is epitomised by Petronius, a 'villian'<sup>57</sup> who is the "sole author of [Nero's] delight" (1.2.95). As he reveals in his soliloquy at 4.1.115ff, he is physically (and morally) deformed, his villainous motivation becoming associated with that of Shakespeare's Richard III. It is this parvenu who plays upon the vicious part of Nero's nature (his ruling personality) so as to exercise what turns out to be an illusory control over him.

more sympathetic than the calculating (Machiavellian) villain because they are not entirely self-directed. I use the term "ambivalent" to describe this type of character in two senses—both in the sense that the character is him- or herself rendered ambivalent (vacillatory) by conflicting emotions, as well as in the sense that the representation causes an ambivalent (mixed) response towards the character by the audience. See glossary of terms (pp.274-5) for a comparison of the four categories within the generic 'villain' class.

<sup>49</sup> His actions are mostly of an instinctive, rather than a contemplative, basis. However it should be noted that he is not entirely apsychological (if one were using a scale, one could say that he is substantially, rather than maximally, apsychological). Whilst most of his actions are dictated by his normative, ruling personality, his vacillation and response to Poppea's request to spare the lives of Britannicus and Cyara is unexpected in an apsychological character.

<sup>50</sup> As the central protagonist of the play, Nero is the most fully developed character. He is allocated the most dialogue (fractionally over twenty percent), as well as being the subject of much of the remainder. Only four of the fifteen scenes (3.1, 4.2, 4.3 and 5.1) are not concerned with, and make no reference to, him.

<sup>51</sup> Nero belongs in this location because, of his two personality states, his ruling disposition is far more dominant. This leads him towards the maximal position, but not completely so.

<sup>52</sup> I would suggest him to be substantially whole because, although the dominance of his ruling personality makes his actions fairly predictable, his bouts of conscience and Poppea's influence upon him suggests that that dominance is not absolute. He remains slightly enigmatic.

<sup>53</sup> Nero belongs in the medial position because he is displayed equally as a complex psychological entity, and as symbolic of the chaos which results from the misgovernment of a state. He is also an embodiment of King Charles II (Stroup and Cooke, *Works*, I.21-2), or rather, the negative aspects of the British monarch (Armistead, *Nathaniel Lee*, p.41; Johnson, p.161).

<sup>54</sup> Nero's complexity can be seen to reside in the medial position because, although he does display psychological conflict, his oscillation is always brief and easily overcome, and he does not undergo anything approaching the long, dark night of the soul. He is maximal in regard to the transparency of his motivation; the basis for all of his actions are revealed in dialogue, either to the assembled court or in internal monologue (of which there are seven separate examples).

<sup>55</sup> Several critics have noted that Lee's Nero differs from the historical sources by depriving him of a valid motive for the murders (Van Lennep, *Sources*, p.117; Hunt, pp.54-6; Kastan, p.128). Unlike the historical Emperor, Nero acts without rational motives for obvious reasons—Lee is describing a world gone mad, not a society where murder is done for political (and therefore rational) purposes. Yet he differs from his sources only to a limited extent. In depicting the vicious behaviour of the emperor he follows Tacitus and Suetonius closely, although he completely overlooks Nero's famous pretension to artistic genius. This is probably because that aspect of his character reveals his fatuousness (as it does in the *Nero* of 1624) which would undermine his evil, and make him appear comical rather than menacing. In the earlier play the emphasis on his artistry results in the mockery towards, rather than fear of, the emperor by other characters in the play. The differences between the play and the sources tend to be plot specific (such as the compression of events which occur over his entire reign into one brief period) rather than the traits which he displays.

<sup>56</sup> Nero is minimally conventional in regard to his societal role as monarch; he is distinctly unlike the conventional ruler in his thorough disregard for his responsibilities to his people. In contrast, he is maximally conventional in his functional role as the villainous tyrant. Collectively he resides in the central position.

<sup>57</sup> That is a Machiavellian villain.

Whilst it is Nero who is described as satanic, it is Petronius who is the real corrupter, sowing the seeds of vice in Poppea as well as fanning the flames of the emperor's desire. Yet despite his success in corrupting Nero, Petronius proves incapable of influencing him in matters of importance. For although Petronius expresses concern at the reports of the revolt under Galba (5.2), and emphasises the gravity of the situation, Nero remains completely indifferent and concerned only with his hedonistic pursuits. It is not a little ironic that this sage advice is ignored, as had been that of every other counsellor.

Like many of Lee's characters, Petronius is difficult to categorise. He is part Machiavellian counsellor, part parasite, but is nevertheless a villain whose final actions are inconsistent with the type foundation. His appearance in the final scene is unlike that of a parasitical advisor in several respects, not the least of which is the fact that he heroically engages in combat. His deathbed contrition is also particularly revealing:

With faithful truth, Sir, I have serv'd you long;  
Yours was the right, I did my self the wrong;  
But now it matters not, 'twas Loyalty,  
And, as I liv'd, I in your service dye (5.3.212-5).

This suggests that he genuinely regrets having corrupted Nero and his involvement in the current situation. Although his contrition may be dubious, I am inclined to view it as sincere because it has been tacitly introduced by his recent behaviour, if, admittedly, not with the greatest of skill. It also helps to explain why he is permitted a noble, rather than suffering an ignominious, death. Thus, despite Hunt's assertion, Petronius is not "reduced" to a luxurious panderer.<sup>58</sup> He is actually an example of a minor tragic hero—a flawed figure whose error is to pander to the emperor's whims and so to contribute not only to Nero's corruption, but also his own, and whose contrition results in his rehabilitation.<sup>59</sup> Although the tragedy is not his tale, his tale is nevertheless a tragedy in miniature.

Poppea is in many ways the most interesting character of the play. Like Nero and Petronius, she illustrates the corruption of the court and the destruction which results from the hedonistic misuse of power. She represents this corruption in action, unlike Nero and Petronius who have long since succumbed to their desires. Verdurmen suggests that she displays the traits of a Drydenesque termagant: lust and excessive ambition.<sup>60</sup> This is certainly true, but she

<sup>58</sup> Hunt, p.58.

<sup>59</sup> The 'tragic hero' is one of four types of hero. This classification derives from Aristotle's concept of the ideal tragic protagonist being the good but imperfect figure whose *hamartia* (usually hubris) leads him or her to make erroneous choices. This results in *metabasis* (reversal of fortune), tragic agony (conflict, contrition and expiation), and eventual *anagnorsis* (although many otherwise ideal tragic heroes may not make such a self-discovery). These characters may commit heinous crimes (often as a result of the manipulation of others), but nevertheless repent of their behaviour and so achieve a moral rehabilitation. See glossary of terms (pp.267-8) for a comparison of the four categories within the generic 'hero' class.

<sup>60</sup> Verdurmen, *Tragedy of Concernment*, pp.154-5.

is much more complex than this summation indicates. She is nymphomaniacal,<sup>61</sup> hedonistic,<sup>62</sup> infatuate,<sup>63</sup> black of blood,<sup>64</sup> and masculine in her behaviour.<sup>65</sup> She is even compared with a Harpy, a sorceress and the goddess Circe, so as to accentuate her lascivious and corruptive nature.<sup>66</sup> Yet her virtue continues to be overlooked, particularly in respect to the extent of her conflict between duty and desire. To date this has been considered far more trivial than the text indicates.<sup>67</sup> In fact her oscillation is the most extensive of any character in the play, two whole scenes (3.2 and 3.3) being dedicated to her struggle. She is torn between a burgeoning desire and the unconscious urge to recoil from the offer:

What unknown guests are these that tear my brest?  
Like slaves, in golden mines, they dig their way:  
A Crown they shew, which my frail heart Adores;  
Before my thoughts, a Royal Scepter flies,  
At which, my fancy grasps; but when it comes  
And it bright glories offers to my hand,  
I fain would reach, and yet refuse to hold (3.2.16-22).

Her normative, virtuous state begins to be assailed by latent desires, and she finds herself "lost in Honours Labrynth" (3.2.28) from which she is unable to extricate herself. This is an important aspect of her dilemma; she is forced to resolve this issue herself, and her growing desire would settle it to her detriment. She receives little assistance from her brother, or her absent husband, in attempting to reject the offer.<sup>68</sup> In the absence of a defender, the repetition of the offer is too attractive for a weak-willed woman such as Poppea. But, as she is at pains to point out, she is "not [yet] guilty of one wicked thought" (3.2.60). She is enticed by the offer, but has not accepted it, either in thought, word or deed, despite Piso's allegation to the contrary. The seed has been sown, but has not yet born fruit.<sup>69</sup> She is to undergo further conflict before such a resolution is made.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. 1.2.118ff; 3.2.49, 64, 70; 4.1.102-12.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. 5.3.22ff; 5.3.56ff.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. 4.1.102ff; 4.3.1ff; 38; 5.3.7, 18ff.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. 3.2.84. This indicates blood adustion, an excess of the hot and moist humour which produces lascivious behaviour.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. 1.2.125ff; 3.3.84.

<sup>66</sup> 3.2.81; 4.3.59-62. The Harpy is compared to Poppea because it symbolises the vicious passions such as lust and guilt. Harpies are the embodiment of vicious disposition and provoking evil-doing (Chevalier *et al.*, p.475). The Greek goddess Circe is the quintessential seductress (Biedermann, p.69).

<sup>67</sup> Cf. Hasan, p.66; Leach, p.201; Hunt, p.53; Verdurmen, "Submerged Borrowing", p.94.

<sup>68</sup> Piso is ineffective in his opposition to Petronius, and is equivocal in his speech to Poppea; he is vociferous in his condemnation of her perceived corruption, yet makes no attempt to explain to her why she should refuse the offer (3.2.43ff). He is even provided with a soliloquy so as to express his intention to destroy Poppea and Nero, yet he does nothing whatsoever to prevent his seduction of her (3.2.90ff). Given that Piso has been impotent to oppose Nero (cf. 1.1.153ff), this soliloquy ironically highlights Poppea's isolation from support against the corrupting influence of the court.

<sup>69</sup> This position differs from that posited by Leach who argues that she has accepted the offer prior to the arrival of Nero. He suggests that 3.3 is nothing more than an exercise in hedonistic foreplay; that they are both pretending to play out the seduction for their own amusement (p.201). I have already argued that this is not entirely the case for Nero, and it is most assuredly not the case for Poppea.

Poppea is presented with two further asides (3.3.35-40, 47-52) to demonstrate the continuing struggle.<sup>70</sup> A notable aspect of the first monologue is that she sees the emperor's passion as a liberating contrast to Otho's staid and dispassionate nature. She becomes enamoured with Nero because he offers her the affection that she feels she is being denied in her marriage. This makes the acceptance of his proposal so much the easier. The other two traits of her character which are influential in this regard are her fatuousness and her naïvety. She is the frivolous child that she envisages; she is unable to decide between "two gay things" (3.3.48) and fails to understand the ramifications of her actions until it is too late. She places little value on her virtue because she does not understand the importance of virtuous behaviour, or the consequences of succumbing to one's vicious dispositions. Living in an idyllic, pastoral environment (traditionally associated with innocence and virtue), has prevented her from witnessing the depravity of the court, and from understanding that evil stems from the rejection of virtue. Her *hamartia*, and her tragedy, derives from this naïvety, and her redemption comes from her eventual *anagnorisis*.

The character of Poppea becomes even more complex after her corruption. From this point on she constantly oscillates between her vicious and virtuous positions. Her subordinate personality continues to struggle to regain ascendancy, to an extent not evident in any other character of the play. She demonstrates her virtue in the altruistic petitions she makes to Nero for the lives of Britannicus and Corbulo (4.1.5, 82-3), but then displays her ascendant vicious state in revealing her infatuation for the prince (4.1.102ff). For, having embraced her base desires, she is now compelled to act upon them. She reveals an awareness of this situation, despite being unable to overcome her nymphomaniacal tendencies.<sup>71</sup> Act Four Scene Three is a case in point—Poppea admits that her "Virtues are dethron'd, and passions rule; / O Heav'ns! my crimes you have reveng'd at full" (4.3.3-4), and then proceeds to demonstrate this in her

<sup>70</sup> It is also important to remember that in drama, action and time often need to be compressed to accommodate the limits of the medium. Thus Poppea's supposedly brief reticence may well have taken a considerable amount of time in action, in the same way that Lady Anne's acceptance of Richard III's proposal of marriage probably took a considerable amount of time, despite appearing extremely, and improbably, sudden in the text. Poppea's continual vacillation helps to emphasise the length of time taken for the seduction to succeed. It is important for the audience to envisage the passing of time, rather than presuming that an event follows immediately upon the one that precedes it. Lee's plays often violate the three unities (particularly time and place), and it is probable that the passage of hours, days, months, even years occur between scenes, particularly in a play such as *Nero* in which events evidently take place over a great deal of time.

<sup>71</sup> Her character has undergone a notable change since succumbing to her vicious personality, although time is likely to have passed between the end of act three and the start of act four, to allow for a gradual descent into corruption, and the resulting awareness of her state. She is no longer naïve and innocent, being now fully aware of her vicious nature, as she reveals at 4.3.3-4. I use the term 'vicious' in contradistinction to Armistead who claims that she is "diabolical[ly] evil" (*Nathaniel Lee*, p.37). She is certainly lascivious, and does threaten to murder Britannicus (although no motivation is given for this act, it is probably because she is enamoured with him, and feels that to remove him would relieve her of her desire). But she is not evil, and certainly not diabolically so. The continual revelation of her virtue suggests that this is not the case.

determination to murder Britannicus (4.3.23), and in her (unintentional) corruption of him.<sup>72</sup> Not only is she aware of her vice, but she also admits to regretting her actions at lines 40-3, and at lines 69ff:

I'll shew thee e're we part  
Sad things: a troubled mind, and wounded heart.  
Ah! for my former peace, what would I give?  
My comfort is, this shame I sha'nt survive.  
Oh dismal change! nothing is constant found;  
The Gods, with whirl-winds, drive our Fortunes round.

These, and her final expression of contrition, are aspects of her character that continue to be underestimated. It is true that she relapses in her seduction of the negro slave (5.3.18ff, 50ff), but her remorse should nevertheless be viewed as genuine. And, despite some doubt as to her veracity,<sup>73</sup> her ultimate repentance at 5.3.86ff is equally sincere, because it has been suggested by her behaviour, and because of her self-awareness. Significantly, in spite of Otho's initial doubt, even he comes to believe her. The empress never once asks for mercy (even stating that she "would not live"—5.3.95); like Othello she simply wishes to confess, and be cleansed of, her guilt. This is reiterated by her assertion that she will speak no more after her contrition (5.3.123). She maintains this position, even after the arrival of Nero—and one suspects that were she not genuinely contrite she would have called for his aid and protection—or when stabbed in the arm by Piso.

Thus, despite Ham's claim (reiterated by Stroup and Cooke), Poppea is considerably more complex than the "familiar lustful queen of heroic tragedy".<sup>74</sup> Although allocated less dialogue than Nero, Britannicus or Piso, she is arguably the most interesting character of the play. She does not appear until the third act, but dominates the action from that point onwards (after Nero of course). The empress is Lee's first example of a 'tragic heroine', and is a particularly efficacious one at that. She is the good but flawed figure whose hamartia (her desire) creates erroneous choices, conscience-ridden suffering, *anagnorisis*, repentance, rehabilitation and death. Her situation evokes Aristotelian pity and fear in the realisation that goodness has been corrupted and destroyed. She is modestly stylised (which is unusual for an intermediary character), medially coherent, medially whole, minimally symbolic, medially accessible (combining substantial complexity—epitomised by her nine monologues—and medial transparency), medially derivative,<sup>75</sup> modestly conventional (minimally so in her

<sup>72</sup> 4.3.44ff. Poppea's corruption of Britannicus will be discussed in due course.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. Ham, p.51; Leach, p.209.

<sup>74</sup> Cf. Ham, p.43; Stroup and Cooke, *Works*, I.22.

<sup>75</sup> Historically she pursued Nero, not the other way around. In addition there is little suggestion of her virtue in any of the sources. But in respect to the nymphomaniacal aspect of her character, Lee closely follows Tacitus (13.45-6) and the earlier play, which accentuate this disposition at the expense of all others.

societal—firstly as a dutiful wife and sister, and later as an Empress, and substantially so in her functional—as a passionate villainess, roles), and is a responsive chooser (a responder).<sup>76</sup> She is medially atypical, making her the most cogitative and individuated character that Lee produces in his maiden work, and is arguably the most effective and affective. The tragedy is as much, if not more, her tale than it is Nero's.

In contrast to the characters that represent the court, are those who reflect the impotence of society in the face of such corruption. This group is epitomised by Britannicus, the usurped heir of the empire, accentuated by the passive acceptance of the regime by Cyara, Seneca, Agrippina, Octavia and Otho (prior to 4.2), and the active support of Drusillus, Plautus and Mirmilon. Unlike Nero and Poppea, Britannicus does not undergo psychological conflict, and is presented for his symbolic and affective qualities. He is the opposite of Nero and highlights the absence of those virtues in the emperor that he himself displays in abundance. In him are presented many of the traits usually associated with the heroic protagonist. He is courageous,<sup>77</sup> selfless,<sup>78</sup> forthright,<sup>79</sup> noble,<sup>80</sup> innocent,<sup>81</sup> loyal,<sup>82</sup> godlike,<sup>83</sup> charismatic,<sup>84</sup> rational (2.3.27), philosophical (4.3.5ff), proud (4.1.31), and described in terms of solar imagery (2.3.110). He is beloved,<sup>85</sup> and is himself a magnificent lover. But in keeping with a characterology which does not permit of absolutes, Lee deliberately undercuts his characterisation, if ever so slightly. Like the typical heroic character Britannicus is a devoted lover, but unlike the type is neither a warrior nor a man of action.<sup>86</sup> He is also corrupted by

<sup>76</sup> She is responsive because her decisions do not immediately follow the establishment of the choice, but stem from psychological conflict. It is true that her decisions are predictable, but she nevertheless struggles against her impulses, demonstrating the contemplative element involved therein. Her only truly instinctive choice is in her decision to seduce the negro slave, but this must be contrasted with the numerous decisions that she makes over which she oscillates.

<sup>77</sup> Cf. 1.1.77ff, 100, 101b.

<sup>78</sup> In that he pleads for the life of Agrippina (1.1.60ff), offers his life in exchange for Octavia (2.3.156), and after being poisoned his first thought is for the safety of his friends (5.1.1ff).

<sup>79</sup> He speaks his mind, even when it endangers him—1.1.60ff, 77ff, 100, 101b; 4.1.24, 35.

<sup>80</sup> Numerous references to his nobility are made in the text so as to accentuate this aspect of his identity (2.3.3, 2.3.80, 3.1.69, 5.1.16, 75), as well as to cognate aspects (his grandeur—5.1.61, his gallantry—2.3.8, and his gentility—2.3.152). His nobility is most evident in his defiance of Nero to plead for the life of Agrippina, whom the audience would have been all too aware had historically been instrumental in the usurpation of his throne. This action substantially elevates his heroic stature.

<sup>81</sup> Cf. 1.1.111, 2.3.15, 5.1.61, yet he is paradoxically also politically cognizant (2.3.9-12).

<sup>82</sup> Cf. 1.1.106. As Armistead suggests, Britannicus embodies the kind of blind obedience mandated by the belief in the divine right of kings (*Nathaniel Lee*, p.41). This is all the more meritorious given that he is the mandated ruler, and as such would be justified in opposing Nero.

<sup>83</sup> Both in his visage (2.3.81; 5.1.15-7; "GOD's great master-piece" (2.3.75) and Nature's "darling" (4.1.124)), and in the fact that he is granted the divine gift of prescience (2.3.101, 154), in ironic contrast to Nero's deluded megalomaniacal claims and self-deification.

<sup>84</sup> He is persuasive in that he is capable of making Nero question his resolution—1.1.92, and charismatic in that his nemesis is continually unable to act against him.

<sup>85</sup> He is loved by Octavia (2.3.1-8), Alamander (2.3.32ff) and Flavius (5.1.15ff), and desired by Cyara (2.3.75ff) and Poppea (4.1.102, 4.2.1ff).

<sup>86</sup> Stroup sees Britannicus as a combination of the "Heroic Hero" and "Saddened Lover" stereotypes (*Type-characters*, p.501).



Poppea, necessitating the introduction of the ghost of Cyara to assist in the reversal of his degeneration. Despite only having recently received news of Cyara's supposed death, the prince is effortlessly seduced by the charms of the Empress. The introduction of the ghost of Cyara as a warning against her, suggests that to succumb is to submit to one's vicious personality as Poppea and Nero had done before him, and thus to proceed down the same path into depravity. It is a battle that he has lost by the time the ghost arrives; it is for this reason that the ghost is required in the first place. His heroic stature is slightly depreciated as a result, and because divine intervention is required to restore his normative, virtuous state.

The characteristic that is most indicative of Britannicus is his preoccupation with death,<sup>87</sup> a habit associated with the Hamletian tragic figure rather than the epic hero. This obsession is evident in the prince long before the deaths of Octavia, Cyara and Coralbo.<sup>88</sup> In a conversation with his sister he states that:

Mild as calm martyrs, I could death receive;  
Two reasons, only, make me wish to live:  
Two debts remain to pay, most Nobly due:  
Love claims the first, t'other I owe to you (2.3.22-5).

Clearly he has given this matter some thought. It suggests a preexisting condition, a deep-seated psychosis, which in faculty psychology is revealed to be black bile adustion.<sup>89</sup> Passivity, his other principal trait, is related to his morbid fixation, and is illustrated at the beginning of the third act. Following the death of Octavia, Britannicus is presented listening to a dirge to his sister. The song reiterates his obsessive thanatopsis, as well as recommending to him that surcease of sorrow would result from his suicide. It simply never occurs to him to seek revenge for her murder because violence is not in his nature, nor is revolt against the sovereign ruler, as he is at pains to point out (1.1.106-10). His reaction to the progressive degradation of the state mirrors his response to the deaths of those he loves—he becomes increasingly pensive, increasingly incapable of action, and eventually insane. Like the virtuous remnant of the court, Britannicus finds himself in a dilemma between enduring the destructive behaviour of a tyrannous ruler, or opposing him; neither option an appealing one.

As the antithesis of Nero, Britannicus' normative, ruling personality is virtuous, and despite his one lapse in succumbing to the charms of Poppea, he remains so until death. In terms of textual centrality he is, like Poppea, an intermediary character, although, being less

<sup>87</sup> Cf. 2.3.22ff; 2.3.153ff; 3.1.1ff; 4.1.7ff; 85ff; 4.3.5ff; 5.1.59ff.

<sup>88</sup> It is important to remember that, to Britannicus, the death of Cyara is distinct from that of Coralbo. Thus he has been burdened by the death of three (as distinct from the actual two) people close to him within a short period of time.

<sup>89</sup> Britannicus admits that his "blood is black, and full of woe" (4.3.35), which Wong has demonstrated to be black bile adustion (pp.72-4). In modern psychological terms, his state would probably be diagnosed as unipolar manic depressive disorder.

stylised than her, he resides in the medial position. He is presented throughout as a modestly typified example of a 'victimised hero',<sup>90</sup> the almost exclusive concentration upon his obsession preventing a more detailed presentation of other aspects of character.<sup>91</sup> He suffers no conflict between virtue and vice like Nero or Poppea, nor does he develop like Petronius. He never debates the merits of loyalty to an abusive sovereign, nor whether it is appropriate to exact revenge upon the murderer of Octavia and Coralbo. His sole concern is whether to continue to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune or by not opposing end them. He is maximally coherent; his ruling personality more fully dominant even than Nero's, his one lapse notwithstanding. Melancholia so thoroughly dominates his character that his actions and behaviour are entirely predictable, demonstrating him to be of a maximal wholeness. He is arguably the most blatantly symbolic character of Lee's creation.<sup>92</sup> But he is equally self-referential, delineated with too much individuality to be seen as merely an emblem. As such, he is medially symbolic, equally one and the other. Of accessibility, Britannicus is a unique example. Despite being only medially accessible (combining medial complexity and medial transparency), he is allocated six monologues and so is presented with a level of interiority unusual in a character who does not undergo psychological conflict. He is minimally derivative,<sup>93</sup> substantially conventional,<sup>94</sup> and static in that he does not change in response to circumstances. He is also an apsychological responsive chooser (a reactor) in that his reactions are entirely predictable, and dictated by his dominant personality state.

Whereas Britannicus reflects the unconditional loyalty of much of the populace, Piso represents those who oppose the tyranny of the emperor, and is supported by Otho (post 4.2) and Flavius. Piso is a malcontent; he is choleric of humour (4.2.5), irascible, outspoken (and vociferously so) and inventive. But he is not a typical revenger, because he is decidedly not a man of action. He spends much of his time conspiring against the regime (1.1.153ff) and vowing revenge (3.2.85-7, 93ff; 4.2.29ff), yet he takes no action whatsoever against the source of the problem. Instead he devotes his energy to assaulting Poppea, who is simply a victim of

<sup>90</sup> The 'victimised hero' is one of four types of hero. It refers to those characters whose actions or choices do not contribute to their downfall. They are passive victims of external forces rather than active contributors. See glossary of terms (pp.267-8) for a comparison of the four categories within the generic class.

<sup>91</sup> Using Fishelov's terms, whereas Nero and Poppea are 'type-like individuals', Britannicus, like Petronius, is an 'individual-like type'.

<sup>92</sup> Firstly his name associates him and his behaviour with that of Great Britain, and by extension the Carolean age. He is also, like Nero, a symbol of Rome, as is evidenced in 5.1 where Lee presents the 'burning' of Britannicus as a metaphor for that of the city.

<sup>93</sup> The historical Tiberius Claudius Germanicus died in 55CE, thirteen years prior to Nero. But, as Kastan suggests, Lee's misrepresentation of historical fact should be seen as a sign of artistic intent rather than evidence of historical ignorance (p.132). This decision can best be explained by a desire to capitalise upon the eponymous nature of his name.

<sup>94</sup> Britannicus is medially conventional with regard to his societal role. Although he displays the loyalty that one expects of a prince towards his monarch, this undermines the responsibility that he owes to the people to oppose the usurper. Functionally he serves as the antithesis of Nero, and in this respect his conventionality is maximal.



circumstance. The only action Piso takes is to disguise himself as a negro slave to entrap his sister. He only dares to oppose Nero (and his minions like Petronius) once the rebellion is in process. This makes him opportunistic rather than heroic, and in the end his opposition is demonstrated to be as ineffective as the passive acceptance, or active support, of the regime. His intention to deify the new emperor demonstrates that nothing has been learnt from the mistakes of the past, and that the same errors are set to occur. Piso is an early Leean example of what I term the ambivalent statesman type, characters who are concerned with serving the state but often at the expense of their morality and/or humanity.<sup>95</sup>

As with Britannicus, the remaining characters are included principally for their functional and affective qualities. Cyara is a romantic 'breeches part' heroine descended from Shakespeare's Viola, Beaumont and Fletcher's Euphrasia, Ford's Eroclea and Dryden's Honoria. Along with Octavia, her principal role is to contrast Poppea, and to elicit sympathy for her suffering. She is steadfast and unyielding in her devotion, inventive, courageous, spirited, dynamic, and strong-willed, and her virtue is above reproach. But unlike the pre-Interregnum type, she is a peripheral figure, succeeding in her function but presenting scant individuality. Hers is a type that would be developed by Lee in the presentation of Rosalinda in his next play. Octavia is contrasted to Poppea by her marital and fraternal devotion. Whereas Poppea abjures her marital duty, Octavia remains loyal to her husband despite his atrocious behaviour; and whilst Poppea ignores her brother's advice, Octavia remains devoted to hers throughout. She is kind, loyal, caring, beloved by her brother and loving him in equal measure,<sup>96</sup> selfless, incorruptible, outspoken, courageous, and thoroughly virtuous. Of the character of Agrippina little need be said. Her death reflects the removal of the last influential advocate of morality from Nero's counsel, as the emperor himself acknowledges at 1.2.22. Excepting this Nero's mother is a stereotypical character with scant individuation that merely serves to catalogue some of Nero's worst atrocities. Seneca is the typical philosophical counsellor, whose advice to Nero on the proper conduct for a ruler is ignored by him to his detriment, and that of the state. He serves to emphasise that ignoring sage advice and criticism of misrule exposes a society to ungoverned rule and eventual chaos. He is wise, honest, philosophical, forthright, courageous, and not obsequious. Otho is essentially a partisan figure,

<sup>95</sup> The 'statesman hero' is one of four types of hero, and is subdivided into the 'ambivalent' and 'exemplary' categories. The former applies to those characters whose intense stoicism, patriotism and service to the state often comes at the expense of their morality and humanity. Their attention to civic responsibility makes them admirable, yet this is often marred by the fact that they immoderately suppress their emotions and neglect their personal obligations in the process. These enigmatic figures are distinguished from the exemplary hero, whose behaviour is unimpeachable and effected without sacrificing either their principles or rectitude. See glossary of terms (pp. 267-8) for a comparison of the four categories within the generic 'hero' class.

despite receiving the fifth highest allocation of dialogue in the play after Nero, Britannicus, Piso and Poppea. He functions as an accomplice to Piso in his revenge upon Poppea, in his opposition to the regime, and by reiterating Piso's arguments. Otho is austere, honest, considerate, forthright, courageous, loyal, trusting (naïvely so, despite his awareness of the nature of the court), staid and dispassionate, yet capable of sincere devotion, quick to anger but capable of forgiveness. In this he is a Roman soldier of the type epitomised by Shakespeare's Enobarbus. This type, from which both Seneca and Otho derive, would be used extensively by Lee, in characters such as Scipio, Clytus and Marcian. They would, however, be given greater focus and centrality than their predecessors in *Nero*.

The last two characters requiring attention are Drusillus and Plautus. The depiction of the former at 4.4.47ff is entirely in conflict with the Drusillus of 2.1. Whereas he had been vociferous in his hatred of Nero and advocating regicide, he now calls the rebels traitors and cowards, and actively opposes them. Here we have an example of the 'schizophrenic' character, one that is wholly incoherent, because he seems to be two entirely different characters, and one cannot adequately combine the disparate positions. Only his name indicates that the two diametrically opposed personalities belong to the same entity. The characterisation of Plautus is no less puzzling. His refusal to listen to treason at 1.1.153ff suggests he is a loyalist, yet his aside at 2.3.90ff is indicative of anti-Neronian sentiment. His appearance with Nero at Otho's estate at 3.2.89 suggests that he is a trusted attendant of Nero—otherwise there would be absolutely no reason for him to be there in the first place—and his loyalty is amply demonstrated in the final scenes of the play; at 5.2.2ff his discussion of the mutiny is tinged with condemnation, and he murders Flavius at Nero's command. At 5.3.181ff he continues to serve Nero faithfully, despite the emperor's irrationality, the order to execute Plautus for that same loyalty, and the increasing likelihood of the success of the rebellion—reason enough to defect if that were his desire. Moreover his partisan (Mirmilon) advises the emperor to flee for his safety 23 lines later. Thus we have a group of characters who are thoroughly inconsistent in that they oscillate between the pro- and anti-Neronian positions. But whilst they are defective in their incoherence, they are also indicative of the impotency of the people to oppose the regime.<sup>97</sup>

*Nero* is fundamentally an exercise in character development. Contrary to popular opinion the central characters, particularly Nero and Poppea, are not simplified versions of heroic stereotypes, but are attempts at producing complex, substantively verisimilar,

<sup>96</sup> She is beloved by Britannicus to the extent that he seems to mourn her death more than Cyara's—Octavia's death being the focus of his grief in 3.1.1ff, as well as 4.1.8ff and 5.1.41ff, both of the latter examples occurring after the news of Cyara's demise.

psychologically conflicted entities that struggle to deal with situations which fragment them. Lee adopts the conventional conflict between love and honour, duty and desire, or virtue and vice, and emphasises the inner turmoil that this dilemma creates in the individual, and the various ways in which they react. It is in the response to difficult choices with which Lee is interested. Whilst the production of such moments of trauma are sometimes awkward, they are nevertheless considered, and an extremely important aspect of his developing characterology, as is his 'unheroic' approach to the heroic code. Lee's attention to verisimilar psychologies in the play has led G. Wilson Knight to emphasise the value of the psychic realism presented in the play, a view shared by Peter Skrine.<sup>98</sup> Whilst the change in character foundation in each case is principally one of degree (after all Nero remains similar in structure to Maximin), the modifications are indicative of a differing focus and approach to the creation and study of character. These changes can be seen to a greater extent in the plays which follow.

As Skrine suggests, *Nero* is a study of power and its effect on the individual; their desire for it and the perverted uses to which it can be put.<sup>99</sup> It emphasises Acton's adage that power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. This is one of the principal motifs of Leean tragedy, and serves as a basis for his characterology. The tragedy also reflects the impotence of the masses to oppose tyranny. The passive loyalty of Britannicus *et alia*, and the active support of Drusillus, Plautus and Mirmilon serve as a warning of the dangers of absolute power. The misuse of power creates pandemonium in society if it remains unchecked, and those loyal citizens are forced into an untenable position from which there is, and can be, no satisfactory solution. Inaction is unacceptable because it perpetuates the chaos and inevitably leads to destruction. Insurrection is equally ineffective because it replaces one form of despotism for another. It is the misuse of power that must change, because there is no adequate response to misrule. Only through the "right use of pow'r", advocated and exemplified by the thoughts and actions of Britannicus, Seneca and Cyara, can the state achieve and maintain harmony. In his later plays Lee would continue to focus upon the misuse of power, and upon the conflict which characters undergo in relation to its exercise, and to lament the loss or destruction of the moderating force.

*Sophonisba, or Hannibal's Overthrow. A Tragedy (by April 1675).*

<sup>97</sup> Flavius, Caligula, Boy, Roman, Sylvius, Burrhus and Syllana are not analysed because they are minor, stereotypical characters who are not sufficiently individuated or of a functional significance to warrant attention.

<sup>98</sup> Knight, p.186; Skrine, p.14.

<sup>99</sup> Skrine, p.23.

The Lord Chamberlain's warrant dated 14 June 1675 for plays acted from 25 January 1674/5 to 7 June 1675 lists *Sophonisba* as having been performed by the King's Company at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane on 30 April, and before their majesties on 4 and 7 May.<sup>100</sup> Another warrant dated 16 February 1675/6 (for 19 June through 29 January 1675/6), record revivals on 6 November, and before their majesties again on 29 December. There have been fourteen recorded revivals of the play from that date to the year 1735, with a final performance at Lincoln's Inn Fields in March of 1775,<sup>101</sup> almost a hundred years to the day since its premiere. Evidently it was one of Lee's most popular plays. He himself attests to its popularity in the dedication, as do both Langbaine and Downes, the latter noting it to be "the most taking" during the final years of the century.<sup>102</sup> The text itself was published on eight separate occasions to the end of the century, and twice in the eighteenth,<sup>103</sup> and was also translated into German by Johann Bernhold in the 1750's.<sup>104</sup> The tragic tale of *Sophonisba* recorded in Polybius and Livy was particularly popular in European literature, Van Lennep recording that Lee's was the seventeenth play on the subject, not to mention the non-dramatic works.<sup>105</sup> Lee's version is based on the most recent versions (those of Marston, Mairet, Nabbes and Corneille), coupled with the account in Roger Boyle's novel *Parthenissa* (1654), all of which expand upon historical data provided by Polybius, Livy and Plutarch.<sup>106</sup> The characters are more traditionally heroic than in *Nero*, the result being that far greater emphasis is placed upon undermining that tradition. The play also covers a much briefer historical period thus providing greater focus, and so greater particularisation, upon fewer individuals. Critically the work has received a mixed reception, especially with regard to character. Stroup and Cooke and Hammond, for example, both emphasise that the popularity of the play derives in no small part from the fascinating representations, whereas Laura Brown condemns them for their elusiveness and perceived inconsistency.<sup>107</sup>

<sup>100</sup> L.C. 5/141, p.215, cited in Nicoll, p.345.

<sup>101</sup> Van Lennep, *Sources*, p.93.

<sup>102</sup> Cf. Dedication, line 1; Langbaine, p.325; Downes, *Roscius Anglicanus*, p.15.

<sup>103</sup> 1676, May 1681 (Easter term, T.C., I.446), 1685, 1691, November 1691 (Michaelmas, T.C. II.387), 1693 and 1697 (twice), 1704 and 1709.

<sup>104</sup> Cf. Johann Gottfried Bernhold, *Sophonisbe, oder, Der überwundene Hannibal: ein Trauer Spiel... aus dem Englischen Original des Nat. Lee*, Nürnberg: Adam Jonathan Felsseckers, 1750-60?

<sup>105</sup> Cf. Van Lennep, *Sources*, pp.105-8 for a record of the dramas.

<sup>106</sup> I agree with Stroup and Cooke (*Works*, I.76) who suggest that it is Nabbes' drama that was revived by the Duke's Company at Dorset Garden on 9 March 1670/1 in contrast to Van Lennep's (*London Stage*, p.193) unsupported allegation that the "Hanibal" listed in L.C. 5/141 (p.2) was a play by Dekker, Drayton and Wilson. Interestingly this reverses Van Lennep's previous claim that the revived play was the work of Nabbes (*Sources*, p.109). Armistead discounts this play as a source (p.47) but it clearly warrants inclusion for its introduction of Hannibal's love of a Capuan lady (in the first act), and the entire Massinissa-Sophonisba plot in Act Three.

<sup>107</sup> Stroup and Cooke, *Works*, I.78; Hammond, *Development*, pp.514, 517-8; L.Brown, pp.23-4. Notably Brown does not provide a single criteria for the determination of coherence.

Contrary to the implication of the title and subtitle, Massinissa is the real protagonist of the play, and the primary plot presents his tragedy. In him Lee has created a character that is more traditionally heroic, yet in keeping with his characterology, the Numidian king is presented with habits and traits not associated with the type. He is in many ways a creature of contrast. Like the Herculean hero, he is a superlative warrior (3.1.101ff; 5.1.75-83, 96ff) and lover, is "Fierce and majestick" (1.1.307), tempestuous (2.1.132), decisive and resolute (3.4.204ff), passionate (2.1.41ff, 93ff), impetuous and irrational when impassioned (4.1.240ff, 285ff), stubborn (4.1.346) and uxorious. He even has a degree of prescience (2.1.160-2). But unlike the Herculean type he is also presented as a melancholic.<sup>108</sup> Of particular note is the manner of his introduction in "a pleasant Grotto", as distinct from the martial environment in which both Hannibal and Scipio are discovered. He suffers from manic depression—more specifically what would now be termed bipolar depressive disorder—so much so that he actually revels in his melancholy; discussing at length his love-sickness, insomnia (1.1.155), and his morbid thanatopsis (1.1.164ff). It is revealed that prior to his falling in love with Sophonisba he had been haughty, bold and ambitious (1.1.127ff; 3.4.243), traits common to the Herculean hero, but now sees war as futile and disdains the austere martial existence which he had once embraced (1.1.172ff, 313-4). This dichotomy is explained by Stroup, reiterated by Rothstein, who suggest that Lee combines the "Saddened Lover" and "Heroic Hero" stereotypes, a point to which I will return in due course.<sup>109</sup> It is as the "saddened lover" that Massinissa is introduced to the audience, so as to emphasise the disposition which dominates his personality, and his actions, throughout—his ungoverned passion.<sup>110</sup>

Unlike Scipio, who is presented as a model of dispassionate reason, Massinissa is ruled by emotions that are in turmoil from the moment that he is introduced. This is most evident in his misogynistic diatribe at 1.1.185ff. The importance of this to his character has been ignored, but it is of particular significance to an understanding of his behaviour. His tirade dominates the first scene in which he appears: seventy-five of the two hundred and six lines of the scene are dedicated to a consideration of his hatred of womankind, and Sophonisba in particular. The emphasis upon his misogyny at such an early juncture highlights the way in which her betrayal has affected his personality. It is evident, even at this early stage, that he experiences a love/hate relationship towards her. All of his actions are a response to her betrayal—his

<sup>108</sup> 1.1.117-22; 3.4.116ff. Wong explains that he experiences blood adustion, suffering both the physiological and psychological effects of love melancholy (p.20).

<sup>109</sup> Stroup, *Type-characters*, pp.467, 478; Rothstein, p.84.

<sup>110</sup> This aspect of his character is highlighted by Scipio on three separate occasions—2.1.86; 4.1.332, 380.

melancholy, his misogyny and his reentry into the conflict,<sup>111</sup> even his vociferous defence of her to Scipio, indicate that he has not yet recovered from her betrayal of him. He has become cynical and apathetic as a result of her defection, poignantly describing himself as "a walking grave" (3.4.118). Yet he is unable to divorce himself from the influence that she exercises over him—he first threatens to kill her, and later to treat her with disdain, but we are all too aware that he is as impotent to oppose her as he is to challenge Scipio. Unlike the seduction of Poppea by Petronius and Nero, Massinissa's seduction by Sophonisba does not take an extended period of time. He has long been primed for her suit because of his obsession. It needed only a spark to re-ignite his passion.

The influence that Sophonisba possesses over Massinissa is thoroughly incomprehensible to Scipio. His attempt to distract the king from his fixation by having him engage in the battle against Syphax may have seemed prudent except that it places Massinissa in a position in which he can be seduced by her. Publicly this is a successful manoeuvre because the king defeats Syphax and wins Cirta to the side of Rome (bringing victory over Carthage one step closer), but from a personal perspective it is dangerous and imprudent because it leads to Massinissa's downfall. The fact that Scipio is all too aware of the charisma of Sophonisba makes him partly responsible for Massinissa's defection. In fact Scipio explicitly orders Massinissa to subdue Sophonisba, which all but guarantees the pair will be thrust together (2.1.149), making his corruption possible. Like Piso, Scipio rants against Sophonisba's corruptive ability, yet does nothing to prevent the corruption from occurring. Massinissa also contributes to his own downfall through his misguided belief in his ability to withstand her charms (3.3.9ff and 3.4.112—the latter after he has started to succumb, and is aware of it).

Arguably the most distinctive aspect of this character is that, unlike the protagonist of the heroic play, Massinissa's power is not absolute. He is presented throughout as subordinate to Scipio, and obliged to obey him. Whilst he may appear to be assertive (an integral characteristic of the hero), he is consistently a victim of both Sophonisba and Scipio. He repeatedly allows his will to be overruled by these two forceful personalities. He differs from the stereotypical Herculean hero fundamentally because he is weak-willed, and unable to maintain a position (either to yield up Sophonisba or to refuse to do so) in the face of opposition. He becomes hopelessly torn between two opposed and irresolvable demands, and forced to adopt the only possible solution—suicide. Despite the force of his love for Sophonisba, he is not prepared to hazard all for love by opposing Scipio, even when he is

<sup>111</sup> He reenters the conflict because, according to Lelius and Varro, Syphax supposedly taunts him (1.1.290ff). This may well be a tacit example of Scipio's shrewd manipulation of the Numidian king (provided in this instance



effectively committed to that course of action after the murder of Trebellius (4.1.241ff), and after he has threatened the consul with a confrontation (4.1.285ff).<sup>112</sup> He is unable to oppose Scipio in the way that Montezuma fights and defeat any and all opponents (including his own king) to win Orazia. It has been made abundantly evident that the Roman consul is the superior of the two heroes in both sovereign and divine authority, not to mention military support, although one suspects that Massinissa is the greater of the two warriors. Ironically, his threat of rebellion evaporates after the body of Massina is introduced. From that moment he no longer considers rebellion as a viable course of action,<sup>113</sup> even though he is now freer than ever to pursue it (remembering that Massinissa had left his beloved nephew with Scipio as a hostage to ensure compliance). In contrast he fights vociferously against the Carthaginians for a Roman victory which can only be to his own detriment. His inability to exercise his will and to defend that decision against all opposition inevitably leads to his self-destruction. Armistead is correct in noting his failure to be a product of emasculating love,<sup>114</sup> but it is equally a result of his inability to exercise his independence in the face of the opposing demands of two more willful individuals to whom he is bound by ties of love. Both manipulate him to serve their own ends and are thus instrumental in effecting the tragedy, although for Sophonisba it is far more necessary than it is for Scipio, hence his belated regret in the final lines of the play.

Contrary to the suggestion of Stroup and Rothstein, Massinissa actually combines four different types of character—the Herculean hero, the saddened lover, the malcontent and the distressed lover.<sup>115</sup> In his first scene Massinissa's normative personality state is revealed to have been as a haughty and ambitious warrior-king, but that Sophonisba's betrayal has led him to transform into an example of the saddened lover type (his first circumstantial personality state), as is introduced to the audience. Through the manipulation of Scipio and his disciples (1.1.260ff, 2.1.1-176) the king becomes a malcontent, his position changing to one akin to his once normative condition, but which has been tempered by his earlier depression. This state

through the mouths of two of his partisans), as is discussed below.

<sup>112</sup> Armistead claims that Sophonisba and Massinissa give all for love (*Nathaniel Lee*, p.49), but he is presumably referring to their committing suicide rather than suffering the indignity of being paraded in triumph. He is clearly not referring to the taking up of arms against their oppressors, which contributes to the hazarding of all for love. Antony and Cleopatra give all for love, Massinissa and Sophonisba do not.

<sup>113</sup> Except at 5.1.307-8, but this is the deluded bravado of a man who is no position to act upon his claim.

<sup>114</sup> Armistead, *Nathaniel Lee*, p.50. I am averse to using the terms "emasculating", "unmanned" (used by Waith to describe Massinissa's state in *Ideas of Greatness*, p.236) or "effeminate" in relation to the impotence caused by love, as it implies that women are impotent, inactive and incapable of influencing affairs, which is most certainly not the case in Lee's drama—Sophonisba is herself a case in point. I prefer to use "enervating", as it is not gender biased.

<sup>115</sup> I differentiate the saddened lover from what I term the distressed type. Once Massinissa reunites with Sophonisba he is no longer strictly a saddened lover (notable for the unrequited nature of their love—Massina being an ideal example), but a distressed one, opposed in the love triangle not by a personal rival for her affections, but by a political opponent to their union. He no longer suffers from melancholia after the reunion (the cause of that depression having been removed), but is henceforth distressed by his inability to enjoy the relationship without hindrance.

combines choleric rage (and the desire for vengeance) with cold disdain for his former love (3.4.53ff). He remains in this condition until overcome by Sophonisba's charms at 3.4.166ff, after which his position becomes that of the distressed lover. The presence of several different personality states in the one character does not make him discontinuous or incoherent. Rather his identity underlies the several positions—enervating love (for both Sophonisba and Scipio) dominates his behaviour and actions, and operates as a unifying principle. The various states also illustrate Massinissa to be an example of what I term a 'distypical' representation—that is a character that progresses through several type states rather than maintaining the same state throughout.<sup>116</sup> Structurally the king is a reactor who is minimally stylised,<sup>117</sup> and substantially coherent (being a combination of types means that he is not wholly of a type, but is wholly coherent in those separate types). He is maximally whole, and medially symbolic, being equally a combination of the historical individual and of a type of character that would be popular in affective tragedy. He is modestly accessible,<sup>118</sup> medially derivative,<sup>119</sup> and medially conventional (medial in his societal role as a Numidian warrior-prince, substantial in his functional role as tragic hero). He even achieves a modest level of *anagnorisis* at 5.1.385ff. Rather than being Herculean, Massinissa is a genuine Aristotelian protagonist. He is an imperfect figure who exhibits hamartia, undergoes suffering and conflict, achieves a degree of self-discovery, and endures a tragic death which evokes the pity and fear at the unnecessary destruction of a worthy figure.

The enigmatic characterisation of Sophonisba makes her one of the most interesting, and critically examined, of the play. This is accentuated by her delayed entrance—she does not

<sup>116</sup> A thorough definition of the distype category appears at pages 111-3 below. In brief a distype experiences one or more changes in type over the course of the play—that is they undergo several notable and meaningful changes in personality state. The principal distinction between the atype and the distype is on the *revelation* of inner conflict—characters in both categories undergo inner conflict but the latter do not express, or examine, that conflict internally to anywhere near the same extent, if at all. Rather they exhibit that conflict through a change in demeanour, and often after the event. Whilst it is true that Massinissa is cogitative, less emphasis is placed on the revelation of conflict than on the physical changes that occur as a result of the dilemma. Massinissa is an example of a greater distype, that is he undergoes more than one change in personality state in the course of events.

<sup>117</sup> Over a quarter of the 2119 lines in the play are spoken by this character. This is a significantly greater allocation than his nearest rival Hannibal, who receives approximately seventeen percent (around 180 lines less than the king).

<sup>118</sup> A combination of medial complexity and modest transparency. He is provided with some internal monologue (four in all), but presents scant psychological depth for one so conflicted, and provides little revelation as to motivation. However, he does present a variety of personality states, which raises his complexity above the level of the minimal or modest (at which most stereotypical characters are discovered).

<sup>119</sup> The historical Massinissa did not kill himself, the historian Polybius having actually met him in the king's old age (cf. Polybius, IX.25). Livy mentions the fact that he submitted to Sophonisba's charms, but otherwise restricts his discussions of Massinissa to his martial accomplishments (xxx.12, *et alia*). Boyle's Massinissa lacks the devotion of Lee's king, sending poison to Sophonisba after convincing himself that if she loved him she would willingly sacrifice herself to save him, and if not that she deserved to die (I.vii). Corneille's character is of a similar nature; as Waith notes, he is not moved to join Sophonisba in death, and will, moreover, probably redirect his fickle affections back to Eryxe (*Ideas of Greatness*, p.188). Lee's character has more in common with the devoted lover in the plays of Marston and Mairer; in the latter we find Massinisse choosing to join her in death for the first time.



appear until 3.4, which is almost the midpoint of the play. Until this time she is the subject of much negative publicity, influencing our perception of her. She is condemned by Massinissa, Scipio, and his partisans, as a woman to be shunned and an enemy the equal of Hannibal. Massinissa's melancholia and misogyny has already been suggested as being founded in her betrayal of him. To Scipio and his supporters she is a snare to entrap men (2.1.4); a distraction from honour and glory (2.1.5-12), cunning (2.1.30; 3.3.33), subtle (2.1.150; 3.1.140; 4.1.192), charming,<sup>120</sup> an "incendiary" (4.1.272), and a witch (4.1.367). She is deemed to be responsible for the renewal of conflict between Rome and Carthage (2.1.29-30, 150-1), the Consul allusively comparing her with Helen of Troy (4.1.362).<sup>121</sup> Of course this is the subjective invective of her enemies, but the equivocal nature of her motivation and the seemingly egoistic nature of her love for Massinissa seems to support at least some of the allegations.

Several critics have been troubled by the ambiguous nature of Sophonisba's reconciliation with Massinissa, querying whether 3.4 represents a genuine desire to reconcile or merely a desperate woman's attempt at survival.<sup>122</sup> An attentive analysis of her character should help clarify this issue. Rather than being an expression of pleasure at being freed from a forced and loveless marriage, or of despair at her plight now that her husband is dead and her city besieged, her opening speech is defiant of Rome and Massinissa. This is not a meek and suffering victim but an assertive woman for whom suicide appears the only viable option until such time as Rezambe suggests an alternative via reconciliation with her conqueror. This immediate suspicion of her motives is augmented by the egoistical nature of her reconciliation. Her every discussion with Massinissa centres around not being yielded up to the Romans. After eliciting a proposal of marriage she resists (on the rather spurious grounds that it will stain her honour) only long enough to exert a guarantee from him that he will not relinquish her (3.4.226-9). No sooner is this granted than she accepts his proposal, conveniently forgetting any concern she has over her honour. Clearly it is not the prospect of a (supposedly) wished for union (even a brief one) with him that is the focus of her concern, or the aim of her seduction, but rather the guarantee that she will escape imprisonment. She cannot countenance the indignity of being made to parade as a Roman captive, but never considers for a moment the shame that Massinissa will incur as a result of his betrayal on her behalf. Even in her soliloquy (5.1.347ff) she is concerned with the fact that his death would result in her capture rather than evincing any concern over the effects of such a loss. This is possibly the most crass

<sup>120</sup> Cf. 3.1.109; 3.3.30; 4.1.266, 364, 387. This term has a specifically negative connotation through its association with Circe, cursing and ravenous hunger.

<sup>121</sup> *Polybus* (xiv.7) specifically mentions the fact that she was an active enemy of Rome.

<sup>122</sup> Cf. Stroup and Cooke, *Works*, 1.76; Verdurmen, *Tragedy of Concerment*, p.83; L. Brown, p.24.

example of her egoism. It never once occurs to her to offer herself as a sacrifice to save the life and honour of her lover, as it does to her Marstonian predecessor.

The ancestry of Lee's heroine has been the subject of attention as far back as the early eighteenth-century. H. Scriblerus Secundus (alias Henry Fielding), in the preface to *Tom Thumb the Great*, suggests that:

The Sophonisba of Mairet, and of Lee, is a tender, passionate, amorous mistress of Masinissa; Corneille and Mr. Thomson gave her no other passion but the love of her country, and made her as cool in her affection to Masinissa as to Syphax (p.vi).

More recently Eugene Waith has compared the character of Sophonisba in the plays of Marston, Mairet, Corneille and Lee.<sup>123</sup> Marston's heroine is notable for her patriotism, stoically accepting the will of the Carthaginian senate that she marry Syphax despite her love for Masinissa (to whom she is wed). Her toleration of the villainous Syphax, and her decision to choose death to save her honour and that of her beloved Masinissa, emphasise that she is 'the wonder of women'.<sup>124</sup> Like Marston's heroine, Corneille's Sophonisbe is patriotic, but is far more concerned with 'gloire' (glory) than of love. Her love of her country is more important to her than the love of either man. Whilst his Sophonisbe is to be admired, Mairet's is to be pitied. She is a woman desperately in love with Massinisse, who (like Nabbes' character) nevertheless has the strength to make him send her poison when he is forced to relinquish her. She displays greater passion than either the Marstonian or the Cornelian character. Lee's queen is felt to combine the passionate heroine in Mairet, with the courage and pride of Corneille's character.<sup>125</sup> However it must be remembered that, despite sharing characteristics with these characters, she differs from them all in her egoism.

Although there is much to be suspicious of in her behaviour, there is also much to admire. Despite the opportunistic nature of her reunion with Massinissa it is evident that she does genuinely love him, if in a way tinged by her self-interest. Theirs is a love which, while not necessarily resumed with the purity with which it began, does attain a degree of ethereality by the end of the play. She also displays a bravery, nobility and majesty in her willingness to end her life to avoid dishonour (3.4.1ff), and in the method of her death (without fear or hesitation) at 5.1.392ff. She is reminiscent of Shakespeare's Cleopatra in both her actions and in the manner of her death.<sup>126</sup> That she plays no active role in her downfall (she only attempts to prevent it) makes her an example of the 'victimised heroine' type. From a structural

<sup>123</sup> Waith, *Ideas of Greatness*, pp.187-8, 236-7. He excludes James Thomson's *Tragedy of Sophonisba* (1730), because it is outside of the scope of his study. It is also post-Lee and thus beyond the scope of mine.

<sup>124</sup> Nabbes' heroine is equally patriotic and pragmatic, foregoing her own desire for the good of the state, and suggesting that her death is the only viable option to Scipio's command.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, p.237. As Armistead suggests, she is "a clearly conceived combination of Mairet's enthusiastic lover and Corneille's proud individualist" so as to elicit both pity and admiration (*Nathaniel Lee*, p.49).

perspective Sophonisba is a provocator who medially stylised, maximally coherent, medially whole and minimally symbolic. She is medially accessible, combining substantial complexity with moderate transparency. She is also medially derivative and medially conventional (substantial in her societal—as a queen, and modest in her functional—as a distressed heroine, roles) but does not achieve *anagnorisis*. Despite Beers' suggestion that Sophonisba is conventional, she is the only cogitative (medially atypical) principal character of this play.<sup>127</sup> Sophonisba belongs to a rare breed of character in English drama; the assertive woman of action who is not a villainess, and this alone makes her particularly worthy of attention.

Scipio is also a singular figure in Leean drama because he is evidently to be admired despite being unsympathetic and obscure. His single-minded devotion to the cause of Roman glory is certainly admirable, but his behaviour as a friend and ally is deplorable. This stems from the fact that he is an astute statesman and general but is ignorant of matters of the heart. He lacks any comprehension of the power of love, repeatedly offering Massinissa the insignificant (a kingdom, power and glory, his life *etc.*) in compensation for relinquishing Sophonisba. He fails to understand that such things are inconsequential to one who must betray, and then live without, the object of his love. He continues this approach throughout, in fact his final words to Massinissa are a repeat of just such an offer (5.1.284ff). One gets the impression that he has never experienced true love,<sup>128</sup> and in the play itself only ever experiences a brief lust for Rosalinda, which he is easily overcome (primarily because of her vehement hatred towards him), and which simply supports his own belief that passion can, and should, be suppressed.

Scipio is the personification of a new (stoic, Roman) type of heroism. Melicent Huneycutt has already noted that in his rigid self-discipline the consul is distinguishable not only from Hannibal and Massinissa, but also from the typical heroic protagonist.<sup>129</sup> In him there is a trend toward a new type of hero: the man of reason. He embodies those virtues Lee conceived of as proper for a statesman: temperance, self-control, prudence, efficiency, objectivity, and patriotic loyalty.<sup>130</sup> Armistead agrees, contrasting the consul with Hannibal (as the personification of old-style heroism) and Massinissa (as the personification of old-style love).<sup>131</sup> Unlike the old-style hero, Scipio insists upon the absolute suppression of one's emotions and desires for the greater good of the state. This is certainly an admirable aim, and

<sup>126</sup> Hasan, p.69; Stroup and Cooke, *Works*, I.77-8; L. Brown, p.24.

<sup>127</sup> Beers, p.151.

<sup>128</sup> This is actually emphasised in the historical sources (cf. Polybius, x.19; Livy, xxx.14).

<sup>129</sup> Huneycutt, p.104.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.106-7. In fact, Rochester could not have been more inaccurate than to suggest that Lee makes "temperate Scipio fret and rave" ("An Allusion to Horace, the Tenth Satyr of the First Book", [l.37], p.42), for never was there created a character less inclined to act in such a manner.

<sup>131</sup> Armistead, *Nathaniel Lee*, p.50.

could even result in an equally admirable character, but for the presence of characteristics that undermine this impression. For, despite being presented as patriotic, stoic, temperate, stern, pragmatic and dispassionate (all worthy traits in a hero), he is also depicted as manipulative (bordering upon deviousness at 4.1.321ff), arrogant (2.1.97ff), self-righteous and critical (2.1.3ff), hypocritical,<sup>132</sup> obstinate, misogynistic, obsessed with glory (3.1.82), egomaniacal (4.1.292ff; 5.1.30ff), and excessively proud (4.1.160ff), traits which compromise his heroism. His actions even border on downright cruelty at 5.1.253ff when he offers absolution as a friend, but refuses to do so as consul. He is deplorable as a friend because he never attempts to arrive at a compromise position, or even to have the matter judged independently by the Senate—it is his way and his way alone. There is nothing to suggest that he is obliged to act in this matter with regard to Sophonisba, he does so out of a vain desire to recreate Massinissa in his own image. His arrogance, hubris and egomania make him unattractive as a character, despite the fact that he has a divine mandate, and is willing to give all for state. He is melodramatic, dominated by his obsession and limited in his focus. He has but one personality state throughout, and suffers no conflict, least of all between personal and civic responsibility.<sup>133</sup> Scipio is a medially typified 'ambivalent statesman hero' who is to be admired for his desire to instil Rome as the new world order, yet is also to be pitied for the deleterious effect that his patriotism has upon his humanity—the only expression of his compassion appearing in his dubious regret at 5.1.425ff over his involvement in the deaths of the lovers.<sup>134</sup> He is much less individuated than either Massinissa or Sophonisba, and so the sole interest in the character resides in the accent on the new, heroic man of reason.<sup>135</sup>

<sup>132</sup> He displays his hypocrisy in two ways. Firstly, he is equally as capable of being passionate and irrational as is Massinissa (2.1.105ff). Secondly, and more significantly, his treatment of Rosalinda is in complete contrast to that of Sophonisba, yet they are both the enemy of Rome (3.1.5-80). This is an aspect of his character that has, surprisingly, been completely ignored. It is true that Sophonisba is (or is perceived to be) more of an active opponent than Rosalinda, but that is beside the point. If he is truly concerned with the safety of Rome then all enemies of the state should be treated equally, especially to one who is the beloved of Rome's greatest enemy. The likely reason for his obstinate position on Sophonisba is that she is a psychological impediment to the recreation of Massinissa in his own image, and his concern is to convince the king to see her in the same light.

<sup>133</sup> Within the stereotypical category, Scipio would be classed as a maximally individuated (or minimally typified) stereotype. Cf. p.107 for an explanation of this subdivision of the stereotypical category.

<sup>134</sup> Scipio's remorse strikes me as questionable in that there is nothing in his behaviour to suggest that he would view the loss of a friend as of greater significance than the promotion of the state. It appears to have been something of an afterthought, an attempt by Lee to conclude on a note of regret without due reflection of the fact that Scipio's character is inconsistent with such an expression.

<sup>135</sup> He is an initiator, modestly stylised, maximally coherent, maximally whole, medially symbolic, minimally accessible (minimally so in both categories—his thoroughly dispassionate demeanour permits scant access to his psyche), substantially derivative and maximally conventional (maximal in both his societal role as Roman consul, and in his functional roles as the opposer in the love-triangle, and as the exemplary hero) and undergoes minimal *anagnorisis* at best. Lee remains faithful to the historical portrait of a martial, stoic and rational Scipio whose continence towards women is emphasised (cf. Polybius, x.19; Livy, xxx.14).

The deuteragonist of the play, and the focus of the second plot, is Hannibal.<sup>136</sup> However, despite the centralised position he is afforded in the text, the Carthaginian general is Lee's most completely stereotypical heroic character to date. Hannibal general is notable for the emphasis on two aspects of character—his love for Rosalinda, and his defiance of fate. The former has been the subject of critical attention from the moment that Rochester claimed him to be "a whining, Amorous slave".<sup>137</sup> It is true, as Maherbai intimates, that he battles Rome as much (if not more) for the recovery of Rosalinda than he does out of an inveterate hatred of that country (1.1.92ff). It is equally true that he is more concerned with her fate than that of his people (3.2.170ff; 4.1.96ff). But he is not a slave to love, rather he is a superlative lover. Rosalinda's welfare is his prime and constant concern, much of his dialogue (including both of his soliloquies) being devoted to her, rather than on the conflict in which he is embroiled.<sup>138</sup> His focus is evident from the outset. When sending the spies to the Roman camp (1.1.110ff), ostensibly to gauge the strength of the enemy, there is a suggestion of an ulterior motive (to discover Rosalinda's status), as it follows immediately after a discussion of her (1.1.92ff). He even highlights the extent of his devotion by revealing that, for love of her, he had languished in Capua rather than pressing home his advantage against Rome after the victory at Cannae. And when warned of the rejuvenated strength of the Roman army (2.2.32ff), his focus quickly reverts to news of her (2.2.40ff), rather than on any potential weaknesses which could be exploited. He even admits that he intends to resume the conflict out of a fear that Scipio has become enamoured with her, and because he continues to detain her, rather than out of a patriotic duty to his country. His is no longer a political conflict, but a personal one.<sup>139</sup> His obsession with Rosalinda (including his jealousy of both rivals—the perceived rivalry of Scipio, and the genuine rivalry of Massina) plays a major part in his downfall.<sup>140</sup> It is as much a cause of his overthrow as is the providential design.

Providence holds more relevance to Hannibal's personality than to his overthrow, because it introduces one of his central characteristics: his willingness to defy an immutable

<sup>136</sup> As Hunt rightly notes the two plots are of equal interest; neither can be truly called the subplot (pp.67-8).

<sup>137</sup> Rochester, "An Allusion to Horace", [1.38], p.42.

<sup>138</sup> Beers suggests that Hannibal is never presented as an extravagant lover on the basis that he shares few scenes (and no love scenes) with Rosalinda (pp.147, 150). It is true they are rarely together, but the absence of love scenes is certainly not indicative of reservation as a lover. In fact love is demonstrated to be his *raison d'être*. As with Massinissa, the extravagance of Hannibal's love is evidenced by the fact that Rosalinda is constantly the subject of his attention.

<sup>139</sup> Armistead is absolutely correct in asserting that Hannibal is no civic leader and patriotic champion, as Wilson Knight suggests, but rather an isolated powerhouse like Almanzor (*Nathaniel Lee*, p.148). In his personal motivation Hannibal is contrasted with Scipio for whom the war is waged purely for the benefit of the state, and who chooses civic responsibility at the expense of a contradictory personal desire. It is not a little ironic then that Hannibal's love and devotion to Rosalinda is not matched by hers for him, as shall be discussed below.

<sup>140</sup> His jealousy contributes to his overthrow because it helps to set in motion a chain of events that lead to the destruction of his army—he seizes Massina, leading to his suicide, which in turn causes Massinissa, in his grief and anger, to almost single-handedly destroy the Carthaginian forces.

fate to conquer his enemies (2.2.99ff; 4.1.133ff). He is opposed from all angles—by his own government, by the complete and united force of Rome, and by a providence that supports the establishment of a new world order. Yet he remains defiant even after defeat and the death of Rosalinda (5.1.198ff), intending to maintain the conflict with Rome despite insurmountable opposition. This characteristic helps to affirm his foundation as a typified Herculean hero for whom defiance of the inexorable is an avenue for demonstrating heroism.

Rothstein suggests that Lee divides the traditional hero amongst the three male figures so that each mirrors the other two.<sup>141</sup> This is not entirely correct. Massinissa and Hannibal should not be viewed as two corners of an equilateral triangle, but rather one side of a coin the obverse of which is Scipio. Both are closer in character than has been credited, and both are deliberately contrasted with the consul, as examples of an antiquated heroic code vainly struggling against a new world order. Nowhere is Hannibal contrasted with Massinissa; they are only ever compared. Each is a passionate warrior whose principal concern is personal gain: each fights primarily for love, and is obsessed with the object of his affection at the expense of his public responsibility, to the detriment of himself and his nation. Both are enervated by a love that debases the hero he once was, and each loves with a purity that is not shared by the object of his affection.<sup>142</sup> Both are superlative lovers and warriors,<sup>143</sup> both evince a degree of prescience (2.1.160-2; 3.2.157), and each is contrasted with the consul who, alone, places the state above all other considerations. Scipio governs for the benefit of the state, while they lead for personal gratification. It is not surprising, therefore, that the dispassionate Roman comes to be seen as the epitome of the statesman ruler. He alone is (almost) completely impervious to the conflict that results from personal complication in matters of state, and to him are given the keys to empire.

Hannibal is the most typified principal character that Lee has yet produced; lacking any real depth or complexity, yet is nevertheless personalised. He is a submedially typified epic hero who is demonstrated to be anachronistic and impractical in the realistic world that Lee creates.<sup>144</sup> He is a responder who is medially stylised, maximally coherent, maximally whole

<sup>141</sup> Rothstein, p.85. This is a position echoed by Hunt who argues that each reflects an aspect of Almanzor's character: Hannibal as Almanzor mastered by time, Massinissa Almanzor mastered by love and Scipio the unregenerate Almanzor of the first three acts of *1 Conquest of Granada* (pp.70-5). However each assessment is vague enough to be a generalisation about most any heroic protagonist.

<sup>142</sup> The ambiguous and self-serving nature of Sophonisba's affection has already been discussed, and the conditional nature of Rosalinda's is referred to below.

<sup>143</sup> Unlike Scipio who is demonstrated to be by far the weakest of the three combatants; he even requires the aid of Massinissa and Lelius to fend off a personal assault by Hannibal at 5.1.99s.d. He is equally poor as a lover.

<sup>144</sup> The 'epic hero' is one of four types of hero. Derived from the heroes of Greco-Roman epic poetry, and exemplified by Dryden's Almanzor, these characters are superlative lovers and warriors whose actions are admirable and worthy of imitation. Because of Lee's 'unheroic' approach to character, few Herculean characters appear in his plays, and none in a pure form. Mostly this type-character serves as the foundation for a tragic,



and substantially symbolic. He is medially accessible,<sup>145</sup> static, substantially derivative,<sup>146</sup> and substantially conventional.<sup>147</sup> Like Scipio he has but one personality state throughout, and does not undergo (or reveal) psychological conflict. Ultimately his opposition to providence is admirable, and his love for Rosalinda engaging, but as an individual he lacks the substance one expects of a character upon whom such emphasis is laid.

Whereas the depiction of Hannibal is rather bland fare, that of Rosalinda is of great interest. From the outset "the fair imperious Rosalinda", as Lee describes her in the dedication, is demonstrated to be an extraordinary example of her sex, having much more in common with the hero than the heroine. She is rational, practical and constant (not given to flights of passion—2.1.200-1; 3.2.83ff), haughty and disdainful (3.1.12ff, 54ff), arrogant and conceited (3.1.25), defiant of fate (like Hannibal—5.1.119ff), ambitious and obsessed with honour (glory, fame and renown) to the extent that she is prepared to betray her own country to serve the man who is the preeminent example of *virtus* and *gloria* (3.1.22-3). She admits to being attracted to men of honour rather than by youth and beauty, and that only the most glorious of men is worthy of her, hence her choice of Hannibal (2.1.232-41). Hers is not love but rather adoration—she does not share a passion for the man, but rather idolises the warrior. Not only is her 'love' mundane, but it is conditional upon the sustenance of glory (in the sense of both a continuation of glory, and of his sharing his immortal fame with her). Any perceived stain on that renown is roundly condemned by her—her repulsion towards him when his jealousy leads to the death of Massina is a case in point.<sup>148</sup> She is in many ways a female epic hero for whom glory is the *raison d'être*. Her soliloquy (5.1.64ff) explains her unusual behaviour by revealing her identity crisis. She reveals that she suffers from what modern psychologists would diagnose as gender displacement; psychologically she considers herself to be masculine (and of a particularly virile, martial temperament at that), but is physically trapped in the body of a woman.<sup>149</sup> Disguising herself as a warrior, and perishing gloriously on the field of battle is the

statesman or victimised representation. See glossary of terms (pp.267-8) for a comparison of the four categories within the generic 'hero' class.

<sup>145</sup> He is medial in both his complexity and transparency—his motivation remains undisclosed, but his ruling disposition helps to make his actions self-evident.

<sup>146</sup> Hannibal is maximally derivative with regard to his heroism, and medially so as the lover of a Capuan lady (three separate sources have broached this aspect of his character; Nabbes' play, and the novels of Orrery—I.ivff, and Vaumorière—I.i, pp.4ff).

<sup>147</sup> Medially so in his societal role—he allows his attention to be too easily diverted to personal matters at the expense of his duty as general; and maximally so in his functional role as a typical Herculean hero.

<sup>148</sup> Cf. 3.2.161ff. This attitude remains unchanged as late as her final scene (5.1.119ff), and is actually augmented by the defeat. She does not dwell on their imminent separation by death (as one would expect of a lover), but rather on the indignity of defeat (5.1.154-5).

<sup>149</sup> Despite her claims that all women desire to be men (5.1.68-9), she alone acts like one throughout, and alone reveals herself to be of the mental disposition of a soldier.

ultimate wish fulfillment.<sup>150</sup> Significantly the only occasion in which her femininity is revealed is in her sympathy for Massina, and her supplication for his life (3.2.16-8; 3.2.31ff). She admits that she resigns all of her softness to Massina in his grief; a grief which only the coldest of hearts could not affect (3.2.77-80). It is her one regression to conventional femininity, and we do not see this behaviour in her again.<sup>151</sup> Beers notes that other heroines of Restoration drama have disguised themselves as men but never with her purpose.<sup>152</sup> That is because no other heroine has endured such a conflict in identity: she alone wishes to become the persona that she adopts. On this basis she is not only one of the most interesting characters of the play, but also one of the most innovative of English drama, let alone of a Leean, Carolean or seventeenth-century example.<sup>153</sup> Needless to say, she is the most atypical lesser intermediary character that Lee has produced (especially so in one who is devoted less than two hundred lines of dialogue) and deserved more attention. Such a character does not belong in the chorus, but warrants star billing.

The last character of any importance is Massina. He is represented by Stroup to be an excellent example of the "Saddened Lover" stereotype.<sup>154</sup> However, it is evident that Lee is again commenting upon the nature of heroic love by undermining its purity in the characterisation of Massina. He is ingenuous, naïve and innocent, raised in a martial environment he is thoroughly unfamiliar with matters of love, to the extent that he has never before seen a beautiful woman. But by far the greatest emphasis is placed on his youth,<sup>155</sup> he is repeatedly demonstrated to be little more than a child, and a petulant one at that. He threatens to kill himself because he gets left behind while the grown-ups go off to fight (2.1.178), and again when Rosalinda refuses to requite his love (3.2.13-6). His immaturity reappears in his refusal to forgive Hannibal his incarceration as much for the general's love of Rosalinda as for the perceived loss of honour: to refuse based on the latter is understandable, but to refuse on the grounds of the former is puerile. Even when he again threatens to suicide because of the dishonour, he is prepared to desist if Rosalinda would requite his love (like a child trying to enforce his will by coercion) and only goes through with his threat when she blatantly refuses

<sup>150</sup> It is not without emphasis that the penultimate reference to Rosalinda in the text is the assertion that "glory with her last breath she profest" (5.1.220).

<sup>151</sup> Her behaviour at this point borders upon the maternal (or parental), especially in light of Massina's extreme youth, as is discussed below. It is true that she is young but he is evidently much more so than she, and her affection for him is clearly not based in passion.

<sup>152</sup> Beers, p.151.

<sup>153</sup> She is an initiator, medially stylised, substantially coherent, medially whole, minimally symbolic and maximally accessible (maximal) in both complexity and transparency through her four monologues—the equal of Massinissa—and her candid disposition). She is also static and minimally (thoroughly un-) conventional (minimally so in both her societal—as a woman, and functional—as a love-interest, roles). The category of derivation is not applicable as she is wholly invented.

<sup>154</sup> Stroup, *Type-character*, p.274.



to countenance the idea. Overall he is less a heroic lover than a petulant child, and his love is more akin to adolescent 'puppy' love than to mature passion. His death is all the more poignant because of its futility, being based upon an overly idealistic and romantic notion of love and honour.<sup>156</sup>

The remaining characters of the play are all partisans, included primarily for their functional value, and all are predominantly stereotypical. Bomilcar and Maherbal are the partisans of Hannibal, Menander of Massinissa, Lelius, Trebellius and Varro of Scipio and Rezambe and Merna of Sophonisba. None are provided with individuation worthy of attention. The last two characters (Cumana and Aglave) are thoroughly functional, serving to present the prophecy in a spectacular fashion reminiscent of the witches in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. Although all of these characters have, on average, more dialogue devoted to them than the choral figures in *Nero*, none are particularised, and simply serve to echo the thoughts and opinions of the principals.

Unlike Lee's first play, *Sophonisba* is not a Manichaean struggle between good and evil; no moral position is advocated or endorsed, or even given a qualified affirmation. Rather it is a cynical examination of heroism, of the futile and irreconcilable conflict between love and duty, of the enervating effects of an obsession with the former and the dehumanising effects of a fixation on the latter. As Armistead suggests, this is not an heroic play but rather a dramatic paradigm for the tragedy of heroism in a post-heroic world.<sup>157</sup> The 'victory' of post-heroic Roman stoicism is a Pyrrhic one—no adequate solution to the dilemmas of the heroic are presented because no solution is attainable. The audience merely look on in regret at the lamentable situation that the characters find or place themselves in, and upon the hopelessness of a conflict in which everyone (except the state) loses. By focussing upon hyperbole—on the uxorious passion of Massinissa, Hannibal and Massina, the egoism of Sophonisba, the patriotic zeal of Scipio, and Rosalinda's obsession with glory—Lee infers that the absence of moderation invites the misguided choices that result in tragedy.

Contrary to Van Lennep's claim that "[t]here is no attempt at any deep characterization", this play presents several interesting examples.<sup>158</sup> Massinissa is the most intriguing and engaging of the play. The tragedy is his tragedy—he is the character that

Aristotle describes as the appropriate subject for tragedy, and whose situation evokes the appropriate emotional response. After him, it is the heroines, rather than the heroes, who are most worthy of attention. Despite not appearing until the midpoint of the text, Sophonisba intrigues us with her enigmatic motivation, and demands attention as a result. So too does Rosalinda in her atypicality; her gender disorder making her one of the most unique examples of characterisation in English drama. In contrast Hannibal and Scipio for all their textual devotion are predominantly stereotypical, lacking complexity, dimension and individuation. Each functions as an heroic paradigm rather than as an heterogeneous and verisimilar figure with whom we are able to engage on a personal level. Massinissa functions in a similar manner to Scipio and Hannibal but is able to transcend his typification and present the individual as well as the type. It is true that Hannibal and Scipio serve the thematic aim well, but they do not invite our affection. They earn our admiration, but not our sympathy. And it is clearly sympathy that is the aim of the play.<sup>159</sup> They are vestiges of the tradition of the heroic play, whereas Massinissa and Sophonisba are examples of the affective tragedy with which Lee is experimenting. In the end it is unfortunate that he does not reproduce in the second plot the types and depth of character he presents in the principal.

Gloriana; or, The Court of Augustus Caesar (by January 1675/6).

The Lord Chamberlain's warrant dated 16 February 1675/6 for plays produced between 19 June, 1675 and 29 January 1675/6 records the presentation of "Augustus Caesar" by the King's Company at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane on the final date of that warrant.<sup>160</sup> Ten pounds was paid by the crown to attend the production on that date. Generally the play is felt to have been a failure, yet, as Beers suggests, the epilogue hints that the audience was larger than usual for the season.<sup>161</sup> According to the Term Catalogues, the play was twice published to the end of the century; in Easter term 1676 and again in Easter 1699 (I.236; III.128). The principal fictional source for the play is the French romance *Cléopâtre* (1647-58) by Gautier de Costes de la Calprenède.<sup>162</sup> Lee's dependence on the novel for plot and incident is slight,<sup>163</sup> the

<sup>155</sup> Fifteen separate references are made to this aspect of his character—I.1.132, 166, 171ff, 209; 2.1.152, 177, 180, 230; 3.2.4, 7, 9, 31, 46, 58; 4.1.317.

<sup>156</sup> Structurally Massina is a substantially typified victimised hero that is a reactor, substantially stylised, maximally coherent, modestly whole, substantially symbolic, medially accessible (modest complexity—allocated just the one soliloquy—and substantial transparency), static, and substantially conventional (maximal in his societal—as a prince, and substantial in his functional—as an unrequited lover, roles). The category of derivation is inapplicable because he is a wholly invented character.

<sup>157</sup> Armistead, *Nathaniel Lee*, p.54.

<sup>158</sup> Van Lennep, *Sources*, p.117.

<sup>159</sup> One suspects that this has a lot to do with the fact that Lee is shifting from the principals of the heroic drama, where admiration for the hero is the intent, towards affective drama where sympathy is the aim. The result is that he mixes the two; Massinissa earns our sympathy but not our admiration, Hannibal our respect but not our affection. Because we engage with Massinissa on an affective level, Hannibal pales in comparison, but is nevertheless engineered for analogy. Scipio, on the other hand, is never presented in an affective sense and, as such, continues to be gauged throughout on an heroic basis. Ultimately the presence of one kind of character in the text inadvertently deprecates our assessment of the other.

<sup>160</sup> Nicoll, p.346.

<sup>161</sup> Beers, p.281.

<sup>162</sup> The novel was twice translated into English in 1652; "Cleopatra" by an anonymous "Gent. of the Inner Temple" (published by Humphrey Moseley and John Holden), and "Hymen's praeludia, or Love's master-piece"

principal influence having been in character foundation, and then only superficially.<sup>164</sup> The Caesario-Candace (Gloriana in the play) narrative differs markedly from the play, although the Marcellus-Julia-Ovid love-triangle adheres more closely. The main historical sources are likely to have been Suetonius' *De vita Caesarum* and Plutarch's *Βίοι Παράλληλοι* (translated into English by Sir Thomas North in 1579 with numerous reprints). Entrenched opinion holds this to be Lee's worst play, much of the criticism again focussing upon a perception of mediocre characterisation. Van Lennep, for instance, claims that the characters are "shallow", Nicoll refers to the "lack of novelty in character drawing", Tucker that this is Lee's most conventional play in terms of characterisation, Hammond that the manners are poorly distinguished, Laura Brown that the figures are inconsistent or enigmatic, and Richard Brown that it lacks the appealing characterisations and clear conflicts that recommend *Sophonisba*.<sup>165</sup> Yet far from being regressive it is actually an example of his progressing characterology, and arguably his most character-driven play to date.

Caesario is considered by many to be Lee's most conventional heroic protagonist.<sup>166</sup> In some ways he is a typically epic figure but, as is always the case, Lee consistently and conspicuously undermines the depiction. Caesario is conceited, arrogant and egotistical (2.1.13-5), compares himself with Hercules (2.1.14, 22ff; 3.1.94) and Mars, calls himself (and is called) "God-like",<sup>167</sup> a descendant of Jove (2.1.21; 3.1.40), the "King of Kings" and heir to the empire of the world.<sup>168</sup> He is passionate, impetuous, irrational, hubristic, "haughty" (3.2.216) and prescient (5.1.124-5), all traits common to the type. His martial glory is repeatedly emphasised,<sup>169</sup> including his talent for killing wild beasts as an infant (2.1.22ff). As is often the case with the Herculean hero, Caesario was raised in a martial environment, and is unfamiliar with court etiquette and intrigue.<sup>170</sup> His martial aspect is highlighted by his devotion and loyalty to his friend Marcellus: because of the strength of that affection he is (at least temporarily) able to circumvent his emotions and desires, even to forego his revenge against Augustus (2.1.89ff, 146). He acts with considerable temperance and composure in breaking up the conflict at 2.1.320ff, and is equally restrained in his subsequent behaviour with the

the twelve parts of which were variously translated by Robert Loveday, John Coles, James Webb and J. Davies between 1652 and 1658, and wholly by Loveday in 1665 (with a reprint in 1674).

<sup>163</sup> Cf. Hill, pp.95-103.

<sup>164</sup> Hill is at pains to point out that the personae of Lee's play are "more or less...stock characters" (p.97), which is clearly not the case. Most of them differ from La Calprenède's conventional (epic) heroes and heroines.

<sup>165</sup> Cf. Van Lennep, *Sources*, p.134; Nicoll, *Restoration Drama*, p.123; Tucker, p.51; Hammond, *Development*, p.525; L. Brown, p.23; R. Brown, *Nathaniel Lee*, p.117.

<sup>166</sup> Cf. Beers, p.133; Van Lennep, *Sources*, p.128; Tucker, p.73; Stroup and Cooke, *Works*, I.148; Leach, p.54; Hunt, p.95; Verdurmen, *Concernment*, p.63; Hughes, p.109.

<sup>167</sup> Cf. 2.1.19, 32; 3.2.213, 271; 4.1.162, 259, 464; 5.1.11.

<sup>168</sup> Cf. 1.1.253; 2.1.61; 3.2.174; 4.1.218.

<sup>169</sup> Cf. 1.1.240; 2.1.71-2, 77-80, 179; 2.1.333-5; 4.1.163, 316-7.

emperor. This aspect is accentuated by his capacity for discerning flattery; a trait common to the martial type, but which is unusual in heroes who usually court adulation. But, despite his virtues, he is also quixotic and hypocritical. He twice acts in this manner—in a humiliating display, bordering upon the comical, he pretends to kill an imaginary emperor at 2.1.73ff, and later envisages with evident pride the way in which he will massacre the bower guard (3.1.82ff). This is beneath the dignity of a true hero who would disdain to mention their involvement in such a battle, let alone boast of killing "Slaves". In this he has about him more of Drawcansir than Almanzor. He is also notably hypocritical, ridiculing Augustus for his amorous weakness whilst himself being a victim of the same exservation, and is even aware of it (3.1.49ff). His hypocrisy extends to ridiculing Augustus for being a "new created God" whilst he himself claims to be godlike.

Like the typical heroic protagonist he is a superlative boaster, but unlike Hercules, Tamburlaine or Almanzor, most of his claims are undemonstrable. From the outset his grandiose pretensions are negated by Leander and Araspes who express the reality of the situation. Every action reinforces his inadequacy, every rant is qualified by being unsustainable. Events happen to him rather than by him; his own plans are regularly frustrated, and his life is continually saved by others.<sup>171</sup> As with Britannicus, Massinissa and Hannibal before him, Caesario's heroism is undermined by the enervating nature of his love. He claims to be impervious to love (2.1.190ff), yet in succumbing firstly to Narcissa and then to Gloriana he is diverted from his regicidal intent. When he is introduced Caesario is determined upon revenge against Augustus, yet the appearance of Narcissa (as much as his affection for Marcellus) distracts him from this enterprise to the extent that he makes no attempt upon the emperor's life when the two come together at 2.1.326ff. Augustus' behaviour reignites his hatred, yet his regicidal scheme is again muted by his desire for a woman. Despite his affection for Narcissa (stressed at 3.1.52ff), he betrays her for Gloriana (3.2.187ff), and as quickly again eschews revenge (3.2.196ff). His debilitation culminates in the obsession with death that dominates his behaviour throughout the final acts. The news of Gloriana's betrayal coupled with Narcissa's death so deflates him that he is completely incapable of exacting revenge.<sup>172</sup>

<sup>170</sup> The latter is demonstrated by his initial repugnance for the conspiratorial (and, by implication, ignoble) designs of Leander and Araspes (2.1.48ff). Later, however, he adopts their very proposal (3.1.39ff).

<sup>171</sup> His life is first saved by Gloriana in the bower (and emphasised at 4.1.164-5). Thereafter Marcellus saves him by drawing in his defence at 4.1.291ff. Next Julia and Narcissa come to his (and Marcellus') defence, pleading with Augustus for their lives (4.1.342ff). Gloriana again saves his life by agreeing to be Augustus' mistress (4.1.375-82). Then Narcissa once again asks for, and gains, his protection at 5.1.50ff. Augustus reiterates this to Gloriana (ostensibly based upon her request) at 5.1.97ff. Finally, at 5.1.395-6, Julia emphasises that she and others had earlier saved Caesario's life. In fact, excepting when he kills the "Slaves" at Gloriana's bower, Caesario is constantly imperilled (including when threatened by Marcellus at 5.1.378ff), rather than being the cause of peril.

<sup>172</sup> As Verdurmen notes, Caesario's increasing passivity is paralleled by the muting of his heroic, ranting rhetoric (*Concernment*, p.73).

His oscillating affections for the two women is ignoble and 'unheroic', as is his death as a result of "domestick jars". He earns sympathy for his plight but no admiration for his actions (or rather his lack thereof).

Caesario vacillates between his normative and circumstantial personality states on numerous occasions. He is introduced, at the beginning of the second act, in his normative personality state as a typical ranting hero, before reverting to the "loyal friend" type at line 89.<sup>173</sup> He maintains this position until Augustus' invective leads to a resumption of his normative state by the third act, although he is now less august because amenable to the prospect of a covert and ignoble attack upon the emperor. But no sooner does Caesario meet Gloriana (3.2.187ff) than he reverts to the enervated lover type.<sup>174</sup> From this point on thoughts of revenge are muted by his enervating passion and increasing thanatopsis. It is evident that, contrary to critical opinion, Caesario is distinctly unlike the stereotypical heroic protagonist. In fact the extent and regularity of his changing personality states makes him particularly distypical. Notably Caesario closely follows the structure of Massinissa in most respects, differing only in the extent of interiority.<sup>175</sup>

In his depiction of Augustus, Lee returns to the type of character he had produced in Nero, continuing his characterological study of the complex, non-melodramatic villain who exhibits virtuous and vicious characteristics. Like his literary forbear, Augustus is proud,<sup>176</sup> tyrannical,<sup>177</sup> lustful,<sup>178</sup> impetuous, irrational, petulant,<sup>179</sup> irresponsible, intolerant, vindictive, merciless (1.1.172ff), cruel, monstrous,<sup>180</sup> furious,<sup>181</sup> and paranoid, although admittedly less superlatively than Nero in almost all cases. Both emperors struggle with their conscience, oscillating between their ruling and subordinate personality states, but, unlike Nero, Augustus' conscience ultimately reasserts itself. Central to the character is his antiquity and his

<sup>173</sup> Although it is possible to be both a "loyal friend" and an epic hero at the same time (many heroes are), in this particular instance there is a distinctive change in his behavioural state away from the heroic paradigm—he ceases to rant and decides to forego his ambition and regicidal intent. As a result a change in personality state is felt to have occurred, and his new state most approximates that of the "loyal friend".

<sup>174</sup> Like the saddened and distressed types, the enervated lover is incapable of taking any action against his enemies, yet differs from them both because he is neither hopelessly opposed by an insurmountable force (as is the case with the distressed lover), nor is his love unrequited (as is the case with the saddened lover).

<sup>175</sup> Caesario is responsive—despite acting consistently with his passionate disposition, he does premeditate his actions which distinguishes him from the apsycho-logical responsive chooser. He is minimally stylised, substantially coherent, maximally whole, medially symbolic, medially accessible (of substantial complexity, but modest transparency), static, minimally derivative, and modestly conventional (modest in both his societal role as a warrior-prince, and in his functional roles as the epic hero).

<sup>176</sup> Cf. 3.1.70; 3.2.23, 59, 70, 214; 4.1.171.

<sup>177</sup> Cf. 1.1.283; 3.1.71; 3.2.214, 268; 4.1.179, 188, 275, 280, 391, 404; 5.1.286, 305; 5.2.12, 90, 127.

<sup>178</sup> Cf. 3.2.214; 4.1.308; 5.3.67. The immorality of this is accentuated by the fact that Augustus is married (3.2.61) and so his proposed relationship with Gloriana would be adulterous.

<sup>179</sup> Cf. 1.1.268ff; 4.1.281ff, 318ff. His petulance is exemplified in his hurling of the dagger at Caesario (2.1.117ff), and in his order to kill all of his family for disobeying him (4.1.361ff).

<sup>180</sup> He is called a "Fiend" (3.2.198; 4.1.259), a "Monster" (3.1.85), a "Brute" (3.1.87), "an old Beast of prey" (4.1.90), a "Savage" (4.1.99) and a "Vulture" (4.1.165), which are all akin to the bestial references to Nero.

lasciviousness, which develops into an ignoble passion for the youthful Gloriana.<sup>182</sup> The battle to overcome this inappropriate desire is one of the foci of the play. This is augmented by the disparity between the absolute power of his office and his inability to resolve his domestic problems,<sup>183</sup> his nostalgic attempts to rekindle his glorious past,<sup>184</sup> his inability and unwillingness to accept his declining virility, and the threat to the suzerainty of "old Saturn" by "a mad young fiery Jupiter" (1.1.284-5), all of which cause him to resort to offensive behaviour to maintain authority. Whilst the lecherous old tyrant from which he derives was a commonplace of the Restoration stage, he differs from the norm in his eventual rehabilitation. His sexual desires are repeatedly emphasised; from the song which opens the play,<sup>185</sup> the revelation of Julia's alleged sexual promiscuity and his own admitted penchant for such behaviour, through to his incarceration of Gloriana and his abhorrent behaviour towards her. Yet one must also remember that Lee emphasises Augustus' condition to be psychopathological—he suffers from an excess of choler (2.1.9) which render him prone to irrational and violent behaviour, and an excess of blood (3.2.66) which makes him lascivious.<sup>186</sup>

The attention on the emperor's distress at his daughter's supposed immorality and Marcellus' disobedience throughout the first act suggests that Augustus is to be the affective focus (or one of the affective foci) of the play.<sup>187</sup> Yet the vicious aspect of his identity is also tacitly introduced at this point to counterbalance our appreciation. His vice is accentuated in the central scenes of the play at the expense of all others, so as to demonstrate that he is at least partly responsible for the tragic outcome. In fact it is revealed that his vicious, rather than his virtuous, personality has been the ascendant, normative state throughout. Firstly it is intimated that (illegal) assassination, rather than (legal) execution, is felt to be more in keeping with Augustan policy.<sup>188</sup> His vicious tendencies are accentuated through the revelation of his ignoble passion for Gloriana,<sup>189</sup> during which it is suggested (and subsequently confirmed) that he has had her incarcerated so as to be able to satisfy his pleasure. In addition he is regularly referred to throughout the play as an "usurper" (2.1.42, 57, 96-7; 3.2.77) and a "tyrant" so as to

<sup>181</sup> Cf. 1.1.107, 133, 170; 2.1.5, 9; 3.2.74, 96-7; 5.1.83.

<sup>182</sup> His old age is emphasised at 1.1.265-6, 271, 284; 3.2.6, 11-2, 24, 32-5, 153, 160; 4.1.90, 349, 369.

<sup>183</sup> The domestic nature of his conflict is emphasised throughout, most notably in the fact that three of the five acts end on his concern with the "homebred" or "domestick jar(s)" he endures (1.1.209; 2.1.364; 5.2.253).

<sup>184</sup> Like Hannibal, he is past his prime in every respect, and so becomes nostalgic for the "Golden days [which] will never come again" (1.1.287).

<sup>185</sup> The second song (3.2.1ff) echoes the first by reiterating his devotion to hedonistic pleasure at the expense of his civic responsibility. Even he himself admits this to be the case (ll.13ff).

<sup>186</sup> Cf. Wong, pp.42-3.

<sup>187</sup> Affective in the sense of the character/s with whom we most associate and sympathise.

<sup>188</sup> Cf. 1.1.258-61. This is reiterated at 4.1.277-8 where it is claimed that Augustus has been involved in the assassination of people in the past.

<sup>189</sup> Even his friend Agrippa makes it clear that his desire for Gloriana is inappropriate for one of his age.



accent the degenerate aspect of his personality at the expense of his rectitude, and thereby remind us that he is the (pseudo-)villain, not the hero, of the piece. His corrupt and licentious behaviour continues to be the principal concern of the third act, particularly the second scene. His threat to rape Gloriana (3.2.105-6) and his determination to keep her alive through force, demonstrates his depraved state, and recalls Maximin's use of St. Catherine.

But, like Nero, Augustus' character is conspicuously complicated through the oscillation between his ruling (normative, vicious) state and his circumstantial-cum-normative (subordinate, virtuous) state. Augustus' fluctuation is much more pronounced than had been the case with Nero. His initial lecherous state is the longest, beginning pre-play and lasting until the middle of the work. The length of this state serves to accentuate his depravity so that all of the subsequent progressions towards a state of virtue are clearly demarcated, and to demonstrate that his contrition is sincere. At 3.2.124ff he overcomes his vicious nature for the first time, and thereafter switches back and forth with remarkable regularity. His first progression to a state of virtue is temporary, lasting but a few lines, before he reverts to type, threatening Gloriana with imprisonment, rape and physical restraint to prevent her from taking her own life (3.2.133ff). He next oscillates at 4.1.204ff when he sees Caesario and is unable to act against him. This too is short-lived, but is indicative of a mind in conflict. His cruelty reappears in his intent to torture Caesario by continually reminding him of Gloriana's betrayal (4.1.419ff). Then in his next appearance Augustus' paternal devotion for Narcissa is such that he is able to put aside his hatred of his brother at her request (5.1.49-50). Yet this is offset by his coercion of Gloriana into consenting to his advances by threatening Caesario's life (5.1.97ff), and by the fact that the moment Narcissa criticises his behaviour he orders her imprisoned (5.1.145-6). For a time he is conscience-ridden about his proposed action because of Narcissa's critique (5.1.192ff), but affirms his intention to act nonetheless. In his final speeches of this scene (ll. 192ff, 204ff), both of which are evidently in aside, there is a decided suggestion of the psychopathological element of his behaviour that Wong so crudely identified. His conscience warns him against his proposal yet he finds himself compelled to act. Most notable perhaps is his aside at 5.2.157ff which suggests that his passion for Gloriana is rooted in genuine affection, despite his behaviour. His late "act of virtue" (5.2.190) seems in part to have been a reaction to her death, and of regret at the outcome of his actions.<sup>190</sup> This all helps to complicate the assessment of the character of Augustus, as do the final lines. His sorrow at the dénouement is worthy of sympathy, and his mora' rehabilitation admirable, but this is offset by his patent lack of understanding as to his involvement in the catastrophe,

blaming the gods rather than accepting responsibility for events over which he had such a bearing. In the end we are left with a conspicuously enigmatic character that is worthy of interest for this reason.

Despite popular opinion Augustus is not a typical lustful king of heroic drama.<sup>191</sup> Nor is he an indeterminate compound of a tyrant, a great monarch and a senile wencher, as Hammond suggests.<sup>192</sup> Rather he is a complex, conflicted figure who combines virtuous and vicious traits, and who presents substantively verisimilar psychological trauma. The extent and degree of conscience-ridden conflict that the emperor undergoes between his ruling and subordinate states, makes Augustus the most atypical character that Lee has produced to date.<sup>193</sup> Further, the emperor is the playwright's most complete example of a tragic hero so far—unlike Poppea or Massinissa, Augustus is more intimately responsible for the tragedy; both of the earlier figures were manipulated into their downfall whereas the emperor is entirely self-directed in his. He is the essentially good but flawed figure whose *hamartia*—his refusal to accept the limits of senescence—leads him to act inappropriately, causing tragic agony, conscience-ridden conflict, regret and rehabilitation. His predicament also fulfills Aristotelian *catharsis* in the discovery that a once great hero has degenerated and been ruined by domestic jars, many of which are of his own making. It is poignant that our final and lasting image of this (presumably) once great man is not as a Herculean hero (as he would have us envisage) but as a sad and misguided old fool clothed in a "Night-gown".

Gloriana is derived from, and shares many of the characteristics of, the heroines of Lee's previous play. Like Sophonisba, she does not appear until the middle of the play (3.2.1ff), having been only briefly alluded to before this (1.1.262-7). Both are also notable for being conditional in their love. Gloriana indicates that it is her proposal to use the "haughty gazer" Caesario to arrest the emperor's persecution of her (3.2.213ff). There is no mention of her having any affection for him at this time, and like Sophonisba, her devotion progressively increases. In fact there is in these lines a suggestion of disdain rather than admiration. She seeks a champion for her cause, not a lover and this makes him convenient. Her statement at

<sup>190</sup> Having said this, one must also bear in mind the knowledge that this same "act of virtue" enables Augustus to rid himself of his enemy without culpability. Significantly he does not even kill Caesario himself but has his minions perform the deed (5.2.197).

<sup>191</sup> Cf. Van Lennep, *Sources*, p. 134, Stroup and Cooke, *Works*, I 148, Tucker, p. 151.

<sup>192</sup> Cf. Hammond, *Development*, p. 525.

<sup>193</sup> He is an instigator who is minimally stylised, substantially coherent, medially whole, medially symbolic, medially accessible (substantial in his complexity, and medial in his transparency), minimally derivative, medially conventional (minimally so in his societal role as emperor, and substantial in his functional role as the lustful tyrant) and clearly fails to achieve even a modicum of self-discovery. He is minimally derivative, critics have paid considerable attention to the extent to which Lee's character deviates from the historical personage, and from the popular conception of the emperor in the late seventeenth-century (cf. Stroup and Cooke, *Works*, I 147-8, Hunt, pp. 35ff, 90). Lee's character is wholly a figment of his imagination, and the title merely serves as an historical



3.2.257-8 is particularly revealing in this regard, the bestowal of her devotion being clearly dependent on satisfactory service. She does admit to loving him at 4.1.176 but only after he expresses the will to die, and she seems to have been (at least partly) motivated by the desire to reinvigorate his opposition to Augustus. Further, she is only prepared to give herself up to the emperor after every other character present—Marcellus, Julia and Narcissa—has come to his defence without success (4.1.375ff). These incidents demonstrate her egoism, although she is clearly not as self-absorbed as her predecessor. Her principal attributes are her strength of character, her assertiveness and her politic skill. She has many of the traits of the hero—she is ambitious, hubristic (3.2.46ff), haughty and disdainful, and is reactionary rather than passive. Her masculine temperament recalls that of Rosalinda, this aspect being emphasised by Narcissa at 4.1.151 who claims Gloriana to have a spirit “more fierce than boldest men”. And in her politic machinations she also demonstrates a partial descent from what I term the victimised villainess type,<sup>194</sup> although her character type is more accurately that of the victimised heroine because she does not actually fulfill her regicidal intent. She is a medially individuated stereotype, with Sophonisba as her basic type foundation. Interest lies in her masculine nature (like Rosalinda), in her conditional acceptance of Caesario (like Sophonisba) and her manipulative ability. From a mechanical perspective the titular heroine is an initiator, medially stylised, maximally coherent, maximally whole, substantially symbolic, medially accessible (of modest complexity and substantial transparency—her motivation being explicated), static, minimally derivative,<sup>195</sup> and medially conventional (medial in her societal role as a princess, and modest in her functional role as a victimised heroine). In the end, it is to be regretted that so little attention is paid to this character: like Sophonisba she is denied the level of attention that she deserves.

Of the intermediary and choral characters Julia is by far the most complex and engaging. In fact not only is she one of the most complicated characters of the play but rivals Poppea, Sophonisba, Rosalinda and Gloriana as Lee's most enigmatic figure to date. The ambiguity centres around the extent of her vice; whether she engages in innocent liaison and revelry or sexual depravity. Much of this assessment depends upon a determination of her cryptic psychic position. Like Sophonisba, Julia is the subject of intense negative publicity

point of reference for the story. On anagnorsis, it is notable that Gloriana even warns him that he is the cause of his own passions (4.1.80), yet he evidently neither listens nor comprehends.

<sup>194</sup> The “victimised villain” is one of four types of villain. This type derives from the likes of Medea, Clytemnestra, and Procne and Philomela. All are, strictly speaking, villainesses because their actions are vicious (murder is vicious regardless of the merits of the motivation), yet this behaviour is mitigated by the fact that the anguish that they have endured has forced them to retaliate. As such they are more likely to elicit our sympathy, empathy, affection and/or admiration than the “calculating” type whose villainy is unmitigated. See glossary of terms (pp 274-5) for a comparison of the four categories within the generic class.

<sup>195</sup> Gloriana bears little resemblance to La Calprenède's heroine Candace. She is almost wholly invented

before her appearance, so that our impression of her is preconditioned towards accepting Augustus' allegation that she is the epitome of wanton vice. Ovid's abrupt exit amidst this discussion (1.1.93s.d.) supports the veracity of the claim as it tacitly implies his involvement in her iniquity. Agrippa contrasts this position by suggesting that she has been slandered by some unnamed courtier, yet even he concedes that because she is “boundless born” (above censure) and “mark'd for sway” (genetically and/or physiologically predisposed to licentiousness)—that she is incapable of following the puritanical rules of society. Mecaenas adds that her accusers merely guess at her infidelity from her actions, attempting to determine whether her ambiguous behaviour at court is innocent or perverse in foundation. Despite doubts over the veracity of the claim, Augustus is adamant that she is guilty of widespread promiscuity, complaining not only of her supposed licentiousness, but also of her vanity and heretical attitude towards the gods. Her affectation is demonstrated from her opening lines (1.1.114ff), and throughout the entire act she is depicted as fatuous and inane. She reveals a penchant for the company of young lovers at 1.1.142, and claims that her patrician descent gives her the right to live “loosely” (1.1.207), both of which suggest some truth to the accusations, yet, as with many of the statements made both by and against her, it does not necessarily imply sexual depravity, and may simply allude to innocent bacchanalian revelry.<sup>196</sup> The issue of her guilt continues to be the subject of those later scenes in which she appears, 2.1.220ff and 4.1 in particular.

The most damning indictment against her is made by Tiberius in 2.1. Yet surprisingly the veracity and motivation of his claim has been ignored despite the invitation to do so.<sup>197</sup> The fact that Marcellus actively confirms Tiberius to be innocent of the possibility of “darkest mischiefs” in his allegation inversely invites the suggestion that his claim is both specious and nefarious. Doubt as to the sincerity of his allegation is accentuated by Julia's claim of “false Tiberius['] malice” at 4.1.53. The very substance of his claim is dubious, since after admitting that “[w]hat was in private acted we but think” (2.1.252), he claims to have witnessed her *in flagrante delicto*, rendering his earlier statement both moot and curious. It has about it the suggestion of a fabrication being progressively exaggerated.<sup>198</sup> At the very least it needs to be

<sup>196</sup> Augustus' reference to her element being “the Air” (1.1.113) implies that she is extraverted and sanguinous in character, although neither trait necessarily correlate with sexual depravity.

<sup>197</sup> It is only recently that this character has even been mentioned by critics. Hughes notes that much of the evidence of Julia's sexual excesses come solely from the rather suspect Tiberius (p. 108), and Kewes that Tiberius is wily (p. 361), yet this is the extent of critical interest to date. This is remarkable, despite the brevity of his characterisation. He is arguably Lee's first unregenerate, calculating (and successful) villain. This type would be repeated in Lee's very next play in the characters of Cassander and his partisans, and used regularly thereafter. He is an important characterological development for no other reason than this.

<sup>198</sup> After all Tiberius' accusation helps to advance his position in the line of succession. His appearance in the final scene of the play to expose the death of Marcellus and the imminent death of Julia, serves to notify his installation as heir to the empire, and to recall the doubt over the purity of his motivation. Augustus' emphasis on the fact that he is “wrong'd Livia's son” (5.3.238) serves as the motivating factor for his villainous behaviour. Overall he recalls the malicious villain of the same name in La Calprenède's novel.

treated with the same reserve that A.C. Bradley recommends of all statements made by Iago.<sup>199</sup> Julia's behaviour with Ovid also suggests her to be innocent of lasciviousness. Her discourse at 2.1.302ff suggests platonic admiration of, rather than carnal desire for, the poet. His reply also intimates that her affection for him is innocent, despite his evident desire that it be otherwise, and he repeats this assertion with evident sincerity at 2.1.351ff. She treats the accusations against her with sublime contempt, refusing to respond to the claims as beneath her dignity, and because of the futility of challenging the dogmatic belief in her guilt.<sup>200</sup> The strength of her acquiescence helps to support her credibility, yet continues to be impaired by curious and evasive statements such as "What I have done / Shall to no mortal, not to you be known" (4.1.48b-9). This is coupled with an admission that "from this hour" Marcellus shall be her lord, agreeing to confine her affections to him and to obey societal norms of behaviour (4.1.70ff). But she then reiterates that she has never betrayed him (presumably in a sexual sense) further suggesting her relationships with Ovid (and others) to have been platonic.

Coupled with the attention to her equivocal nature, is the progressively increasing focus on her virtue: her egocentric affectation is diminished as focus is placed on her altruism. Her behaviour towards Gloriana is a case in point—rather than being jealous of a woman more beautiful than she, Julia offers her sanctuary. Her willingness to come to the defence of Caesario is another example, and her imminent death from grief because of the death of her husband reflects the depth of her love for him, and accentuates our sympathy for her. She develops over the course of the play from a vain, fatuous, affected, proud, arrogant and egotistical libertine, into a devoted wife and friend, and a noble and virtuous heroine. With considerable characterological skill, Lee has created a character that embodies the "Vertue's growth" to which she alludes at 1.1.159. She is a submedially atypified victimised heroine, a figure that evokes both pathos over her plight, and admiration for her fortitude.<sup>201</sup> She is certainly not the "empty-headed fribble" that Hammond claims her to be.<sup>202</sup> It is typical of Lee that such an interesting character is female, and it is again to be regretted that she does not receive greater emphasis.

The remaining characters are principally functional and affective in value. Narcissa typifies the pathetic heroine who bravely fights and dies in the cause of her unrequited lover.

<sup>199</sup> Bradley, pp 221ff

<sup>200</sup> Her refusal to seek forgiveness from her father (1.1.171) is a case in point, because to do so would be to admit to a crime of which she believes herself innocent

<sup>201</sup> She is a responder who is substantially stylised, medially coherent, medially whole, minimally symbolic, medially accessible (of medial complexity and modest transparency), substantially conventional (medial in her societal role as a princess, and maximal in her functional role as a libertine turned heroine) and achieves a medial level of *anamorphosis* in her development as an individual from vice to virtue. She is medially based on the historical sources, yet her friendship with the poet is free from the suggestion of undue familiarity to be found in *Léopâtre*. Hill agrees suggesting Lee's Julia to be "hardly recognizable" with La Calprenède's character (p.95)

She embodies the naïve and innocent country maiden, in contrast to the courtly dissoluteness of her friend Julia. Accent is placed on her unfamiliarity with palace etiquette, and the fact that Augustus had kept her from this environment in her youth to prevent corruption, yet chose to raise his own daughter in these same surroundings (2.1.208ff). Narcissa's love for Caesario is immediate and emphatic, and she displays remarkable strength in her willingness to defy any and all in his defence. It is she who first decides to importune Augustus to protect her lover, and to threaten suicide should the supplication fail (4.1.134-9). Her outspoken criticism of Augustus at 5.1.137ff is admirable, as is her response to his threats of imprisonment. And she earns of sympathy and affection in the manner of her death from a broken heart.

Like his sister, Marcellus is the typical loyal friend and saddened lover. He is little more than a boy (1.1.239), younger even than Caesario (2.1.141), yet his martial skill is emphasised (1.1.236ff), as is his sagacity, his familiarity with court intrigue (2.1.164ff), and his widespread popularity. The strength of his friendship is such that Caesario forgoes his regicidal intent against Augustus because the emperor is his adopted father and has his affection. He becomes an enervated lover type from 2.1.220ff onwards when informed of Julia's supposed infidelity—wishing for death (4.1.66ff) yet nevertheless displaying infinite capacity for forgiveness.<sup>203</sup> The few occasions in which he challenges either Julia or Caesario he quickly overcomes his anger. His love and devotion is unconditional, he is prepared to put his life on the line to protect his friend. And his death from grief ("without a wound"—5.2.227) because of the death of his sister reflects the strength of his love. Like her his principal function is to suffer and, in so doing, to engage the sympathy of the audience.

Mecenas, Agrippa, Araspes and Leander are all partisan characters. The former are the loyal aids of Augustus. Mecenas serves as his Machiavellian counsellor advocating assassination as being in keeping with Augustan policy, policy of which one suspects he himself has been the foundation. In contrast Agrippa provides the sage advice, and none of the ignoble. To Caesario, Araspes and Mecenas act as the voices of reality, demonstrating, through their contradiction, that his claims are unrealistic. Both are prepared to suggest an unheroic course of action, but evidently have his best interests at heart. As counsellors both are practical men rather than heroic idealists—if murdering Augustus in his sleep is the most expedient, and least dangerous, course of action, then both recommend that approach. The last of the choral characters is Ovid who is a typical saddened lover, despite not suffering from melancholia. His principal function is to help expose and advance the plot.

<sup>202</sup> Hammond, *Development*, p 525

<sup>203</sup> Wong suggests that in Marcellus Lee presents a classic example of the symptoms of love-melancholy: jealousy, depression, anger, the desire to kill and as mercurial a willingness to forgive (p.49).

Critics have been at pains to point out that this is Lee's worst play. Other than those who have condemned the play for its stylistic excesses and thematic disunity (both of which are, to a degree, admissible), recent criticism has focussed upon the perceived typification, artificiality and melodramatic nature of the representations. Dobrée in particular claims that "judged by any standard of reality [*Gloriana*] would be monstrous enough, but it never comes near enough reality to be judged by such a standard".<sup>204</sup> Yet it is clear that Lee is presenting all too real people afflicted with all too real dilemmas and reacting in an all too real manner. The setting may be stylised, but the situation, the participants and the extensive presentation of interiority, are definitely unconventional and substantively verisimilar. In fact *Gloriana* demonstrates the progress that Lee has made in his characterological artistry. He introduces several themes and character types in this play that are repeated with considerable success in his later plays, such as the rivalry of two heroines for the affections of the hero (and vice versa), and the introduction of the lustful old tyrant and calculating villain types. Although the depiction of Caesario does not advance his study (being largely a repeat of Massinissa), Augustus, Gloriana and Julia are all of particular note. Augustus represents Lee's foray into the typical old lecherous despot, but transcends the type in the extent of his inner turmoil. Further the emperor is Lee's most complete example of an Aristotelian hero to date. This type foundation is used to great effect in the plays that follow. Being descended from the victimised villainess type Gloriana adds another type to the LEEAN pantheon, despite the fact that she shares several features with Sophonisba. The enigmatic portrayal of Julia is also evident of considerable characterological skill, as is the exhibition of her moral progression from vice to virtue. These new characters, and the emphases upon ambiguity and personal growth, continue to be the subject of his characterology in the developmental plays. Of particular note is the way in which Caesario and Augustus provide the foundation for Lee's successful sexual rivals, including the father-son conflict. By bringing together the lecherous tyrant (a descendant of Nero) and the victimised hero (a descendant of Massinissa), and introducing a rivalry between them for the affections of the heroine, Lee strikes upon a formula which would bring him considerable dramatic success. If, as Armistead suggests, *Gloriana* is "a journal of ideas for future exploitation",<sup>205</sup> it is a journal with attention firmly centred on characterological concerns.

#### Conclusion.

<sup>204</sup> Dobrée, p. 114.

<sup>205</sup> Armistead, *Nathaniel Lee*, p. 58.

Despite Nicoll's suggestion that Lee was incapable of indulging in subtle studies of mind-states, and that his characters in the early plays are the stock characters of heroic drama,<sup>206</sup> several of the characters in his foundational plays demonstrate considerable characterological artistry. Nero and Poppea from *Nero*, Massinissa, Sophonisba and Rosalinda from *Sophonisba*, and Augustus, Gloriana and Julia from *Gloriana* all display considerable complexity, transcending their type foundations and presenting levels of psychological depth and/or ambiguity which invite closer inspection. Thematic attention is directed towards Lee's ongoing examination of the idealistic and unrealisable tenets of heroism in post-heroic society, of frustrated and enervated love and its catastrophic consequences, of the futile and irreconcilable conflict between love and duty, of the deleterious influence and tyrannous misuse of absolute power, and the effects which this has in both the civic and domestic spheres. In each play Lee concentrates upon the same concerns, directing his attention towards the character's reactions to situations familiar to the heroic genre. But in keeping with a characterology that does not permit of absolutes, Lee deliberately undercuts the seemingly heroic characterisations, complicating the representations by introducing internal conflict to produce effective, affective and verisimilar tragic characters.

From his first play Lee reveals a singular and considered approach to characterology. *Nero* is not only his foray into characterisation, but also his first effort at creating atypical figures, of adumbrating conventional heroic types and of presenting tragic alternatives. Lee ameliorates the representation of the emperor by introducing internal conflict and 'unheroic' aspects to turn a heroic tyrant into a tragic villain. A development of this very type would lead to the production of *Caesar Borgia*, arguably Lee's greatest representation. Poppea is equally efficacious, transcending the conventional termagant type in her Manichaean struggle and eventual rehabilitation. She is an atypical amalgamation of the innocent heroine and lustful termagant, a tragic heroine who shares with Petronius the distinction of being Lee's inaugural attempt at producing an Aristotelian tragic figure. Although an intermediary figure, Poppea is perhaps the most complex, individuated, credible, effective and affective character that Lee produces in his maiden work. Britannicus and Piso are also of importance to Lee's characterological foundation, the former being his first victimised hero type, and the latter his first (albeit rudimentary) example of a statesman hero. Along with the dispositional and calculating villains, the types presented in this play would constitute the basis for Lee's typological pantheon. Not only are these characters valuable exercises in type creation, but

<sup>206</sup> Nicoll, *Restoration Drama*, p. 123.



there is also in the individuation of each an inkling of the sublime characterisations that he was to produce.

*Sophonisba* continues his experiments in character and type development. Although more closely heroic in foundation, the figures of this play are distinctively 'unheroic'. Massinissa expands the tragic hero into a central figure whose conflict is intense, pathos-laden and verisimilar. The enigmatic presentation of Sophonisba is one of the most engaging aspects of the play, and serves as the basis for the equally equivocal Gloriana. Although Hannibal is a typical heroic figure, he is a well-constructed example. His defiance of fate is admirable, and his affection for Rosalinda engaging. She is herself one of the most intriguing characters that Lee creates, unique in Lee's pantheon as a female Herculean hero racked with an identity crisis. Along with Poppea and Sophonisba, she evidences Lee's interest in the dynamic heroine who is usually absent from heroic drama. An expansion of ideas introduced in *Piso*, Scipio is an enigmatic figure who is to be admired for the manner in which he establishes Rome as the new world order, but who is both obscure and unsympathetic as an individual. Yet he is evidently to be pitied for the deleterious effect that his devotion to state has upon his humanity. Scipio acts as the forerunner of several variants of the type. The Roman general serves as the foundation for the soldier-counsellor sub-category that Lee inaugurates in *The Rival Queens* with Clytus. In the figure of Marcian in *Theodosius*, Scipio is used as the basis for a figure that manages to overcome the disparity between his public and private roles. The type then reaches its apotheosis in the profoundly ambiguous title-character of *Lucius Junius Brutus*.

As Hunt notes the dissatisfaction with the entirely admirable hero that began in *Nero* and developed in *Sophonisba* reaches its peak in *Gloriana*.<sup>207</sup> Despite critical depreciation of the characters, several are evidence of a progression in his characterological design and artistry. In his depiction of the emperor, Lee returns to a study of the conflicted villain that he had begun in *Nero*. He is a complex atypical figure who presents substantively verisimilar psychological trauma, and becomes Lee's most complete example of a tragic hero to date. Like her predecessor, Gloriana is an enigmatic figure who, from a characterological perspective, is of interest in that she descends in part from the victimised villainess type, but is ultimately a victimised heroine. The complication of the heroine-villainess antithesis is repeated to great effect in the figure of Roxana in *The Rival Queens*. In keeping with his attention to female characters, Julia proves to be another cryptic character. She engages interest as to the degree of her iniquity, as well as in her progression from a fatuous roue into a virtuous heroine. And although Caesario imitates Massinissa he is nevertheless an effective, affective and believable example of the type, and indicative of his improving talent. Thus, rather than being a

conventional exponent of heroic characterology, it can be seen from all of Lee's foundational plays that he adapts the type foundations to produce 'unheroic', tragic figures. Regardless of the perceived efficacy of these characters, at the very least they are worthy characterological experiments that form a useful foundation for the developmental and sophisticated examples to follow.

### Approaches to Typification.

It has been necessary to analyse the plays of Lee's foundational period of characterological development before describing the three methods of characterisation he adopts, so as to provide appropriate examples to assist in explaining the definition of each approach. These three methods, I have termed the stereotypical, distypical and atypical approaches. The former is the most familiar approach, this method having been discussed at length in Chapter Two. These characters retain the same foundation throughout the text, never acting contrary to their type, and undergoing no discernible change in personality state. Yet within this category there are varying degrees of individuation, as is evidently the case between Britannicus and a Roman soldier. As such it is necessary to be able to differentiate between the extremes, rather than simply reducing all typified characters to one all-encompassing term. Utilising the quintuple scale enables us to distinguish between those characters that are minimally typified (or maximally individuated), from those that are of modest and medial typification (substantial and medial individuation), are the substantially and maximally typified (modestly or minimally personalised). The most obvious distinction between minimal and maximal typification is between those figures that are minimally and maximally stylised – that is, between those who are presented stereotypically, but at considerable length, and those who are typified, but only briefly represented. At the minimal/modest positions are found those principal figures who undergo considerable suffering and who may exhibit interiority, but who nevertheless experience no changes in their personality position. Zepharex and Oedipus are examples that will be examined in due course. These characters remain consistently typified throughout, yet are infinitely more interesting, dimensional and personalised than the substantially and maximally typified support cast.

In contrast to the stereotype is the atypical character, notable for the accent placed upon the internal revelation of conflict, and/or the oscillation in his or her various personality states. That is not to suggest that atypical characters lack typicality (after all, as I have already suggested, it is axiomatic that all dramatic characters have a type-foundation), but rather the

<sup>207</sup> Hunt, p. 86.



emphasis placed on the workings of their psyche, and/or the changes in personality state preclude us from simplistically categorising them as a stereotype. Their individuation stems from the fact that they transcend their stereotypical foundation, and their typicality is abraded in consequence. Just as the stereotypical category is subdivided to reflect the degree to which a character is individuated, the atypical category is assessed on a quintuple scale, so as to reflect the varying degrees of profundity in the representation. At the minimal end of the atypical scale are found those characters who subtly defy the conventions of their type, such as the hero/ine acting viciously, or the villain/ess virtuously. These characters cannot be reduced to stereotypes because typified figures do not undergo change in personality state. Petronius is an early example of such a character, being a villain who finally acts contrary to his type. At the modest position are found those characters that undergo a modicum of conflict between their virtuous and vicious personality states. Nero is an example of a character at this location because of his brief bouts of conscience. Thereafter atypicality increases with the degree of internal conflict, substantive verisimilitude and centrality in the text. At the maximal end are found the most profound examples of a playwright's characters.

The third method of characterisation has been termed distypical. Lee not only presents psychologically conflicted characters but also studies of stereotypes, especially those of the heroic genre that he transcends. He takes these types and deliberately undermines and adapts them, molding and reshaping the raw material into different forms, which nevertheless retain a typical foundation. These characters experience one or more fundamental changes in type over the course of the play, that is, they undergo several notable and meaningful changes in personality state. Yet within each state they remain stereotypical examples. Distypical characters are individuated in the way that they differ from their perceived foundation, and attention should focus upon the ways in which they are transformed into other types, or combinations of type. Little tends to be revealed about them through an explication of their mental disposition at (or following) a moment of crisis, so one must discover their identities by examining the various states in which they are presented. Massinissa is a prime example of a distype, being a combination of four different types of character: he begins the play as a traditional 'heroic' hero, and proceeds through the saddened lover, the malevolent and the distressed lover types. The principal distinction between the atype and the distype is on the *revelation* of inner conflict: characters in both categories undergo inner conflict but the latter do not express, or examine, that conflict internally to anywhere near the same extent, if at all. Rather they exhibit that conflict through a change in demeanour, and often after the event. Distypes cannot be viewed as stereotypes because of the changes they experience in their personality state, and so warrant a separate category. More accurately, the distype is a sub-

category of the atype—after all, that which is not stereotypical is necessarily atypical—it is also assessed upon the atypical scale, although with the added necessity to emphasise that the character is a distype. A lesser distype (one that only undergoes one change in state) is equated with minimal atypification, whilst a greater distype (those who experiences several changes, like Massinissa and Caesario) are modestly atypical. And whilst some might (and have) argue that the change in state is indicative of a protean figure, it is clear that Lee is emphasising an intentional modification—that the personality of the character is now different from the previous state, in precisely the same manner as people in the real world are changed by events without being viewed as protean.

It is also pertinent at this point to differentiate between those characters that undergo moral conflict and those that experience a change in personality state. In the former, conflict produces an oscillation between the character's vicious and virtuous personality positions, but does not reflect a permanent change in character type. That is, there is a temporary change in disposition from virtue to vice (or vice versa) before reverting to the previous position. Nero is an excellent example of such a character; he is a villainous tyrant who experiences brief periods of virtuous ascendancy yet who remains consistently a villain throughout. These characters are differentiated from those (distypes) who undergo a change from one personality state to another, such as hero to melancholic to enervated lover, which does not reflect a loss of, or change in, virtue. These characters never revert back to an earlier position because the change in state is permanent. All these types of character are presented by Lee in his foundational plays and continue to be adopted and adapted in his developmental dramas. Those who undergo moral conflict may either experience sufficient oscillation to be defined as modestly atypical (Nero is such an example), or may only undergo slight change (such as Petronius) and so reside in the minimal position. Atypes and distypes in particular may or may not be presented in the same text; sometimes Lee presents complex cogitation in the psyche of the protagonists, in others the protagonist is presented with less interiority, but as a stereotype who turns out (at close inspection) to be distypical. In some the protagonist is of one form and the intermediaries another. Finally, one must stress that Lee was by no means the first to present such a characterology, but he was particularly adept at it, arguably the most adept of his time. Dryden included

## Chapter Four. Characterological Development: *The Rival Queens* to *Oedipus*.

*The Rival Queens; Or, The Death of Alexander the Great* (by March 1676/7).

Far and away Lee's most successful stage production, *The Rival Queens* premiered on Saturday 17 March 1676/7, ten pounds being issued to the King's Company at the "New Theatre" by the Lord Chamberlain.<sup>1</sup> Extremely popular with the court, it was performed as part of the Queen's birthday celebration on 15 November 1681, and again on 19 December 1685, 27 October 1686 and 16 January 1689/90. It was revived in Great Britain in one form or another until the mid-nineteenth century, and in America from 1768 to 1863.<sup>2</sup> Recently the tragedy was revived at the Union Theatre in London between 27 November and 22 December 2001. Licensed for publication in Michaelmas term (26 November) 1677 (l.291), the play has been reprinted on numerous occasions.<sup>3</sup> The primary fictional source of the plot is La Calprenède's *Cassandre* (1642 to 1650), translated by "an Honorable Person" in 1652,<sup>4</sup> and by Sir Charles Cotterell in 1661, and reprinted in 1676.<sup>5</sup> Of the numerous historical sources for the life of Alexander, Plutarch's biography and Quintus Curtius Rufus' *De rebus gestis Alexandri Magni* are the most influential.<sup>6</sup> But, as is often the case with Lee's use of sources, these works are mainly of relevance to the construction of the plot, and for the suggestion of particular incidents, rather than for the creation of character. That is the sources, particularly the romances, tend to provide general ideas rather than specific details.

For the most part, early assessment of the characters, including Alexander, is that they are "weak", "shallow", "superficially conceived and not fully delineated".<sup>7</sup> More recent critics have responded by arguing that Alexander is, in fact, a complexly generated character who

<sup>1</sup> L.C. 5/141, p.359. Van Lennep refers to a letter by the Marquis of Worcester to the Marchioness dated 17 March 1676/7 that alludes to this performance as the premiere (*London Stage*, l.255).

<sup>2</sup> The various performance records suggest that there have been more than two hundred known revivals of this play in Britain, and well over a hundred in America. Cf. Genest, Otwell (pp.52-5), Beal (pp.1ff, 282ff), Beers (pp.39ff), Lewis (pp.111ff).

<sup>3</sup> There have been some 35 editions of the play (including adaptations) as well as its appearance in several collections of British drama, and in four modern editions. It is by far Lee's most widely published work.

<sup>4</sup> A hand written note on the title-page of a copy held in the Henry E. Huntington Library claims the author to be George Digby, Earl of Bristol.

<sup>5</sup> The principal influence of *Cassandre* is in the suggestion of the love-triangles—specifically the rivalry between Hephestion and Lysimachus for the affections of Parisatis, and the suggestion of a possible contest between Statira and Roxana for Alexander—the heroines having competed for the love of Oroondates in the romance.

<sup>6</sup> Translated by John Brende in 1553 (reprinted to 1614), and by Robert Codrington in 1652 (reprinted to 1675). Historical studies by Flavius Arrianus, Trogus Pompeius and Justin[i]us, Diodorus Siculus, Josephus, Joannes Zonaras, Petrarch, Rene Rapin, Samuel Clarke, Giovanni Botero and Sir Walter Raleigh all document the life of Alexander, as does Racine's tragedy, but any influence from these works is likely to have been minimal.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Van Lennep, *Sources*, pp.182, 189; Stroup and Cooke, *Works*, l.215; Hunt, p.123. Hasan is the sole exception to this trend in early Leean character analysis (p.82).

effectively combines the lover and tyrant types.<sup>8</sup> This has led Laura Brown to counterclaim that the depiction is incoherent, that the play presents "two parallel and absolutely irreconcilable accounts of the Alexander story" which are "mechanically and superficially combined", and that the king's careers (as lover and tyrant) remain unreconciled.<sup>9</sup> Alexander presents many of the admirable traits of the former (such as being a superlative lover,<sup>10</sup> warrior,<sup>11</sup> and friend,<sup>12</sup> as well as being prescient<sup>13</sup> and defiant of fate<sup>14</sup>), but also the ignoble characteristics of the latter—megalomania,<sup>15</sup> excessive ambition (l.1.42b-3), inconstancy (l.1.341ff), obstinacy, intolerance,<sup>16</sup> disdain, vainglory (4.1.31), hubris (4.1.467), imperiousness, impetuosity, lust, pretension, anger (l.1.166-70) and aggression, arrogance, irrationality, egoism, self-indulgence,<sup>17</sup> puerility, petulance,<sup>18</sup> irresponsibility,<sup>19</sup> and ungoverned passion.<sup>20</sup> As is often the case with the tyrant, his characteristics are presented hyperbolically.

Alexander's torture of Philotas (l.1.203) is the first of an extensive catalogue of crimes that are reported for the express purpose of illustrating his despotism. To this is added reference to the murders of Parmenio (l.1.243), Hermolaus (l.1.281) and Callisthenes.<sup>21</sup> These crimes reflect the extent of disharmony in the state and consequently render the conspirators more sympathetic, because supported by popular opinion. Criticism of Alexander by Oxyartes (2.1.45-7), "Others" (2.1.48) and Perdiccas (3.1.5-6) add to the tone of disapproval, as does the criticism of Clytus, which is the most explicit example. The allusion to Persepolis (2.1.343-4) is yet another reminder of his vicious tendencies, as well as confirming his renowned

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Hunt, p.134; Verdurmen, p.164. Hughes has more recently echoed this opinion (p.247).

<sup>9</sup> L. Brown, pp.71-6; R. Brown, p.118.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. l.1.363ff. Alexander's love for Statira is even admitted by Cassander (2.1.52).

<sup>11</sup> Cf. 2.1.151-2; 3.1.85-7, 307-8.

<sup>12</sup> Alexander's love for Hephestion almost equals his love for Statira (4.1.344-5). His benevolence towards his friends is as superlative as is his malevolence towards those who antagonise him.

<sup>13</sup> Prescience is traditionally the province of the hero, and is a trait which Lee regularly designates to these figures. Alexander's ironic statement at 2.1.410-1 suggests a certain level of prescience. 3.1.408-9, 4.1.76ff and 4.1.95ff are further examples.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. 2.1.216ff. In this he recalls Hannibal.

<sup>15</sup> Alexander is arguably the most megalomaniacal Leean character to date, Nero included, especially given that his pretensions to divinity result in a divine mandate for his destruction, as shall be discussed in due course.

<sup>16</sup> One should also be aware of the fact that he does display remarkable restraint on several occasions before being goaded into action.

<sup>17</sup> Alexander's genuine remorse over killing Clytus (4.1.510-20) quickly becomes self-indulgent at 4.1.524ff as he seeks to blame everyone else for his crime.

<sup>18</sup> Alexander's hurling of the spear at Clytus recalls Lee's Augustus who hurls a dagger at Caesario (*Gloriana*, 2.1.117ff).

<sup>19</sup> He is obsessed with his personal relationships at the expense of his public role. His lack of concern for the governance of his empire is exemplified by his complete indifference to the belief in an imminent destruction of Babylon (2.1.186ff). In this he is more akin to the tyranny of Nero than the statesmanship of Scipio.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. l.1.42, 51-5; 2.1.317, 261, 338. This trait of his character has been emphasised by Stroup, *Type-characters*, p.325; Leach, p.59; Hunt, p.129; Verdurmen, p.112.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. 2.1.244ff; 4.1.9. Alexander's unjust order to crucify Philarda over the death of Hephestion (5.1.258) is yet another example of his tyranny.

susceptibility to wine.<sup>22</sup> Alexander himself contributes to the atmosphere of despotism. His threat to torture and kill anyone who would dare tell him that Statira is dead (2.1.314-6) is reminiscent of Nero (*Nero*, 5.3.182ff). And despite the fact that Lysimachus continues to goad him about Parisatis, his response is excessive and demonstrates his viciousness. That he would make Lysimachus watch the marriage of Parisatis to Hephestion in chains (2.1.389-90) is cruel and vindictive, and his order that a "Prince of the Blood" be fed to the lions (2.1.400-3) like a common criminal is sadistic. As he reveals at 3.1.388-9, his violent tendencies are only ever just below the surface. Resistance to his despotism is validated by the several references to prodigies in the play that suggest that there is divine support for the conspiracy.<sup>23</sup> There is a tacit suspicion that his destruction is not only sanctioned but providentially ordained because of his hubristic pretension to divinity, which is conspicuously repeated throughout.<sup>24</sup> He even has the audacity to suggest that he intends to teach the gods how to govern.<sup>25</sup> His divinity is continually reasserted by the courtiers,<sup>26</sup> so it is unsurprising that he comes to view himself in this manner. Even Clytus is not above supporting this belief (4.1.424). Like the court of Nero which fosters vice (and the ruler's megalomania), that of Alexander encourages hubris. The king is surrounded by (and surrounds himself with) people who reinforce his beliefs, thereby creating a vicious circle.

But in contrast to the focus upon Alexander's despotism, is an equal emphasis upon his capacity for love and benevolence. Scenes with Statira, Sysigambis and Hephestion help to render him more attractive, and to reveal the benevolence he displays towards those he loves, and who love him in the expected manner. The attention paid by Lee to Alexander as a lover has led Laura Brown to suggest that this character combines two irreconcilable types, yet the combination of the lover and tyrant is common to Leean characterology. To differing degrees, Nero and Augustus have displayed aspects of the lover, but unlike Alexander are not traditionally conceived of as combining the types.<sup>27</sup> Alexander is, in fact, a development of the

<sup>22</sup> The reference to wine in relation to Alexander is repetitive and intentional. Cf. 1.1.304, 3.1.191-2, 378-9, 4.1.83-4, 4.1.436, 4.1.515, and in relation to Polyperchon at 1.1.249 and Clytus at 2.1.406, 4.1.32 and 4.1.502. Excessive drinking triggers Alexander's paranoia (4.1.371ff) and his irascibility. Wine encourages his ignoble behaviour, as it does in Clytus.

<sup>23</sup> 1.1.286s.d; 2.1.1ff, 167ff.

<sup>24</sup> The first reference appears at 1.1.192-5, and is repeated at 1.1.222, 2.1.131, 2.1.142, 2.1.162, 3.1.437, 4.1.353, 4.1.357-9, 5.1.148 and 5.1.376. Orosimedes' decree that "All Empires Crown, Glory of Babylon, / Whose Head stands wrapt in Clouds, must tumble down" (2.1.14-5) suggests that Alexander's (the "head") hubris has angered the god (or gods) who has (have) ordained his downfall. This is accentuated by the enraged tone in which the mandate is given to Aristander. Whilst Alexander misconstrues this to be a reference to the destruction of the city (and its famous gardens), it is evident that he is the "head" and "Glory of" Babylon. The old witches' advice to use "Poyson" to assassinate Alexander (and Cassander's reply) further suggests divine influence (2.1.31ff).

<sup>25</sup> 5.1.167ff. It is not a little ironic that Alexander was noted to be a poor governor. According to Raleigh, for example, Alexander was derided by Augustus Caesar for wanting more worlds to conquer than he was adequately able to govern (*History of the World*, II.xiii, p.601).

<sup>26</sup> 1.1.256-7; 2.1.96, 104, 286, 420; 3.1.122; 4.1.11, 177; 5.1.193.

<sup>27</sup> The combination of these types would be repeated in Mithridates, Caesar Borgia and Constantine.

Nero and Augustus lover-tyrant, whose love (requited or otherwise) was substantially subordinated to his tyranny (and, in the case of the latter, contributes to it) by combining the type with aspects of the pure affection of Lee's heroic lovers Britannicus, Massinissa, Hannibal and Caesario.<sup>28</sup> Alexander combines, and accentuates, the virility of Caesario (the hero who is loved by, and is the lover of, two women) and the misrule of Augustus (the hero whose unsuitability for peacetime administration leads him to despotism), with the petulance and megalomania of Nero, and the ethereal devotion of a Britannicus, Massinissa and Hannibal. It becomes increasingly evident that Alexander's capacity for love and benevolence is derived from the same foundation as his tyranny.

The characteristic which underlies and unites the seemingly disparate roles, as well as the major trait clusters, is his neurotic insecurity. From the moment that Alexander appears (2.1.96ff) he displays a pathological need for affirmation. He requires constant reinforcement of the love and admiration of his people, repeatedly reminding them of his feats of heroism in statements like "Can none remember? Yes, I know all must".<sup>29</sup> He is particularly curt with anyone who disappoints him in this desire. When Clytus refuses to compliment him, Alexander claims the old man to be spiteful and envious, and is unwilling even to listen to his complaints (4.1.398ff). He becomes petulant in his attempts at self-justification, and puerile in hurling fruit at the counsellor. He even threatens the life of his beloved Hephestion (4.1.484-5) when the youth (and the other courtiers) attempt to prevent him from a rash course of action. But rather than alleviating the situation, this only manages to excite his paranoia: instead of realising that they serve by opposing him, he views their opposition as treasonous. His intolerance of criticism, and his refusal to listen to, let alone acknowledge, his own shortcomings, is the most important aspect of his character.<sup>30</sup> His hubris, passion, petulance, paranoia, egotism, intolerance of opposition, vulnerability to sycophancy and need to be loved (and by more than one woman) are all aspects of a deep-seated insecurity which underlies all of his actions, particularly the destructive behaviour that causes his downfall. Along with his megalomania, Alexander is the most neurotic of Lee's characters to date.

<sup>28</sup> If we were to conceive of this on a scale, Nero would be a maximal despot and modest lover (because his love is requited, but hardly ethereal), Augustus a substantial tyrant and a minimal lover (because unrequited in his desire), and Alexander medial in both aspects, being equally a tyrant and lover.

<sup>29</sup> 2.1.156. Clytus illustrates Alexander's neurosis when referring to the "Adorations he requires" (4.1.7).

<sup>30</sup> His intolerance towards those who challenge his resolution is exemplified at 3.1.21 when he orders Parisatis removed from her supplication at his feet. Related to his intolerance of opposition are his obsessions with compliance and with the assertion of his authority. Of the former, the notable example is Alexander's refusal to exempt Clytus from the banquet (3.1.432bff). Not only do the courtiers challenge his commands, they often treat them with disdain; Lysimachus, Clytus and Roxana variously ignore, or blatantly refuse, his orders. He is equally unwilling to allow others to issue commands. This is exemplified at 4.1.371-2 when he feels compelled to countermand Clytus' order for a fanfare. Finally, Sysigambis' obsession with placating Alexander implies that he is not only malevolent towards those who actively oppose him, but also to those who do not actively support him.



Although few would describe Alexander as superlatively as Douglas Beers—that “nowhere in a great male character has Lee created so human a figure”—the representation is nevertheless an efficacious one.<sup>31</sup> He is a creature of contradiction, blending the hero and tyrant, and displaying extremes of benevolence and malevolence. The two seemingly irreconcilable positions are demonstrated to be aspects of a united identity, dominated by a neurotic insecurity (hamartia) which manifests itself in intense affection, excessive hubris and violent intolerance. Much of the success of the character stems from the fact that the amalgamation of two contrasting types creates an ambivalent figure who is simultaneously admirable and censurable. Alexander is an example of a “dispositional tragic” villain,<sup>32</sup> all that separates him from being a tragic hero is the lack of remorse. Otherwise he fulfills most of the necessary tenets of the Aristotelian tragic protagonist, and is the appropriate subject for tragedy. From a mechanical perspective, the king is a lesser distype who is an a-psychological causative chooser who is minimally stylised,<sup>33</sup> medially coherent and whole, modestly symbolic,<sup>34</sup> medially accessible (substantial complexity and medial transparency), medially derivative,<sup>35</sup> modestly conventional (minimal in his societal role—as a monarch, and medially in his functional roles—as a lover and a tyrant) and achieves a minimal level of anagnorisis.<sup>36</sup> As Tucker notes, Lee focusses upon the downfall of a hero whose flaws were originally conventional heroic virtues.<sup>37</sup> He is a victim of his own hyperbole, his excessive demeanour enabling his rise to power in the martial domain yet the same lack of restraint in the political

<sup>31</sup> Beers, p. 173.

<sup>32</sup> A sub-category of the tragic villain type, dispositional villains are not deliberately manipulated into vice but corrupted by their ruling disposition. That is, they are affected by their own a-psychological desires. Whilst ambivalent tragic villains may also be a-psychological, they differ from dispositional type in that the former cogitate over their actions whereas the latter do not. See the glossary of terms (pp. 274-5) for a thorough definition.

<sup>33</sup> Alexander is allocated over twice as much of the text as Roxana, his nearest rival in this regard. Over a quarter of the lines in the play are spoken by this character. He is the subject of much of the text, especially so given that there is no real independent subplot. He is arguably the most minimally stylised Leean character to date.

<sup>34</sup> He is modestly symbolic because although predominantly self-referential, he also reflects the dangers of absolute and unchecked power.

<sup>35</sup> Lee makes it evident in the Dedication (ll. 90-1) that the audience should not “expect him [Alexander] in his Majesty of two thousand / Years ago”. Lee is not presenting the historical figure but rather a creation of his own imagination. He does not present how Alexander acted, but rather how he (or another ruler) might have acted in a given situation. Depending upon the source (particularly Plutarch and Curtius), Lee’s Alexander is either modestly or substantially derivative. This is because the former accentuates his positive aspects, the latter his negative ones. Lee takes aspects from both. The character is, however, almost totally dissimilar from the figure of the romance.

<sup>36</sup> Although Alexander makes no profound self-discovery about his downfall, he does display some self-awareness. He develops from his plan to make Hephestion (2.1.122-3) and then Statira (3.1.407) his heir, to leaving it to “him that is most worthy” (5.1.371). This suggests some progression from a self-indulgent individual who awards beneficence based on sycophancy to a more astute ruler who bequeaths the empire to the most deserving. He also acknowledges that the murder of Clytus is a stain on his “rising virtue” at 4.1.535, which is further suggestive of a modicum of self-awareness.

<sup>37</sup> Tucker, p. 86.

and domestic spheres causes his destruction.<sup>38</sup> For, despite being “the greatest man that ever was” (5.1.312), Lee demonstrates that Alexander is still only a man, and a flawed one at that.

Not only is Alexander equally virtuous and vicious, but all the principal characters correspond to, and accentuate, one of those two personality states.<sup>39</sup> On the one side are found Clytus, Statira and Lysimachus, and on the other Cassander and the conspirators, Roxana and Hephestion. The former has been the subject of considerable misguided analysis in the past. According to Van Lennep, Clytus is the only character in the play who is a “flesh and blood creation”.<sup>40</sup> However, this character is actually one of the most stereotypical principal figures of the work. His characteristics and behaviour prior to the banquet prove to be exactly the same (although lessened in intensity) as those that follow. In addition there is a common belief (again generated by Van Lennep) that Clytus is Lee’s first full-scale rendition of ‘Roman’ martial virtue.<sup>41</sup> Clearly this is not the case, as Lee’s own Scipio, and to a lesser degree his Seneca and Otho, attest.<sup>42</sup> Like his forerunners (particularly Scipio), Clytus represents the conventional martial traits of stoicism, candor, honesty,<sup>43</sup> pragmatism, rationality, heroism, temperance, austerity, patriotism and authority. He is also aged and (occasionally) wise.<sup>44</sup> Yet this same martial nature carries with it cognate traits and tendencies which are less desirable, such as his vociferous criticism and misogyny,<sup>45</sup> brusqueness, ardency, obstinacy,<sup>46</sup> arrogance, hubris,<sup>47</sup> tactlessness, belligerence, antagonism, intrusiveness and xenophobic elitism.<sup>48</sup> These ‘vices’ are simply intense, immoderate and injudicious expressions of his otherwise martial

<sup>38</sup> As with all of his immoderate characteristics, his superlative love, and pathological need to be loved in return, devolves into subservience, particularly to women. As Phil Dust notes, he jilts Roxana for Statira, Statira for Roxana, and then Roxana for Statira. His magnanimity in overturning the warrant against Lysimachus is not an act of altruism but the result of the influence of Parisatis. He is even unable to punish Roxana for the murder of Statira because of his subservience to her (p. 83).

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Tucker, pp. 90ff; Armistead, *Nathaniel Lee*, pp. 67ff. Alexander is flanked by three rivalries—the rival courtiers (Lysimachus versus Hephestion), the rival queens (Statira and Roxana), and the rival subjects (the loyal and forthright Clytus opposed by the traitorous and disingenuous Cassander). Those on the one side (Statira, Lysimachus and Clytus) are associated with, and encourage, his virtuous inclinations, whilst those on the other (Roxana, Hephestion and Cassander) pander to his vice. The former are salutary, the latter deleterious, to his morality.

<sup>40</sup> Van Lennep, *Sources*, p. 186.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Van Lennep, *Sources*, p. 187; Hunt, p. 136.

<sup>42</sup> I agree that he is descended from Shakespeare’s Enobarbus, and is the prototype of Marcian, Admiral de Coligny, Dalmatius, and Dryden’s Ventidius (cf. Van Lennep, *Sources*, p. 187; Stroup and Cooke, *Works*, I. 216; Armistead, *Nathaniel Lee*, p. 71), but Lee’s own Seneca, Otho and Scipio are all significant descendants. Amongst other things Scipio is less stylised than Clytus, and so is a more rounded example of the Roman soldier.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. 4.1.4; 4.1.496, 516.

<sup>44</sup> His old age is repeatedly emphasised (1.1.4, 19, 50, 58; 2.1.127b, 272; 4.1.64; 4.1.368, 413, 444, 560) as is his being “Reverend” (1.1.9; 2.1.84; 4.1.551), in the sense of being revered and respected, as well as wise.

<sup>45</sup> He is particularly critical of all things that are neither Macedonian or masculine. He criticises those who subordinate glory to love, effeminate luxury to martial discipline, Zoroastrianism to Greek religion, and Persian custom to his native Macedonian. He equates womankind with irrationality, anti-heroism and an impediment to glory (1.1.29ff, 69; 2.1.405-7).

<sup>46</sup> Alexander refers to Clytus’ obstinate perversion and pride at 4.1.362-3, 379-82.

<sup>47</sup> Clytus reveals his hubris early on when he arrogates that he speaks for the gods and Alexander (1.1.20-2). Later he admits to his own “burning pride” (4.1.15).



'virtues', and are epitomised by (but not restricted to) the intoxicated expression of his attitude in the fourth act. Clytus is himself wholly responsible for his downfall because he is fully aware of his hamartia,<sup>49</sup> yet nevertheless chooses to imbibe, and copiously so. It is true that he is commanded to appear at the banquet (as is twice emphasised—3.1.423-4; 4.1.33-4), but is never ordered to drink to excess. He does so to satisfy his ego, his feeling of superiority (as a resolute Macedonian warrior), and to evidence his elitism, just like he does in refusing to wear Persian dress in defiance of his king. His remorseless attack on the decadence of the court and the effeminacy of the courtiers (and so an attack on Alexander) effectively forces the king to retaliate. Coupled with Alexander's own intoxicated state, and his passionate nature, the result was inevitable.

Whilst Clytus is effectively portrayed, he is not particularly complex in terms of trait variation, conflict or revelation of interiority. He is a relatively one-dimensional and medially typified 'Roman' warrior-counsellor.<sup>50</sup> Unlike the distype, Clytus does not undergo a fundamental change from one type to another, nor does he suddenly display vices not present prior to the banquet scene, but simply displays the same characteristics in a different manner. Nevertheless he is an example of a minor tragic hero, a good but imperfect figure, whose immoderate elitism leads to his downfall, contrition, anagnorisis and death. He is an instigator who is substantially stylised,<sup>51</sup> maximally coherent and whole, substantially symbolic,<sup>52</sup> modestly accessible (of minimal complexity and modest transparency), maximally derivative, substantially conventional (substantial in his societal role as the counsellor, and in his functional role as a symbol of Alexander's virtuous personality, and maximal in his functional role as the Roman critic of the emperor's tyranny). His deathbed contrition suggests that he has achieved a substantial degree of anagnorisis, especially given that he has consistently maintained a knowledge of his hamartia—an unusual aspect in a dramatic character. His unwillingness to bend with the wind causes him to be broken by the storm.

In contrast to the loyalty and honesty of Clytus is placed the treachery and disingenuousness of the conspirators, exemplified by their leader Cassander.<sup>53</sup> Whilst it is true that he is stereotypically 'villanous', he is not only the most fascinating antagonist Lee has so

<sup>48</sup> Clytus reveals his xenophobic and patriotic elitism at 4.1.384 when he asks for "Greek wine".

<sup>49</sup> That is his loss of inhibition when intoxicated (cf. 2.1.406; 4.1.32). These help to emphasise his earlier assertion that talk is his bane (1.1.58). Hephestion and Alexander both emphasise that wine has caused Clytus to act inappropriately (4.1.436, 515).

<sup>50</sup> Stroup goes as far as to suggest that he is the Restoration exemplum of the "Bold Counsellor" type (*Type-characters*, p.233).

<sup>51</sup> Clytus receives the least dialogue of any major character of the play, after Alexander, Roxana, Cassander and Statira. Nor is he the subject (or one of the subjects) of any of the scenes in which he appears.

<sup>52</sup> Clytus is variously described as the personification of civic virtue, and of Alexander's conscience (Armistead, p.74; Huneycutt, p.160).

far produced, but is also one of the better examples of the type in Carolean drama. He is similar to Shakespeare's Iago and Richard III with regard to the complexity of his motivation, his skill at manipulation, and his absolute dedication to purpose. These help to make him both effective and involuntarily appealing, while the validity of (at least part of) his motivation renders him a little sympathetic. He is Lee's first fully developed unregenerate antagonist, an antisocial malcontent who exhibits the diabolic malevolence of a Nero and the calculated machinations of a villain. Not only is he modelled upon Iago and Richard, but also Cassius, Milton's Satan (see n.59) and Lee's own Nero (his prototype of the diabolist), Petronius and Tiberius (his prototypes of the villain).<sup>54</sup> Like Iago and Gloucester, Cassander reveals his corrupt and vicious nature from his first soliloquy onwards. Yet he and his fellow conspirators also serve a choral function by exposing the tyranny of Alexander, and highlighting his flaws.<sup>55</sup> Thus he differs somewhat from the conventional antagonist who disrupts an otherwise harmonious state, and engenders chaos for purely personal reasons. In this respect he recalls Cassius, a victimised villain whose actions stem from social responsibility. That is not to suggest that Cassander is not in part personally motivated, or that he does not revel in villainy for its own sake, but rather that his motivation is not completely self-serving or diabolic. In fact, despite claims that the conspirators are inconsistent and unprincipled,<sup>56</sup> rarely has a character expressed his multiform motivation with such sincerity. The first reference occurs at 1.1.153ff where it is disclosed that his father Antipater is to be replaced by Craterus as the governor of Macedonia, and that Cassander has been ordered to eliminate Alexander to prevent his divestiture.<sup>57</sup> His "Fathers weighty Cause" is reiterated when he expands upon his rationale at 1.1.168ff. Here he adds that he is driven by the fact that he was beaten by Alexander and his guards because he mocked Persian sycophancy. The vehemence of Cassander's anger at Alexander's tyranny is indicative of another motivating factor (1.1.205ff). Yet another is the seeming divine support for his design. The revelation of several prodigies to the conspirators (beginning with the ghost of King Philip) is felt by Cassander to be intended to "shake us" into action (1.1.287ff); that they have been given a divine mandate to act, and are being urged to do

<sup>53</sup> Their disingenuousness is exemplified at 2.1.69ff when Cassander advises his disciples to dissemble and act like all of the other sycophants.

<sup>54</sup> Leach adds that in Cassander's desire to gain the love of Roxana by implicating her in guilt he recalls Middleton's de Flores (p.76).

<sup>55</sup> As with Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, a large number of conspirators appear in the text to accentuate the extent of the disharmony in the state, and of the antipathy towards Alexander's misuse of power. Other than the four regicides and Roxana, Antipater and Cassander's mother (1.1.154-60) are also adherents of the cause.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. Huneycutt, p.161; L. Brown, p.73.

<sup>57</sup> References to Craterus (at 1.1.214, 251) in the play indicate him to be a sycophant the equal of Hephestion who is awarded the position because of flattery rather than merit.

so.<sup>58</sup> His fifth motive is revealed to be his love for Roxana (1.1.301ff), and the sixth his diabolic pleasure at seeing chaos prevail.<sup>59</sup> This makes him the most maximally transparent Leean character to date.

Cassander's skill as a manipulator and corrupter has been acknowledged, yet the ability of his colleagues, particularly Polyperchon, is repeatedly overlooked.<sup>60</sup> He first demonstrates his proficiency at 1.1.185ff in convincing Polyperchon to join the conspiracy, then inciting all of the conspirators into action with a deliberately bombastic catalogue of Alexander's crimes. He even admits to having tried to provoke Statira into enmity with Alexander (1.1.315) by emphasising the king's love for Roxana, and that Statira's displacement will result in the end of the Darian line of kings in Persia. Just as Petronius and Nero combine to corrupt Poppea, Cassander and Polyperchon together manipulate Roxana into vice. Their calculated fabrication about Alexander's behaviour at 3.1.40ff successfully incites her to join the conspiracy (at least against Statira). Their mock-horror at 3.1.114-5ff is poignant and emphasises their skill at manipulation. At 4.1.143ff they intimate a threat against Roxana's unborn child as a method of obtaining her collusion against Alexander, which is only undone when Cassander expresses his love for her. He then cleverly redirects her attention towards an attack upon Statira, without so much as a moment's reflection.<sup>61</sup> This enables the conspirators to concentrate on the assassination of Alexander, without the risk of exposure (as she threatens at 4.1.182).

<sup>58</sup> The prodigies in Act Two help to confirm to Cassander a belief in the providential support for the intended regicide, as he explains at 2.1.4-5. Although Polyperchon does not understand the manifestation (2.1.29ff), Cassander views it as a divine recommendation that they poison the king (2.1.37ff). His reference to "those that weave the plot" (2.1.38) applies to the gods, as much, if not more so, than the conspirators themselves. His subsequent allusion to the conspirators as "Dragons" (2.1.42) recalls the dumb show in which the Eagle (Alexander) is defeated by the Dragon. This further supports the suggestion that he views this phenomenon as divine approval for his proposal.

<sup>59</sup> Cassander's diabolism is emphasised throughout. At 1.1.162 the planned regicide is compared with the war in heaven, tacitly comparing him with Satan. He accentuates this aspect at 1.1.328ff by stating that he does not care if Statira commits suicide or regicide as long as she commits an atrocity (1.1.328ff). His interest here is as much in creating discord as exacting revenge. He repeatedly revels in his villainy (cf. 2.1.49ff and 2.1.317-8). Even his supposed love for Roxana is diabolical because he wishes to corrupt her, and so remove any trace of purity and virtue, before enjoying her. His professed admission for wishing to reign in hell rather than serve in heaven (4.1.269ff) is patently Miltonic (*Paradise Lost*, I.261-3). His final speeches of the play again reiterate his pleasure at witnessing his villainy (5.1.278ff), to the extent that he imagines his actions could end the torments of Tantalus, the Danaids and Sisyphus.

<sup>60</sup> Polyperchon, for one, has been described as gullible (Beal, pp.83, 149), yet there is no evidence to suggest this—in fact he is quite as adept at manipulation as is Cassander. It is true that he mistakenly assumes himself to be the leader of the conspiracy, yet this is a considerable leap from being the dupe of others. Contrary to Beal's suggestion, Polyperchon has more of the innovative Buckingham (of *Richard III*) about him, than he does of the rather moronic and inept Casca. There is even a tacit suggestion that Thessalus is an astute schemer. Although it is not stated who reveals Alexander's infidelity to Statira the implication is that it was Thessalus (1.1.309ff), especially given that he reveals an intimate knowledge of their responses (Sysigambis' weeping and Statira's fainting). Later he appears to be testing the loyalty of Perdicas (3.1.3-4) to discern whether he is a potential candidate for the conspiracy, but no further action is taken, probably because that man's scruples are affirmed through his speech.

<sup>61</sup> Cassander reveals the sincerity and intensity of his passion for Roxana in his asides at 3.1.84 and 3.1.96-7, yet this is evidently secondary to his machinations in importance. After her rejection of him, his passion cools and she becomes nothing more to him than a "Semele" (4.1.243). This is a reference to the mortal rival of Juno who was

So rather than being presented with one master manipulator and several undifferentiated henchmen, the conspirators (particularly Cassander and Polyperchon) are demonstrated to be equally adept, and of differing dispositions and mentalities.<sup>62</sup> Although his associates are stereotypical, Cassander himself is particularly engaging because of the focus placed upon his motivation and manipulative skill. It is possible to discern in him a combination of the victimised villain (of which Cassius is an excellent, and clearly influential, example), the diabolism of Nero and Satan, and the calculated manipulation of a Iago or Richard III. The amalgamation of the malcontent, the diabolist and the villain is characterologically and dramaturgically effective, and would be repeated to varying degrees in the depictions of Pharnaces, Pelopidas, Machiavel, Tiberius Brutus and Arius. He differs from the norm in that he actually combines several villainous aspects. He does not change from one type to another, like a distype, but combines several different forms of an overarching type (the "villain") at the same time. His principal type may nevertheless be defined as the "calculating villain". He effectively serves as the basis for, and the exemplum of, an archetype. That is, there is no better example with which to compare subsequent villains than against this character.<sup>63</sup>

Statira, the second of Alexander's virtuous correlatives, is essentially stereotypical, and principally of functional and affective value. But unlike Clytus she is given dimension by being psychologically engaging. She is a typical pathetic heroine,<sup>64</sup> being of an "easie Nature" (1.1.352), virtuous, devoted, constant, gentle, docile,<sup>65</sup> affectionate, dignified, noble, magnanimous, phlegmatic,<sup>66</sup> compassionate, benevolent,<sup>67</sup> and astute,<sup>68</sup> and the object of the

duped by the goddess into asking Jove to appear before her in all his glory, resulting in her destruction (cf. Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, iii.273-315).

<sup>62</sup> The contrast of Polyperchon as haughty and impassioned with Cassander as rational and manipulative is only approximate, because it must be remembered that Polyperchon does demonstrate the ability to act calculatedly.

<sup>63</sup> He is a modestly typified villain who is a provocator, medially stylised, maximally coherent, modestly whole, substantially symbolic, medially accessible (minimal complexity and maximal transparency), medially derivative, substantially conventional (medially in his societal role as a courtier, and maximal in his functional role as antagonist) and static (and unashamedly so). Lee's depiction of Cassander as the head of the conspiracy and lover of Roxana is drawn from the romance, although his character is as derived from the historical and literary as the fictional sources. Characterologically he is derived more from the literary forebears to which Lee has added some innovative elements.

<sup>64</sup> The *pathetic lover* is the fourth of the melancholy lover types. This character differs from the saddened lover because requited in his or her affections, from the distressed lover in having a personal rival for the affections of his or her lover, and the enervated type because capable of taking action to maintain the affections of his or her beloved.

<sup>65</sup> She is presented as ultra-feminine in contrast to the masculine Roxana. The first specific reference to Statira in the play is to her fainting after hearing of Alexander's infidelity (1.1.311-4). Other references to her docility occur at 2.1.351-2 and 3.1.119.

<sup>66</sup> Roxana reveals that Statira is made up of the element of water (3.1.121). Statira demonstrates this at 5.1.62ff by treating her rival's threat of murder with considerable calm, restraint, dignity and courage.

<sup>67</sup> Her compassion is exemplified at 5.1.159ff when she asks Alexander to spare the life of her murderer.

<sup>68</sup> Statira is not duped by Roxana's feigned concern for her (3.1.187ff), evidencing that she is no naïve gull. Statira's aside at 5.1.91b-93a also demonstrates her sagacity in attempting to placate Roxana until such time as Alexander can arrive and rescue her.

ethereal love and devotion of a world conqueror.<sup>69</sup> She is also capable of remarkable assertiveness and strength of character when provoked.<sup>70</sup> And with the exception of her rather understated haughtiness and arrogance,<sup>71</sup> she displays no truly offensive characteristics. But Statira makes up for the lack of trait and/or personality complexity with remarkably cogent and substantively verisimilar psychological depth. The manner in which she mentally revisits Alexander's betrayal with Roxana (3.1.359ff) is both dramaturgically effective and affective.<sup>72</sup> It suggests that his infidelity has so traumatised her that, whilst willing to forgive and capable of forgiveness, she is incapable either of forgetting or of returning to the status quo. Hers is not a traditional 'forgive and forget' mentality, but a realistically 'human' reaction to infidelity. In fact she only accepts him unconditionally after he threatens to end his life, which overrides all other concerns.

Other than her psychological depth, Statira is notable, and worthy of attention, for the emphasis placed upon her downfall as a direct result of her Oedipal curse.<sup>73</sup> When at 1.1.419ff she swears that, if she ever sees Alexander again "[m]ay sudden death, and horrid, come instead / Of what I wish, and take me unprepar'd", she puts in place a curse that is exacted upon her when she breaks that oath. This is accentuated by the revision of her self-fulfilling curse at 3.1.162-4, when she declares that

Shou'd now Darius awfull Ghost appear,  
And my pale Mother stand beseeching by,  
I wou'd persist to death, and keep my Vow.

Ironically, despite the actual appearance of the ghosts of her parents at the beginning of the fifth act, Statira continues to violate her vow (having technically broken it at 3.1.276 and unequivocally so at 3.1.410), rather than observing the explicit supernatural warning. By this point her death is beyond prevention in any event, making it clear that Lee includes the scene to highlight that the vow is the cause of her downfall and that it has been providentially

<sup>69</sup> Their love is both sensual and ethereal (1.1.374ff; 2.1.361).

<sup>70</sup> Not only does Roxana provoke her into retaliation (at 3.1.248ff), but Cassander reveals at 1.1.310ff how he had activated her anger and is the causative agent behind her decision to divorce Alexander. Roxana also alludes to her strength of character in admitting to her "bravery of Soul" (3.1.165).

<sup>71</sup> Statira does occasionally reveal haughtiness (such as at 5.1.53-4) and arrogance (at 5.1.68ff), although these traits are fairly common to the heroine, especially a royal one.

<sup>72</sup> Lee also makes dramatic use of suspense in having Statira stabbed just as Alexander is about to appear (5.1.119ff).

<sup>73</sup> Based upon the self-fulfilling vow of Sophocles' Oedipus (cf. *Oedipus Tyrannus*, ll.224ff), the Oedipal curse is a term I have developed to describe the type of imprecation which, when broken, is realised upon the imprecator. Earlier Leean characters have made such vows—Petronius at 2.2.29-31, and Octavia at 2.3.7-8 in *Nero*, Sophonisba at 1.1.253-5, Massinissa at 2.1.141bff and 2.1.154-5, and Rosalinda at 3.2.107-10 in *Sophonisba*, and Caesario at 3.1.60-3 in *Gloriana*—or slight variations thereof, but none have had so much emphasis placed upon this action as a principal cause of their downfall. Subsequent examples are found in *Mithridates* (Mithridates at 1.1.340ff), *Oedipus* (Oedipus at 1.1.481ff, 2.1.57-62, 179-82 and 4.1.178-80, and Jocasta at 1.1.498-500, 505 and 512) and *Caesar Borgia* (Orsino at 2.1.84ff, and Bellamira at 4.1.366-7). Obviously I am not suggesting that Lee is

ordained.<sup>74</sup> Statira's admission at 3.1.267ff of her intention to violate the vow, and the fact that it causes her some consternation, reminds the audience that she will bring upon herself the very curse she had invoked. Rarely are we presented with such a classical example of hamartia.<sup>75</sup>

Like Statira, Roxana is presented through repetitive emphases on a small number of cognate traits, suggesting her to be stereotypically and melodramatically villainous.<sup>76</sup> She is excessively proud,<sup>77</sup> seductive,<sup>78</sup> choleric,<sup>79</sup> haughty and arrogant,<sup>80</sup> passionate, lustful, ambitious, hostile,<sup>81</sup> provocative,<sup>82</sup> spiteful, jealous (3.1.34; 4.1.564), irrational and violent. That is, she is allocated many of the characteristics associated with the conventional superannuated coquette. Yet, for all this, she is notably a victim of both Alexander and Cassander, and is spurred on to her actions not only by her inordinate pride (her ruling disposition) but also by gross naivete. Alexander has played a significant role in the transformation of Roxana from an innocent girl into a *femme fatale* by seducing and then rejecting her.<sup>83</sup> Cassander then channels her anger into a villainous course of action, partly because of his skillful manipulation and partly because of a misguided assumption of her importance to the king, and of the strength of the love Alexander has for her rival.

From the moment that she appears it is clear that Roxana is a pawn of the conspirators—the line immediately preceding her entrance (3.1.36) emphasising this point. Cassander repeatedly encourages her fury, and the conspirators use any and all opportunities to direct her to their ends, even suggesting that her unborn child would suffer if she did not ensure his or her succession by eliminating the king. Her rejection of this proposal demonstrates that despite her conflicting attitude towards Alexander, she is still in love with him and hopeful of a

the first since Sophocles to adopt this device, but he does accent this aspect as one of the principal causes of a character's downfall more often than his contemporaries.

<sup>74</sup> This is emphasised by the assertive reference to the "sad end which the Gods have decreed" for her (5.1.13).

<sup>75</sup> From a mechanical perspective Statira is a reactor, medially stylised, maximally coherent, modestly whole, medially symbolic, medially accessible (of modest complexity and medial transparency), static, substantially derivative, and maximally conventional—maximal in her societal role as a queen, and in her functional roles as a pathetic heroine, and as a virtuous correlative of Alexander. She is a modestly typified example of the "victimised heroine" type.

<sup>76</sup> Cf. Beal (p. 127) who suggests that she is drawn on a simplified, operatic scale. This position concurs with the early critics who argued that the characterisations are weak, shallow and superficial.

<sup>77</sup> Roxana's "Tow'ring" pride is repeatedly emphasised as one of her principal dispositions. The first reference to her in the text is as "proud Roxana" (1.1.285), and is repeated at 3.1.34, 3.1.199, 3.1.257, 3.1.262 and 5.1.53.

<sup>78</sup> References to her seductive skill appear in the emphases on her "charms" (2.1.335; 3.1.191-2, 290ff; 4.1.188), "Arts" (2.1.411; 3.1.193), subtly and "wiles" (2.1.337; 3.1.201), and enchantment (2.1.339-40; 3.1.292).

<sup>79</sup> Her opening lines reflect her fury (3.1.37-9, 45ff), another of her principal dispositions. This trait is reiterated at 4.1.117-8 and 5.1.80.

<sup>80</sup> Cf. 3.1.258ff. Her arrogance is again demonstrated at 4.1.239ff when she imagines that Statira would be thankful to die at such an illustrious hand as hers.

<sup>81</sup> Even Roxana's seeming pity for Statira is tinged with animosity and self-interest (3.1.138, 149-51).

<sup>82</sup> Roxana's ability to evoke tormenting scenes to excite Statira's jealousy makes her particularly provocative.

<sup>83</sup> It is true that she displays the assertive traits of an Amazon (3.1.82-3), yet having a strong nature does not equate with a greater tendency towards vice. Alexander's rejection activates her justifiable anger and grief which is then channeled into villainy by Cassander.



satisfactory resolution.<sup>84</sup> She even repudiates this option internally by suggesting that she would be despised for regicide, yet this is clearly vacillation, and an attempt to validate her refusal. Cassander's deflection of her fury at him onto Statira, having failed to direct it onto Alexander, further evidences the way in which he deceives her.<sup>85</sup> She accepts his proposal without question, because it agrees with her own desire (4.1.205ff), and with a deluded belief that the elimination of her rival will help her recapture Alexander's affection.

Like Alexander, Roxana is directed into tragedy by her hyperbolic passions, and the manipulation of others. This is not to suggest that she plays no part in her own downfall. Statira's decision to divorce Alexander gives Roxana a seeming victory, yet she hubristically overreaches at 3.1.211ff. Her pride will not allow her to be content with a modest victory. She feels the need to humiliate and torture her rival, which only encourages Statira to recant her vow and fight for Alexander's affections. This feature of her character is demonstrated as not only her ruling disposition but also her major flaw, dominating her behaviour to the extent that she claims to have seduced Alexander (4.1.188) to satisfy her pride.<sup>86</sup> All of her actions stem from her hubris, and it is this disposition which Cassander manipulates to his own end. Along with her inordinate pride, her patent misunderstanding of the extent of Alexander's devotion for her (or lack thereof) results in her downfall. She mistakenly assumes that the sole impediment to a resumption of their love is Statira. Roxana illustrates this belief at 5.1.176ff, and is genuinely astonished that he rejects her without even a moment's consideration. She has patently failed to understand that Alexander does not love her with the same devotion with which she loves him, or he loves Statira. The play reveals a woman who, through no fault of her own, suddenly finds herself in an intolerable situation, futilely endeavouring to reverse a devastating loss, and becoming more and more desperate and less and less in control of the situation in which she suddenly finds herself, until she is left with no other option but to murder her rival in the mistaken belief that this will resolve the problem.<sup>87</sup> Despite her every endeavour to resolve the issue without resorting to violence, the extent of her love will not allow for defeat and so she is forced into this course of action.<sup>88</sup>

<sup>84</sup> From 3.1.305 onwards Roxana is torn between her conflicting love and hatred towards Alexander.

<sup>85</sup> Cassander even manages to rejuvenate her intention when she begins to contemplate death rather than retribution (4.1.226ff).

<sup>86</sup> This is, however, most likely braggadocio—her earlier statement (3.1.85ff) of how she was seduced by Alexander appears more authentic. Her pride would not allow for an admission that she, not he, was captivated, and is a slave to love.

<sup>87</sup> It is important to remember that the events of the play occur within a single day, and given Roxana's late arrival on the scene, they have occurred to her within a remarkably short period of time. She has had little time to actually contemplate her actions, and so reacts instinctively and with aggression.

<sup>88</sup> One must remember that Roxana gives Statira every opportunity to relinquish her interest in Alexander, and it is only because of her repeated refusal to concede that Roxana resorts to violence. This reflects her virtue, because a wholly vicious character would not have bothered to make such an offer, and would simply have executed her on sight. Given that the murder of Statira (and those of a few of her defenders in the process) is the only crime that

Unlike the conventional termagant type that is felt to be the sum total of her character (rather than simply her foundation), Roxana reveals some very unconventional traits and characteristics, and is placed in an unconventional situation.<sup>89</sup> Coupled with the fact that she is manipulated into action at a time when she is at her most vulnerable, her desperate passion for Alexander and frustration at his loss reveals a genuine psychological basis for action, and makes for a sympathetic figure. Despite the emphasis placed on her vicious traits, and the functional role she performs as an example of Alexander's vicious personality state, she is not thoroughly and melodramatically evil, but is a minimally atypical victimised villainess who combines virtuous and vicious dispositions.<sup>90</sup> Alexander's transformation and Cassander's manipulation of her, as well as her inordinate pride and misguided assumptions about Alexander's love, bring about her downfall. Hasan suggests that the presentation of Roxana is so artistic and masterly that she becomes one of the outstanding characters of tragedy.<sup>91</sup> This is perhaps overly appreciative, but is not entirely without foundation.

Despite being the subjects of the subplot, Lysimachus, Parisatis and Hephestion (like all of the minor characters) are stereotypical, principally of affective, symbolic and functional value, and so may be treated in brief. Lysimachus is a typical epic hero, a "Prince of the Blood" who is passionate, irascible, courageous, haughty, obstinate, irrational, tactless, and in direct contrast to Hephestion, is superlative both as a warrior and lover. Yet for all his heroism he is not above sycophancy—in fact from the moment that he receives his reprieve (4.1.291s.d.ff) he is more akin to Hephestion than Clytus. One gets the distinct impression that his attempt to demonstrate his absolute loyalty to Alexander has led him to echo the excessive affection of the Persian courtiers. Parisatis is a typical distressed (victimised) heroine, whose love for Lysimachus is absolute: her sole function is to suffer and so increase the pathos of the play. Unusually in Leean drama her suffering ends with a satisfactory conclusion in that she is united with her love. Vernon suggests that the conventional reunion of the lovers counters the logic of the play which demands the death of Lysimachus along with all those who have challenged Alexander's authority.<sup>92</sup> His survival permits the union of Lysimachus and Parisatis, the scions of the royal houses of Macedonia and Persia, and gives the play a sense of

Roxana commits, there is no reason to assume that she is dispositionally more vicious than virtuous. It is simply that circumstances have actuated some of her less desirable traits.

<sup>89</sup> Although Beal suggests that Roxana is operatic and lacking in dimension, even he is compelled to admit this to be the case (pp. 127-8).

<sup>90</sup> She is a responder, modestly stylised, substantially coherent and whole, medially symbolic, medially accessible (modest complexity and substantial transparency), substantially derivative and conventional, and static (patently failing to understand either her involvement in the conspiracy or the fact that Alexander does not love her in equal measure). She is substantial in both her societal—as an abandoned wife and queen, and functional roles—both as a victimised villainess (she does not instinctively resort to violence, but nor does she vacillate at length) and as an correlative of Alexander (she is reflective of his vicious personality, but not wholly so).

<sup>91</sup> Hasan, p. 126.



closure. Nevertheless Lee cannot resist the urge to complicate the situation. For the same flaws that led to the destruction of Alexander are present in Lysimachus, recalling a motif introduced in the conclusive *Hero*. The type of heroic traits that win princesses and kingdoms for the likes of Alexander... Lysimachus are the same characteristics that will destroy them if they fail to learn to act with moderation. Lysimachus' opponent in the love-triangle, Hephestion, is no alternative. He is the quintessential parasitic sycophant, symbolising Alexander's love of flattery. Quite simply, there is nothing in his character to individualise him beyond his name. His death from a surfeit of alcohol represents the physical and moral decay into which Alexander is leading his subjects. Sysigambis also reflects Alexander's love of flattery. She is an unscrupulous pragmatist whose self-interest so thoroughly makes her a disciple of Alexander that she actively serves him in preference to, and at the expense of, her own family. She panders her granddaughters to Alexander and his favourite, and is curt with them in their refusal to cooperate. It is only in the belated bestowal of Parisatis upon her beloved Lysimachus, and in her death from grief upon hearing of Statira's murder, that she demonstrates any affection for her progeny, and so partially redeems an otherwise unattractive character. The remaining characters in the play are of insufficient significance or individuation to warrant attention.

As with most of Lee's plays, *The Rival Queens* has been criticised for its pedestrian and artificial characterisations. William Archer denounced it for its "gross untruth, its remoteness from life and nature", and the "intolerable" and "preposterous" psychology of the meeting between Statira and Roxana.<sup>93</sup> Others have focussed on the lack of profundity.<sup>94</sup> Nancy Lewis is correct in noting that Lee does not probe the minds of his characters and present them struggling with universal problems,<sup>95</sup> yet this does not prevent them from being complexly generated, and substantively verisimilar entities. In fact the same critics who note the lack of depth admit this to be the case.<sup>96</sup> Although Lee does not focus upon internal conflict, he continues to develop his characterological skill in other areas. In *Alexander*, for instance, Lee combines two characters (Caesario and Augustus) developed in the previous play, balancing the two types (tyrant and lover) where traditionally the tyrannous aspect is emphasised. By so doing the tyrant becomes more complex, ambiguous and infinitely more interesting. When Lee reinstitutes internal conflict into this type of figure in his next play he creates the even more engaging figure of Mithridates. Individuation is felt to be absent from the intermediary

<sup>92</sup> Vernon, p.xxv.

<sup>93</sup> Archer, pp.155, 158.

<sup>94</sup> Cf. Stroup and Cooke, *Works*, I.216; Hammond, *Development*, p.547.

<sup>95</sup> Lewis, p.85.

<sup>96</sup> Cf. Hammond, *Development*, p.547; Lewis, p.109.

characters. Van Lennep claims that they "lack the subtlety of living embodiments".<sup>97</sup> Robert Birley argues that Lee deliberately created simplified figures rather than actual human beings—that Alexander is merely a compact of many heroes, and that the queens personify different types of women.<sup>98</sup> Yet he contradicts his own argument by claiming that the dramatic situation would have been better if the two rivals had been wholly opposite to one another in character. The fact that the queens are not absolutely diametrical indicates that Lee never intended them to be dehumanised emblems, but individuated entities.<sup>99</sup> That is not to suggest that they do not have a symbolic function or that Lee did not intend them to be seen in contrast, but rather that the functional role is not the totality of the representation.<sup>100</sup> It is true that the intermediaries are stereotypical, but they are nevertheless either presented with psychological verisimilitude (as in the case of the rival queens, despite Archer's assumption) or are adumbrated and presented as morally ambiguous to complicate the level of their typicality (in the case of Roxana, Cassander, Clytus and Lysimachus). It must be remembered that of the objective correlatives only Statira and Hephestion can be said to be wholly reflective of one of Alexander's two personality states.<sup>101</sup> None of the other characters—Clytus and Lysimachus as virtuous correlatives, and Cassander and Roxana as vicious ones—are wholly good or evil. In fact all of the intermediaries, with the sole exception of Hephestion, are individuated types.<sup>102</sup>

As Hume suggests, Alexander's internal flaws and conflicts make of *The Rival Queens* a rarity for its time: a genuine tragedy of character not obviously predetermined from the start.<sup>103</sup> Others consider it to be the first great Restoration tragedy.<sup>104</sup> In the de casibus fall of "the greatest man that ever was", Lee once again introduces the familiar themes of frustrated love and the misuse and deleterious nature of absolute power. Continuing a theme introduced in *Gloriana*, *The Rival Queens* is concerned with the degeneration of a martial hero as a result of his inability to deal with domestic and political concerns in a pacific society. Like Augustus,

<sup>97</sup> Van Lennep, *Sources*, p.186.

<sup>98</sup> Birley, p.43.

<sup>99</sup> Birley also argues that Lee succeeded in combining contradictory historical accounts in such a way as to make of Alexander a more complex character than was often found in heroic drama (p.50). Again this undermines his argument that Alexander is a compact of many heroes.

<sup>100</sup> By denying the existence of complication in Lee's characterisation—despite the invitation to do so—not only is Birley's thesis reductive, but carries with it the implication that Lee's characters are inferior because they do not satisfy his pat analysis. This is an endemic problem in literary criticism—situations that do not perfectly equate with a preconceived theory invariably find the writer, not the critic, at fault.

<sup>101</sup> Interestingly even in the figure of Statira there is scope for dissent as to the degree of conventionality. Phil Dust suggests that Statira is no simple personification of modesty and virtue, but an extremely clever Restoration coquette in regaining Alexander (p.83). Although I have been unable to locate any textual evidence to support this contention, unless one construes her vow and self-exile as being cynically motivated, it is nevertheless an interesting interpretation of the character.

<sup>102</sup> Using Fishelov's division we would define Cassander and Roxana as type-like individuals, and Clytus, Statira and Lysimachus as individual-like types.

<sup>103</sup> Hume, *Development*, p.204.

<sup>104</sup> Hammond, *Development*, p.529; Vieth, *Rival Queens*, p.10.

the excessive passions which help Alexander become a world conqueror are incommensurate with the characteristics necessary to administer the empire. Alexander is equally a victim of his neurosis and his position, perishing as a direct result of his insecurity (manifested in his alternating between love and tyranny) and his unsuitability for peacetime rule.<sup>105</sup> He exemplifies the dangers of absolute power, and the catastrophic results of its misuse. Once again we are left to lament the destruction of those characters who have a salutary effect on the hero, and the success of those who demoralise him. Lee also continues his interest in the distinctly unheroic, and overarching, theme that immoderation leads to tragedy. Alexander's hyperbolic nature, manifested in his polygamy and despotic response to opposition, as well as Clytus' elitism, and the overwhelming love that drives Statira to make and break an Oedipal curse, and which drives Roxana to murder, are all examples of heroic excesses that end in catastrophe. Moderation as a tragic preventative is a lesson that Lee is yet to illustrate, but its lack continues to be the focus of his tragedies.

*Mithridates, King of Pontus. A Tragedy* (by March 1677/8).

*Mithridates* is concerned with the tyrannous misuse of power, the frustration of true love by an aged despot, and the corruption of king and country by a group of malcontents that prey on the flaws of the monarch, and so undermine the brittle society over which he reigns. The date of the premiere is unrecorded but was presumably prior to 28 March 1678, the date on which the tragedy was licensed for publication. It was performed at the Theatre Royal and was to be Lee's last offering to the King's Company, as he and Dryden defected to the rival Duke's Company with their collaboration *Oedipus* later in the year. Langbaine claims that the play was a success, especially with the court, as does Lee himself in the dedication.<sup>106</sup> Beers suggests that it held the stage from 1678 to about 1695, and was revived in 1704 and frequently from 1708 to 1738.<sup>107</sup> The ongoing popularity of the play is also suggested by its regular publication between 1678 and 1728.<sup>108</sup> The plot is almost entirely fictitious. Appian, Plutarch and Pliny

<sup>105</sup> This is exemplified by Lee's conventional use of nostalgia at 1.1.59ff to highlight the fact that the protagonist's heroism (and virtue) is now a thing of the past. In *Gloriana* this convention had been used to demonstrate Augustus' incompatibility for governance and his obsolescence in the *pax Romana*. It is used in precisely the same sense in this play. Another example of his unsuitability for peacetime rule occurs at 5.1.326ff. In his delirium he returns to the battlefield, to a time before he resorted to despotism (and in which Parmenio, Clytus and Philotas all still live) and a world which is both suitable and comfortable. This is a form of pastoral escape from an intolerable reality.

<sup>106</sup> Langbaine, p.324; Dedication, 1.49.

<sup>107</sup> Genest records 19 revivals to 1738. The play was honoured with opening the 1681 season, for which Dryden contributed a new prologue and epilogue. According to Genest, the Drury Lane company even rehearsed it in 1796, but opted against presenting it on the advice of Sheridan (vii.297).

<sup>108</sup> Editions appeared on 22 June (Trinity) 1678 (I.320), February (Hillary) 1685 (II.118), 1685 (reprint), 1693, 1697, 1702, 1711, 1726 and 1728.

provided some general ideas, but the love plot is wholly fabricated and the specific incidents do not follow historical events. The dramatic predecessors are La Calprenède's *La Mort de Mithridate* (1635) and Racine's *Mithridate* (1673). The former is unlikely to have influenced Lee as it differs substantially from the accounts of Racine and Lee,<sup>109</sup> whilst the latter may have elicited some general ideas, principally in establishing a love rivalry between Xiphare's (Ziphare's) and Mithridate(s), and in focussing upon the internal conflict and eventual remorse of the title character. But, as Lee's editors have suggested, the dramatist probably depended less upon influence than imagination.<sup>110</sup> Structurally and thematically the play owes more to Dryden's *Aureng-Zebe* than to the historical and dramatic works on the king of Pontus, whilst the characters are applications of Lee's own types and ideas.

Mithridates is unquestionably the most interesting and complex character of the play, and also one of the most effective that Lee has yet created. He continues Lee's tradition of the aged despot, already presented in the figures of Augustus and Alexander, but transcends these examples in being manipulated into his own downfall. The first specific reference to his character is given by Pelopidas who reveals the king to be "of mighty Faith / In holy Fables" (a superstitious man who is susceptible to the influence of fabricated omens), "of various humor" (inconstant), and one "Whom every day New Beauties set on Fire" (easily impassioned)—1.1.77-9. This analysis succinctly and accurately sums up his nature, although the depiction is elaborated and complicated by internal conflict. Andravar adds that, despite his age (40), he refuses to age gracefully, trying to recapture his youth through excessive promiscuity and a vain attempt to conceal his aging visage with the aid of cosmetics. Like Augustus he is neither willing nor able to admit his senescence, and so resorts to vicious behaviour to assert his preeminence. This includes refusing to divest part of his prerogative to his sons, specifically the women that they had conquered (through war or love), or jurisdiction over parts of his territory, despite allowing them to lead his armies. Although renowned for his virility, he maintains this reputation by continually seizing (and violently replacing) his brides and concubines. His virility, and his marked need to manifest this trait, make him particularly susceptible to corruption. In fact he is so thoroughly predictable in this respect that the conspirators are able to anticipate his actions and so plan his downfall with consummate ease. No other Leean character has been presented as so predictable, a predictability which stems

<sup>109</sup> Carrington Lancaster notes La Calprenède's emphasis on Mithridates' virtuous character (and Pharnaces' ultimate repentance), whereas Racine depicts his vice. In the former the king is not a tragic hero, but a victim of unmitigated treachery and the strength of Rome. In addition the dramatic focus is principally vested in Pharnaces (p.8).

<sup>110</sup> Stroup and Cooke, *Works*, I.288.

from his superstitious temper, lust, egocentricity, inconstancy,<sup>111</sup> and refusal to admit his own senescence. But most of all it stems from his inability to relinquish any part of his dominion which would diminish the internal and external perception of Mithridates as the absolute and unrivalled alpha male of the state. The allusion to the rivalry of Saturn and Jove (3.2.185) is poignant as it reflects the king's fear of being supplanted as *primus sine paribus*, of conceding political and sexual dominion to his sons—hence his continual debasement of them, and seizure of the objects of their desire.<sup>112</sup>

Despite his inability to control his passions, and the perceived inevitability of his actions, Lee presents considerable oscillation between the king's virtuous and vicious personality states, so as to reveal a more complex identity than is familiar to his subjects. As with Alexander, the two opposing forces within this character are of equal weight, battling for dominion over his "troubled soul" (2.1.166). The king's penchant for cruelty is familiar to his people, yet his attempts at virtue go unnoticed. Yet examples of this are so prevalent in the text as to suggest that inner struggle is customary to him. In fact much of the play is concerned with his psychological trauma, both in his Manichæan struggle for moral ascendancy, and in the post-coital guilt which leads to his anagnorisis. Although the first act suggests him to be a melodramatic despot of the most heinous type,<sup>113</sup> this conception begins to change in the second as we experience the first of his extensive inner conflicts. From the moment that Mithridates reappears (2.1.104ff) he oscillates between his obsession with Semandra and an instinctive need to resist her charms. He displays remarkable fortitude in initially withstanding his desire, oscillating between passion and restraint—between his vicious and virtuous personality states—on eight separate occasions within the limited space of two hundred lines.<sup>114</sup> These passages illustrate the level of proficiency that Lee has achieved in his art. Significantly, once his virtuous state achieves dominion (2.1.299ff), and "Manly Virtue Lords it o're [his] Passion", Mithridates reveals that an oppressive weight has been lifted from his shoulders, releasing him to a long wished for virtuous state of being. However, his fears of a possible relapse, despite the professed strong reign of his virtue (2.1.351-2), reminds us that his newfound state may well be a short one. Nevertheless this state lasts long enough for the war against Rome to be fought and won, and may well have continued as the norm, had not the villain triumvirate preyed upon his "feeble Virtue". Pharnaces refers to his concern at the

<sup>111</sup> The fact that Ziphæres suspects the possibility of Mithridates relapsing in his lust for Semandra at 2.1.361-2 implies that the king is (and always has been) the type of person likely to do so.

<sup>112</sup> The motif of the aged Saturn attempting to resist being supplanted by the young Jove recalls that used by Augustus to describe his conflict with Caesar in *Gloriana* (1.1.284-5).

<sup>113</sup> The corruption of Mithridates into a vicious desire for Semandra recalls Petronius' temptation of Nero to Poppea. However, Petronius requires considerably less effort to corrupt the Roman emperor than Pelopidas does the king of Pontus.

<sup>114</sup> 2.1.104-7, 108-9, 110ff, 162-6, 167ff, 264-8, 269ff, 299ff.

prospect of seeing Semandra at 3.2.16ff, and that this is a contest he is beginning to lose. In quick succession the king is presented repeatedly vacillating in his decision to see her lest the vision undermine his resolve—the first described (3.2.20-3) and the second and third enacted (3.2.24ff, 79)—but the temptation to see her is enough to corrupt him, and what follows is inevitable. It is a conflict which is lost from the moment he consents to see her, and is concluded shortly thereafter (3.2.117ff).

As with his commitment to virtue, when Mithridates again gives himself over to his base appetites he re-embraces that position entirely, despite his "Nature" struggling against the return with considerable force (3.2.199ff). He forces Semandra to abjure Ziphæres with threats to murder him and then forces her into marriage as a prelude to an enforced satisfaction of his lust. Throughout this period all pleas and entreaties fall upon deaf ears and he exacts his will without the slightest compunction. However, no sooner does he rape Semandra than he suffers the most intense guilt over his action. This guilt dominates his thoughts and actions throughout the rest of the play. After undergoing a post-coital sleep disturbed by nightmares recalling his life's atrocities, Mithridates suffers an inconsolable remorse.<sup>115</sup> It is here that Mithridates realises the errors of his ways, remembering the loyalty and devotion of Ziphæres (4.1.134ff), ceasing to see himself as an all-conquering epic hero, and suspecting the sycophants of being the cause of his distress (4.1.153ff). His admission that, but for the temptation of Pelopidas and Andravar, he may well have resisted his desires and maintained control over his "struggling Virtue" (4.1.181) is particularly poignant, serving to acknowledge his hamartia in a manner that has not been achieved by any other Leean character to date. Too late he realises that Ziphæres has always been his "right arm" (4.1.136) and Pharnaces his "infectious limb" (4.1.230). But having made this discovery he makes every effort to reverse the damage that he has caused, even to the extent of ordering his name and crimes blotted from the records of his people. His self-discovery is completed at 5.2.186ff where he acknowledges that it has been his "lawless love, and boundless pow'r" which has caused his downfall. As Hunt suggests, Mithridates' self-discovery approaches true tragic illumination.<sup>116</sup>

Despite the evident merits of the characterisation, it has nevertheless attracted the usual erroneous criticism. Malcolm Elwin, for instance, suggests that Mithridates is incoherent, and Beers that carnal desire for women is his only real characteristic.<sup>117</sup> Perhaps the most

<sup>115</sup> Mithridates receives ample warning of the divine displeasure at his proposed marriage to Semandra through signs which he ignores. The irony that he is a particularly superstitious man who ignores the overt signs of divine disapprobation is palpable (4.1.6ff).

<sup>116</sup> Hunt, p.154. As Philip Parson puts it, Mithridates learns from painful experience the existence and autonomy of his moral nature (Love (ed.), *Restoration Literature*, p.60).

<sup>117</sup> Elwin, p.128; Beers, p.192. Wong mistakenly suggests that once Mithridates has enjoyed Semandra, his lust is sated and his love melancholy cured (cogent enough), but adds that his mind thereafter returns to a state of



significant is Stroup's description of Mithridates as a "Heroic Villain", a type he defines as being not responsible for his tragic flaw and who does not accept responsibility for his actions, and so is the inappropriate subject for tragedy.<sup>118</sup> To suggest that the king is an example of this type is flagrantly inaccurate. Although Mithridates is manipulated into action, he is given ample scope for choice, and in acting is wholly responsible for his actions. In his conscience-ridden state Mithridates discovers the truth of his situation and not only accepts responsibility for his actions but regrets his behaviour and attempts to make amends. He fulfills all of the Aristotelian tenets for the tragic protagonist, including hamartia, agony, proairesis, anagnorisis and thanatos, while his situation evokes catharsis. In addition he undergoes contrition and moral rehabilitation. The result is that Mithridates is not only the most comprehensive example of a tragic hero to date, but also of Lee's entire canon. Few characters in Carolean tragedy can claim to be so complete an example of the type.<sup>119</sup>

Mithridates' most obvious traits are his inconstancy—evidenced by his repeated fluctuation over his preferred son, as well as in the oscillation between his virtuous and vicious personality states,<sup>120</sup> and his excessive promiscuity—manifested in his pathological obsession with displaying his sexual supremacy and by so doing to reduce the virility of the two rivals for his political and sexual dominion.<sup>121</sup> These traits make him eminently corruptible, because his predictability makes him the ideal tool for those who would prey upon his instability in order to undermine his precarious self-control and his equally fragile hold over his kingdom. More so than Alexander, Mithridates reflects the extreme positions of virtue and vice, the two halves of his identity being seemingly irreconcilable but are linked by his inconstancy and lasciviousness, as well as his related traits of superstition, intolerance, egocentricity and hubris.<sup>122</sup> The dramatisation of Mithridates' intense Manichæan struggle prior to his crime and his equally acute guilt-ridden state thereafter creates a thoroughly believable psychological entity. It illustrates Lee's continually improving characterological skill and artistry, particularly in the areas of substantive verisimilitude, in the psychological study of conflicting impulses,

equilibrium (p.47). This is incorrect—he becomes intensely conscience-ridden as a result of his guilt, as I have demonstrated.

<sup>118</sup> Stroup, *Type-characters*, p.327.

<sup>119</sup> Structurally Mithridates is maximally atypical, a responder who is minimally stylised, medially coherent and whole, maximally accessible (maximal complexity and transparency), medially conventional (minimal in his societal role as king, and maximal in his functional roles as tyrant and as opposer in the love triangle) and maximal in his anagnorisis. He is modestly symbolic because although predominantly self-referential, he also reflects the dangers of absolute power. He is medially derivative—from the historians Lee derived his lust, cruelty and intellect, and from Racine the suggestion for a rivalry with Ziphæres, the conflict in his mental state, and his eventual contrition. Yet Lee departs from these sources by accenting Mithridates' manipulation into vice.

<sup>120</sup> This is particularly so in relation to his oscillating desire for Semandra, but is not restricted to her.

<sup>121</sup> That is, by seizing for himself all those beautiful young women who will assist in demonstrating his delusions of immortality.

<sup>122</sup> Armistead suggests that Mithridates combines Nero's depravity, Alexander's guilt and Hannibal's superstition (*Nathaniel Lee*, p.85). I would add Augustus' senescence to this list.

and in the typology of tragic drama. It reflects an evident desire to produce credible psychological reactions to universal concerns, rather than simply producing superficial scenarios to serve an affective function. In his king of Pontus Lee has created his first truly sublime character.

After Mithridates, characterological interest centres upon the antagonists Pharnaces and Pelopidas.<sup>123</sup> Like his father, Pharnaces is jealous, envious, lustful, ambitious and sardonic. He is also possessed of an instinctual cunning (what might now be termed "street-wise"), which one suspects has been fostered by his unstable environment. Yet notably Pharnaces' opening lines (and those of the play) do not present an angry malcontent fomenting revenge but a melancholy individual who is disappointed and aggrieved at his unjustified misfortune. The style of his exposition of the impending marriage of his lover Monima to his father, coupled with his stunned disbelief at the disproportionate amount of praise and preferment given to Ziphæres (especially given that he had been the king's favourite until his brother's victory over the Romans—1.1.7), makes him depressed and resentful, rather than angry and vengeful. There is nothing in this introduction to indicate that he is normally of a vicious demeanour, or that he is by nature a malcontent. In fact as the king's favourite and heir-apparent, the ambitious prince would have had absolutely no reason to act in this manner, as it could only jeopardise his wished-for succession. In these lines revenge is the furthest thing from his mind, suicide being preferred to patricide. And, although it is Pharnaces who first suggests rebellion, this follows Pelopidas' admission of his hatred for Archelaus, and so gives the prince tacit support for any villainous action. Pharnaces seems to suggest this course of action purely out of frustration (as, I believe, does Ziphæres at 3.2.507-10), and because there appears no alternative except to accept the unacceptable. It is Pelopidas who turns the impotent and melancholy frustration into an active, vengeful rage.

So how do we explain the seemingly rapid and perfunctory transition from virtue to vice? Given his politic, streetwise demeanour it is likely to have been cautious inhibition towards vice, rather than an innate tendency towards virtue, which has hitherto deterred him from transgression. His normative state may more accurately be said to have been 'reluctantly virtuous'.<sup>124</sup> His corruption is an uncomplicated process because it simply represents the liberation of his inhibitions. This is demonstrated at 1.1.50 with an abrupt change in his character, as he embraces villainy as the only option available to him to reverse his deposition. It is matched by an immediate change in the style of his language, and in his demeanour, from

<sup>123</sup> Andravæ is excluded from this survey as being an undifferentiated and superfluous replica of Pelopidas.

<sup>124</sup> Reservation and seeming virtue will have been a necessary aid to survival for a prince living in a court in which siblings are murdered for displaying excessive ambition, and seeking to usurp their father's suzerainty. This is emphasised in the reference to the death of Mithridates the younger (5.1.26ff).



the impotent complaints of a saddened lover to the decisive and calculated speech of a driven villain. The change is immediate, notable and evidently intentional. Despite having chosen this path, it is not without note that Pharnaces does experience a brief episode of conflict between his normative position and his circumstantial-cum-normative state at 1.1.143-5, as he experiences trepidation over the need to engage in opposition. This is the only moment at which he vacillates over his plans, thereafter embracing villainy in Iago-like fashion, and remaining unrepentant to the last. Moreover, he becomes progressively more violent as he is freed of his doubts—raping Monima, then betraying his people to Rome whilst advocating their mass slaughter in the most vivid and vitriolic terms (5.1.55ff). Whilst he is initially stimulated by Pelopidas, it is not long before he takes command of the enterprise.

As with all of Lee's villains, Pharnaces' actions are mitigated, and his character complicated, by the fact that, like Cassander, his motivation is both multiform and legitimate. The opening lines of the play record the cause of his distress and the reason why he resorts to ignoble methods to redress his situation. And to avoid any confusion as to his motive, at 1.1.111 he repeats the cause to be his ambition and the loss of love.<sup>125</sup> His malignity is clearly not motiveless. However, one soon discovers that the loss of his political position is of greater concern to him than the loss of the object of his desire. In fact, having overcome his inhibitions, it does not take Pharnaces long to contemplate a violent fulfillment of his desire for Monima. This negates any suggestion that his devotion is genuine and ethereal, and makes his lust equal to that of Mithridates for Semandra. In fact, Pharnaces is nothing if not his father's son. Like him, the prince is eminently corruptible, and is corrupted because of his uncontrollable lust, overweening ambition and an innate preference for vice. Like the king's, Pharnaces' virtue is reluctant and forced. The only difference between the two is that Pharnaces' rape of Monima causes him not the slightest consternation or remorse, whilst his father's rape of Semandra causes him the most acute regret.

Of equal interest to Pharnaces is his Machiavellian counsellor Pelopidas. This character is Lee's most obvious homage to Iago to date, to the point of having no real motive for his villainy other than being overlooked for preferment. His inveterate hatred of Archelaus recalls Iago's envy of Cassio, each believing that he had had his rightful military promotion usurped as a result of cronyism rather than merit (1.1.45ff). His tempting of Mithridates into a vicious desire for Semandra is a masterful example of Iago-like reverse psychology, rivalling his literary forebear in the skill of the manipulation. And one must not forget that Pelopidas tempts not only Mithridates but also Pharnaces into vice, both occasions serving to elevate his position

<sup>125</sup> There is also an intimation that the murder of Pharnaces' brothers (and possibly his mother) has led to the development of some antipathy towards his father.

and assisting in the success of his enterprise against Archelaus, except that it also results in his own demise. Furthermore it is not without significance that he has already implemented his plan of revenge against Archelaus before mentioning it to Pharnaces. This demonstrates him to be an independent architect (like Iago) rather than simply a tool of another's villainy. Hasan suggests that it is difficult to find Pelopidas' compeer in Restoration drama,<sup>126</sup> although Machiavel (in *Caesar Borgia*) is an evident development on this character. Nevertheless Pelopidas does represent a progression in the manipulative aspect of the Leean archetype Cassander, and reflects Lee's increasing interest in the Jacobean villain.

In the antagonists we witness a change from the traditional Machiavellian leader and partisans (however active), as seen in *The Rival Queens* and in much of the earlier heroic drama, to that of a virtuous (but eminently corruptible) leader and a Machiavellian counsellor who preys upon his fickle virtue to advance his own cause. This is a progression of the format subtly proposed in Lee's first play and which would be repeated to great effect in *Caesar Borgia*. His principal character type is as a calculating villain—although initially manipulated (the province of the tragic villain) he quickly asserts authority in the conspiracy, and so more properly resides in this position than the tragic.<sup>127</sup> Nevertheless, as he had done with Cassander, Lee ameliorates the character of Pharnaces so that he does not present unadulterated evil, but rather a substantively verisimilar human being with psychologically plausible motivation. The fact that Pharnaces is another Leean study in the mental pathology of love melancholy complicates, and renders partly sympathetic, the typical melodramatically evil antagonist. His dejection at the loss of Monima, and at being supplanted in his father's affections and birthright, along with the influence of Pelopidas in convincing him to act, results in a figure that evokes both detestation and sympathy. Despite viewing this character as a dehumanised type, Tucker is compelled to admit that this ambivalence makes moral judgement of him difficult.<sup>128</sup> This, I would suggest, is precisely Lee's point. After all, complexity is an imperative of the human condition, and it is this condition that Lee dramatises.

The play's affective scenes are almost entirely the province of the melancholy lovers Ziphares and Semandra, neither of whom is elevated much above the typical. But, as is so

<sup>126</sup> Hasan, p.127.

<sup>127</sup> From a mechanical perspective Pharnaces is a lesser distype, a provocator who is medially stylised and coherent, substantially whole, medially symbolic, substantially accessible (medial complexity and maximal transparency), substantially derivative, medially conventional (minimal in his societal role as prince and maximal in his functional role as villain) and static. Pelopidas is a villain who is medially stereotypical, causative, substantially stylised, maximally coherent, modestly whole, medially symbolic, modestly accessible (minimal complexity and substantial transparency), medially conventional (minimal in his societal role as military commander, and maximal in his functional roles as Machiavellian counsellor), and experiences absolutely no regret and so undergoes no self-discovery. Derivation is not applicable as a category as this character is wholly invented—excepting of course the Shakespearean foundation.

<sup>128</sup> Tucker, pp. 42, 44.

often the case in his characterology, Lee subtly undermines and/or individuates the type.<sup>129</sup> More so than Caesario, Ziphares embodies the enervated lover-hero, yet is adumbrated in his virtue by his excessive pride, scepticism of the supernatural, and blasphemous attitude towards the gods (the latter an extension of his hubris). His scepticism is poignant as he himself is grudgingly forced to recognise his metabasis (reversal of fortune), but it is his hubris that undermines his otherwise pristine character. Whereas Pharnaces is nothing if not his father's son, Ziphares differs from both in his complete lack of ambition,<sup>130</sup> and in an innate sense of virtue. He is brave, honest, intelligent, a superlative lover and warrior, and absolutely loyal and devoted. In fact, one would almost doubt his lineage were it not for the fact that he shares an arrogance which exceeds his father's in his denial of the influence of the gods in his affairs (3.1.68ff). But it is principally upon the affective value of this character that Lee concentrates. As with Semandra's post-rape psychological trauma, Ziphares' suffering is psychologically and affectively compelling. Images such as his traumatic visualisation of Semandra and Mithridates copulating (4.1.447ff) help to humanise an otherwise one-dimensional typification. Having said this, Lee does devote too much attention to these scenes at the expense of the conspiracy and the revelation of Mithridates' internal conflict. These scenes will have appealed to the female members of the audience, and assisted in the ongoing success of the play, yet they detract from the focus upon the protagonist. Lee takes an intermediary heroic character type and centralises him, to the extent that Ziphares receives the greatest attention of the entire play. Unfortunately this is detrimental as Ziphares is of limited characterological interest, and the attention would have been better applied elsewhere, or in the greater complication of his character.<sup>131</sup>

Semandra is a typical pathetic heroine, spotlessly virtuous to the extent that she could almost be said to personify fortitude. Her other principal feature is the strength of her love for Ziphares in that she repeatedly sacrifices her honour to protect him. Yet, despite claims that she is the least interesting character of the play,<sup>132</sup> her post-rape psychological trauma (4.1.186ff) is effective, affective and substantively verisimilar. It is so well-presented that Lee seems to have had an empathetic feeling for the rape victim. Her image of herself as transformed into a hideous monster is particularly vivid and helps to individuate an otherwise melodramatic type. Her self-loathing is another aspect of Lee's perception of the psychology of

<sup>129</sup> It is of interest that, in the dedication to *Theodosius*, Lee says of Ziphares and Semandra that "Such characters every Dawber cannot draw". This suggests that he must have been satisfied with the depiction of these figures.

<sup>130</sup> 1.1.200-3, 210ff, 419ff.

<sup>131</sup> Ziphares is a victimised hero who is modestly typified, a responder who is modestly stylised, maximally coherent, modestly whole, substantial symbolic, medially accessible (modest complexity and medial transparency), substantially derivative, maximally conventional (maximal in his societal role as a prince, and in his functional role as an enervated lover) and elicits minimal anagnorisis.

<sup>132</sup> Hunt, p.164.

a rape victim. It also demonstrates the extent to which Lee's characterology and dramaturgy have advanced. Excepting her post-rape psychological state, however, her character pales into insignificance in comparison with Lee's earlier heroines. She lacks the enigmatic qualities of her virtuous predecessors such as Sophonisba and Gloriana, and does not even play an unconscious role in her downfall as do Cyara and Statira. This is the first occasion in which a centralised virtuous heroine has had no discernible hamartia in Lee's drama, her absolutely pristine virtue limiting interest to her post-rape psychology. This insight would be used to great effect in the depiction of Lucretia in *Lucius Junius Brutus*, but would not justify anywhere near the same amount of textual attention, which exceeds that allocated to Pharnaces and is itself exceeded only by Ziphares and Mithridates.<sup>133</sup>

The remaining characters are stereotypes that serve functional, symbolic, and affective roles. Archelaus is a descendant of Clytus, a loyal old general who acts as an advisor to Ziphares. As with Ziphares and Semandra, this character receives considerably more attention than is dramatically justifiable. What is baffling is that so little comparative attention is paid to Monima. She has no real purpose other than her brief appearances in the first and second acts. Her role is simply to suffer from an unrequited love for Mithridates. It is probable that this character was actually represented (rather than simply being alluded to) because of the practical necessity of providing a part for the two principal actresses of the company—no Leean play to date had presented just the one heroine, most likely for this very reason. Unfortunately little is made of this necessity. Lee seems to have forgotten about the existence of Monima by the third act as he devotes his attention to the conspiracy, the internal conflict of Mithridates, and the affective scenes involving Ziphares and Semandra. It is to be regretted that no attempt is made to correlate and compare the psychological states of the heroines, as Lee had done to great success with the rival queens in his preceding play. The result is that the character of Monima lacks any real interest.

In the dedication Lee claims that this is his best play to date, a position with which at least two critics agree.<sup>134</sup> From a characterological perspective the representations of Mithridates, Pharnaces and Pelopidas, support this contention. Nevertheless the remaining characters (Ziphares, Semandra, Archelaus, Andrarar and Monima) receive either too much, or not enough, attention. The extraordinary presentation of Mithridates, coupled with Lee's adroit presentation of the villainous Pelopidas, and of the complicated nature of Pharnaces, demonstrate the characterological and dramaturgical skill which Lee has achieved.

<sup>133</sup> Semandra is a victimised heroine who is modestly typified, a responder who is substantially stylised, maximally coherent, modestly whole, substantial symbolic, medially accessible (medial complexity and modest transparency), maximally conventional (maximal in her societal role and maximal in her functional role as an enervated lover) and is static. Derivation is inapplicable as she is a wholly invented character.

Unfortunately these figures are offset by dimensionless secondary and intermediary characters. The fact that this play is around 500 lines longer than his earlier plays (roughly the equivalent of an entire act) results in much greater attention being given to characters that do not warrant it. It results in a play that presents both the great merits and infuriating flaws of Leean characterology.

The structural progression in *Mithridates*, along with its characterological merits, validates the claim that it is his best so far. Once again Lee concentrates upon the downfall of a once great man because of his ungoverned and ungovernable passions. As he had with Augustus and Alexander, Lee distorts the historical personage by focussing upon the traits that made him preeminent but which come to undermine him. It is, as Armistead succinctly puts it, a study of the mental pathology of political leadership, and of the psychology of power.<sup>135</sup> Lee again explores the themes of regal senescence, of the conflict between the monarch's domestic and political responsibilities, and of the traits (particularly his ungoverned passion) that conquer kingdoms but cannot maintain them. The format is enhanced by having the king tempted into vice by antagonists who prey upon his flaws, and focussing attention upon that corruption and the tragic results to the individual, court and state. Whereas Augustus and Alexander are wholly responsible for their own downfalls, Mithridates is manipulated into his. This results in a greater unity of focus than the preceding plays. It has no independent subplot as much of the attention is centred upon the internal and external conflicts that the king undergoes, upon his numerous rises and falls, and upon his eventual anagnorisis. There are far fewer distractions from the focus upon Mithridates, or upon matters not directly concerning him. All of the actions of the play are centred around his corruption, conflicts, remorse and self-discovery, with the exception of the affective scenes between Ziphares and Semandra which result from the king's corruption. Despite Hammond's suggestion, *Mithridates* is not inferior to *The Rival Queens* in matters of theme, construction and character,<sup>136</sup> but an evident progression. The play benefits from the structural advance upon the common format, and from the effective depictions of Mithridates, Pelopidas and Pharnaces, but the remaining characters suffer as a result of Lee's intense focus upon the protagonist, and of his failure to capitalise on the affective episodes by complicating the depiction of the lovers.

Oedipus. A Tragedy (summer/autumn for November 1678).

<sup>134</sup> Hasan, p. 104; Hunt, p. 148.

<sup>135</sup> Armistead, pp. 80-1.

<sup>136</sup> Hammond, *Development*, p. 552.

The exact date of the premiere of Lee's first collaboration with John Dryden is a matter of contention, varying between September 1678 and January 1678/9. Stroup and Cooke opt for a date of December-January 1678/9. Alan Roper, in the University of California edition of the works of Dryden, claims that the composition of the play was not completed until summer 1678, and, given that the play was licensed for publication on 3 January 1678/9, suggests a premiere between mid-November and mid-December.<sup>137</sup> Produced at Dorset Garden, it was Lee's first offering to the Duke's Company, and was an instant success. Downes claims that "it took prodigiously being Acted 10 Days together", a particularly long run for a stage production at this time (p. 37), and continued to be popular until the middle of the eighteenth-century.<sup>138</sup> It was published seven times over the next hundred years as a testament to its ongoing popularity.<sup>139</sup> The primary sources for the play are the tragedies by Sophocles (*Oedipus Tyrannus*, c. 429-420 BCE), Seneca (*Oedipus Rex*, c. 60 CE) and Pierre Corneille (*Oedipe*, 1659). In the preface Dryden emphasises their indebtedness to the Greek tragedy; however, there is a general consensus amongst critics that the collaborators were more indebted to Seneca and Corneille than they were to Sophocles. It is true that they followed the foundational drama for the central themes of patricide, incest and the self-fulfilling (Oedipal) curse, but added Seneca's incantation scene, use of the ghost of Laius, the method of Oedipus' blinding, the suicide of Jocasta onstage, the character of Manto, and the name of Phorbas given by the Roman dramatist to Sophocles' anonymous shepherd. The tone of the play is also distinctively Senecan, the play adopting his fatalism rather than Sophoclean humanism with regard to the role of the gods in the destiny versus free-will debate that has surrounded the Oedipal myth since its inception. From Corneille came the subplot of Adrastus and Eurydice, which closely follows his *Thésée-Dircé* subplot. Creon's attempted usurpation of the throne is the pair's own contribution, as is the extent of the passion between Oedipus and Jocasta.<sup>140</sup>

Analysis of the title character best begins with a consideration of Dryden's own remarks in the preface. In this revealing document Dryden explains that he envisaged Oedipus as an exemplary epic hero in contradistinction to the tyrannical villain created by Corneille.

<sup>137</sup> Roper (p. 443) argues for this period based on the fact that Matthew Medbourne does not appear in the cast, and would probably have been allocated a role were it not for the fact that he was imprisoned on the 26<sup>th</sup> of November, and never released. It is thus likely that the play was performed after that date, or at least had gone into rehearsal after he had been accused.

<sup>138</sup> There have been about fifty recorded revivals of this play.

<sup>139</sup> The play was published in May (Easter) 1679 (I.350), November (Michaelmas) 1682 (I.516), 28 February (Hilary) 1687 (II.190), 1692, February (Hilary) 1701 (III.234), c. 1720, 1734 and 1777.

<sup>140</sup> In the *Vindication of The Duke of Guise* (1683, p. 42), Dryden declared that "I writ the first and third acts of *Oedipus*, and drew the *Scenary* of the whole play", that is contributed the general structural and characterological outlines. Yet as Hasan (p. 119) cogently notes, it would by no means have been easy to separate the contributions of the two playwrights had Dryden not made this claim. I suspect that there are numerous passages in both sections of the play that have been contributed by the other dramatist, making a true determination of the exact contribution much less evident than Dryden's remarks suggest.



Dryden claims that Corneille failed in his character because he had not presented a great hero, drawing the king as "suspicious, designing, [and] more anxious of keeping the Theban crown, than solicitous for the safety of his People". This he contrasts with Sophocles, whose Oedipus is "a just, a merciful, a successful, a Religious Prince, and in short, a Father of his Country". In Dryden's hands we are presented with a typical 'heroic' hero who evokes admiration, but who fails to elicit affection, and who remains throughout little more than a dimensionless stereotype. He is a superlative lover and warrior, who is magnanimous, intelligent, righteous, conscientious, and a man whom even the ghost of Lajus acknowledges to be endowed with "Temperance, Justice, Prudence, Fortitude / And every Kingly virtue" (3.1.364-5). Unlike the Sophoclean figure he is neither hubristic nor impetuous, nor is he, as Van Lennep claims, the "morbid, embittered king" of Seneca's play.<sup>141</sup> He differs from the conventional Leean monarch because he is as concerned with his civic responsibility as he is with his private life. It was left to the junior partner to endow the character with elements that make him 'human' and affective. In this play, however, rather than adulterating Dryden's pristine protagonist, Lee follows the direction of his colleague with regard to the exemplary nature of Oedipus, restricting his characterological contribution to a focus upon the affection between him and Jocasta, and by so doing accentuating the affective possibilities of the myth.

It is in the intensity of the king's relationship with Jocasta that the play enters innovative and interesting territory. Lee's Theban passages between Oedipus and Jocasta are passionate and tender, and represent a departure from the Sophoclean and Senecan predecessors, and from the dispassionate interaction between the two in the scenes that Dryden composed based on those sources. The presence of genuine affection between the king and queen is an aspect of the myth which has never before been advanced. After the discovery of his parentage and crimes, Oedipus is informed that the gods only require his banishment from Thebes (and, implicitly, the termination of his marriage), and that he is free to reign in Corinth with their blessing.<sup>142</sup> However, not only is Oedipus driven to insanity and death because of his antipathy to his incestuous crime,<sup>143</sup> but also because of an intolerable desire to continue in this relationship, and the inability to live without Jocasta. This reality is as hard to accept as the fact that he has committed these crimes in the first place. It makes of Lee's Oedipus arguably the

<sup>141</sup> Van Lennep, *Sources*, p.254.

<sup>142</sup> 4.1.601ff. However, it has already been made evident that a separation from his wife is unacceptable. When Oedipus, in the latter stages of the third act, begins to suspect that it is possible that he had killed Lajus (but not yet knowing his true parentage), he expresses a fear that he may be banished "From Thebes and you [Jocasta]" (3.1.582). This emphasises his love for her—theirs is not, nor has it even been, a marriage of convenience.

<sup>143</sup> His incestuous relationship concerns him far greater than the fact that he had murdered a father he never knew and for whom he had developed no affection. 1.1.543ff, 4.1.292-3, 4.1.605-6 and 5.1.144ff are all explicit examples of his antipathy towards incest. In his soliloquy at 5.1.144ff he emphasises that the incest he has

first literary character to present a demonstrable Oedipal complex.<sup>144</sup> No previous representation of this mythical figure has faced this dilemma, since the revelation of the incest had hitherto ended all consideration of love (if their relationship can even be termed 'love'—in both Sophocles and Seneca their relationship is notably dispassionate and convenient rather than affectionate). It is Lee's Oedipus alone whose love is absolute, and so he finds himself torn between two equally intolerable choices. He admits that the strength of their love is "[t]oo mighty for the anger of the Gods" (5.1.209-10), and fears a revival of the "dead Embers" of that affection, yet it is evident that his anagnorisis has failed to effect an emotional divorce. His passion for her remains, albeit in a state of dormancy. Jocasta admits that no change in her feelings has taken place, claiming Oedipus is "still my Husband" (5.1.221). This rekindles his passion, leading to what would have been an enduring affection had not the ghost of Lajus broken the resolve of the hitherto steadfast Jocasta, and driven her to distraction. Nevertheless from this point onwards Oedipus remains constant in his love for his wife to the last; and despite the temporary disintegration of her affection, her love is once again revealed in her dying speeches to him.<sup>145</sup>

Most critics consider Oedipus' desire to continue in his incestuous relationship to be a flaw in his character. Yet this behaviour strikes me as wholly consistent with Lee's focus on the play as a love tragedy, and on these characters as victims of impeded love. Oedipus may now know the terrible truth of his existence, and that his love is taboo, yet this does not lessen the intensity of that affection. The real tragedy, in this interpretation of the myth, is that Oedipus experiences an absolute passion for a woman who is morally inappropriate, and is unable to accept this intolerable situation. Once again we have the traditional love-triangle that Lee uses to great effect. Here the impediment to love is divine rather than human, yet, as in every previous Leean example, the existence of an impediment does not terminate that love, but the inevitable resolution to the insoluble dilemma is for the lovers to end their lives.<sup>146</sup>

Although the scenes between Oedipus and Jocasta are effective, affective and substantively verisimilar, the king remains a stereotype throughout. He is a modestly typified character who are presented with interiority but does not undergo any notable change, nor

committed is the cause of his distress—virtually no mention is made of the regicide, all being centred on his immoral relationship.

<sup>144</sup> I refer to the post-discovery Oedipus as Lee's because from this point onwards the character, and his actions, are more likely to have been his conception rather than Dryden's.

<sup>145</sup> It is worth noting that there remains an ambivalent attitude towards incest in the play. Creon had been betrothed to Eurydice by Jocasta when she was a baby (1.1.85, 548b-550a), not to mention the hypocrisy of the gods for whom incest is acceptable—Jove, for instance, is married to his sister Juno, as Jocasta is at pains to emphasise (5.1.485-6). Van Lennep notes that other than Oedipus and Jocasta (and the ghost of Lajus), no character in the play expresses the slightest horror at, or condemnation of, the king's relationship (*Sources*, p.252).

<sup>146</sup> This is a conflict experienced by Massinissa and Ziphare.



oscillate in personality state as a result.<sup>147</sup> Whilst the Theban king shares some of the characteristics of the tragic hero, because he is so pristine and unrepentant in his love and over the regicide he is more properly a conventional epic hero. By Aristotelian standard he is closer to the *epieikes* than the tragic protagonist.<sup>148</sup> Because this character is fundamentally Dryden's conception, Lee restricts his contribution to the affective scenes with Jocasta. Dryden's design for Oedipus as an exemplary character prevented his colleague from adulterating the representation. However, the play may well have benefited from a less pure Oedipus, more in line with the Cornelian figure, which would have permitted Lee greater flexibility in the characterisation, especially given that the subplot and the conspiracy invite the possibility of presenting a self-interested ruler. It is unsurprising that a few years later Dryden would admit that he had made an error in making of Oedipus "too good a man."<sup>149</sup>

Whereas Oedipus is essentially a Drydenesque creation augmented by Lee, Jocasta is almost entirely the work of the younger dramatist. The classical Jocasta was a minor functional agent who lacked individuation, and whose role in both plays was simply to assist in the discovery of Oedipus' identity, and then suicide in self-retribution for her unwitting crime. Her interaction with Oedipus is almost wholly dispassionate and their marriage one of convenience. In Sophocles there is no intimation of ethereal, or even sensual, affection between the pair. Jocasta appears at line 634 to break up the conflict between Oedipus and Creon, and to expose the facts of Laius' death. There is nothing in her speeches to suggest that her second marriage is anything but a political necessity. And whilst Seneca's queen appears to maintain a more genuine affection for her husband, the discovery of his true identity brings about a sudden and pointed emotional dissociation. But, like Sophocles' figure, Seneca's Jocasta is so briefly depicted as to be almost undifferentiated from a common messenger. In contrast, Lee's character achieves substantially greater individuation, poignancy and pathos by virtue of the force of her love, the conflict she undergoes, and the manner of her death. Like Oedipus, Jocasta faces an intolerable conflict between the desire to commit an honourable suicide and

<sup>147</sup> Structurally Oedipus is a responder who is minimally stylised, maximally coherent, maximally whole, substantially accessible (medial complexity and maximal transparency), maximally conventional (in both his societal role as monarch, and in his functional role as enervated lover) and undergoes maximal anagnorisis. He is minimally symbolic, unless one is a Freudian in which case Oedipus maximally symbolises the Oedipal complex in us all. He is substantially derivative in comparison to the classical sources, but wholly dissimilar to the Cornelian figure.

<sup>148</sup> This is the tenet of John Dennis' claim that "*Dryden* has alter'd the Character of *Oedipus*, and made it less suitable to the design of Tragedy, according to *Aristotle's Rules*" ("The Impartial Critick" (1693) in Hooker (ed.), I.19).

<sup>149</sup> *Works of Dryden*, xx, p.70. As Dennis noted, Dryden's characterisation upset the subtle balance of Sophocles' tragedy "to punish a Man for Crimes, that are caused by invincible ignorance, is in some measure unjust, especially if that Man has other ways extraordinary Vertues. Now Mr. *Dryden* makes his *Oedipus* just, generous, sincere, and brave...*Sophocles* represents *Oedipus* after another manner: the distinguishing Qualities which he gives him, are only Courage, Wit and Success, Qualities which make a Man neither good nor vitious" ("The Impartial Critick", in Hooker (ed.), I.19).

the desire to remain in an inappropriate, divinely opposed, incestuous relationship with the man she loves absolutely. She suicides both because of this relationship, and because of the desire to continue in that state.

It is in Lee's second act that the intensity of this relationship is made manifest. Although the first meeting of Oedipus and Jocasta in the play (1.1.498ff) does display affection between the pair, there is little passion in their exchanges, and the intense irony undermines any attempt to present them as passionately engaged.<sup>150</sup> It is not until the second act that their passion is emphasised and the irony of their relationship abandoned. Jocasta repeatedly emphasises her love for Oedipus throughout Lee's episodes. Most notably her affection is evinced by her attempt to dissuade Oedipus from continuing his search for the truth (4.1.395ff) after she has discerned his true identity (4.1.378ff). In this she differs from Sophocles' queen who, when she discovers the truth, departs the stage and takes her own life. This immediate and unconsidered act contrasts with the torment endured by the Carolean figure. In fact her love for him overcomes the initial urge to suicide, but leads to an attempted (and temporarily successful) reunion. This reunion only collapses because of the direct intervention of the ghost of Lajus which serves as a catalyst for her eventual insanity, and re-instigates her intended murder-suicide.<sup>151</sup> Her love for Oedipus is so potent that her final lines emphasise the enduring and ethereal nature of her love for him, so as to accentuate her tragedy. So, despite remaining stereotypical, Jocasta is arguably one of the most individuated types of the play.<sup>152</sup>

Dryden's presentation of Creon as a calculating villain with designs upon the Theban throne has little in common with the character of the same name in the earlier versions. In both Sophocles and Seneca, Oedipus accuses Creon and Tiresias of conspiracy, and in each case Creon is at pains to point out that he has absolutely no desire to rule. Dryden takes the allegation of conspiracy and makes it a reality (excepting Tiresias' involvement), turning the

<sup>150</sup> The interaction of the pair in Dryden's third act is even more dispassionate and expository than in the first.

<sup>151</sup> Her incipient madness begins as early as 4.1.429ff, yet it is notable that even in her increasing distraction her principal concern is for the welfare of her beloved husband (5.1.168ff). As an aside, Jocasta's temporary desire to pursue the ghost of Lajus and to unite with him in the afterlife (5.1.263-74) is of particular interest in terms of the psychological constitution of this character. It strikes one as indicating that she had never achieved an emotional conclusion of their union following his death, because of her abrupt marriage to Oedipus. That is, she had not been given sufficient time to grieve over his loss (the brevity of the intervening period having already been emphasised at 3.1.529), and to achieve what would now be termed 'closure'. This is consistent with her discussion of the differing nature of her love for each of her husbands (1.1.526ff). Although the concept of closure is unlikely to have been familiar to a seventeenth-century audience, the inclusion of this passage is poignant and reflects the potentially transcendental nature of Leean dramaturgy, in the same way as Shakespearean drama transcends its age and invites readings like Ernest Jones' Oedipal analysis of *Hamlet*.

<sup>152</sup> She is a minimally typified victimised heroine, being effectively and affectively particularised by the strength of her love, and by the intensity of her torment. She is a responder who is medially stylised, maximally coherent, maximally whole, minimally symbolic, substantially accessible (medial complexity and maximal transparency), minimally derivative, maximally conventional (maximal in both her societal role as queen, and in her functional role as an enervated lover) and undergoes her own self-discovery amidst the revelation of her husband-son's identity.

noble statesman into a vicious villain who is a self-interested, misogynistic, duplicitous, hubristic and conscienceless malcontent. In designing him as such, Dryden drew almost entirely upon Shakespeare's Richard the Third, just as his partisans are based upon the king's aides, principally the unregenerate Buckingham of the opening acts. Like Gloucester, Creon is both physically and morally deformed, his monstrous visage mirroring an equally monstrous personality, as is made abundantly evident throughout the first act (1.1.133ff, 159-60, 179-81). This is by no means the extent of Dryden's indebtedness to Shakespeare's play. He has Creon attempt to seduce Eurydice in a manner reminiscent of Gloucester's conceited suit to Queen Anne. Secondly he manipulates the *mobile vulgus* into accepting his claim to the throne, the parallel extending to a simulated refusal of the offer (1.1.212-5). His intention to satisfy his lust for Eurydice, and then to discard her, also recalls his Shakespearean predecessor. And like the English king, Creon's motives are wholly self-interested—ambition for the throne, lust for Eurydice, and antipathy towards Oedipus.<sup>153</sup>

What has been overlooked with regard to Creon's deformity is that it serves to make him more understandable and sympathetic, just as it does with Shakespeare's protagonist. The revelation of his depressed and reluctant state at the beginning of the third act is particularly poignant in this regard. Creon's claim that

I am [wretched]: my soul's ill married to my body.  
I wou'd be young, be handsom, be belov'd:  
Cou'd I but breathe my self into Adrastus (3.1.7-9).

This recalls Gloucester's opening soliloquy in which it is intimated that his deformity has led to the development of his misanthropy. It suggests that his social ostracisation has bred in him antisocial sentiment—that the ascendancy of his vicious personality was a reluctant but deliberate response to his being repeatedly discriminated against. His desire for Eurydice, her love for that which he most despises (Adrastus, his antithesis in terms of physical beauty), and her repeated and vehement rejection of his advances, both before and during the play, increase his malignity.<sup>154</sup> Depending upon whether one considers the character from a moral or a psychological perspective, one would conclude either that the physical is a manifestation of a pre-existing moral deformity—that his soul is innately evil—or inversely that his bodily disfigurement has caused his ethical transformation—that but for his malformation and/or his subsequent ostracism he may have remained virtuous. A psychological reading makes an otherwise wholly repugnant and diabolical villain comprehensible. It does not justify his behaviour, but it does help to explain his actions, to expose an important aspect of his psyche,

<sup>153</sup> Creon's claim to having been defeated by Oedipus (1.1.398) reveals that he feels aggrieved that the throne, which he believes to be rightfully his after the death of Laius, has been usurped by Oedipus.

and to illustrate that effect has been the result of cause rather than action stemming from an innate and motiveless penchant for evil. Whilst the text overtly invites a moral reading by emphasising the parallel between the outward and inward states, it also tacitly invites the latter by introducing his depression and self-loathing at the beginning of the third act. Even though Creon is principally a Drydenesque figure, it is possible to see the influence and input of Lee in this representation, the complication of melodramatic figures being an aspect with which the younger dramatist has demonstrated a continuing interest.<sup>155</sup>

Richard Brown has argued that Lee portrays Creon in the second act as a jealous unrequited lover in contrast to the political villain of Dryden's first and third acts.<sup>156</sup> Whilst the character does present these two positions, to divide these states between Acts One and Two is erroneous. It is evident from the outset that Creon is, in part, motivated by his failure as a lover. He reveals an intense passion for Eurydice at 1.1.83-4, and it is clear that he is distressed by her refusal to requite his desire. His exasperated statements about Adrastus at 1.1.89ff and throughout the third act support this opinion. It is true that Creon is misogynistic, but this does not detract from the fact that he is an aggrieved lover, any more than Massinissa's outbursts lessen the intensity of his love for, and distress at the loss of, Sophonisba. There is too much passion in Creon's outbursts for us to discount the sincerity of his grief. In referring to Adrastus' "Charms / Of youth" and "outward form", Creon reveals the feelings of inadequacy which form the basis for his vicious personality. His temporary change in state reflects a minimally atypical change, as he temporarily becomes depressed and unable to act, and needs to be reinvigorated into action by his disciples. Psychological impotence gives this character a heterogeneity that is absent in his colleagues, and many of the other figures in the play.<sup>157</sup> His emotional distemper makes him one of the most complex and interesting characters of the play.

Like Pharnaces, Creon strikes one as having been reluctantly virtuous, and it is the incitation of his partisans Diocles, Alcander and Pyracmon which leads him into active revolt.

<sup>154</sup> In this he recalls Cassander and Pharnaces, unrequited lovers whose jealousy leads them to turn upon the objects of their desire when their advances are rejected.

<sup>155</sup> Interestingly Douglas Beers doubts that Lee could have curbed his imagination sufficiently to allow Creon to appear so logical and dispassionate a villain as he is (p.98). Although Creon is a Drydenesque creation, it is interesting (and reflective of the prevailing view) that a student of Lee's drama would have such a complete lack of appreciation of his skill at characterology. It also reflects an evident misanalysis of Lee's Cassander, Pharnaces, Pelopidas *et al.* (p.98). Further Beers clearly ignores the ameliorating aspects of the characterisation of Creon, as well as his evident desire for Eurydice, in determining that he is dispassionate.

<sup>156</sup> R. Brown, "The Dryden-Lee Collaboration", p.13.

<sup>157</sup> He is a calculating villain that is an instigator who is modestly stylised, maximally coherent, substantially whole, medially symbolic, medially accessible (modest complexity and maximal transparency), medially conventional (minimally in his societal role as statesman, substantial in his functional role as calculating villain, and medial in his role as unrequited lover) and does not undergo anagnorisis. He is medially symbolic—Dryden may have had Anthony Ashley Cooper, the first Earl of Shaftesbury, in mind in the creation of this character. He is minimally derivative when compared to the classical sources, but maximally so when compared with Shakespeare's Richard III.

This is evidenced on several occasions when they suggest to him a course of action. However, although the several conspirators are meant to be suggestive of popular opinion, the actual number is excessive and could have been vested in Diocles alone. Just as Creon is founded on Shakespeare's Gloucester, Diocles is based on Gloucester's associate, the Duke of Buckingham, specifically the unregenerate figure of the first half of that play. Significantly it is Diocles who raises Creon out of his impotent lethargy and depression into action at the beginning of the third act. Yet, despite Creon being an interesting character, and the disciples being adequately represented (if unduly numerous), there has been no adequate attempt to connect the conspiracy to the tragedy, and to demonstrate the impact they have on Oedipus' downfall. Because they play no active role in the catastrophe, they progressively become superfluous. This undermines the attention they receive at the beginning of the play (which suggests that they are to play a major part in the king's downfall), and become increasingly redundant as the focus of the tragedy shifts away from the conspiracy and onto the discovery of Oedipus' true identity induced by Tiresias.

The character of Tiresias is an example of the type of inconsistency and absence of paradigmatic unity which can result from collaboration.<sup>158</sup> Because Dryden draws Tiresias upon the Sophoclean model, and Lee on the Senecan, the result is a composite of a clairvoyant and magician who oscillates between the two in an ambiguous manner. The dilemma stems from the fact that the Greek seer is presented with foreknowledge of Oedipus' identity and offences, unlike the Roman who is required to perform necromantic rites in order for the truth to be revealed both to himself and to those present. The character is further complicated by the fact that Dryden's character begins the play without foreknowledge (suggesting a Senecan basis), as is demonstrated by his erroneous claim that the gods had not only sent Oedipus to them to destroy the Sphinx, but that they had also authorised his succession (1.1.317-20). He then receives the truth onstage in a grand display of clairvoyance, so as to emphasize the fact that he has been made aware of Oedipus' identity.<sup>159</sup> Yet the receipt of this knowledge is subsequently undermined by his supposed need to discover the cause of the plague, and by

<sup>158</sup> At this point it is pertinent to remark upon a specific characterological problem that collaborations can produce. Characters composed by more than one dramatist are more susceptible to incoherence and the lack of a discernible paradigmatic unity. In a collaboratively written play it is more difficult to determine if enigmatic fragmentation of a personality is deliberate or simply inconsistent, especially if one of the dramatists overlooks the subtle complexity that his or her colleague has introduced, and adds contradictory elements. These instances may lead to the creation of ambiguous signs which complicate, and render the characterisation, inconsistent, making it difficult for the analyst to determine whether the contradictory elements are part of a concerted plan for a complex but coherent identity, or whether the character is incoherent and ineffective, and which defies satisfactory analysis. A case in point occurs in the presentation of Tiresias, particularly between Acts One and Two, where Dryden's Sophoclean conception of the character clashes with Lee's Senecan augmentation.

<sup>159</sup> This causes a change in foundation from a Senecan to a Sophoclean figure. Seneca's necromancer had been at pains to point out that he is no longer able to channel the gods because of his age and frailty (II.297-8; cf. Miller (ed.), 1.453).

several statements he makes arguing that he is oblivious to the truth. Tiresias' seeming oscillation between knowledge and nescience makes a producible interpretation difficult. This irregularity is emphasised by Lee who firstly reiterates Tiresias' telepathic connection with the gods (2.1.134ff), but then introduces the oracular (2.1.168ff) and necromantic (2.1.264ff) aspects of his character.<sup>160</sup> This ambiguity is accentuated by the difficulty of determining whether Tiresias' claims to being unaware of the identity of the regicide are genuine or feigned. Some of the most problematic statements of the play occur in the second act. After being ordered to reveal the regicide, Tiresias claims that "'Tis lost, / Like what we think can never shun remembrance; / Yet of a sudden's gone beyond the Clouds" (2.1.184-6). This is augmented by his claims that

Since that the pow'rs divine refuse to clear,  
The mystic deed, I'll to the Grove of Furies;  
There I can force th' Infernal Gods to shew  
Their horrid Forms (2.1.264ff)

and reveal the truth. This suggests that he is genuinely unaware of the identity of the regicide. Yet such claims appear to be contradicted by his seemingly knowing statement at 2.1.277 that "prophetick dreams thy [Oedipus'] Fate" will show. The only statement which seems to explain these positions occurs at 2.1.132-3 where Tiresias intimates that he is compelled to conceal the truth. In the absence of further statements, interpretation of the character must be based on the assumption that he is dissembling when he claims not to know the identity of the regicide. However, this does render him less attractive than the Sophoclean or Senecan figures,<sup>161</sup> because he is guilty of dissimulation, and as a result contributes to the tragedy of self-discovery.<sup>162</sup> It is to be regretted that Tiresias is provided with the truth as it then creates the need for duplicity, and renders the need for oracular and necromantic rites redundant (other than for its dramatic effect). The character would have been much more effective had he not been aware of Oedipus' parentage and offences, and if lines 322-33 of the first act had been excised. A modern production of the play would most likely benefit from an excision, as it

<sup>160</sup> Tiresias' oracle in particular strikes me as redundant, given that it follows Dymas' exposition of the Delphic oracle (1.1.433-6).

<sup>161</sup> The Carolean Tiresias is less attractive than the Sophoclean figure who is guiltless because he attempts to dissuade Oedipus from seeking the murderer, and than the Senecan who is guiltless because unaware of the truth.

<sup>162</sup> Significantly, it is Tiresias who reveals that Phorbas was the shepherd who had given the infant Oedipus to Ægeon (4.1.388-90). It is unlikely that this would have been revealed by any other character (only Jocasta is likely to have known this fact, and is unlikely to have divulged it), and so Tiresias deliberately revives an otherwise stagnating search. Not only does he expose this information, but then urges Oedipus not to proceed with an interrogation, which is as much as an invitation to do so. This further undermines his character and makes him more purposely culpable for the tragedy.



would render the character more consistent, comprehensible and appealing. It is evident that the combination of the Sophoclean and Senecan figures is incommensurate and ineffective.<sup>163</sup>

The remaining characters of the play are of little critical interest, not least Adrastus and Eurydice who are two of the least inspiring intermediary characters that Lee has had a hand in creating. Very few scenes are devoted to the lovers, none of which occur before the middle of the play (3.1.117ff), previous to which Eurydice serves only to illustrate and accentuate Creon's villainy, and frustrated love—to play Anne to his Richard.<sup>164</sup> The lack of attention stems from the fact that the love-triangle has no connection with the action involving Oedipus and Jocasta whatsoever, and the failure to capitalise on the functional relationship of the pair to the king in the Corneilian source. Because the conspiracy is itself a poorly connected subplot, of which the lovers are a mere adjunct, it makes them superfluous additions, which is reflected in their typification. Their only purpose is to suffer and elicit sympathy, but their lack of individuation and limited connection to the plot undermines this design. Because their situation is utterly incomparable to the intensity of the torment of Oedipus and Jocasta, it only manages to detract from that focus. Whereas in *Oedipe* the king has a direct role in the subplot, the removal of him from this line of action renders them an unnecessary distraction from the focus upon Oedipus and Jocasta. Adrastus' presentation as an undifferentiated heroic lover who is absolutely virtuous limits his heterogeneity and makes him difficult to engage with, as does the purity and innocence of Eurydice.

Although early criticism of the play was mixed at best, more recently the analyses have tended to be more favourable, partly because freed from a prejudicial (and self-defeating) comparison with the Sophoclean foundation. More recently, with the notable exception of Antony Hammond,<sup>165</sup> critics have attempted to judge this play on its own merits. The result is that the work is gaining some grudging respect, especially in the episodes and characterisations by Lee.<sup>166</sup> Richard Brown, for instance, notes that Dryden's plan and acts are subservient to Lee's poetry that gives the play its tragic intensity.<sup>167</sup> The one thing that critics do agree on is that the play is a Senecan tragedy of the immutability of an oppressive fate. But it is also a

<sup>163</sup> Tiresias is an ambivalent statesman hero, a provocator who is medially typified and stylised, modestly coherent, medially whole, minimally symbolic, minimally accessible (minimal complexity and transparency), modestly derivative, medially conventional (medial in his societal role as prophet and substantial in his functional role as catalyst) and is static.

<sup>164</sup> 1.1.103-77; 3.1.35-116. The lovers both appear in Act Two, but never once speak to each other.

<sup>165</sup> Hammond claims that this is not even a particularly good play by Restoration standards (*Development*, p.570). Given the plethora of hack works produced in the period, this is a spectacular indictment. However his analysis strikes me as intransigent and aimed at championing Sophocles rather than attempting to judge this play on its own merits.

<sup>166</sup> There is still often a tendency to judge the comparative merits of the two parts and to find in favour of Dryden. Hunt (p.173) and Roper ("Oedipus", *Works of Dryden*, xiii, pp.441ff) are recent examples of critics who claim that to Dryden is owed much of the credit for *Oedipus*. See also Stroup and Cooke (*Works*, 1.370-2) for an analysis of early criticism most of which is negative and directed at Lee.

tragedy of self-discovery and impeded love. Oedipus' moral and civic responsibility compel him to engage in the search for a truth which progressively involves him on a personal level, even to the extent of overwhelming his own desire to suspend the search (4.1.438-43). His own virtue undermines him as he progresses towards his own downfall. Unlike Lee's previous rulers, he is wholly innocent of any conscious crime, and so it is his virtuous traits (rather than any vicious ones) which contribute to his destruction, making his tragedy all the more pathetic. But even more than this, it is in the tragedy of impeded love that Lee contributes most to the play. For, despite Van Lennep's claim that "the over-development of the love motif...and the unnecessary heightening of the incest element are bad enough, but the farewell love scene in the fifth act is most revolting and appears to have been universally condemned by the critics",<sup>168</sup> this is one of the most poignant aspects of the work, and is no doubt one of the principal reasons for its success. Van Lennep has patently failed to appreciate Lee's design of illustrating the overwhelming power of love, and its capacity for transcending the most virulent opposition. This is a theme common to Leean drama, and one which he repeatedly accentuates. In fact *Oedipus* could be said to be the *ne plus ultra* of the love and honour conflict. It is unsurprising that Lee would relish a part in the production of such a play, as it poses the ultimate dramaturgical challenge. Not only is the tragic love affective, but it is extremely effective as well, as the popularity of the play on the Carolean stage illustrates.

The most notable aspect of the characters of *Oedipus* is that they are more stereotypical and conventionally heroic than in Lee's solo plays. This is partly because collaborations do not allow as much freedom for character development without risking paradigmatic unity, and partly because Dryden's structure limited the characters to traditional heroic types. In foundation, Oedipus is a Drydenesque conception, and so is presented throughout as an exemplary Herculean hero of the type common to the serious drama of the 1660s and early 1670s. As a result, Lee maintains the pristine virtue of the king and restricts his contribution to a consideration of his marital relationship, both pre- and post-anagnorisis. This prevents Lee from employing one of his characterological fortes—the complication of a melodramatic figure. Interest in Oedipus is thus restricted to his affective and pathetic functions, in particular the strength of his love, the torment he endures, and his victimisation at the hands of a pernicious fate. Jocasta is also an individuated type whose interest rests in her love and in the representation of her tormented psyche.<sup>169</sup> But neither reaches the potential that the plot invites. The same applies to the intermediary characters. Creon is a typical villain—founded

<sup>167</sup> R. Brown "Dryden-Lee Collaboration", p.23; R. Brown, "Nathaniel Lee", p.118.

<sup>168</sup> Van Lennep, *Sources*, p.256.



closely upon Shakespeare's Richard the Third—who is either melodramatically evil or a particularised individuation depending upon whether one reads his character from a moral or psychological perspective. Unfortunately little is made of the possibilities introduced at the beginning of the third act. Tiresias remains enigmatic with regard to his coherence and motivation, the attempt to combine the incommensurate Sophoclean and Senecan figures resulting in a disingenuous character, in stark contrast to the admirable models on which he is based. All of the remaining characters of the play are reduced to the most basic, undifferentiated types who fail to elicit our continuing interest or affection. Whilst the tragedy was a stage success—the subject matter, and Lee's treatment of the affective possibilities of the myth, would have ensured this—it is to be regretted that the characters were not developed to their full potential. Lee in particular would have benefited from greater flexibility to demonstrate his characterological skill.

#### Conclusion.

Lee's development over the years 1677-8 sees the production of several efficacious representations, foreshadowing the most profound and innovative creations of the forthcoming period of his characterological development. It is punctuated by his first blockbuster in *The Rival Queens*, a tragedy that provides some characterological interest in the depictions of Alexander, Cassander and Roxana. This is succeeded by *Mithridates* which, whilst being ambivalent in its characterology, does produce three important contributions, including his first truly great characterisation. The period ends with *Oedipus*, Lee's first collaborative effort, which nevertheless demonstrates his artistry and innovation in accentuating the affective possibilities of the myth, and so turning the otherwise potentially staid depictions of Oedipus and Jocasta into effective, affective and substantively verisimilar figures.<sup>170</sup> This skill would be further demonstrated in the production of the sublime characters of his succeeding works.

Alexander effectively combines in equal measures the hero and tyrant types, and in so doing presents a figure that is more complex, ambiguous and interesting than the traditional, melodramatic despot. Lee also allows this character a modicum of self-discovery, an aspect elaborated in *Mithridates*, his next depiction of this type of character. Along with Alexander there is considerable characterological value in Cassander, Lee's first fully developed

<sup>169</sup> Richard Brown refers to Dryden imagining of Seneca's version that "this is what Oedipus must feel like" ("Dryden-Lee Collaboration", p.15). This aspect is what Lee repeatedly dramatises in not only this but all of his plays—his interest continues to be in dramatising the emotional state of an individual at a moment of crisis.

<sup>170</sup> Jocasta and the Oedipus of the final acts are the only characters of the play that can be said to be distinctively Leean, and so are the only two considered here.

unregenerate villain, and the prototype of his more sublime examples. This character's ongoing value lies in his multiform and legitimate motivation, and in his skill at manipulation, aspects which are repeated and accentuated in the later types. Roxana also provides a first for Lee, representing his inaugural example of a victimised villainess. Even more significant than the addition of another character to his arsenal, is the fact that she is presented as being corrupted into villainy, an innovative development for a type which descends from the mythical figures such as Medea, Clytemnestra, Procne and Philomela, who are all self-directed agents of retribution. However, like Statira, Roxana's interest is principally affective, and although both are presented with admirable realism, neither is presented with much complexity or conflict, which is to be especially regretted in the latter.

As suggested, Mithridates represents a progression on Lee's tradition of the aged despot, transcending Augustus and Alexander in being manipulated into vice and his downfall, in the extent and repetition of his internal conflicts, and in the emphasis placed upon his anagnorisis. He also holds the distinction of being Lee's most complete example of a tragic hero, and so is his first truly exceptional characterisation. Along with this regenerate figure, the play also provides excellent depictions of villainy in the figures of Pharnaces and Pelopidas. The former follows Cassander in his motivation, to which is added greater emphasis on being a saddened, unrequited lover who needs to be freed of his inhibitions by Pelopidas in order to act. Pelopidas himself represents a progression on the manipulative aspect of the prototype, and reflects Lee's steadily improving proficiency at portraying antagonists, peaking in his subsequent representation of Machiavel. As suggested above, the characters of *Oedipus* are all heroic types who provide little evidence of Lee's developing characterology, because he was limited to working within Dryden's typified structures, and so was unable to fully employ his characterological expertise. Nevertheless Lee does demonstrate his innovative dramaturgical skill by accentuating the affective possibilities of the myth, greatly enhancing the depictions of Oedipus and Jocasta.

This period of Leean characterology is notable for two other aspects. The first of these is the diminishing focus placed upon the heroines, with the female characters increasingly becoming of an affective value alone. Excepting Roxana, there are no Poppeas, Sophonisbas, Rosalindas, Glorianas or Julias to be found in this period. Statira, Parisatis, Semandra, Monima, Jocasta and Eurydice are all pristinely virtuous suffering heroines, who are affective, and occasionally psychologically realistic, but are nevertheless largely undifferentiated and interchangeable. They lack the complexity and ambiguity of Lee's earlier examples. The second aspect is the almost total absence of apsychological characters amongst the principal, secondary and major intermediary characters. These characters become less and less prevalent

as Lee places greater emphasis upon the internal conflicts and revelation of psyche in his principal figures.

Thematically Lee's interests have remained fairly consistent, and in line with audience appeal. His continuing focus in these plays has been upon the fall of a superlative hero because of his ungoverned passions and of the immoderate behaviour which causes tragedy. He once again introduces the familiar themes of frustrated love and the misuse of absolute power, and directs his attention to the characters and the ways in which different individuals respond to these common concerns. To this he adds an increasing interest in the manipulation of the protagonist (and others) into his or her vice, of the effect of corruption upon the mental state of the victim, and of the inevitable results of such manipulation. This interest had been tacitly suggested in *Nero*, although it had not been a major focus of that tragedy, but which has become an increasingly principal concern of the works of this period. It is in this concentration that Lee can be seen to be exercising a greater degree of thematic innovation than he has in the past. And it is his greater thematic concentration and innovation, as well as a continuing progression in his characterology, which mark his most sophisticated tragedies.

## Chapter Five. Characterological Sophistication: *Borgia to Brutus*.

*Cæsar Borgia*; Son of Pope Alexander the Sixth (by August 1679 for spring 1680).

While *The Massacre of Paris* is believed by many scholars to follow *Oedipus* around spring of 1679, this play will be considered in the next chapter, in relation to *The Duke of Guise* and *The Princess of Cleve*, with which it forms a triumvirate of plays concerning the Valois court and the political machinations of Catherine de Medici, the former two derived from the same historical source. Moreover, several scholars now believe that it was written early in 1681. The next play whose date is reasonably settled is *Cæsar Borgia*.

As with all of Lee's plays written in the years 1679 to 1681, the date when this tragedy was completed is a matter of debate. Nicoll and Ham suggest a date around September 1679, Langbaine and Genest 1680, and Stroup and Cooke the median (1679-80).<sup>1</sup> Nicoll's date derives from the mention of its publication in the *Term Catalogues* for Michaelmas 1679 (1.370); however, Van Lennep (supported by Hammond) argues that it was completed by late August. Melanie Rangno goes so far as to suggest that the play was written in the preceding spring.<sup>2</sup> Even the issue of how quickly the play was composed has aroused debate. Van Lennep and Stroup and Cooke suggest that Lee hurriedly wrote this play after the refusal of *Massacre*, whilst Hammond and Armistead argue that it could not possibly have been composed in haste.<sup>3</sup> I agree with the latter two on the basis of the play's characterological sophistication, which suggests carefully considered design and composition. The play is likely to have been offered for production before August 1679, but was probably refused a licence by the Lord Chamberlain, which delayed presentation until around spring of 1680 when it was performed by the Duke's Company at Dorset Garden.<sup>4</sup> Despite suggestions that it was unsuccessful, the revivals of the play suggest that it must have been popular, although obviously not to the same

<sup>1</sup> Nicoll, p.146; Ham, p.122; Langbaine, p.322; Genest, 1.277-8; Stroup and Cooke, *Works*, II.67. Most other critics opt for a generalised date of 1679 (cf. Beers, p.66; Hunt, p.172; Leach, p.85; Wong, p.86; Armistead, *Nathaniel Lee*, p.106).

<sup>2</sup> Van Lennep argues for a pre-September composition based on the fact that the epilogue refers to Father Lewis who was tried on 28 March 1679 and executed on 27 August. That he is referred to in the present tense suggests that the play was completed well before the latter date (*The London Stage*, 1.277). Rangno, whose thesis focuses intently upon this period of Lee's writing, cogently argues for a compositional date of early 1679 given that by summer the accusations of the Popish plot had begun to be seriously doubted even in the courts, which would have reduced the impact of an anti-Catholic polemic (pp.78-9, 94n.2).

<sup>3</sup> Van Lennep, *Sources*, pp.286, 381; Stroup and Cooke, *Works*, II.67; Hammond, p.576; Armistead, p.107.

<sup>4</sup> Genest, 1.277-8. The dedication to *Rome's Follies, or The Amorous Fryars* (1681) implies that there was some difficulty in getting *Borgia* performed.

extent as some of Lee's earlier efforts.<sup>5</sup> The principal historical sources for the play are Francesco Guicciardini's *Historia d'Italia* and, to a lesser degree, Tommaso Placido Tomasi's *Vita del Duca Valentino* (1655, translated into French in 1671) and Niccolò Machiavelli's so-called *Sinigallia Tract* (1502).<sup>6</sup> However, whilst these sources provided a general setting, the text which is most influential in terms of structure, theme and character is Shakespeare's *Othello*, just as Dryden's *Aureng-Zebe* had provided a similar foundation for *Mithridates*.

The character of Cæsar Borgia has been one of the most exciting discoveries of my study of Leean characterology. Whilst the play has attracted the usual criticism, especially with regard to its sensationalism, critics have generally praised Lee's portrayal of his protagonist. Allardyce Nicoll suggests that Lee has produced a rarity in Restoration tragedy—a complex character, Van Lennep sees a “decided evolution of character”, and Hasan a virile, complex character who transcends the typical heroic struggle between love and honour.<sup>7</sup> However, more recently, assessment of this character has been more ambivalent. Hunt argues that Valentinois is not actually psychologically complex but simply contradictory, that he is a wholly and consistently vicious character feigning virtue to achieve his malicious ends.<sup>8</sup> He suggests that Borgia is not actually corrupted into vice by Machiavel, and that his seeming virtue masks well-concealed policy and dubious motive. Leach also expresses concern over Borgia's motives, arguing that there is considerable doubt as to whether his nobility is real or assumed.<sup>9</sup> Rangno agrees, suggesting that the duke's passionate and political aspects remain so distinct that he is at odds with himself.<sup>10</sup> Most critical of all is the view shared by Hunt and Rangno that the play fails to exhibit the complexity of human experience, credible motive, or even a genuine sense of tragedy.<sup>11</sup> Clearly these are issues that require further consideration.

There is no doubt that Borgia, as presented by Lee, is infamous for cruelty, lust and incest, that he is inclined towards vice, and lacks any innate love of virtue. Yet it is equally

<sup>5</sup> Downes suggests that this play was especially popular with Betterton in the title role, and again during 1685-8 where it was a stock of the repertory at Drury Lane (p.52). Further revivals appeared at LIF on 8 June 1704 (Genest, II.310), at Haymarket on 11 January 1706 (II.347) and on 19 August 1707 (II.375), and Drury Lane on 3 January 1719 (II.639). The publication of the play (in 1696 and 1711) suggests at least two further revivals.

<sup>6</sup> Guicciardini's history was published in 1561 and translated into English by Geoffrey Fenton as “Historie of Guicciardin”, 1568 (reprinted 1577, 1579, 1599 and 1618), by W. Traheron as “Civill considerations” in 1601, and by Sir Robert Dallington as “Aphorismes civill and militaire” in 1613 (reprinted 1629). Machiavelli's “Sinigallia Tract” was translated into English by Edward Dacres as part of *Nicholas Machiavel's Prince* in 1640.

<sup>7</sup> Nicoll, p.146; Van Lennep, *Sources*, p.381; Hasan, p.112. Others who share this impression include Ham, p.154; Stroup and Cooke (*Works*, II.13-4); Sutherland, p.73; and Loftis, *Revels*, p.271.

<sup>8</sup> Hunt, pp.206, 217-8. Derek Hughes shares Hunt's view that Borgia merely feigns his concession of Bellamira to Gandia (p.268).

<sup>9</sup> Leach, pp.91-2, 238.

<sup>10</sup> Rangno, p.92.

<sup>11</sup> Hunt, pp.205-6; Rangno, p.72. Hunt claims that the world of *Borgia* is even more polarised than that of *Nero*—the evil characters more evil and the good more virtuous (p.208). Rangno adds that the evil represented by Machiavel does not deepen the sense of tragedy, for it does not threaten human beings that exist in a real world (p.72).

clear that his intense love for Bellamira counterpoises his vicious tendencies and allows virtue to compete in him for psychic dominance. One of Borgia's fundamental traits is his chronic love melancholia, an aspect of his character revealed before he appears on stage (1.1.227), and which is illustrated at considerable length from that moment. His opening lines (1.1.417ff) are those of a conventional unrequited melancholy lover (the saddened lover type), who is genuinely distraught that Bellamira has rejected his advances.<sup>12</sup> Significantly, he tells us that he loves Bellamira because she reminds him of Charlotta, a woman who had publicly scorned him in favour of another.<sup>13</sup> This affects his behaviour towards Bellamira, making him apprehensive, distrustful and susceptible to belief in her infidelity. In exposing his “tender glory” to her, he leaves himself particularly vulnerable to a repetition of his experience with Charlotta. Bellamira's violation of that trust spurs him to brutal retribution precisely because of his emotional frailty and the inflated magnitude of the violation. We also discover that he has been raised a soldier and not a courtier, another similarity with his characterological forebear Othello (1.1.540-1).

From the moment that Machiavel convinces Borgia that Bellamira's aversion for him is feigned (1.1.539ff), the duke's mental state changes from melancholia to child-like ecstasy (1.1.557ff) then to malicious intent (1.1.595ff), all at the instigation of a puppeteer who, having convinced him to fight for her affections, then implants the idea that he should conquer through violent means if necessary (1.1.589ff). It is evident even at this early stage that Machiavel's influence over Borgia is absolute. This is of particular significance when determining whether Borgia's surrender of Bellamira to his brother Palante is genuine or feigned, and in regard to those other occasions in the middle acts when he appears to be acting virtuously. When separated from Machiavel's influence, Borgia is capable of virtue, nobility and heroism, but whenever the advisor reappears he quickly redirects Borgia towards vice. When Machiavel arrives following Borgia's yielding of Bellamira to Palante (at 2.1.172ff), he realises (and admits in an aside at 2.1.235) that something has gone amiss.<sup>14</sup> This is followed by a

<sup>12</sup> Although Borgia does reveal his intention to kill Bellamira's father and his supporters amidst his melancholic state, their deaths are a political necessity, and so his capacity for murder does not compromise his capacity for virtue, heroism and nobility. One should also be aware that this decision has been influenced by Machiavel, who, we discover, has a profound effect upon his behaviour. It is true that homicide (or even contemplating this intention) is not generally the province of a melancholy lover, yet Borgia is unique, as shall be further demonstrated.

<sup>13</sup> 1.1.515-6, 531-2, 566, 591-2. Leach claims that Borgia was more (rationally) concerned with the damage to his reputation over Charlotta's rejection rather than (emotionally) distressed at the loss of a wife (p.93). However the introduction of this motif is intended to highlight his sensitive emotional state, and so help to explain his motivation.

<sup>14</sup> Machiavel does not yet know who the rival is (he finds out at 2.1.272, and is genuinely surprised) but does suspect from the evident change in Borgia's demeanour that he is no longer the same effervescent individual whom he had left at the end of the first act.

resurgence of Borgia's melancholia, which Machiavel is compelled to redress.<sup>15</sup> Borgia's announcement at 2.1.237ff that he intends to return to his previous life as a soldier strikes one as genuine. The desire to forget his hapless endeavours in love for once and all, by returning to a martial environment which is familiar and comfortable, is typical of an unrequited lover who has accepted defeat with resignation. There is nothing in this speech, or in the actions leading to it, to suggest that he is being, or has been, disingenuous.

Much of the argument for a feigned concession rests upon Borgia's claim that he "seem'd at all appearance / Mild and relenting" (2.1.190-2) and his subsequent repetition of this assertion. Yet these statements strike me as apologetic. It is the vehement censure of Machiavel, and that alone, that causes Borgia to attempt to justify his behaviour by claiming that he was being disingenuous. Having started down this path, Borgia progressively elaborates his excuse so as to convince Machiavel of his sincerity and so placate him. For instance, Borgia claims that he took no action to murder his brother because of his father's command against fratricide (2.1.312ff), yet this excuse is spurious at best. Borgia need not have killed, or even fought, Palante—he simply could have enforced his prerogative.<sup>16</sup> By ordering the marriage concluded, Borgia would have succeeded without the need to do anything untoward. What is beyond doubt, however, is that the more Borgia claims to have feigned his concession of Bellamira to Palante, the more he comes to believe it. Thus, by 2.1.310, Borgia's state has reverted to his normative (pre-melancholic) position—as it was at the end of the first act, before the discovery of the love of Bellamira and Palante—that he will obtain her at any cost. Yet, even after this profession, Borgia still manages to act nobly by offering combat to his brother, willing to relinquish all to him if he lose, but that Palante must see and speak to her no more if Borgia should prevail.<sup>17</sup> He even attempts to stop the confrontation after having injured Palante, and again after having disarmed him, when he simply could have killed him, as a villain probably would have done. Further, he offers to compensate Palante for the loss of Bellamira with his fortune after Palante quits Rome (3.1.196-7). He has no reason to do so, but does out of a strong (if not always ascendant) sense of virtue which emerges without effort in the absence of Machiavel.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>15</sup> 2.1.237ff represents Borgia's second circumstantial change in personality state to that of a saddened lover type. This change is effected distypically, that is the change is a physical one which occurs after the event, rather than being experienced during the event through interiority.

<sup>16</sup> It is important to remember that Bellamira and Palante had already accepted their separation, and Borgia is aware of this. Notably the duke only gives this particular excuse after Machiavel has brought this idea to his attention.

<sup>17</sup> 3.1.167ff. Valentinois also fights out of a misguided belief (more of a hope really) that to see him bleed will cause Bellamira to fall in love with him. This behaviour is more in tune with a desperate lover than with a villain.

<sup>18</sup> Palante even admits that Borgia has acted with nobility and generosity (3.1.216-7).

His marriage to Bellamira leads Borgia to rediscover his ecstatic demeanour, evident when he next appears at 3.1.340ff.<sup>19</sup> This happiness seems to remove any thoughts of ignoble actions, and it is only his further manipulation by Machiavel which turns that happiness into doubt, then anger, when he is subtly led to believe that Bellamira is unfaithful (3.1.357ff). And yet, having discovered Bellamira and Palante together at 3.1.459ff, and being well within his right to be incensed (especially given his preceding magnanimity), he again offers to relinquish her to Palante if he would but end Borgia's life (3.1.509ff). When at 3.1.532ff Bellamira offers her unconditional love whilst professing the innocence of the meeting, Borgia once again regains his tranquillity. With it comes a sudden and immediate change in demeanour from his melancholy state back to an harmonious one.<sup>20</sup> Borgia's balanced state continues throughout the early part of the fourth act until Machiavel again arouses suspicion of her fidelity. This restores Borgia to the prince of his making, for the duke had progressively become less like the man whom Machiavel considered to be his second self. The insecurity, jealousy and suspicion of womankind engendered by Borgia's experience with Charlotta make it easy for his advisor to prey upon him, as he does at 4.1.55ff. Once again it is solely and wholly the influence of Machiavel that undermines Borgia's harmony. This is done with a confidence born of a thorough understanding of Valentinois' greatest fear and weakness.

Once given over to his doubt Borgia again plunges into vice, threatening all manner of violence upon Adorna to force her to provide evidence of Bellamira's treachery (4.1.170ff). From this moment onwards (4.1.93ff), Borgia is beyond redemption—like Othello he is helplessly driven by his suspicions. Yet even now Borgia's tears (4.1.240-1) reveal that it is pain and not indignation which drives him to action, despite his spurious claim to the contrary.<sup>21</sup> He is not an embittered and violent cuckold but a melancholy lover who feels compelled to bring an end to his suffering lest it end him. This means ending the lives of the recalcitrant lovers. Significantly, despite Machiavel's every endeavour to erase Borgia's passion for Bellamira, he continues to dote on her even after she is strangled, to the extent that he intends to resuscitate her (5.1.199bff). However, the suggestion that if revived she would invariably re-offend puts an end to all thought of resurrection.<sup>22</sup>

Borgia repents his actions at 5.1.224ff when he realises the part which Machiavel has played in his overthrow. This passage warrants quotation in full:

I say, my Lord [Machiavel], your policy is out:  
Furies and Hell! how should you judge of Love,

<sup>19</sup> Remembering that his virtue has remained in the ascendant since his offer to his brother.

<sup>20</sup> This balanced state is contrasted with the jealousy which Borgia admits had "made sick my Brain" (3.1.558).

<sup>21</sup> Borgia claims that his tears are of vengeance and anger, but once again his assertion has a suggestion of being an excuse to avoid further censure by Machiavel.

<sup>22</sup> This is an idea drawn directly from Othello's soliloquy at 5.2.1ff.



That never lov'd? Thou hast no taste of Love,  
 No sense; no relish—why did I trust thee then?  
 Had any softness dwelt in that lean bosom,  
 My Bellamira now had been alive:  
 Tho I had cause to kill her, thou hadst none;  
 To set me on, but honour; jealous honour!  
 Oh the last night! I tell thee, Pollititan!  
 When I run o're the vast delight, I curse thee,  
 And curse my self; nay wish I had been found  
 Dead in her armes; But take her, bear her hence:  
 And thou lov'st me, drive her from my Memory.  
 Tell me my Brothers Murder is discovered;  
 That the four Ghosts are up again in arms:  
 Say any thing to make me mad, and lose  
 This Melancholly, which will else destroy me (5.1.224-40).

Borgia's anagnorisis recalls that of Mithridates and Oedipus, and continues Lee's recent interest in this aspect of character.

Yet for all his new self-awareness, Borgia's attention is rapidly diverted to political matters. Unsurprisingly even this is significant, consistent and intentional. It is, as Machiavel admits, an expression of Borgia's unbalanced state that he now oscillates from grief to indifference with alarming speed (5.1.248-9). He rapidly changes from thoughts of war (5.1.250-2) to thoughts of Bellamira, at the mere mention of the word "women" (5.1.256ff). By the start of 5.3 Machiavel has finally achieved his objective of turning Borgia into an emotionless tyrant, yet ironically he does not like what he has created.<sup>23</sup> That the duke expresses complete indifference at his impending death (after being poisoned), reflects his madness as much as his loss of interest in life without Bellamira (5.3.236bff). In contrast, Machiavel's professed concern over recent events (5.3.242ff) suggests he regrets his actions, belatedly realising that the emotionless ruler may be good in theory but becomes a monster in practice. Borgia's indifference to the sight of his blinded son, in direct contrast to Machiavel's horror at this vision, is a case in point (5.3.246bff). It is only after his son speaks that Borgia is briefly raised from his lethargy and appalled by what he sees. Yet such moments of clarity are few after Bellamira's death, which makes them particularly poignant and all the more pitiable. His insane ranting at the end of the play (5.3.278ff) may seem to be the effect of the poison he has ingested but this is merely an extension of the imbalance caused by the repeated oscillation between a harmonious and disharmonious state. When this conflict is resolved it is achieved at a permanent cost to his sanity, something evident (to Machiavel's consternation) since that morning.

<sup>23</sup> This is matched by pangs of guilt in Machiavel as he experiences nightmarish visions of Borgia dead.

Borgia is a victim both of "resistless Love" (3.1.381) and the repeated and intense manipulation of Machiavel. He combines his "Mother[']s softness" (virtue) and his father's fury (vice) (3.1.438-40), his virtue appearing when contented (especially with regard to his love) and distanced from Machiavel, his vice ascending when enraged, and under the influence of his counsellor. There is therefore little textual evidence to support the idea that Borgia merely feigns virtue, and is at heart a wholly vicious character. Borgia is most assuredly not acting viciously at 2.1.172ff or 3.1.459ff, but exactly like a melancholy lover. Especially in the latter scene, Borgia is not acting in a manner commensurate with a subtle and deliberate villain—he even possesses traits of the 'rival friend' type who offers to die in order to give his competitor unfettered access to his beloved.<sup>24</sup> Lee does not present a villain acting surreptitiously to defeat an enemy but a hero of nobility and virtue who openly faces his opponent and tries to win fairly, candidly and without the slightest taint of villainy. His suffering is poignant, affective, effective and substantively verisimilar. One sympathises with his plight and his attempt to resolve it with honour and dignity. He never once resorts to ignoble or underhanded tactics, which is both commendable and admirable. He does murder his political rivals (which is, incidentally, only effected once he becomes insane) and the lovers (a crime of passion), which are the acts of a villain. Yet his crimes are mitigated by the anguish he has endured, and the manipulation he has undergone. In the absence of his voice of vice, Borgia invariably acts with virtue, as a disciplined and honourable soldier, raised away from the corruption of the court, would normally (and conventionally) act. Although Rangno maintains that Borgia is too dependent upon Machiavel to achieve a tragic stature,<sup>25</sup> the duke is presented with considerable autonomy and opportunity to deliberate over his actions, and in acting becomes tragically responsible. In this he is no more reliant on Machiavel than Othello is on Iago—both are manipulated but both are culpable.

There is little doubt that Borgia is, and was intended to be, the tragic protagonist of the play. He fulfills all of the Aristotelian tenets of the category—being the good but flawed figure,<sup>26</sup> whose erroneous choice causes proairesis, suffering, anagnorisis and thanatos, and

<sup>24</sup> This is Stroup's classification for the traditional heroic character who is the unrequited rival of a friend or brother. This figure is faced with a classic love and honour conflict, and generously relinquishes his interest in the heroine, illustrating the strength of his friendship, and triumph over his passion. He often chooses to escape his torment through his own death. Lee most obvious examples of rival friends are Theodosius and Varanes, but Borgia and Palante are also of this foundation.

<sup>25</sup> Rangno, p. 61.

<sup>26</sup> The duke's hamartia is his absolute trust in his betrayer, far more than his susceptibility to jealousy or passion, which is manipulated beyond the bounds of human endurance. Othello is actually more susceptible to jealousy, and does not question his manipulator to anywhere near the same extent as Borgia. Although the moor does request proof, that which he receives is at best inconclusive but is accepted as veracious. He never once discovers Desdemona with another man (other than in public with a chaperon), whereas Borgia does on three separate occasions, and the duke is willing to accept Bellamira's explanation on the first of these. Further, Bellamira has admitted to loving another on numerous occasions in both word and demeanour, yet Desdemona never once

whose situation evokes the necessary catharsis. It is only his lack of remorse that prevents him from becoming a tragic hero, his status remaining that of an ambivalent tragic villain. As Stroup and Cooke suggest, the representation of Borgia shows a progression upon the characterological artistry of Mithridates.<sup>27</sup> Once again Lee has demonstrated his considerable talent in producing a character that is effective, affective and atypical, psychologically complex, heterogeneous and substantively verisimilar. Borgia's tale is as much about the brutal psychopathological effects of jealousy and love melancholia on the individual, as it is about his manipulation by a corrupt counsellor. He is to be pitied for his situation, admired for his repressed but constantly reviving nobility, and not reviled as a villain. Borgia's actions are merely the end product of trials and tribulations that would test the resolve of the most virtuous of men. Susceptibility to manipulation is his principal aspect—he can certainly be driven to vice but is also capable of virtue, nobility, heroism and love. It is ironic that, as Borgia tells Bellamira, kindled by love and ambition he would have swept through Italy (4.1.342-3) and effected the very sort of rule that Machiavel wished for him, yet, throughout, his counsellor had assumed love to be an impediment to the manifestation of this very ambition.<sup>28</sup>

Criticism of Machiavel centres around a belief that he is melodramatically evil, and his contrition disingenuous. Hasan suggests that his remorse is nothing more than a sagacious attempt to obtain leniency; Tucker that he is only an agent of action, and not a 'character' at all, because totally devoid of internal dimension; and Rangno that he lacks autonomy, is constructed on abstract principles of evil, and is thoroughly impenitent.<sup>29</sup> These views seem to be based upon the assumption that, because this character is a representation of Niccolò Machiavelli, he must therefore personify the textbook machiavellian, and be consistent with the common perception of that statesman in the seventeenth century. However, signs in the text

intimates to Othello that there is a rival for her affections, either in the present or past, and so the suggestion of her infidelity should be much more difficult to believe, and require significantly greater evidence.

<sup>27</sup> Stroup and Cooke, *Works*, I.13-4. The entire play is a characterological advance on *Mithridates* because of the greater focus on fewer characters, and because both the principals are complex atypical figures, unlike the earlier play which suffers from the typified portrait of Ziphare.

<sup>28</sup> Structurally the prince is substantially atypical, a responder, minimally stylised, medially and whole, minimally symbolic, medially accessible (substantial complexity and transparency), and conventional (medial in his societal as duke, and substantial in his functional roles of saddened lover and victimised villain) and achieves substantial anagnorisis. Borgia is allocated over thirty-five percent of the dialogue, in contrast to Nero (around twenty percent), Massinissa (twenty-six), Caesario and Alexander (both twenty-eight), Ziphare (twenty-six), Oedipus (thirty-three), Varanes (twenty-two), Brutus (thirty-two), Guise (in *Massacre*—twenty-two, in *Guise*—twenty), Nemours (twenty-four) and Constantine (twenty-eight), making him the most centralised character that Lee creates. Further the shares of Machiavel (around 25%) and Bellamira (almost 10%) make this play essentially a 'three-hander', with little focus provided to any other character above the most peripheral and general. Borgia is medially derivative—Lee deviates from the historical duke who was notoriously cruel, incestuous and devoid of morality. His character's descent from Othello is significantly more evident than is his similarity to the historical figure.

<sup>29</sup> Hasan, pp.112-3; Tucker, p.43; Rangno, pp.73, 79. Other sceptics include Stroup (*Type-characters*, p.342), Armistead ("Borgia", p.169) and Kewes (p.371). Only Leach and Hammond have accepted his contrition to be genuine and consistent with the structure of the work (Leach, p.91; Hammond, "Greatest Action", p.180).

intimate that this is not the case, that he is more multi-dimensional than is assumed, and that his contrition is genuine, if somewhat surprising. It is true that Machiavel is an Italianate villain in imitation of Iago, and draws upon Lee's earlier calculating and diabolical villain types, yet he also recalls the regenerate villain (cum-tragic hero) in his sincere remorse.

From the outset Machiavel is revealed to be the true power in the state. His first speech reveals that he has designed the destruction of Bellamira, her family and supporters because they pose a threat to the installation of Borgia as a tyrant on the ancient-Roman model (1.1.75ff). Palante is condemned to death because he is a rival to Borgia in the affection of the Roman people, the Pope and his sister Lucrece, who influences the Pope (1.1.258ff). Evidently it is Machiavel who dictates state policy and not Valentinois, regardless of the duke's misguided assumptions to the contrary. It is out of ambition, and not affection, that Machiavel elevates Borgia—because of the duke's fitness to rule he is chosen for elevation,<sup>30</sup> and because he is Machiavel's "second self".<sup>31</sup> He intends to mould the duke into an ambitious despot devoid of emotion and compassion. To this end he incites Borgia to reject pusillanimous rule and uxorious love. So whilst he appears to support, even advocate, the marriage of Bellamira to Borgia, he views her as an impediment to ambition and permits the marriage purely to eradicate the duke's desire by satisfying it.<sup>32</sup> It is also the most expedient means to ensure that Borgia eventually effects a complete and irrevocable emotional divorce from her. For this reason Machiavel explains away Bellamira's aversion for Borgia (1.1.542ff), anticipating that it will render her 'betrayal' all the more poignant, and so greatly enhance the duke's animosity towards her and all womankind. The counsellor's machinations extend to convincing Bellamira to visit the supposedly dying Palante and, having engineered the rendezvous, then informing Borgia of his suspicions of a tryst between them. His subtle revelation of this information is comparable with Iago to Othello, and Pelopidas to Mithridates.<sup>33</sup> The phrase "I am satisfied" rivals Iago's "indeed" as one of the most powerfully undertoned statements in English drama.

Yet despite Machiavel's evident diabolical pleasure in his machinations,<sup>34</sup> and the extent to which he manipulates all those around him, he is not wholly reprehensible.<sup>35</sup> His

<sup>30</sup> In this Machiavel refers to Borgia's ancestry, including the fact that he is the illegitimate (but acknowledged) son of a priest (now Pope Alexander VI) and (possibly) a nun.

<sup>31</sup> In effect Machiavel vicariously elevates himself through another of his kind—he cannot rule himself so he serves as the power behind one who can.

<sup>32</sup> Machiavel shares the psychopathological belief that desire can be eradicated simply by copulating with the object of that desire.

<sup>33</sup> Like his predecessors, Machiavel is a master in the psychology of suggestion, and of traducing the virtue of those he wishes to destroy.

<sup>34</sup> This is repeatedly admitted—3.1.60b-3, 3.1.241ff, 4.1.304-5 and 5.1.40ff.

<sup>35</sup> Very early on Machiavel reveals an intense revulsion for personal vice (as opposed to vicious actions committed for political expediency), being disgusted with Borgia's incestuous relationship with Lucrece, and himself rejecting Sforza's offer of the Indian boys—demonstrating his revulsion from sodomy. Thus he is presented as not wholly repugnant, when it would have been easy for Lee to make him so.

regret in the final lines of the play is illustrated to be genuine because it has been foreshadowed, and gradually developed until his enunciation of the moral. His contrition tacitly begins as early as 5.1.117ff, and comes to the fore at the beginning of 5.3 with an admission that he has been experiencing nightmarish visions of Borgia's death (5.3.31ff). Images of this nature are traditionally the province of a figure experiencing doubt over his or her actions. This doubt is increased by the unaffected shock he experiences at seeing the mutilated Seraphino, by his professed horror at the carnage of that morning, and at Borgia's insanity.<sup>36</sup> Machiavel's most poignant admission occurs at 5.3.242ff when he states that

I must confess my mind, by what I saw  
This morning, and by what has happen'd since,  
Is deeply shockt, even from her own Foundation.<sup>37</sup>

The significance of this statement to his burgeoning regret cannot be underestimated. Despite Hasan's contention, there is nothing in Machiavel's final speech at 5.3.360-72 to suggest he is attempting to justify his actions for the sole purpose of escaping punishment. No amount of mitigation could save him from retribution following this carnage.<sup>38</sup> There is a frankness in the resignation and finality of his resolution ("as my *last Judgment*"—italics mine) that "No Power is safe, nor no Religion good, / Whose Principles of growth are laid in Blood". His contrition comes about partly because of the shock at the chaos he has created, and partly in the belated realisation that emotionless rule is sound in theory but fundamentally flawed in practice. He has patently failed to understand the power of love, and the potential result of a violent disintegration of such love—in this instance creating an insane monster totally unlike the ideal Roman tyrant which he had envisaged.

There is a prevailing critical misconception that Machiavel is nothing but a Carolean echo of a Jacobean 'Italianate' villain,<sup>39</sup> and a conventional (negative) image of the historical figure.<sup>40</sup> Or as Dobrée puts it, Machiavel is "the most machiavellian Machiavelli ever

<sup>36</sup> It is true that he is undeterred by the murders of the Orsini *et alia*, but these are political necessities which should be considered as distinct from the murders of Bellamira and Palante, the mutilation of Seraphino and the insanity of Borgia, all of which touch Machiavel on a personal level despite his own attempts to govern devoid of emotion.

<sup>37</sup> The events of the morning refer to the murders of Bellamira and Palante, witnessed by Machiavel at 5.1.116ff, and of Borgia's burgeoning insanity at that time.

<sup>38</sup> It strikes me as being absolutely illogical for Machiavel to go to such incredible lengths to create an emotionless tyrant out of Borgia, and then express horror at the result, if one is simply being disingenuous!

<sup>39</sup> Stroup, *Type-characters*, p. 342; Hasan, pp. 128, 450; Hunt, p. 215; Rangno, pp. 71, 79. To Sanders Machiavel is not even a commendable example of the type, describing him as an "Elizabethan villain of the second flight" (p. 501).

<sup>40</sup> Tucker, p. 43; Rangno, pp. 74, 79. To even refer to a conventional image of Machiavelli in the period is hazardous, given that opinion tended to be divided over many famous figures (Augustus, Alexander and Julius Caesar to name but a few), and no one position received unconditional support. For a consideration of the disparate views of Machiavelli in the period, see Felix Raab's *The English Face of Machiavelli: A Changing Interpretation, 1500-1700* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964).

drawn".<sup>41</sup> Yet these assumptions fail to appreciate Lee's complication of the type foundation. It is true that the 'calculating' and 'diabolical' villain types serve as the basis for Machiavel, and are necessary to his role as the functional agent of the action, yet the character ultimately transcends the foundation in his moral development. He is a progression and outgrowth of the type, differing from his villainous predecessors, including Iago, in that he genuinely attempts to serve the interests of his master, albeit in a misguided manner.<sup>42</sup> He does not intend to cause anarchy: this is an inadvertent result of an erroneous approach to king-making. That he suffers a catastrophic reversal of intention (*peripeteia*), and experiences authentic remorse and rehabilitation, contributes to a character that possesses many of the attributes of the Aristotelian tragic hero, of which he becomes a lesser example. As had been the case with Nero, the complication is subtle but evident.<sup>43</sup> To suggest that Machiavel is barren of complexity and his recantation unconvincing,<sup>44</sup> or that he is at best ambiguous,<sup>45</sup> is to ignore the evidence to the contrary. Machiavel's rehabilitation does not make him inconsistent or disingenuous, it makes him human, a design that informs most of Lee's creations.<sup>46</sup>

The remaining characters are stereotypes or satirised caricatures. Just as Borgia recalls Othello, and Machiavel Iago, Bellamira recalls Desdemona; Lee's character following Shakespeare's in terms of her function, but differing in specific details. Like her forebear, Bellamira is a pristinely virtuous heroine, murdered by her husband because of his suspicions of her infidelity. But unlike that figure, Lee's character is forced into a loveless marriage by an ambitious father, displaying considerable strength of spirit and defiance in attending her wedding in mourning dress, and courage in defending Palante and her own honour at 3.1.464ff. Yet she does reveal her imprudence and naive lack of knowledge of court intrigue in choosing to visit Palante after being warned of the dire consequences of such an action. For, unlike her forebear, Bellamira is truly in love with another man, and so inadvertently contributes to her own destruction. Despite Hunt's suggestion to the contrary, she plays no *conscious* part in her downfall, but does contribute to it through her continual disobedience of Borgia's command.<sup>47</sup> Here she differs from the wholly innocent Desdemona who does nothing at all to implicate

<sup>41</sup> Dobrée, p. 119.

<sup>42</sup> Leach notes that whereas the murder of Desdemona is the climax of Iago's scheming, the removal of Bellamira is for Machiavel only part of his design (p. 86). Hammond adds that Machiavel is not motivated by the same selfishness that characterises Iago, Edmund and de Flores (*Development*, p. 575).

<sup>43</sup> After all, Machiavel is not the protagonist (and subject) of the tragedy, but a figure whose principal function in the text is to act as the agent of the action. A potent foundation is necessary to this aim. His progression out of that foundation is a secondary concern, and could not be attended at as great a length as the complication of Borgia, and not until after the action is well established, without detracting from that focus.

<sup>44</sup> Rangno, p. 79.

<sup>45</sup> Tucker, p. 49.

<sup>46</sup> Machiavel is a lesser distype who is a provocator, modestly stylised, medially coherent, whole, symbolic and accessible (modest complexity and maximal transparency), substantially derivative, medially conventional (medial in both his societal role as consigliere, and in his functional role as antagonist) and in his anagnorisis.



herself in guilt, except for losing a handkerchief. Bellamira's one individuating feature is her strength of character, yet this does not prevent her from being an essentially uninteresting stereotype. It is certainly excessively appreciative to suggest, as does Hasan, that Bellamira is entitled to be included in the rank of the best heroines of the Restoration.<sup>48</sup>

In contrast, Cardinal Ascanio Sforza's interest lies in the fact that he is Lee's first foray into satirical caricature. From the outset he is depicted as the epitome of the Roman Catholic hierarchy as it was imagined in Protestant England. The first half of the opening act (to line 384) is included principally for the purpose of satirising his (and, by extension, the Church's) behaviour. He is demonstrated to be guilty of every conceivable sin—particularly the seven cardinal ones. He is inane, illiterate, foppish and vain (wearing cosmetics and behaving narcissistically), a venal simonist (having bought his Cardinalate) who is violent and cruel, selfish and ambitious, greedy and covetous, misogynistic, lecherous and sexually depraved—a syphilitic bisexual with a penchant for pederasty—in short an “effeminate Villain” (1.1.13ff). He reduces all human relations to the material and carnal. Yet for all this he is, as Hunt notes, wholly superfluous to the action of the play, functioning in the same way as Antonio in *Venice Preserv'd*—establishing and reinforcing our impression of the corruption that governs the world of the play.<sup>49</sup> Lee makes no attempt whatsoever to individuate this caricature, who merely serves to ridicule the Catholic priesthood to an audience incited by the Popish plot. Nevertheless he is interesting from a characterological perspective.

The remaining characters of the play are barely worth attention. Palante is a typical melancholy lover of the pathetic type—requited in his love but losing Bellamira to his rival—and is yet another victim of machiavellian machination. His *raison d'être*, like that of Bellamira, is to suffer and elicit sympathy. Her father, Paul Orsino, is venal, senile, passionate, intolerant, violent and ambitious. He sells his daughter to Borgia for political advantage, despite being aware of the duke's vicious nature. He is contrasted with his associates, Vitellozzo, Ange and Adrian, who all wisely counsel against the marriage because of suspected treachery. He ignores their advice at his, theirs and his daughter's peril. Adorna is a victimised villainess, recalling Lee's own Roxana, except that her forebear's affections were at one time requited. She acts wickedly out of a desperate hope that Machiavel will help her to win Palante, rather than out of revenge, or out of hatred for her rival. Alonzo, the supposed disciple of Machiavel, is an incoherent figure who unsuccessfully attempts to combine two wholly different types of character. Like Bosola in Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*, he is a malcontent

<sup>47</sup> Hunt, p.209.

<sup>48</sup> Hasan, p.111.

who despises the duplicitous political society in which he lives and in which his employers thrive, whilst orphans, widows and soldiers are disaffected and disenfranchised (1.1.164bff). Yet he is also a mercenary assassin who hypocritically accepts Sforza's blood money to mutilate Seraphino, and so actively endorses the society that he criticises. This is one of Lee's few truly ineffective characterisations. The remaining characters are too briefly characterised to warrant consideration.

*Cesar Borgia* reiterates several motifs common to Lee's drama, the first being that morality must not be sacrificed to abstract principles like ambition, policy or religion, especially when those principles are immoral and inhumane. It is also his first play to overtly emphasise that immoderate behaviour leads to tragedy, an issue that is considered at greater length in *Theodosius* where one character's mastery of his excessive behaviour—leading to a satisfactory conclusion—is contrasted with the inability of another to overcome his hyperbole, resulting in his tragedy. Most significantly, *Borgia* is a psychopathological study of jealousy. Despite the extent to which the historical sources are felt to contribute to the structure of the play, Guiccardini's history, and similar accounts, do little more than provide a general setting and some expository data for a reworking of Shakespeare's *Othello*. Not only does this tragedy provide a thematic foundation, but a basic characterological one as well—Borgia being founded on Othello, Machiavel on Iago, and more distantly Bellamira on Desdemona. However, Lee augments the Shakespearean patterns to suit his own characterological interests. He amplifies the Othello foundation by increasing the extent to which Borgia is manipulated into jealousy and vice, and the acute oscillation in personality state which he undergoes as a result, and by adding an intense love melancholia, augmented by an existing neurotic anxiety towards womankind, and a known (and preferred) rival for Bellamira's affections. This is further enhanced by the accent on his susceptibility to vice when under the absolute influence of Machiavel and his contrasting virtue when distanced from his mentor. No other Lecan character undergoes such suffering, manipulated victimisation, or fluctuation in his or her personality states. These aspects result in a character that is worthy of comparison with his Shakespearean model. So too is Machiavel, who is more fully individuated than his literary ancestor. Whereas Iago is presented as a melodramatically unregenerate villain throughout, Lee ameliorates the foundation by providing his character with contrition, anagnorisis and rehabilitation to create a villain-cum-hero. Although I would not go as far as Hammond and suggest that Machiavel is more complex than Borgia,<sup>50</sup> he is nevertheless a near equal. This

<sup>49</sup> Hunt, pp.206-7. Hammond cogently adds that he symbolically represents that which Machiavel and Borgia oppose, and is the reason why Machiavel perceives a need for potent government. Thus he indicates that Machiavel is at least partly in the right in his endeavours (*Development*, p.580).

<sup>50</sup> Hammond, *Development*, p.577.



results in a play which presents two profound representations that are not only worthy descendants of their Shakespearcan forebears, but even rival them in certain respects. At the very least they are the nearest Leean rivals to the grandeur of two of Shakespeare's finest characterisations.

*Theodosius*: or, *The Force of Love* (winter/spring for summer 1680).

After *The Rival Queens*, *Theodosius* was Lee's most successful stage production in terms of audience appeal. As with many of his later plays, the exact date of premiere is unrecorded and contentious. The appearance of the first quarto in Michaelmas term 1680 (1.418) has led many to suggest a premiere around September or October of that year.<sup>51</sup> More recently, Robert Hume's analysis of Lee's writing and production schedule during this period suggests that the play was probably written in the early months of the year, making for a possible production in early summer.<sup>52</sup> It was an enduring success and a stock of the repertory, regularly revived until 1707 and around once a year from 1717 until the end of the century,<sup>53</sup> and was published thirteen times between 1680 and 1782.<sup>54</sup> Downes stresses the popularity of the play with the noblewomen (p.38), and Lee concedes as much in the dedication to the king's mistress Frances Stewart, Duchess of Richmond. As Langhaine notes (p.327), the principal source is La Calprenède's *Pharamond* (1661), translated by John Phillips in 1677. The love-triangle between Varanes, Athenais and Theodosius is drawn from "The History of Varanez Prince of Persia" in Part One of the romance, and follows that chapter fairly closely. The second plot, pertaining to Marcian and Pulcheria, derives from "The History of Martian" in Part Two, although Lee is less specifically influenced by it. None of the dramatic predecessors – Philip Massinger's *The Emperor of the East* (1631), Jean de Mairet's *L'Athenais* (1642) and Pierre Corneille's *Pulcherie* (1672) amongst others, seems to have been of particular influence.<sup>55</sup>

*Theodosius* was not only one of Lee's most popular plays, but also one of his most critically admired—Nicoll's conclusion that *Theodosius* and *Lucius Junius Brutus* are his best

<sup>51</sup> Nicoll, *Restoration Drama*, pp.146-7, Hammond, p.588, Ham, p.147. Richard Brown (in Backscheider, p.120) suggests late summer/early autumn, Hunt opting for the latter date (p.224).

<sup>52</sup> Hume, "Satiric Design", p.120. This position was first suggested by Van Lennep (*Sources*, p.406) and is shared by Huneycutt (p.193). Based on Massinger's probable composition date of either late 1679 or early 1681, *Theodosius* is felt to have been composed early in 1680. This would also allow time for *Lucius Junius Brutus* to have been researched, composed, rehearsed and produced by the first week of December.

<sup>53</sup> There have been over seventy recorded performances of this play in Great Britain and America.

<sup>54</sup> The play was reprinted Hillary term 1684/5 (II.118), 1692, 1697, 1708, 1719, 1739, 1744, 1746, 1774, 1776, 1777 and 1782.

<sup>55</sup> Beers notes that Massinger's play suggested an idea for *Theodosius*, where Philanax and others criticise Theodosius for his inefficiency as a ruler, not because of inability but because of indifference, and chide him for allowing Pulcheria to govern in his stead (p.207). This is, however, the extent of the indebtedness.

works is fairly representative of twentieth-century opinion.<sup>56</sup> Structurally it presents a dual plot, rather than a principal and interrelated secondary line of action. Despite the implication of the title that the action is to centre on the ruler of Rome's Eastern empire, Theodosius is himself little more than a functional intermediary. The central interests of the drama are the force (power) of love, the development of Varanes from an ignoble libertine to an ethereal lover (and the related love and honour conflict endured by Athenais), and the parallel evolution of Marcian, at the instigation of Pulcheria, from a hypercritical, undiplomatic and unaffectionate soldier into an ideal lover and statesman. All except the last of these characters receive greater textual attention than the emperor. His role is to serve as a link between the two independent, but paralleled lines of action. Nor is this play *Theodosius'* tragedy: despite the fact that the woman he loves kills herself for love of another, the emperor survives the play. Rather it is the tragedy of Varanes' imperfect love and Athenais' insoluble problem.

From the outset Varanes is represented as the very antithesis of the Roman emperor. The Persian prince is described as, and reveals himself to be, a libertine who is choleric, temperamental,<sup>57</sup> passionate, imprudent, rash, haughty and arrogant (1.1.74),<sup>58</sup> self-interested, ambitious and proud,<sup>59</sup> foolish and insincere, impious,<sup>60</sup> unsophisticated,<sup>61</sup> and masculine (in contrast to Theodosius' professed effeminacy). The ruling aspects of his character are his elitism and egotism. The first is demonstrated from the moment that he appears onstage, in his disparaging reference to Leontine as "a poor Philosopher", and to Athenais as his "Heiress" (1.1.106). This is a particularly poignant description of his former tutor, a man whom the prince claims to admire, and to the daughter whom he professes to love—his passion for her having been established before he appears (1.1.74ff). It sets the tone for his derogatory references to her plebeian descent, as well as demonstrating the distinctly sensual nature of his 'love'. It is also in marked contrast to the manner in which Theodosius treats Leontine and Athenais.<sup>62</sup> Throughout Varanes' suit to her, he behaves as if his ignoble offer is a compliment

<sup>56</sup> Nicoll, *Restoration Drama*, pp.146-7.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. 1.1.59, 377-8, 4.1.52.

<sup>58</sup> Two separate references to Varanes' "haughty Soul" (1.1.59 and 2.1.342) in the play attest to the preeminence of this aspect of his character.

<sup>59</sup> References to his ambition occur at 1.1.381 (his "dar'd Soul") and 3.1.378. Despite his claim to love "Glory" and Athenais above all other things (1.1.108), it is obviously an unequal relationship. His repeated allusions to his own pride, ambition and glory reveal the reason why he could not countenance the idea of marriage to Athenais (3.1.377, 383, 3.2.378ff, 395; 4.2.417).

<sup>60</sup> He is irreverent in his attitude towards religion, both Christianity and Zoroastrianism (1.1.100ff, 276ff, 291ff).

<sup>61</sup> Athenais' reference to his "rude fancy" (1.1.97) may allude to a lack of sublimity—that is, he conceives on a mundane, peripheral level, without depth or transcendence. In this she refers to his interest in the paintings without understanding their significance. A parallel can be made to Athenais herself—Varanes sees only her common descent rather than her inherent worth.

<sup>62</sup> On meeting with his former tutor, Theodosius refers to Leontine as his "Foster Father" (1.1.210). He also defends the philosopher to Varanes at 3.1.329ff. Pulcheria's affection for Athenais, and Theodosius' immediate offer of his crown to her, illustrate Varanes' folly in refusing to do likewise, as well as demonstrating her obvious

to one of her station, even implying that Leontine's decision to depart for Athens, and Athenais' rejection of him, are an affront to his prerogative. Despite his numerous protestations of devotion, he refuses to risk all for love until it is too late. He never seriously considers her worthy of the crown despite tempting her with a spurious offer, nor does he dispute Arantes' claim that she is unworthy, let alone broaching the subject of a marriage with his father, until after she has rejected him and he is forced to reassess his attitude.<sup>63</sup> Although he offers to refuse the throne and elope with her (2.1.387ff), when put to the test he reneges. These are but a few of the many instances where his claims are undermined by his actions, and those actions speak loud.<sup>64</sup> Whilst he doubts his resolve at 2.1.440, his vacillation is momentary and does not lead to any concerted attempt to resolve the issue. That his advances have been nothing more than a rakish attempt at sexual conquest is indicated by his pointed admission that he intends to enjoy Athenais regardless of Leontine's opposition (2.1.479-83)—the implication being he is prepared to use force if necessary.<sup>65</sup>

Although Varanes' ignoble attitude towards Athenais gradually changes from the beginning of the third act,<sup>66</sup> he remains a self-interested egotist, especially in his deplorable behaviour towards his 'friend' Theodosius. When he repents of his attitude towards Athenais and orders Arantes to beg his forgiveness and offer her his throne, his contrition goes some way to making him more sympathetic, but is undermined by his unsavoury behaviour towards his 'friend' in attempting to win her back.<sup>67</sup> It is a reflection of the differing degree of their friendship that Theodosius is willing to postpone his marriage indefinitely and join Varanes on a potentially life-long search for his lost love (2.1.245-8); yet the prince never once considers doing the same for Theodosius. The emperor also gives Varanes the opportunity to seduce Athenais away from him (3.1.359ff), which the prince all too willingly accepts despite knowing that it will destroy Theodosius' newfound happiness. The development of a degree of

worth. Neither one ever mentions her common lineage, only Varanes, his advisor Arantes, Marcian (who does not even know her) and Athenais and Leontine themselves ever do.

<sup>63</sup> Isdigerdes is never present to refuse a marriage on the basis of unsuitability (as Mithridates is to Ziphares), the prince himself rejects the idea because he believes that placing a commoner on the throne of Cyrus would be inglorious and disreputable.

<sup>64</sup> On an earlier occasion, for the benefit of Athenais, Varanes begs the gods to relieve him of the throne (1.1.116ff), an example of his insincere histrionics. Another is his offer to flee with Theodosius to roam the world free from the responsibility, and glory, of rule (1.1.385ff).

<sup>65</sup> Athenais' conclusion that he intends to enjoy her by "unlawful means" (4.2.422) demonstrates that she certainly believes that he intends to rape her.

<sup>66</sup> A considerable period of time is likely to have passed between the end of Act Two and start of Act Three, sufficient for Leontine and Athenais to have moved from their residence, for Arantes to have discovered this, and for Athenais to have befriended Pulcheria and converted to Christianity.

<sup>67</sup> Contrary to Leontine's claim that the princes share "A friendship that may challenge all the World, / And at the proof be matchless" (1.1.63-4), when tested the friendship is demonstrated to be unequal. Varanes is what might be termed a "fair weather" friend. This is all the more significant when one is aware that in the romance the two men have never met before Varanes arrives in Constantinople. The inclusion of an existing friendship serves to highlight its inequality.

equanimity towards the impending marriage of Athenais to Theodosius—a development on the ignoble nature of his friendship towards the emperor—coincides with the development of a spiritualised love for Athenais.<sup>68</sup> Only when he finally discovers that his affection for Athenais is imperfect, does his love achieve a level of ethereality. His pride, egotism and elitist attitude have prevented him from giving all for love, and so he irrevocably loses that which is most important to him.<sup>69</sup>

Whereas Varanes' love-and-honour conflict is self-induced, that suffered by Athenais is thrust upon her, as she becomes torn between the love she feels for the prince and the obligation she feels to honour the contract negotiated between her father and an emperor for whom she has no affection. At the beginning of the play Leontine reveals that Athenais had been raised and educated in Athens away from courts ("like a Sybill"), and is therefore unaware of the dissembling nature of courtiers, or of rakish seduction (1.1.67ff). Because of her naivety, she never questions the sincerity of Varanes' protestations, and his failure to live up to her expectations leads to a marked change in her personality. At 2.1.534ff, Athenais changes in demeanour from a requited lover to an indignant and inimical misanthrope (3.1.45ff). Thereafter she disdains both Varanes and Theodosius, although reserving more of her animosity for the prince.<sup>70</sup> When she encounters Varanes at 3.1.272ff she acts pompously towards him.<sup>71</sup> Although much has been made of haughtiness as an integral aspect of her character, it is clearly reactive and an attempt to demonstrate her inherent worth to Varanes—worth that is patently obvious to both Theodosius and Pulcheria. Arrogance masks her pain and disillusionment at his rejection and threat of violence against her—of the gross and unexpected slight that she suffered at the hands of a man whom she believed was completely devoted to her.<sup>72</sup> It is true that she is aware of, and repeatedly emphasises, her own virtue, yet the

<sup>68</sup> Varanes' eventual magnanimity towards his rival is notable in his admission that "all is well" (5.4.34) when told of the impending marriage. It should be admitted, however, that his equanimity is qualified by being reluctant—he is not wholly gracious in defeat. Yet it does reflect a progression in the quality of his friendship, and helps to make him more admirable and sympathetic.

<sup>69</sup> Structurally the Persian prince is modestly atypical tragic hero, a reactor, minimally stylised, maximally coherent, maximally whole, minimally symbolic, medially accessible (modest complexity and maximal transparency), substantially conventional (substantial in his societal role as prince and in his functional role as pathetic lover), achieves modest anagnorisis, and is substantial in derivation. Whilst retaining the egotism of the romance character, Lee lessens the despicable nature of that figure who had actively attempted to undermine his rival by disparaging him to Athenais whilst bragging of his own preeminence.

<sup>70</sup> Even Theodosius feels compelled to comment upon her "heartless Carriage" (3.1.130).

<sup>71</sup> Her pomposity is illustrated by her pointed emphasis upon the fact that Theodosius has willingly offered her his empire, whilst Varanes would not countenance the idea despite his numerous vows to the contrary, including at this very moment (3.2.279ff). Her indignant reactions continue at 4.2.390ff, leading Varanes to emphasise her "pointed fame, and nice revenge" at 5.2.46.

<sup>72</sup> Hunt emphasises this aspect of her character (pp 247-8). He states that her behaviour is distinctly "unchristian" although I would suggest that, as with Theodosius, her decision to convert is made out of emotional distress rather than a spiritual calling. She is at heart a pagan, as is evidenced by her decision to suicide like one.

expression of her pride is a circumstantial reaction rather than a normative trait of character. Although she is innately capable of haughtiness, it is not her real nature.

Much of her dilemma stems from the fact that she maintains an intense passion for Varanes, despite her hostility towards him, yet is contracted to marry a man to whom she is indifferent. There is no warmth in Athenais' speech or behaviour towards Theodosius—this is for her an enforced marriage, made by her father without her involvement (4.2.284, 293). Despite her lack of affection, she accepts the decision and chooses to fulfill the contract with absolute fidelity. But when her fidelity clashes with her suppressed love, she suffers irresolvable conflict.<sup>73</sup> Leontine, Theodosius and Varanes all contribute to this dilemma and her downfall. Her father intensifies her dilemma by commanding that henceforth she reject Varanes even if he offers her his throne (2.1.500-2). As a dutiful daughter, she is thereafter unable to accept her lover, because it will not only violate her father's contract with Theodosius, but also his explicit mandate. The emperor also exacerbates her conflict by magnanimously allowing Varanes to compete for her affection. This is augmented by his pointed (but probably inadvertent and hyperbolic) claim that, whilst she is free to choose her partner, if she does choose the prince "[t]hat moment Theodosius is no more".<sup>74</sup> The threat to end his life complicates her decision, and is augmented by a similar claim by Varanes in his admission that to lose her would be to lose the will to live. That both men threaten to suicide if she refuses them makes her position intolerable. She is now faced with a situation in which to refuse Varanes will result in her own unhappiness, and the destruction of the man whom she loves, yet to choose the prince will lead to the destruction of the man who has treated her, and her father, with great honour by offering her his crown, but for whom she has no passion. To refuse the emperor would also bring her into conflict with her father's express command. Only in death is she able to resolve her dilemma—by suiciding she fulfills her obligations of love to Varanes (by maintaining her absolute devotion to him in life and death) and of her honour (by marrying Theodosius in fulfillment of her father's contract and dictate). As a tragic victim of a dilemma thrust upon her by the three men who profess to love her, Athenais exemplifies the sometimes destructive force of love.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>73</sup> Her love for Varanes is repressed but ever present—that is, she is unable to effect an emotional divorce from him. This is illustrated by her admission to Theodosius (even before she meets Varanes, and assumes her pompous demeanour) that an interview would be likely to re-ignite her passion for him.

<sup>74</sup> 4.2.316. Theodosius later contradicts this statement (5.4.63), but this will have been because he does not recall having made this assertion. Athenais, however, is certainly conscious of it.

<sup>75</sup> Athenais is a victimised heroine who is modestly stereotypical, a reactor, medially stylised, substantially coherent, maximally whole, substantially accessible (medial complexity and maximal transparency), maximally conventional (maximal in her societal role as a dutiful daughter, and in her functional role as a distressed lover) and static. She is medially symbolic—her refusal to be the concubine of a prince seems to have a didactic function aimed at Lee's court audience, especially in light of the dedication of the play to Frances Stuart, the duchess famous for having withstood King Charles' attempts at seduction. This aspect is also emphasised in the final lines

Contrary to Hunt's assertion that Marcian is superfluous to the play, he rivals Varanes as its most important figure.<sup>76</sup> The dual plot structure serves to emphasise the parallel development of these characters from flawed to admirable heroes over the course of the play. Marcian, having begun as a typical 'Roman' soldier-counsellor, descended from Lee's own Scipio, Clytus and Archelaus, evolves into the type of balanced statesman worthy of imperial rule.<sup>77</sup> While he is loyal and honest,<sup>78</sup> he is excessively passionate and hypercritical, despite the validity of his complaints.<sup>79</sup> He is brusque, tactless, intemperate, intolerant, undiplomatic and imprudently critical, particularly of effeminacy and sycophancy.<sup>80</sup> He is also ambitious, chauvinistic,<sup>81</sup> elitist,<sup>82</sup> slightly self-important and self-righteous, and a pagan who despises Christian pacifism (2.1.100ff). Like the soldier-counsellor type, he is obsessed with honour, glory and returning the empire to the martial grandeur of the past—in this case that of the Roman republic. This places him in conflict with the laissez-faire rule of Theodosius. His repeated references to the emperor's youth imply that he feels it necessary for the emperor to be made aware of his shortcomings, and so arrest the decline. He wishes to turn a pacifistic, indolent ruler into a martial Roman statesman who exercises due concern for all of his people, rather than just those courtiers who amuse him. Although his motives for criticising the emperor are admirable, he is nevertheless injudicious and undiplomatic in pursuing his objective.

of Act Two (2.1.553ff) which are overtly didactic. Athenais is also modestly derivative—in *Pharamond* Athenais is reserved and unaffectionate, displaying absolutely no affection for Varanes or interest in his suit, and little for Theodosius, accepting his proposal simply because he asked. Her dispassionate attitude towards Theodosius in the play mirrors her relationship to both men in the source. Of course the fictional characters differ from the historical Athenais who did not suicide but lived out her life as the wife of the emperor.

<sup>76</sup> Hunt, p. 252. Van Lennep (*Sources*, p. 424) had previously stated a similar position, arguing that the "subplot" has been justifiably condemned by a number of eighteenth-century critics for its irrelevance.

<sup>77</sup> Pulcheria states that she wishes to oust his "sharp Atomes" (2.1.14) and then implements a plan to do so.

<sup>78</sup> Marcian's loyalty is repeatedly emphasised. Pulcheria challenges him to raise the army against her (2.1.226ff) which Lucius supports, but which Marcian emphatically refuses to countenance. Lucius once again makes this suggestion at 4.1.25-6, and is again denied. Later Marcian adds that the army had repeatedly asked him to lead a rebellion, which he refused on every occasion (4.2.140ff). Kewes quotes parts of Marcian's speech to Theodosius at 4.2.134ff out of context in order to argue that it is a "seditious soliloquy" and evidence that he seriously contemplates usurpation (p. 366). However I would argue that Marcian is being rhetorical and attempting to arouse Theodosius out of his indolence, and does not seriously entertain the idea of executing his threat.

<sup>79</sup> As is revealed at 2.1.6, Marcian has always been hypercritical of the court. As spokesman for the people (both the army and commoners—2.1.140), Marcian is particularly aggrieved at the fact that the rule of the empire has reverted to a woman, and because the arrears have been withheld from the army by corrupt officials. This aspect of the play is notably didactic, as this was a common grievance of the English army. These complaints are acknowledged by Pulcheria who admits to raising similar objections to Theodosius (2.1.124ff). Although she is of his opinion, Pulcheria is more tactful in the expression of her concerns.

<sup>80</sup> Pulcheria refers to Theodosius' effeminacy, and to Marcian's disdain for it, at 2.1.16, as does Marcian himself at 4.1.39.

<sup>81</sup> Marcian is opposed to the idea of a woman ruling the empire, despite acknowledging Pulcheria's worth (2.1.126ff). He supports the tenets of Salic law prohibiting women from succeeding to a throne. This is, he adds, a common grievance amongst the army (2.1.139).

<sup>82</sup> Like Varanes, Marcian is an elitist, intending to advise Theodosius that Athenais is a commoner and so an inappropriate match (4.1.5-7).



Marcian needs to develop rationality, diplomacy and affection if he is to be worthy of Pulcheria's love, and a partner in her rule. Only by acquiring self-discipline is the general able to become her equal. She encourages him to change because she appreciates his potential—her calculated censure, and divesting him of his commissions, are designed to force him to reassess his behaviour. That he is able to learn is illustrated in 4.2, where, after antagonising Theodosius by injudicious criticism, he changes tack and by inventing the story of Athenais' execution (4.2.189ff) manages to awaken Theodosius to his defects. He is also demonstrated changing from a soldier-counsellor devoid of personal emotion and who rejects love as effeminate softness unsuitable for a soldier—like Scipio and Brutus, who are the worse for being of this attitude—to a more fully rounded leader who, like Oedipus, combines the warrior and lover in equal measures.<sup>83</sup> Despite Hunt's claims that Marcian's apparent amoral worship of ambition makes him unsympathetic,<sup>84</sup> he is eventually seen as the most admirable character of the play, because he is ambitious for the greater good of the state rather than personal glory. In fact Marcian ultimately becomes Lee's archetypal exemplary statesman hero. His marriage to Pulcheria represents an ideal union of old Roman virtue and Christian love, and of the military and civil administrations.<sup>85</sup>

Pulcheria has, justifiably, long been admired as a character. Nicoll (she is "one of the few really artistically-drawn women figures of Restoration tragedy, a character that inestimably raises...the worth of Lee as a dramatic poet"), Elwin ("she is one of the finest portraits in Lee's gallery of women"), Beers (she is "the most distinctly individual of all of Lee's female characters"), and Hasan (she "stands out above the rest" of his heroines) represent a general consensus.<sup>86</sup> Much of her success stems from the fact that she is presented as a dynamic, influential and independent heroine who personifies the ideal stateswoman.<sup>87</sup> She displays the types of characteristics that are desirable in a ruler—intelligence, wisdom, courage, pragmatism, common sense, perspicacity, sagacity, ingenuity, equanimity, prudence,

<sup>83</sup> Marcian's naivety towards womankind is illustrated in the fourth act. After Pulcheria discusses Athenais' warrant with him, it behooves Lucius to have to explain her design to him, because the general has failed to pick up on her deliberate nuances.

<sup>84</sup> Hunt, p.255.

<sup>85</sup> Structurally Marcian is modestly atypical, an initiator who is substantially coherent, maximally whole, substantially accessible (medial complexity and maximal transparency), medially derivative, medially conventional (substantial in his societal role as soldier-counsellor, and medial in his functional role as required lover) and achieves substantial anagnorisis. He is modestly stylised, rather than minimally like Varanes, because the prince is more often the focal attention of the play than the general. Both characters are allocated similar amounts of dialogue (Varanes around 550 lines, Marcian around 520), yet Varanes is slightly more central because Athenais receives twice as much textual attention than Pulcheria, each heroine focussing their attention upon their respective lover. Symbolically Marcian and Pulcheria may allude to a wished for succession of William and Mary to the English throne, and so the pair are conceived of as being medially symbolic.

<sup>86</sup> Nicoll, *Restoration Drama*, p.147; Elwin, *Playgoer's Handbook*, pp.129-30; Beers, p.198; Hasan, p.127.

<sup>87</sup> Pulcheria is an example of an ideally balanced psyche, being equally passionate and rational—her first speech is actually an emotive one at the loss of her sisters Marina and Flavilla to the church (1.1.371ff). She is certainly not wholly clinical and dispassionate—this is merely a regal façade, and to hide her affection for Marcian from him.

rectitude, fortitude, dignity, nobility, and, most importantly, a social conscience.<sup>88</sup> Her concern for the welfare of the state, and at the perversion of the court, is particularly significant, because it leads her to seek out a partner who shares her attitude. Armistead's suggestion that Pulcheria is to blame for permitting sycophantic and hedonistic courtiers to despoil the empire is erroneous.<sup>89</sup> It has been the inability to counteract their corrupting influence upon the emperor that has prevented her from acting, not a passive or disinterested acceptance of circumstances. During the play she discovers a potential ally in Marcian not only because he is the commander of the army, but because his attitude is commensurate with her own. From this moment Pulcheria actively works to arrest the corruption. She chooses Marcian for her partner because he personifies old (republican) Roman values, but realises that his aggression needs to be harnessed if he is to become a statesman worthy to share her power. She tests the extent of his loyalty, honesty and devotion to the emperor not only to determine whether he is worthy of sharing her love and jurisdiction (as she admits at 2.1.231-2), but also to assess whether he is a genuine ally or a potential usurper.<sup>90</sup> This illustrates her perspicacity as a politician, and further evidences her concern for the ongoing welfare of the state.

Pulcheria's manipulation of Marcian into action is particularly ingenious. Firstly she reprimands and banishes him for his tactless criticism of the administration then, pretending to forget her hostility towards him, reveals that the emperor had authorised Athenais' execution and hands him the document. This revelation is intended to encourage Marcian to demonstrate his loyalty to the emperor and his value as a counsellor. Not only does Pulcheria deliberately reveal this information, she actually instigates the signing of the warrant so as to instigate this chain of events. She intends that Marcian should not only prove his worth to Theodosius, but that her brother should be made aware of the dangers of his pusillanimous rule. It is important to remember that Pulcheria is attempting not only to seduce Marcian, and to develop his statesman-like capacities, but also to awaken Theodosius to conscientious administration and arrest his apathetic and effeminate behaviour. She continues to demonstrate her creativity at 5.3 by feigning indifference to Marcian as a means of arousing his passion for her. Her simulation extends to the point of making it appear that she is being forced, at her brother's

<sup>88</sup> Theodosius' reference to her "sharper Wit, and stricter Wisdom" (1.1.156) alludes not only to her intellect but also to her vociferous criticism of his lackadaisical administration.

<sup>89</sup> Armistead (*Nathaniel Lee*, p.126) emphasises that she had ruled during Theodosius' minority, implying that she was responsible for permitting the court to be corrupted. However, her openly hostile attitude (having repeatedly criticised her brother on this point in the past—2.1.124ff) towards the sycophants and opportunists disproves this. Moreover Theodosius' effeminate behaviour and apathetic rule would encourage and advance such characters. Thus she must have been *unable*, rather than *unwilling*, to counteract their influence. Pulcheria is certainly not depicted as apathetic or politically irresponsible, nor is she "unprincipled" as Wilson Knight suggests (p.192), in fact she displays profound civic responsibility. There is certainly no reason to assume that she has recently developed a social conscience.



command, into a marriage against her will. By making the union seem reluctant she ensures that Marcian must continue to try to win her affection.

Pulcheria is a woman who knows what she wants and how to get it, making her an extraordinary example of an (exemplary) heroine in Carolean and English drama. She displays the resourcefulness usually associated with a villainess, yet without the vicious motivation. Pulcheria is also the most influential female character that Lee has created since his developmental period (*Poppea*, *Sophonisba*, *Gloriana*), excepting Catherine de Medici. Pulcheria represents a return of interest to dynamic heroines whose role is more than simply affective—figures who instigate action rather than simply acting as the passive victim. Notably she is able to fuse her personal desires with her civic responsibility for the greater good of the state, rather than sublimating one to the other, and to assist Marcian in achieving a similar fusion.<sup>91</sup> Her union with him produces a model marriage of ideal rulers.<sup>92</sup>

Pulcheria's dynamism is contrasted with her brother's passivism. Much of Theodosius' inactivity stems from his effeminacy and melancholia, which are emphasised from the outset. The first references are to his soul being "of the tenderest make" (1.1.44), to his softness (1.1.52ff), and to the complete contrast between him and Varanes.<sup>93</sup> His actions demonstrate him to be virtuous—he is sensitive, pacifistic (1.1.55), honest, judicious (1.1.54) and just, noble, dignified, prudent, passionate,<sup>94</sup> kind, magnanimous, and an absolutely loyal and devoted friend—yet he is an indolent, negligent and self-indulgent ruler who allows corrupt courtiers to degrade the empire because of his indifference to state affairs. This apathy results from his melancholia over an unknown woman,<sup>95</sup> itself a result of his normative depression. This makes him sad rather than bad, pathetic rather than disreputable. He is a hopeless romantic whose obsession causes him to lose interest in all other things.<sup>96</sup> He delegates his

<sup>90</sup> After having censured and divested Marcian of his honours, she calls him a traitor and then invites him to raise the army against her (2.1.226ff) to determine if he would actually do so.

<sup>91</sup> Scipio and Brutus are examples of characters who sublimate their personal feelings to their public responsibility, Nero, Alexander and Mithridates some of the many Leean examples who represent the other extreme.

<sup>92</sup> She is a minimally atypical exemplary stateswoman, an initiator who is substantially stylised, substantially coherent, modestly whole, medially symbolic, medially accessible (modest complexity and maximal transparency), substantially conventional (substantial in both her societal role as empress, and in her functional role as dynamic heroine) and static. She is modestly derivative, differing from the figure of the romance who is emotionally detached, refusing to allow her personal feelings to interfere with her public responsibilities. Lee follows the dynamic Pulcheria of history closer than that of the romance.

<sup>93</sup> Later Theodosius admits to having a "Constitution soft as mine" (1.1.152) acknowledging his own effeminacy. Pulcheria (2.1.16) and Marcian (4.1.39, 59) also refer to this aspect of his character.

<sup>94</sup> Varanes knows Theodosius well in advising Athenais to hide from him lest it cause the emperor to fall in love with her and so forego his intention to abandon the material world (1.1.137ff), which is exactly what happens.

<sup>95</sup> Theodosius admits his melancholia had driven from him all ambition and desire to rule (3.1.211ff). Depression is a normative, ruling aspect of his character, as is illustrated by the references at 1.1.41, 268, 301ff; 3.1.117, 176.

<sup>96</sup> The repeated references to Theodosius' youth—by Atticus (1.1.19), Varanes (1.1.139), the emperor himself (1.1.210), Lucius (4.1.130), Marcian (4.1.39; 4.2.27, 30, 51, 129, 143) and Athenais (5.1.26)—are poignant,

unwanted responsibility to corrupt officials and surrounds himself with effete and decadent courtiers who pander to his disposition. His proposed retreat into monasticism is not vocational, but an attempt to escape from his depression, as Atticus is at pains to point out (1.1.41ff). From the moment that he arrives on stage (1.1.142) it is clear that he chooses the cloister out of reluctant resignation rather than desire. The cause is revealed to be his unrequited love for a woman whom he briefly saw, but never met. Despite his own claim, "never was a man so [un]willing, and [un]prepar'd" (1.1.231) for life as an anchorite. In describing Athenais he burns with an enthusiasm never present in the discussion of his monastic plans. His obsession with the mystery woman is all-pervasive, as we see when he reappears on stage at 3.1.98ff.<sup>97</sup> His demeanour changes from melancholia to ecstasy from the moment that Leontine accepts his proposal of marriage to Athenais (3.1.162ff). This sudden joy is contrasted admirably with Varanes' equally sudden descent into misery (3.1.195ff). Despite Varanes' every effort to dissuade him from his love, Theodosius remains absolutely devoted to Athenais. The prince argues that she is unworthy of a crown because of her common birth, whilst preparing to offer her his own (3.1.322ff). Yet from the moment he sees her Theodosius is unconcerned by her ancestry, regarding her as someone worthy of his throne, whilst the better informed prince continues his denigration. Varanes' even accuses her of social opportunism (3.1.334ff), which Theodosius flatly rejects without even truly knowing her. Yet, as previously stated, despite the early focus on the emperor, as well as his being the play's title character, Theodosius progressively comes to play a purely functional role in the drama. As the tragedy unfolds, his role is restricted to being the unwitting impediment to the union of Varanes and Athenais, and the embodiment of a defective court opposed by Marcian and Pulcheria. Little else need be said of this peripheral stereotype, or of the remaining characters, who are too insignificant to warrant attention.<sup>98</sup>

Although *Theodosius* presents no profound characterisations, the ingredient that sets it apart from Lee's previous tragedies is the use of a dual plot structure to exhibit the parallel

suggesting that he is little more than a boy. The emphasis on this aspect of his character suggests a possible parallel with Lee's other youthful lover Massina who is also a hopeless, and helpless, romantic.

<sup>97</sup> Even during Theodosius' discussion of Varanes with Leontine at 1.1.209ff, the emperor cannot resist referring to the mystery woman (1.1.226ff).

<sup>98</sup> Theodosius is a victimised hero who is substantially stereotypical, a reactor, medially stylised, maximally coherent, maximally whole, medially symbolic, modestly accessible (modest complexity and medial transparency), substantially derivative, medially conventional, and achieves modest anagnorisis. Theodosius is modestly conventional in his societal role as emperor, and in his functional role as impediment to love, and substantially conventional as the embodiment of a corrupt court. His gradual discovery of the errors of his rule at the instigation of Marcian (and Pulcheria), and his insistence on their union as monarchs for the benefit of the state, goes some way to making him less minimal in his role as a conventional ruler. However his initial indolence, and his eventual decision to join the monastery because of the loss of his love, renders him a modest example of a conventional king. Also by uniting Marcian and Pulcheria and placing them on the throne he demonstrates that he is not the absolute epitome of the corrupt court, but nevertheless remains a substantial example of court corruption.

development of two independent protagonists.<sup>99</sup> With the exception of the conflict affecting Athenais, interest is less upon complex internal struggles than on the progression of Varanes and Marcian from flawed to admirable heroes. The result is that the protagonists are presented with only submedial atypicality, but this is more than compensated for by the degree of structural interplay. The prince develops from a proud elitist and self-interested libertine into a contrite and spiritualised lover. He is the tragic hero of the play, the good but imperfect figure whose egotism causes him to make an erroneous choice, leading to misfortune, suffering, contrition and then self-destruction. It is his trauma, and that experienced by Athenais, which supplies the affective centre of the play. Athenais continues Lee's interest in pathetic tragedy, and is a worthy descendent of Gloriana, Statira, Semandra, Jocasta and Bellamira. The development of Marcian, and the celebration of his union with Pulcheria, serves to counteract the emotion-charged relationship between Varanes and Athenais. Marcian's transformation from an emotionless soldier into a passionate lover, and from an undisciplined counsellor into an exemplary statesman worthy of the rule of empire, is skillfully effected. So too is the depiction of Pulcheria who turns out to be one of Lee's finest female characters. However, as is unfortunately too often the case in Lee, insufficient attention is given to this character. Although Varanes and Marcian are not the first characters by Lee to develop over the course of a play—Petronius, Mithridates and Machiavel, amongst others, have all fundamentally changed in personality as a result of events—this is the first play in which Lee institutes a deliberate parallel in the development of his characters, and makes it a central focus of the work. The structural complexity conflicts with William Archer's claim that "there is no sustained constructive power in [this] play", with Sutherland's suggestion that Lee has failed to control his extravagance in this play, and with Hammond's claim that it shows Lee in an indecisive frame of mind, is weakly constructed and lacks serious thematic importance or coherent development.<sup>100</sup> The use of a dual plot format for characterological purposes is actually testimony to Lee's artistic development, and makes *Theodosius* a particularly praiseworthy tragedy.

Lucius Junius Brutus; Father of his Country (summer/autumn for December 1680).

The play normally regarded as Lee's masterpiece was produced by the Duke's Company at Dorset Garden, and suppressed by the Lord Chamberlain on the eleventh of December 1680

<sup>99</sup> An example of this parallel was detected by Leach who noted that Pulcheria's testing of Marcian is paralleled in the second half of the act by Athenais' inquiry into Varanes' intentions towards her. Hers is another test, this time of moral rather than political integrity (p. 164).

<sup>100</sup> Archer, p. 152; Sutherland, p. 73; Hammond, *Development*, pp. 588, 591.

after three or (probably) six days of performance, because of its supposedly "Scandalous Expressions & Reflections vpon ye Government".<sup>101</sup> Despite its being received "with great Applause",<sup>102</sup> with the exception of a production in Dublin in 1738, there is no record of it having been revived,<sup>103</sup> although Charles Gildon's adaptation—*The Patriot, or The Italian Conspiracy* (1703)—employed large sections of the original verbatim. The tragedy was only published once in Lee's lifetime—recorded in the *Term Catalogues* for Trinity term 1681 (1.451), with a second quarto appearing in 1708. Madeleine de Scudéry's *Clélie* (1655-61, translated into English by John Davies and George Havers in 1678), Livy's *Ab urbe condita* and Machiavelli's *Discorsi Sopra la Prima Deca di Tito Livio*<sup>104</sup> provide the chief sources for the play. As is often the case with Lee's use of sources, however, their influence tends to be general rather than specific. Contemporary and modern assessment of the tragedy has been laudatory. Langbaine's claim that Lee "has shown a Masterpiece in *Lucius Junius Brutus*, which scarce one of his Contemporaries have equal'd, and none excel'd" is fairly representative of contemporary opinion.<sup>105</sup> Most modern critics agree that it is one of the greatest tragedies of the Restoration, Elwin going so far as to suggest that it is one of the few English tragedies "in the least comparable to the greater works of Shakespeare".<sup>106</sup> Although Stroup and Cooke believe that Elwin's assertion is excessive (II.319), there is some validity to this claim, at least from a characterological perspective. In fact almost every aspect of this play reveals a development in Lee's dramaturgy—not only in terms of character, but also theme, structure, stylistics and moral and political complexity. But assuredly the greatest merit of this play rests upon the profoundly complex representation of the protagonist, Lucius Junius Brutus, the founder of the Roman republic.

Depending upon one's perspective, Brutus is either an inhuman and politic rebel against constituted authority, or an exemplary stoic patriot who makes an enormous personal sacrifice for the greater good of the state. Despite claims by some critics that he is, or is

<sup>101</sup> L.C. 5/144, p.28. In the preface to *The Patriot*, Gildon claims that *Brutus* was banned after three days (sig.a3r). *The Term Catalogues* argues for the longer period (1.451), which is supported by a manuscript note by William Oldys asserting that John Bowman had told him so (Van Lennep, *Sources*, pp.452, 453n.6).

<sup>102</sup> Giles Jacob, *The Poetical Register*, 1719, I.162.

<sup>103</sup> Loftis (p.xii) refers to the advertisement for the revival in *The Dublin News-Letter*, 22 to 25 April 1738.

<sup>104</sup> Translated by Edward Dacres as *Discourses upon the First Decade of Titus Livius* (1636 and numerous reprints to 1680). Victoria Hayne cogently suggests that Lee's assessment of Brutus after having read Machiavelli changed from approbation to repudiation. She reads the dramatist's assertion in the dedication that "Before reading Machiavelli...", not as "even before" but rather as "until" that moment (p.360n.13). To her the Florentine's approval of Brutus' political ingenuity and murder of his sons for political purposes seems feeble reinforcement for an appreciation of Brutus' greatness. I am inclined to agree with her assessment based on the fact that it is consistent with Lee's ambivalent representation of the consul.

<sup>105</sup> Langbaine, *Lives and Characters*, 1699, p.85.

<sup>106</sup> Elwin, *Playgoer's Handbook*, pp.130-1. Hammond suggests that it is the most poetic drama written after 1660 (*Development*, p.607), and one of the finest tragedies in English since the death of Shakespeare ("Greatest Action", p.175).

intended to be, exemplary and represents Lee's own perspective,<sup>107</sup> this is clearly not the case, because, for all the good that he does for Rome, he is repeatedly demonstrated to be arrogant, ambitious, intolerant, obsessive, misogynistic, obdurate, presumptive, austere, vain, self-righteous, dogmatic and autocratic. His presumption, dissimulation, manipulation, opportunism and arbitrariness all undermine an exemplary status. From the moment that he adopts a guise of insanity he begins to manipulate the people, and in the course of the action exploits Titus, Valerius, Vinditius, Collatinus and the Senate and people of Rome to his own ends. He deceives Titus (1.1.231), Valerius and the *mobile vulgus* (2.1.136ff) into believing that the gods have lifted his madness and chosen him as their agent to expel the monarchy and institute a new system of government.<sup>108</sup>

Brutus' presumption that he has a divine mandate for action receives marked attention in the play, and is both tacitly and explicitly undermined from the outset.<sup>109</sup> Despite suspecting that violence has been committed against Lucrece, Brutus then queries exactly when the gods intend to give him a sign to throw off his disguise and expel the tyrants (1.1.109-11). In his own mind, therefore, the suspected rape is not evidence of divine sanction, and only comes to be accepted as such by him because of his egotistical delusions of grandeur.<sup>110</sup> He decides to preempt action in the absence of a real sign, and then subsequently convinces himself that the rape actually provided the evidence. Significantly, to this point there have been no supernatural occurrences to suggest that a revolution has been advocated or endorsed.<sup>111</sup> Throughout his corpus Lee repeatedly uses prodigies as evidence of divine displeasure; the absence (and the pointed need for Brutus to fabricate them—1.1.302ff, 454ff, 2.1.211ff) suggests there to have been no affirmation.<sup>112</sup> Even when a genuine prodigy occurs (4.1.143ff), it serves to undermine

<sup>107</sup> Tucker, p.100; Loftis, p.xxii; Verdurmen, p.164. As Leach suggests, one should not assume that Brutus' ideology is that of Lee, any more than we should assume that of Tiberius or any other character reflects the dramatist's perspective (p.216).

<sup>108</sup> The gods have had nothing whatsoever to do with Brutus' conscious decision to throw off his disguise: it is all part of a ploy to demonstrate his deluded pretensions. When Valerius tells the people that the insensible Brutus has been chosen by the gods to be their orator (2.1.136ff), he simply enforces Brutus' pretensions. For when the 'madman' is suddenly profoundly astute (as we know he has always been) it seems to demonstrate the divine influence to them, and so guarantees their support for his crusade.

<sup>109</sup> As Hayne notes, identification with Brutus' point of view is discouraged from the very beginning (p.344).

<sup>110</sup> His admission that "[o]ccasion seems in view" (1.1.94) illustrates that the incident is a consciously convenient excuse for action.

<sup>111</sup> It is not until 1.1.285ff that anything approaching a prodigy is introduced, and then in such a manner as to illustrate the lack of real evidence. After all, this 'prodigy' is merely thunder and lightning, and is evidently not meant to be seen as extraordinary, as is demonstrated by one citizen's underwhelming attitude towards it (1.1.285ff). That he is beaten into submission affirms that "authentication by divine word turns out to be authentication by cynical thuggery", as Derek Hughes so succinctly puts it (p.295). This manipulation of the truth is augmented by Vinditius' ridiculous (and obviously fabulous) claim to having seen ninety-nine and a half prodigies that very day.

<sup>112</sup> Lucrece questions "[i]f there be Gods" (1.1.351) before suggesting that they "are far off" and unconcerned with the events unfolding in Rome, further undermining Brutus' pretensions to divine agency. And at 2.1.337-8 he expresses hope that the Fates are auspicious to Rome, contradicting his own assumption that he is the fulfilling their dictate.

Brutus' pretensions. Although the appearance of the goddess Egeria to Titus illustrates that there is divine support for the republic, this in no way validates Brutus' misguided belief that he has been chosen as their agent.<sup>113</sup> He may have inadvertently effected *part* of the providential design, but has done so without endorsement or an understanding of the plan. This is highlighted by the fact that the gods explicitly attempt to save Titus' life by having him abjure the royalists. That he does so and dies anyway indicates that this is not part of the divine will, and that Brutus' arbitrary execution of his son is contrary to the mandate that he claims to have

Arguably the most poignant aspect of Brutus' pretensions occurs at 4.1.274-84:

I'm at a loss of thought; and must acknowledge  
The Councils of the Gods are fathomless;  
Nay, 'tis the hardest task perhaps of life  
To be assur'd of what is Vice or Virtue:  
Whether when we raise up Temples to the Gods  
We do not then Blaspheme 'em, O, behold me,  
Behold the Game that laughing Fortune playes;  
Fate, or the will of Heav'n, call't what you please,  
That marrs the best designs that Prudence layes,  
That brings events about perhaps to mock  
At human reach, and sport with expectation.

No sooner does he admit to being unable to understand the will of the gods than he determines with absolute conviction that they have decreed that the rule of Rome must be administered with "fiercest Virtue" (4.1.299-302), and 'submits' to their dictate that his sons be executed. He asserts that "the Gods have Doom'd thee [Titus] to the grave" (4.1.496), then contradicts himself by adding that "[i]t seems as if the Gods have preordain'd it" (4.1.512). After admitting that they *seemed* to have fixed Titus' death, Brutus then concludes that it *is* fixed and irrevocable, that neither "Gods [n]or Men" can save him. He invents a divine decree and then administers it to the letter assuming the absolute truth of it. He adds that since it is decreed, then it must be done in such a way as to demonstrate that the state is greater than the individual. He is adamant that Titus be whipped and executed in public to illustrate that the administration of the state has to be impersonal, and will go to any length and make any claim, however fallacious and blasphemous, to achieve that aim. That Brutus subsequently doubts the existence of the gods (4.1.574) thoroughly undermines his pretensions.

Whilst Brutus' antipathy towards Teraminta is in part based on her ancestry, principally it is because she is an impediment to his desire to mould Titus in his own image.<sup>114</sup> From the very beginning he tells Titus that ungoverned passion is inappropriate to "the troubled times"

<sup>113</sup> There is no reason to disbelieve the veracity of Titus' claim, as he never once gives cause.

<sup>114</sup> Despite acknowledging her worth (2.1.282, 321ff), Brutus' personal animosity towards Teraminta is based upon her descent (1.1.218ff)—that she has both genetically and environmentally inherited Tarquinian vice.



(1.1.200-2) and callously orders him to abandon her—"And by the way, my Titus, / Renounce your Teraminta" (1.1.202-3). It has been argued that his impassivity results from afterthought; his entire focus being on the immediate problem.<sup>115</sup> Yet this statement is calculated and intentional, intended to demonstrate that at a time of national crisis an individual must curb his personal desires and devote his energy to the survival of the state. To Brutus, Titus is *his*, not Teraminta's, and she must be divorced because she is, like Sophonisba to Massinissa and Bellamira to Borgia, an obstacle to indoctrination. Brutus' command that they not consummate the marriage, and his seemingly irrational disdain for sexual relationships are, like all of his actions, calculated to achieve this effect.<sup>116</sup> As Titus suspects, Brutus intends to "screw [him] to performance / Beyond the reach of Man" (2.1.291-2)—to act in a superhuman (and unnatural) manner by suppressing his passion. When Brutus tells him that "I mould thee to my heart" (2.1.309), contextually it is an admission of his desire to convert Titus to his ideological position, rather than a statement of affection. Although the consul defends resistance to tyrants in the name of freedom, as Susan Staves notes, his demands for Titus' loyalty rely not on an appeal to the propriety of fighting for liberty, but on the insistence of his sacred obligation to obey his father.<sup>117</sup> Thus Titus is deprived of the opportunity to choose for himself, and so is unable to reach (or advocate) a compromise position. He is simply to do his father's bidding and to accept the role that has been assigned to him, firstly as a disciple then as a sacrifice.

Brutus' attempt to control Titus' 'effeminate' emotions, and to manipulate him into support for his crusade is pervasive, and serves to render him increasingly unsympathetic. Throughout, he is particularly intolerant of ungoverned displays of emotion. He tells Titus that if he ever sees his father display emotion it is the parent in him, not the statesman (1.1.240-3). That he rarely does is poignant and intentional, Lee inserting this statement to emphasise Brutus' excessive stoicism and lack of familial devotion. His disdain for emotion is most notable in the abrupt change from a composed to a furious tone at the very moment Titus begins to weep (2.1.326bff). Because he has so successfully repressed his own feelings, he is incapable of displaying emotion and can only describe how he ought to feel. Despite claiming that only a beast would be unmoved by his sons' betrayal (4.1.291-2), there is a complete absence of the rant that marks passages of intense emotion in Lee's characters. Rather than rave, he continues to describe the divine plan (or his version of it), his tone progressively

<sup>115</sup> Rangno, p.104.

<sup>116</sup> Brutus twice refers to Titus' marriage as an error to be rectified (1.1.215; 2.1.315-6), illustrating his belief that Titus is a child to be ruled as he sees fit. Teraminta is an intolerable rival, as much for the fact that she stimulates his (irrational and ungovernable) passion as for her descent.

<sup>117</sup> Staves, p.245. Brutus' claim to duty is not a little ironic. Filmer would probably have argued that Brutus' argument is incongruous with his actions because the consul does not act with the same level of obligation to his monarchical 'father' Tarquin. One could add that he does not act with the same degree of duty to his state 'father' Rome, either, in ignoring the express will of the people that he not execute Titus.

becoming more irate than melancholic. The manner in which he callously capitalises on Titus' suicidal depression (now intensified by his vehement self-revulsion) to convince him that he must be executed for the greater good is one of the more offensive aspects of his character. Brutus is determined to demonstrate his superior worth and that of his ideology and will stoop to unscrupulous exploitation to achieve it.<sup>118</sup> Titus is transported at the prospect of being sacrificed—imagining that it will expiate his opprobrium—yet this is less an admission of the propriety of the punishment, than it is an attempt to demonstrate the extent to which he is prepared to go to regain his father's affection. Yet the moment that Titus questions the severity of the penalty (4.1.518-9), Brutus turns on him, coldly stating that "[i]f thou deny me this, thou givest me nothing" (4.1.520). That Brutus is prepared to witness the execution of his sons without emotion (4.1.530-1) does not illustrate an arduous devotion to a cause: all that it reveals is that he does not care for his sons enough to seek an alternate punishment.<sup>119</sup> They are simply a means to an end. Even Titus is compelled to acknowledge that Brutus gives him "no token of [his] tenderness" (4.1.539), suspecting that his "late compassion was dissembled" (4.1.546). Brutus' subsequent response is vicarious—his speech histrionic and his writhing simulated—all to ensure Titus' acceptance of his fate.<sup>120</sup> Although the prevailing view is that Brutus experiences an intense conflict between his civic responsibility to Rome and his personal devotion to his sons, no such struggle really ever occurs, the latter being distinctly sublimated to the former.<sup>121</sup>

Not only is Brutus opportunistic in manipulating Titus into a willing submission of his father's judgement, but is arbitrary in maintaining it. Having already decided the fate of his sons without putting them to trial, he then overrules the resolution of the entire Senate and people of Rome that they be pardoned.<sup>122</sup> This demonstrates the extent to which he has assumed absolute power. The manner in which he divests Collatinus of the consulship in order to assume power is also to be suspected. Despite Collatinus having been constitutionally

<sup>118</sup> Brutus even waits until Titus is in control of his emotions before convincing him, as if to suggest that his son's tears are a disgusting and vexatious delay to seeing his will effected.

<sup>119</sup> In *Clelia* Brutus was compelled to execute his sons because of the dictate of the people. This is the exact opposite of the situation in the play, where the people seek a reprieve and are overruled.

<sup>120</sup> Brutus claims that his own suffering "ought t'unman me" (4.1.556), but his actions are vicarious. Even the tears he claims to cry (4.1.549) are forced so as to manipulate Titus into a willingly fulfillment of Brutus' symbolic role for him. There are, however, a few occasions in which his emotion appears authentic, assuaging his character. His final couplet of the third act (lines 583-4) strikes one as genuinely emotive, as does the abrupt stop amidst 5.2.41—"strike off their heads, and then / My Sons. No More: their Doom is past". Valerius adds that Brutus silently weeps at Tiberius' obloquy (5.1.148-9). Unfortunately these moments are insufficiently supported to demonstrate a concerted conflict in his psyche.

<sup>121</sup> Cf. Loftis, *Brutus*, p.xxiii; Leach, p.239; Hammond, *Development*, p.613; L. Brown, p.79; Owen, p.469.

<sup>122</sup> 5.2.31-3, 124-6. Brutus' presumption extends to criticising Valerius for robbing him of *his* justice, rather than that of the state (5.2.150). As Hughes notes, it does not take long for the liberator to turn despot in his resolve to curtail "the loose Liberty of Rome" (4.1.514) and to assume state justice as a personal possession (pp.296, 299). Other than the example above, Brutus refers to 'my' justice at 4.1.533, and Titus and Tiberius to 'your' or 'thy' justice at 4.1.481 and 5.1.125.



elected "by whole Rome" (3.1.15) and "by general approbation" (3.2.70), Brutus manipulates the mob to remove his political opponent from office.<sup>123</sup> He asserts that "the Roman People / All, with one voice" (3.2.23-4) have demanded that Collatinus be replaced, yet this claim must be treated with reservation. Although Tiberius admits that the mob are indifferent to Collatinus (3.1.51-2), he was nevertheless chosen by the people to "have power. / If they have changed their mind, it will have been at Brutus' instigation. And to divest him on the will of the mob (or rather Brutus' will for the mob) is to deny Collatinus' supporters (including the nobility) the right to representation. By manipulating the mob to his own ends Brutus exposes the flaws in the system, and effectively replaces an absolute monarch with an authoritarian demagogue.<sup>124</sup> This point is made no more evident than when Brutus' admits to indulging the mob "in what is right" (3.2.26), having presumably already convinced them what is right, and illustrating the necessary skill to continue to do so. For Brutus the people are a means to an end, to be indulged when it is convenient and exploited when necessary—they are not an equal partner in the administration of the republic, but rather a child to be dictated to by their 'father' (like Titus), and a tool to be used to combat his opponents. This is reiterated when he states that the mob "are capable of being told, / And will conceive a truth from worthy men" (3.1.48-9). Worthiness is likely to be determined by one's skill in demagoguery and manipulation rather than by virtue, benevolence and skill in administration. His idea of elected rule is limited, because he will only accept democratic principles consistent with his own authoritarian ideology. He replaces malevolent monarchy with his own form of supposedly benevolent oligarchy, with himself and those of his choosing as the consuls. This is simply an alternative form of tyranny.<sup>125</sup> It is not unconditional rule for the people: it is rule for the people when it is suitable. Thus a fundamental flaw in the system of government is exposed at the moment of its inception, and implies that the system is subject to continued manipulation.

Despite having a professed anti-monarchical ideology, Brutus repeatedly alludes to the majesty and grandeur of two of Rome's previous monarchs, Romulus and Numa (2.1.150 and 5.2.175ff). This demonstrates that the mode of government is not the problem, it is the individual administrator. Brutus' issue is specifically with the Tarquins and not with the

<sup>123</sup> Brutus' removes Collatinus because of his moderation in opposing and censuring the king, because of his Tarquin heritage (3.1.96ff), his association with malcontents, and Collatinus' envy of him (3.1.106ff), none of which justify preemptively removed from power. One should remember that Brutus' antipathy and lack of sympathy towards Collatinus is in evidence prior to the revolution when he criticises the grieving husband for despairing at the loss of Lucrece.

<sup>124</sup> Although Brutus asks Collatinus to resign, the request is a veiled threat to submit or suffer the consequences. Having manipulated the people to withdraw their support for Collatinus, Brutus then warns Collatinus not to defy 'their' dictate. The malice in Brutus' tone that Collatinus should go "of thy own accord / Lest thou be forc'd" (3.2.74-5) cannot be ignored.

system. He despises the king's tyranny, hedonism and corruption and wishes him overthrown, but had Tarquin been a benevolent ruler there would have been no complaint.<sup>126</sup> Brutus follows a long line of Lekan conspirators who react to a tyrant rather than a system—Piso and Otho to Nero, Caesario to Augustus, Cassander and his accomplices to Alexander, and so on. There is nothing wrong with the system unless the ruler is corrupt. Then the system is held responsible for the failing of the individual. Throughout the play Lee demonstrates that this not only applies to the monarchy, but also to the republic, which is being moulded by a misguided leader. Brutus may have been the appropriate man to create the republic, but his manipulation, arbitrariness, inflexibility, delusions of grandeur and egotistical desire for preeminence are inappropriate traits for a statesman.<sup>127</sup>

In stark contrast to her repeated criticism of the supposed inconsistency and ambiguity of Lee's characters, Laura Brown claims that "our admiration for [Brutus] is sustained without confusion or qualification throughout the play, and his consistent heroism differentiates him sharply from Lee's earlier protagonists".<sup>128</sup> This assessment could not be more at odds with Lee's enigmatic representation. The Brutus of the play is a complicated version of the Livian historical figure filtered through Machiavellian commentary and further adulterated in typical Lekan style. He is complicated by the fact that he is both exemplary and intensely flawed, patriotic and unscrupulous, a stoic and an automaton, heroic and unheroic, virtuous and vicious—a philosophical theorist and politic statesman who uses inappropriate means to achieve his ends. Although his ultimate ideal may have been to benefit the state, his methods are questionable and are less than purely altruistic. He is to be admired for the suppression of his emotions for the greater good of the state, yet his self-discipline is undermined by the inhuman zeal with which he manufactures change. That he acts as a 'father' to his country is to be admired, that he does not act in this manner to his children is not. He is to be applauded for his foresight in moulding himself into the appropriate person to resolve the state's ills, yet the methods he uses to effect this change are defective. That he is the founder of a system of government that is more equitable and democratic is praiseworthy, that he undermines that

<sup>125</sup> Although their statements may be considered to be subjective, Vitellius (3.1.5-13), Aquilius (3.1.19-20) and Tiberius (3.1.21) have already argued that Brutus has merely usurped the monarchy for himself. These statements are poignant and are evidently intended to suggest that there may be a degree of truth to their claims.

<sup>126</sup> This differs from Shakespeare's Julius Caesar who is assassinated because of what he might become.

<sup>127</sup> Brutus recalls Augustus and Alexander, both of whom were ideal empire creators, but poor administrators.

<sup>128</sup> L. Brown, p.76. It would appear that Brown's sole criterion for efficacy in characterisation is a consistency that requires typification, an unchanged state from beginning to end, and the lack of internal conflict. All of Lee's characters, with the notable exception of Brutus, are criticised for their supposed inconsistency presumably for the fact that they are atypical, undergo changes in personality state and moral development, and exhibit interiority in the process. These are all characterological aspects fundamental to Lee's tragedies, just as they were for his Shakespearean predecessor. Yet for Brown, the one major character of Lee's (Brutus) that exhibits none of these aspects, is venerated, whilst the many that do are criticised. In the absence of a validating explanation of her

system through his deceitful manipulation, and arbitrary overruling, of the will of the people is not. He is to be admired for doing what he does to "[g]uard and Defend the Liberty of Rome" (as he repeatedly emphasises—2.1.233; 3.2.126; 5.2.5, 210), but also criticised for doing so in such an inappropriate and unsympathetic manner. The disparity of the two positions makes for a fascinating and provocative figure. In the end, if Brutus is exemplary, he is an example of the defects, rather than the merits, of the obsessive devotion to a cause, of the deleterious perversion of even the best of men and intentions.<sup>129</sup>

Throughout the play there is considerable evidence to suggest that Titus and Teraminta are to be seen as the best possible future for Rome, making his arbitrary execution and her suicide all the more lamentable. This is evidenced by numerous references to the inappropriateness of the punishment,<sup>130</sup> and to the worthiness of the lovers, despite Titus' imperfections. He has many of the better traits of his father,<sup>131</sup> and Teraminta is the antithesis of hers, making them a preferable alternative to the two ideological extremes. It is true that Titus is passionate, melancholic,<sup>132</sup> effeminate, irresolute and susceptible, but he is also kind, unselfish, sensitive, conscientious, distinctly unambitious, and a touchstone of moral rectitude against which his father and brother are assessed and found wanting.<sup>133</sup> It is exactly these traits that Brutus strives to suppress in a misguided attempt to remould him in his own stoic, dispassionate image, which is itself demonstrated to be equally imperfect and unideal. Much of Titus' emotional instability stems from the insoluble dilemma of "renounc[ing] thy Father or thy Love" (2.1.356), and so he oscillates between a desire to satisfy both. This type of instability traditionally consumes an otherwise admirable individual: like Britannicus, Massina, Caesario, Theodosius and Varanes, Titus is a heroic lover who is tragically destroyed by a youthful inability to maintain a balance in his emotions at a moment of crisis, and by forces outside of his control. He is victimised by Brutus' steadfast animosity towards the Tarquins

theory of consistency, of exactly why it is that absolute consistency is so imperative to dramatic characterisation, the entire argument strikes me as counterintuitive.

<sup>129</sup> Brutus is minimally typified ambivalent statesman hero, a provocator who is minimally stylised, substantially coherent, medially whole, modestly symbolic, substantially accessible (medial complexity and maximal transparency), modestly derivative, medially conventional (maximal in his societal role as liberator but modest as a father, maximal in his functional role as political malcontent) and is static. Armistead notes several adaptations of the romance—Brutus is divested of his desire for Lucrece, and his patriotism strengthened into an obsession, the competition between this obsession and his paternal affection for Titus is intensified, and the devotion of the lovers is contrasted with his dispassionate political zeal (*Nathaniel Lee*, p. 132). This is a cogent summation of the derivation of Lee's character.

<sup>130</sup> Not only is the punishment contrary to the will of the gods, the senate and the people of Rome, it is also opposed by Brutus' co-consul. Although Valerius reluctantly accepts Brutus' decision, he also encourages Teraminta and Sempronia to plead for their lives, illustrating his personal aversion to the ruling.

<sup>131</sup> Teraminta describes Titus as the image of his father, although less severe (4.1.330ff). Titus sees himself as wholly different from Brutus, rather than as the gentler version of his father that Teraminta perceives.

<sup>132</sup> He has what psychologists might term a unipolar depressive disorder with suicidal tendencies.

<sup>133</sup> One must also allow for the fact that his excessive emotion results from his immaturity and from the lack of paternal instruction to date.

and his refusal to permit a union between the lovers because of Teraminta's ancestry, and the fact that she is an obstacle to Brutus' design. Titus is forced to choose between the affections of those he loves and is unable to do so.<sup>134</sup> Given that excessive, unnatural and dispassionate stoicism is to be viewed with scepticism, and Titus' intended transformation into a stoic is equally questionable, his choice of Teraminta is to be seen as admirable. Although he violates several oaths when under duress, like Borgia when left to his own devices he invariably makes the appropriate decision, as in his withdrawal from the conspiracy.<sup>135</sup> Although coerced into submission, when allowed the opportunity to consider his position he abjures the royalists. Whilst the prodigy probably influences this decision, it is evident that he is openly hostile to the conspirators from the outset, his support not only reluctant but feigned so as to appease them and protect his wife. When pressured he is exploitable but when permitted to consider his actions he invariably acts in a suitably virtuous manner.<sup>136</sup> Although Rothstein and Verdurmen both claim him to be protean,<sup>137</sup> Titus never changes attitude on a whim. Rather, he is repeatedly compelled to accept the commands of strong willed individuals because of his own pusillanimity, and rejects those orders when given the opportunity to consider the consequences of his actions.<sup>138</sup> Paradoxically, it is the very fact that he is weak-willed that prevents him from being protean, for it explains exactly why it is that he acts in a seemingly protean manner.

Loftis finds little to admire in Titus, arguing that he displays scant fortitude or perception, that his crimes whilst mitigated are nevertheless treasonous, and the sentence not only justified but appropriate.<sup>139</sup> This is not the way that Lee presents either the 'crime' or the punishment. It fails to appreciate the extent of Titus' conflict, the trauma at his conversion, his heroism in defying the conspirators (considering the likely result for both Teraminta and himself), the universal opposition to his sentence and the arbitrariness of it, and that he goes to his death with courage and honour. It also fails to appreciate the repeated emphases on Titus' worth and the symbolic value of the lovers. Firstly, and most notably, is the explicit attempt of

<sup>134</sup> Titus' conflict is not between duty (to his father) and love (for his wife), but rather between equal affection and devotion to both—his conflict between love and love is infinitely more traumatic. His decision to become a martyr to his father's cause is purely out of filial affection, and desire to obtain paternal affection in return, rather than from a conviction in the justice of his sentence. He equally questions his submission out of doubt in his father after Brutus ignored his vow to protect Teraminta from the mob (4.1.577-8; 5.1.75) rather than concern that it would serve the greater good.

<sup>135</sup> For example, the 'conflict' that he wages in his soliloquy—between following his father's dictate and his love for Teraminta—is remarkably one-sided, merely an exposition of the fact that he has already reverted from accepting Brutus' command to choosing Teraminta, rather than a struggle between the two choices.

<sup>136</sup> In this he differs from the romance figure who betrays his father for love but not under duress.

<sup>137</sup> Rothstein, p. 95; Verdurmen, *Concernment*, p. 231. Both view him as protean because he fails to adhere to a consistent course of action, and follows shifting feelings that destroy any chance of illustrating a unified identity.

<sup>138</sup> This excepts his punishment, of course, which is outside of his control, yet he even challenges this dictate.

<sup>139</sup> Loftis, p. xxiii.

the gods to save his life through a prodigy aimed specifically at him.<sup>140</sup> This is supplemented by numerous references to his worth. Teraminta calls him "[t]he wealth o'th' World unless you [Brutus] rob 'em of it" (4.1.34) and "[t]he hope of Earth" (4.1.395); he is a martyr (5.1.113)—with all that the term connotes; and to Valerius his death is equated with the loss of the topmast of the ship of state (5.2.188-90). Given that Brutus and Titus represents extreme positions of reason and passion, Titus is felt to be preferable because Teraminta acts as a mediating influence upon him whereas Brutus listens to none but himself. Symbolically the lovers represent the favoured future of Rome, a harmonious union of the scions of republicanism and monarchy who are arbitrarily and inappropriately destroyed against the will of all. One cannot help but suspect, given the extent of the human and divine opposition to Titus' execution, that Lee is speaking through Titus when he states that "was there ever day / Through all the Legends of recorded time / So sad as this?".<sup>141</sup>

Like Titus, Teraminta is a victim of irresistible forces and displays her worth in the manner in which she deals with that opposition, in the strength of her character and the intellect that she displays. Much has been made of her supposed sexual coercion of Titus into joining the conspiracy, and her supposedly questionable reversion when he threatens to forsake her and the world. What has been ignored is the pointed emphasis upon her compulsion to convert him, and her antipathy towards the royalist position. She repeatedly asserts that her mother forced her to swear not to consummate the marriage until she succeeds in obtaining his support.<sup>142</sup> Like Titus, she is exploited by her parents and is unable to oppose their command. Importantly, she never does so out of a belief in the appropriateness of the conspiracy.<sup>143</sup> In fact having discovered his attitude towards the royalists (and his doubt over her virtue), only then does she reveal the threat against her life, her willingness to die and insistence that he remain constant. This is not a desperate attempt to convince him to join the conspiracy, rather an explanation of the reason why she had attempted to convert him in the first place, so that he

<sup>140</sup> That the gods intervene after Titus has joined the conspiracy to advise him to recant while there is still time, clearly demonstrates that they do not feel that he has as yet committed an offence. That Titus recants and is penalised has as much to say about Brutus' irrational and injudicious anger as it does about his ideology.

<sup>141</sup> 5.1.109-11. Titus is a medially typified victimised hero, a reactor (although capable of contemplative decisions), modestly stylised, maximally coherent, maximally whole, medially symbolic, medially accessible (modest complexity and substantial transparency), medially derivative, medially conventional (medial in his societal role as loyal son, and substantial in his functional role as distressed lover) and static. On his symbolic function, Susan Owen correctly rejects Rangno's suggestion that Titus represents Monmouth, and Richard Brown's that Titus and Tiberius both represent aspects of the Duke, because this would require one to accept that Brutus symbolises Charles, which is counterintuitive (p.477).

<sup>142</sup> 3.3.72, 74, 79, 106.

<sup>143</sup> Titus admits that the first time he saw Teraminta she was melancholy (1.1.2). In claiming to see the "light" at 1.1.18, Teraminta reveals the cause of her melancholia to be an awareness of her father's tyranny to which she is averse. Like Pulcheria she has a social conscience, and so is being presented as an attractive alternative to him. This is reinforced by her emphasis on the baseness of her Tarquin blood (1.1.40-1), that her father is a tyrant (3.3.111), a "bloody black Usurper" (3.3.112) and is "guilty" (3.3.114). Her melancholia and pervading sense of foreboding subsequently increases his own.

would no longer despise her. Her insistence that he refuse to join the conspiracy is authentic, and reflects a preference that he decline even at the cost of her own life. She is the only character who maintains a consistent grasp on reality, criticising the excesses of both Titus and Brutus but also emphasising the inherent worth of her husband, defending him to Brutus in an attempt to prevent the loss of such an admirable and valuable individual. The pointed emphasis on her being Tarquin's bastard daughter highlights that she is unlike the other members of her family, and so is being offered as a preferable alternative to them as a future head of state in conjunction with her husband. Her mediating influence upon Titus is an important function of her character and illustrates her worth, as does her other notable symbolic function; that against her the values of the other characters are to be judged. Her death, like that of Titus, is evidently to be seen as a terrible loss to Rome's future.<sup>144</sup>

Stroup and Cooke have argued that Tiberius has insufficient reason for sacrificing his father to the revenge of the Tarquins and so becomes too melodramatic a villain to be plausible.<sup>145</sup> To suggest this not only ignores the textual evidence but also Lee's habitual practice of complicating his characters. Tiberius is a complex figure who not only demonstrates the failings of the monarchical position but also the republican.<sup>146</sup> He is an example of what Hunt terms the 'polemic ambiguity' that characterises the play.<sup>147</sup> Like Cassander and Pharnaces, Tiberius is a malcontent whose motivation is partly justifiable. He argues reasonably and with conviction for the royalist position, a factor that complicates and ameliorates his character, as does his resolute commitment to the cause through to the end. It is true that Tiberius is elitist, envious, ambitious, hubristic and vicious.<sup>148</sup> Yet, he does not betray his father purely out of a desire to ingratiate himself with the monarchy. He has a genuine, if misguided, conviction in the merits of a monarchical system of government, and acts accordingly. His assertion that monarchs are able to transcend inflexible law is cogent (2.1.9ff), especially in light of Brutus' subsequent action. He argues that the king is able to administer the spirit, rather than the letter, of the law, which is impossible in the rigid system

<sup>144</sup> Teraminta is a victimised heroine who is medially typified, a responder who is medially stylised, maximally coherent, maximally whole, substantially symbolic, medially accessible (modest complexity and maximal transparency), minimally derivative, medially conventional (minimal in her societal role as princess, and maximal in her functional role as distressed lover) and minimal anagnorisis. Lee turns the romance slave into the daughter of Tarquin to enhance her importance as a lover (of Titus now instead of Tiberius) and her symbolic value to the future success of the state. There is no trace of the strength of character in the romance figure that is revealed in the play.

<sup>145</sup> Stroup and Cooke, *Works*, II.319.

<sup>146</sup> Tiberius actually asserts that the murder of the consuls was ordered by royal decree (4.1.59), as well as that of the Senators and principal revolutionaries (4.1.61-3), thus his motivation in this regard is self-evidently obedient.

<sup>147</sup> Hunt, p.269.

<sup>148</sup> Tiberius reveals his elitism in his attitude to the commoners as "vile" (2.1.18). He despises his father because he courts the commoners rather than the nobility (3.1.23-4)—further evidencing his elitism. Tiberius is partly motivated by the "hope [of] a Fortune" (3.1.83)—he is not entirely disinterested or inspired by political conviction. Further references to his ambition appear at 3.1.144 and 4.1.118.



that Brutus advocates. Yet Lee also undermines Tiberius' position by highlighting the many defects of the system. Absolute monarchy, like all modes of government, is predicated upon benevolent rule, and fails when the ruler is despotic. His theory is also affected by the implication that culpability should not be based purely upon innocence or guilt, but also on an individual's ability to afford, or obtain, absolution from the king (2.1.20-4). Fabritius makes a cogent point that the mob are unruly (2.1.32)—that is unruleable—because they are so fickle and impressionable. He is an imbecile who illustrates the dangers of power in the hands of one such as he, but he also expresses a reasonable argument. Another is the suggestion by a priest that under shared rule not even the smallest issue can be resolved because of the conflicts of opinion and the inability to compromise (3.2.139-46), whereas a single ruler would settle the problem in an instant.<sup>149</sup> But these arguments are reduced by the continuing actions and elitist attitudes of the nobility and priesthood.<sup>150</sup> The royalists are predominantly made up of decadent young libertines wishing a return to the good old days, not citizens who have a genuine belief in the virtues of monarchical government. Tiberius, whilst partly of this view, does at least have a sincere belief in the system. Thus whilst the royalist argument is demonstrated to have some merits, the defects clearly outweigh them.<sup>151</sup>

Just as Tiberius and his colleagues represent the overall failings of the monarchical position, Vinditius exemplifies the dangers of placing power in the hands of the people. The mob are introduced planning "Sedition" (1.1.296) and seeking a leader, which provides Brutus with the opportunity to manipulate them to enable his own installation.<sup>152</sup> He invents a prodigy which the people willingly accept at Vinditius' instigation.<sup>153</sup> Despite one citizen emphasising that Brutus is well known to be deranged, the people accept his prodigy almost without question despite being unable to see it.<sup>154</sup> That the people elect the "King's Jester" as their

<sup>149</sup> This is part of Lee's complication of the political argument. For, whilst this argument may well be valid, it is perhaps also unideal—the immediate resolution of an issue may not result from careful consideration. Another example is Tiberius' ridicule of the republican argument that kings are simply flawed human beings and that the people are not sacrificial beasts of burden who exist at the king's pleasure (4.1.30-2). That republican argument is in fact quite a cogent one (and continues Vinditius' argument at 2.1.41ff).

<sup>150</sup> At 4.1.103 the priests refer to the counter-revolution (implicitly) and the sacrifice (explicitly) as a "black Design", suggesting it to be vicious and inappropriate. Brutus uses this same term at 4.1.306 to emphasise his (and Lee's) assessment of that action.

<sup>151</sup> Tiberius is a calculating villain who is medially typified, a provocator who is medially stylised, maximally coherent, maximally whole, substantially symbolic, medially accessible (modest complexity and substantial transparency), modestly derivative, medially conventional (minimal in his societal role as dutiful son and maximal in his functional role as villainous malcontent) and resolutely static.

<sup>152</sup> That Lee uses such a value-laden term evidences his adulteration of each of the ideological positions being presented in the play. No position is to be admired uncritically, all have their merits and defects to be stressed.

<sup>153</sup> Brutus chooses Vinditius as his claque, using him to convince the others of his prodigy and then allows him to determine what the prodigy means.

<sup>154</sup> The irony of this is emphasised by Brutus' query as to whether the "Fantom" is "but the making of my Fancy" (1.1.304), but this is ignored by the rebels because it suits their belief in divine displeasure at the monarchy. Vinditius ridiculously accentuates Brutus' pretensions to divine agency by claiming that the gods themselves told

leader reflects a fundamental problem of democratically elected rule. It illustrates the fickleness and susceptibility of the mob, and the danger that when manipulated they may place their trust in an inappropriate leader. Further concern over mob-rule surfaces in the summary trial, condemnation and execution of Fabritius (2.1.85ff). This action impugns the legality and moral rectitude for which the republic should (and will later) stand. Vinditius contrasts the "Peoples Law" (2.1.124-5) with the "Arbitrary power of Kings", yet the two are seen to be commensurate. Yet the republicans also make some valid arguments against monarchical rule. Vinditius reveals that he is anti-monarchical because even the most benevolent and efficacious monarchs are no better than other men (2.1.41ff). He adds that they are no more intelligent, skilled or capable of doing for the people anything that they cannot do for themselves, and so should not receive preferential treatment. Another valid point is made at 2.1.52-3 that the courtiers molest the wives and daughters of the citizenry and cause disturbances of the peace during their drunken debaucheries. This highlights the dangers of a nobility given carte blanche to do whatever they desire without fear of reprisal. Like all the principal characters of the play, Vinditius is presented both as contemptible and admirable. He is a caricature of a despicable city politician ambitious for undeserved honours (4.1.218-9), but nevertheless argues forcefully against monarchical rule—he exposes and so prevents the plot to restore the Tarquins, but is undermined by his summary execution of Fabritius. He too exemplifies the polemic ambiguity of this play.

Many critics now agree that *Lucius Junius Brutus* is neither polemical nor propagandist, but rather an apolitical examination of alternate forms of government.<sup>155</sup> The political themes basically serve as a complicating and enriching dimension,<sup>156</sup> forming part of the structural foundation for a work of tragedy rather than being the subject of a work of propaganda in a dramatic format. Although the depiction of the overthrow of Tarquin invariably invites a Whiggish interpretation,<sup>157</sup> this exegesis is conspicuously offset by the presentation of a politically and ethically ambiguous protagonist, and the equally ambivalent depictions of Vinditius and Tiberius as the exempla of the extremist republican and royalist

him of their anger and that he has seen ninety-nine and a half prodigies that very day (1.1.309-12). His pretensions are no more ridiculous than Brutus' and serve to highlight this fact.

<sup>155</sup> Leach, p.216; Hammond, *Development*, p.584; Rangno, pp.100, 128; Veith, p.59; Armistead, *Nathaniel Lee*, p.130; R. Brown, "Political Dramas", p.43, and "Nathaniel Lee", p.121; Verdurmen, "Brutus", p.81. Nevertheless the Whig position maintains its adherents—cf. Hume, "Cleve", p.122; Loftis, *Politics*, p.16; Wong, p.129; L. Brown, p.76; Owen, pp.463-82; and Kewes, pp.367ff. Hayne (pp.337-65) argues for the opposite extreme, claiming that the play actually supports the Tory position.

<sup>156</sup> Cf. Dobrée, p.120; Loftis, *Brutus*, p.xix; Leach, p.216; Armistead, *Nathaniel Lee*, p.131. Dobrée correctly notes that what appealed to Lee about Brutus was not his absolute patriotism, but rather the severity to his sons (p.120). Armistead adds that whilst Brutus' success is necessary for historical accuracy, Lee was more interested in the immediate results of his actions than in the ultimate benefits (*Nathaniel Lee*, p.131).

<sup>157</sup> Cf. Loftis, *Brutus*, p.xviii; Parker, p.4; Hayne, p.343; Kewes, pp.369, 373.



positions.<sup>158</sup> Lee may well be suggesting that an imperfect republic is preferable to degenerate monarchy, as Kewes affirms, and celebrating constitutionalism and the deposition of absolutist tyranny, as Loftis argues, yet his endorsement of the republican position is particularly muted, and must to be treated with reservation.<sup>159</sup> He illustrates throughout that all systems of government are deficient when improperly administered. Democracy (regardless of how equitable in reality) may be preferable to monarchy, but only if it is governed by a benevolent administrator, and is just as capable of collapsing into tyranny when manipulated by a self-interested demagogue. Brutus' utopian model is demonstrated to be distinctly dystopian when confronted with the reality of those who will implement it—Vinditius, the *mobile vulgus*, and Brutus himself—just as Tiberius' position is undermined by his own vices, and those of the Tarquins, Fabritius, the priesthood and the decadent nobility.<sup>160</sup> Vinditius and Brutus dispense arbitrary justice in a manner that demonstrates the royalist argument against it, just as the iniquity of the courtiers and priests illustrates the republican position. Once again Lee contrasts extreme personalities and ideologies to lament the destruction of the moderating alternative. Titus and Teraminta, the scions of republicanism and monarchy, are destroyed by equally extreme and untenable positions. So while Lee advocates admiration for Brutus' devotion to the state, he also invites criticism of the consul's exploitative and arbitrary methods. Lee is not interested in dramatic pamphleteering,<sup>161</sup> but rather in the manner in which political conflict enables him to focus on his continuing interest in the deleterious effects of absolute power, the dangers of inhuman devotion to abstract principles, the destructive results of impeded love and the insoluble conflict between love and duty, and the need for moderation in public and domestic affairs.<sup>162</sup> As Hammond suggests, the message of *Brutus* recalls that of *Venice Preserved*: that however justified a rebellion may be, it invariably brings injustice and suffering to the innocent in its wake.<sup>163</sup>

Apart from its interest as a study of conflicting political ideologies, *Lucius Junius Brutus* is also a profound tragedy of character. Few would go as far as Erwin Wong and suggest that Lee is more concerned with presenting republican propaganda than with

<sup>158</sup> Parker, p.4; Hayne, p.343. As Verdurmen notes, the play is exclusively orientated toward the delineation of states of despair and victimisation, which automatically undercuts any political message, let alone a dogmatic one. In this *Brutus* and his earlier "non-political" play *Mithridates* are felt to be commensurate ("Brutus", p.82).

<sup>159</sup> Kewes, p.367; Loftis, *Brutus*, p.xviii.

<sup>160</sup> This is not to mention the fact that Brutus utopia, enunciated at 5.2.42ff, is patently absurd—to suggest that idleness could be banished and excess repressed and all undesirables exiled from the state is illogical and impractical.

<sup>161</sup> In the dedication (ll.9-10), Lee was at pains to point out that the play is not even allegorical. Hunt (p.267), Rangno (pp.134, 161) and Richard Brown ("Political Dramas", p.45) all note that the differences between England and Rome are emphasised as pointedly as the similarities. The myth is, as Rangno states, generally applicable as a historical precept, but not as a concerted allegory (p.161).

<sup>162</sup> Hammond (*Development*, p.602), Rangno (p.104), and Richard Brown ("Nathaniel Lee", p.121) have all noted Lee's emphasis on the need for stability between a statesman's public and private responsibilities.

characterisation or verisimilitude,<sup>164</sup> the complex and realistic characterological study of the human condition being once again Lee's foremost concern.<sup>165</sup> It has long been held that Titus and Brutus divide between them many of the traditional qualities of the Aristotelian tragic hero, although the division is imprecise. It is true that Titus is the virtuous but flawed individual whose hamartia (uxorious passion) leads to an erroneous choice, suffering, contrition and death. Yet the play is not his tale but Brutus', and his situation more akin to the victimised hero than the tragic one. Although Loftis and Veith argue that Brutus displays no flaw,<sup>166</sup> this is not strictly the case. His hamartia stems from his hubristic belief that he, his ideology and his actions, are infallible and divinely sanctioned. He too is good but fallible, but, unlike Titus, his actions are deleterious to his humanity, moral rectitude and political integrity.<sup>167</sup> His service to the state makes him an exemplary statesman but his dehumanised actions and lack of contrition render him un-exemplary as an individual, and certainly not a tragic hero. Although he may be the appropriate man to resolve Rome's immediate crisis, he is not the appropriate choice for maintaining the new administration because he encourages others, and is encouraged by them, to think himself infallible. He combines Livy's revered patriot filtered through Machiavellian perception and further complicated by Lee, to create a character that is both exemplary and intensely flawed, the ultimate servant of the state who also exemplifies the ethical perversion that results from an obsessive devotion to a cause. Against him is placed his elder son Tiberius, whose beliefs and actions are equally untenable, inappropriate and demoralising. He is a complex figure who demonstrates the failings of both systems of government. Like Cassander and Pharnaces, he is a villainous malcontent who is nevertheless justifiably motivated, having a genuine if misguided belief in the merits of his position. This complicates his character, demonstrating that he is neither so melodramatic nor so motiveless as to be implausible. Although he is typical, he is all too believable and would have appeared so to a contemporary audience exposed to extremist politicians. The alternative to these equally dehumanising extremes is the imperfect but preferable lovers. Titus is a typical distressed lover who, like Britannicus, Massina and Theodosius, is the victim of his emotive sensibility, and by forces outside his control. He is a victim of his insoluble love and love

<sup>163</sup> Hammond, "Greatest Action", p.183.

<sup>164</sup> Wong, p.129.

<sup>165</sup> Although Verdurmen (*Concernment*, p.232n.49) and Veith ("Psychological Myth", p.62) have questioned the numerous supposedly "arbitrary, irrational, or seemingly unmotivated actions" of the major characters. Factors such as the mutual hatred between Brutus and Tiberius, Brutus' demand for Titus to renounce Teraminta, and the consul's praise of her which contrasts his condemnation of her, Brutus' abhorrence of the thought of sexuality in his son's marriage, and Titus' incredible lapse of memory in subsequently asking his father to protect Teraminta, are all introduced as being unmotivated. Yet each of these actions is wholly consistent with the represented characters.

<sup>166</sup> Loftis, p.xxii; Veith, pp.60-1.

<sup>167</sup> It is unfortunate that Brutus does not undergo regret or anagnorisis so as to make his tragedy complete.

conflict and his father's determination to recreate him in his own image. Yet for all of his defects (the results of youthful romanticism), he is the most humane, virtuous and morally upright of the Bruti. Whereas Brutus is guided by none but himself, and Tiberius by a corrupt court, Titus has the mediating influence of Teraminta to help maintain his rectitude. That the pair, who represent an ideal union of the two political ideologies and are moderate examples of each, are destroyed against the will of gods and men, serves to illustrate the dangers of corruptive power being vested in the hands of an individual, be he a monarch or a politician. Much of the sublimity of the play rests in there being no simple determination of the numerous ethical dilemmas—such as whether Brutus is to be admired for his absolute devotion to the state or criticised for his inappropriate methods, whether Tiberius is to be admired for his devotion to his monarchical father or criticised for his lack of devotion to his paternal one, whether Titus is to be admired for his heroism or criticised for his irresoluteness. Ultimately the play illustrates, and encourages one to question, the Machiavellian principle that the ends justify the means. The republic may well have been a qualified success for several hundreds of years, but Lee invites us to question whether the method of founding was appropriate and whether the cost, both to Brutus and Titus, was worth it.

#### Conclusion.

The tragedies of the year 1679-80 advance, and in some cases represent the culmination of, ideas and character types formulated in Lee's earlier plays. They contain numerous complexly generated figures, and several of the foremost of his entire canon. Lee presents many of the same universal themes that have permeated his works to date, so as to present improved versions of earlier character types as well as variations of those types. Thematic interest centres upon the deleterious nature and the dangers of the misuse of absolute power, the fall of a hero because of his ungoverned passions, and the catastrophic results of impeded love and the insoluble conflict between love and duty. His examination of the nature of power, in particular, reaches its climax in *Lucius Junius Brutus* in which he most succinctly manifests that all systems of government are defective when inappropriately maintained.

The period begins with *Cæsar Borgia*, a tragedy of jealousy and manipulation loosely patterned upon Shakespeare's *Othello*. Its success rests upon the efficacious presentations of Borgia and Machiavel, two characters that rank amongst Lee's finest. In the title-character especially, Lee has created arguably the most enigmatic and psychologically traumatised character of his corpus. Modelling his character on *Othello*, Lee accentuates the extent to which the duke is manipulated into vice, the degree of internal oscillation he undergoes, and

the self-discovery he achieves. The result is a complex character who combines aspects of Shakespeare's figure with ideas drawn from Lee's own Augustus and Mithridates. So too is the case with Machiavel. Whilst he shares many of the characteristics of the calculating and diabolical villain categories—his being arguably the best imitation of Iago in the Caroline period—he also transcends the foundation. Lee takes the unrepentant villain (a Iago-like figure previously illustrated in Lee's own Cassander, Pharnaces and Pelopidas), and raises the type from a lesser intermediary into an influential central figure, by focussing upon the remorse and rehabilitation that results from an awareness of the impropriety of his actions (an aspect derived from Petronius and Mithridates). These changes result in a character that ultimately displays many of the features of an Aristotelian tragic hero. This is particularly innovative, no other Leean hero having derived from such a familiar basis for a villain as Iago.

This splendid tragedy is followed by Lee's second great blockbuster *Theodosius*, which uses a dual plot structure to parallel the development of two figures from flawed to admirable heroes. From a characterological perspective Varanes is unique in Lee's pantheon in that he is a principal figure without a discernible Leean predecessor, as well as influencing no subsequent portrayals. Although he ultimately fulfills the role of the traditional pathetic lover-hero he is introduced in stark contrast to the type, behaving with intolerable cruelty towards the professed object of his affection. Marcian, on the other hand, has a common Leean heritage. Just as he had done with Machiavel, Lee centralises an intermediary type-character (the soldier-counsellor—derived from his own Clytus and Archelaus), accents the development of his love (traditionally anathema to the type) and deliberately diminishes the hypercriticism that is fundamental to these figures, to create what appears to be Lee's ideal ruler. He represents a humanised amalgamation of the dispassionate natures of both the soldier-counsellor type and the statesman-hero, as introduced in the figure of Scipio. This play is also notable for a return, in the figure of Pulcheria, to the dynamic heroines that Lee had produced in his foundational plays, particularly Sophonisba and Gloriana. Interesting and influential female characters of this nature would be repeated in Teraminta and the Marguerite of *The Duke of Guise*, as well as the villainous Catherine de Medici, and the enigmatic Princesses of Cleve and Jainville.

Lee's increasing characterological and dramaturgical sophistication culminates in his magnum opus, *Lucius Junius Brutus*, and the masterful representation of the enigmatic Brutus. It is upon this tragedy that his worth as a dramatist is finally and firmly established. As with Marcian, the depiction of Brutus continues and crowns the dramatist's recent focus upon the statesman-hero. Whereas Marcian progresses out of a soldier-counsellor foundation to become both an exemplary statesman and individual, Brutus derives more directly from Scipio, exceeding that character as the ultimate example of the ultra-stoic founder of a new world

order at the expense of one's humanity. Although Brutus remains typified in character because of his immutable resolve, lack of psychological conflict and total absence of remorse, this is more than compensated for by the degree of ethical and political ambiguity that is generated as to the propriety of his actions. It is in the depiction of Titus that the affective focus of the play resides. In him Lee presents the profound internal struggle with which we have become accustomed in his tragedies, continuing the irresolvable and catastrophic struggles that permeate his plays. The admirable depictions of these figures, as well as the evident structural, thematic and stylistic skill, account for the profound merits of this work, the culmination of many of the characterological and dramaturgical ideas formulated in the foundational, developmental and sophisticated tragedies that have preceded this Carolean masterpiece.

## Chapter Six.

### Final Works: The French Plays and *Constantine*.

The Massacre of Paris (late 1679 or early 1681 for 7 November 1689).

More so than for any other play written by Lee between the years 1679 and 1681, the date of the composition of *The Massacre of Paris* remains the subject of debate. Given that the play overtly parallels the Popish plot and the massacre of the Huguenots in Paris on St. Bartholomew's day (24 August) 1572, the terminus a quo can be established as 18 October 1678—the date of Sir Edmund Berry Godfrey's murder and the commencement of plot hysteria. The terminus ad quem is 18 July 1682 when *The Duke of Guise* was suppressed, Lee admitting in the dedication to *The Princess of Cleve* to having used two scenes from the already completed *Massacre in Guise*. If we accept an approximate compositional time-line of *Oedipus* (mid-1678), *Borgia* (spring 1679), *Theodosius* (by summer 1680), *Brutus* (by December 1680), *Cleve* (winter 1681-2), *Guise* (completed by 18 July 1682) and *Constantine* (mid-1683), a date of either late 1679 or early 1681 is equally plausible.<sup>1</sup> Stroup and Cooke opt for the spring of 1679 at the height of anti-Catholic sentiment, Hume the latter date because the dedication of *Cleve* links *Massacre* directly to that work. The play is considered here with *Guise*, since the two tragedies are derived from the same source, and several characters, particularly the Duke of Guise, appear in both, thus offering me the opportunity to assess their syntagmatic unity. Although it is not my intention to engage in the debate over chronology, the later date seems to me more probable.<sup>2</sup>

In *The Vindication of the Duke of Guise* Dryden states that *Massacre* was suppressed at the request of the French Ambassador.<sup>3</sup> The play was eventually performed before Queen Mary by the United Company at the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane on 7 November 1689. Van Lennep notes that it elicited much weeping during its premiere.<sup>4</sup> It was revived at Drury Lane

<sup>1</sup> Both dates have their adherents; Van Lennep (*Sources*, p.266), Stroup and Cooke (*Works*, II.3), Armistead (*Nathaniel Lee*, pp.95-6), Verdurmen (*Concernment*, p.273), Hunt (p.189), Love (*Satire*, p.237), Beers (p.20) and Rangno (p.45) all opt for the former, Hume, Richard Brown ("Heroic Satirized", p.387n.8) and Winn (cf. Roper, p.478n.15) the latter. In "Satiric Design" (p.119) Hume argues that Lee either wrote *Massacre* in spring 1679 at the height of anti-Catholic hysteria over the Popish plot and then held on to it for two or three years before using parts of it in *Guise*, or he wrote *Massacre* after *Brutus* in spring or summer 1681, the prompt suppression of *Massacre* immediately leading him to use parts and ideas from it in both *Cleve* and *Guise* in late 1681 c: early 1682. The dedication of *Cleve* also seems to link *Massacre* more directly to *Cleve* (in that *Cleve* "was a Revenge for the Refusal of [Massacre]") than to the earlier period (p.120).

<sup>2</sup> Not only is the dating contentious but it is certainly not improbable that Lee amended the play prior to its eventual production to suit an even more fervently anti-French Williamite audience. If this is the case then the play properly resides at the end of his career.

<sup>3</sup> Roper (ed.), *Works of Dryden*, xiv, p.343, ll.28-9.

<sup>4</sup> Van Lennep, *Sources*, p.269.



on 9-11 August and 30 October 1716 after the Old Pretender's invasion, and at Covent Garden for three nights from 31 November 1745 following that of his son.<sup>5</sup> The principal source of the plot is Enrico Caterino Davila's *Historia Delle Guerre di Francia* (1630), supplemented by ideas drawn from Bacon, who had used the massacre to demonstrate his philosophical arguments.<sup>6</sup> Most critics have found *Massacre* to be one of the simplest and most effective of Lee's plays.<sup>7</sup> Criticism of the depictions has been equally favourable—Stroup and Cooke, for instance, arguing that the "characters are more complex and convincing than most of Lee's".<sup>8</sup>

A notable aspect of this tragedy is its concentration upon three protagonists who receive an equal amount of attention. This is a return to a structure similar to *Sophonisba*, although the Duke of Guise, Admiral de Coligny and King Charles IX are more equally treated than in the earlier play which is dominated by Massinissa to a greater extent than any one character in *Massacre*. All three figures present characteristics of the hero. Surprisingly, the former has received comparatively little critical attention despite being a particularly complex figure that effectively combines the distressed lover, vengeful malcontent and ambitious villain types. From the outset Guise reveals a genuine affection for Marguerite, despite being partly influenced by his ambition.<sup>9</sup> His nonchalant discussion of her with his brother the Cardinal (1.1.67ff) strikes me as braggadocio and not entirely sincere.<sup>10</sup> It is true that he does not love her with the purity that she does him, but his affection is nevertheless evident. He later reveals his genuine affection for Marguerite but admits being compelled to reject her (3.2.18ff). His suit to Cleve is sudden and immoderate and clearly a reactive attempt to achieve an emotional divorce from Marguerite. It also fits with his ambitious desire to marry above his station (Cleve is a princess) but the intended marriage is evidently unappealing to him—he has no affection

<sup>5</sup> Van Lennep, *Sources*, p.270; Stroup and Cooke, *Works*, II.3. The only edition of this play was published in November (Michaelmas) 1690 (II.288). Scenes from the play were also translated into French in 1790 as *Scenes Singulieres, extraites d'une Tragedie Angloise intitulee: La St-Barthelmi, ou le Massacre de Paris. Par Nathanael Lee*.

<sup>6</sup> Davila's history was translated by Sir Charles Cotterell and William Aylesbury as *The Historie of the Civill Warres of France* in 1647, reprinted Hillary term 1677/8 (I.305). Ham adds that the play probably derived its inspiration from Bishop Burnet's *Relation of the Barbarous and Bloody Massacre* (Michaelmas term 1678—1.330) which deliberately parallels recent events and those of the massacre in 1572 (p.167). Other possible sources include Henry Estienne's (attr.), *Discours Merveilleux de la Vie, Actions and Deportemens de Catherine de Medici* (1575, with reprints to 1666), Samuel Clarke's *A Martyrologie* (1652 and 1677), François-Eudes de Mézeray's *A General Chronological History of France* (1643-51) and Jacques-Auguste de Thou's *Historia sui Temporis* (translated by Edward Stephens as *Popish Policies...in the Histories of the Parisian Massacre*, 1674) amongst others as well as Christopher Marlowe's *The Massacre at Paris*, but Davila is likely to have been the most influential.

<sup>7</sup> Hammond is one of the few notable exceptions, viewing the play as a hastily written and superficial potboiler in which lack of motivation is the chief weakness (*Development*, pp.585, 586, 595).

<sup>8</sup> Stroup and Cooke, *Works*, II.5. Van Lennep refers to the "skilful characterization" (pp.327, 328n.2), and cites in support an assessment in the *Edinburgh Review* in 1823 claiming the play "shows a skill in character equal to Otway, to whom Lee is commonly inferior in that respect" (Volume 38, p.201).

<sup>9</sup> Marguerite refers to his ambition at 1.1.18, 5.1.156 and 5.1.164.

<sup>10</sup> He plays the ambitious libertine but is not entirely of that persuasion, and admits as much at 3.2.34ff. Although he claims to love Marguerite purely out of ambition (1.1.94-5), this is evidently not the whole truth.

for Cleve whatsoever and their union would have been a mere marriage of convenience. At 3.2.123-4 he confesses to courting Cleve out of revenge rather than out of inconstancy, and later admits to pretending to loath Marguerite and love Cleve out of anger because of Marguerite's seeming infidelity (3.2.157-9). That the scene ends with a reconciliation demonstrates that his love is stronger than his ambition—he is, after all, defying the dictate of the king by renewing their relationship.<sup>11</sup>

However his dominating trait is his all-consuming desire for revenge, a disposition that is far more influential than either his love or ambition. Early in the play the duke admits, with evident sincerity, that he is absolutely prepared to give up Marguerite, and sell his own soul, to gain revenge on the Admiral (1.1.120ff). Whilst this might seem to support the allegation that he is nothing more than a libertine and that his affection for the Princess is limited,<sup>12</sup> it serves to illustrate the sheer extent of his desire for revenge. In this he exemplifies the typical Jacobean revenger—obsessed with exacting revenge regardless of the cost, a fixation that is detrimental to his rectitude. Guise refers to his "Ambition, and...vow'd Revenge" (3.2.205),<sup>13</sup> and to the "Venom / That swells me all within" (4.1.58-9) to illustrate his pervasive obsession. After reconciling with Marguerite, Guise agrees to the king's command to forego her, yet it is notable that this occurs only after Charles reveals that the Admiral is to be killed as soon as the marriage is effected, thereby satisfying Guise's obsession. Nevertheless the decision to give her up is still not an easy one.<sup>14</sup> It is only the vehemence of his anger, stemming from one of the most justifiable of causes—the murder of his father—that prevents a fulfillment of their union. His desire for revenge is thus more legitimate than those of Cassander, Pharnaces and Pelopidas, whose provocation is less grievous. The duke is a noble man who has earned the love of the discerning and morally virtuous Marguerite but who is blinded by his hatred of Chastillon whom he believes to have been the prime mover in his father's assassination. His obsession demoralises him and leads him to vicious actions, whilst his behaviour towards Marguerite remains virtuous. When read from a psychological perspective, Guise is a

<sup>11</sup> His ultimate decision to become a libertine is reactionary—a choice never to fall in love again because of the pain incurred by the loss of his love.

<sup>12</sup> Evidence of his love throughout the play undermines the likelihood of his being a rake.

<sup>13</sup> Guise reveals his ungoverned passion (his tendency to easily become enraged and act irrationally) here. This is something that a calculating villain *never* does, evidencing that he is, as far as Lee is concerned, not meant to be viewed as one.

<sup>14</sup> It requires not only Charles and Catherine to justify the proposed action (rather than simply ordering it done), but also to threaten Marguerite's life to ensure his compliance. Guise's love is so intense that he feels compelled to reveal the reason for his betrayal to Marguerite (5.1.115). Nevertheless it is not without significance that during his explanation he is distracted by the sound of a gun-shot (the one aimed at Coligny) and temporarily ceases to defend his actions.

sympathetic (or at least empathetic) figure and the play as much his tragedy as it is the Admiral's and the king's.<sup>15</sup>

Marguerite's love for Guise is so ardent that there is a suspicion at 1.1.45-8 that it is excessive—it is feverish and maddening, not terms one associates with requited love.<sup>16</sup> She remains devoted to him until he destroys their contract of marriage—maintaining her affection for Guise despite threats of violence and disinheritance against her. She is appalled by his involvement in the conspiracy—even more galling than the fact that he betrays her is the fact that he does so out of an ulterior motive of revenge and ambition, sacrificing love to a heinous desire. She feels that she has been made an unwitting accomplice in the action and is dishonoured as a result. Yet for all this it is clear that she still loves him and has been unable to effect an emotional divorce (5.1.187). She is virtuous and morally upright, displaying an intense revulsion for villainy to such an extent that she actively defends the life of a husband for whom she has a professed antipathy.<sup>17</sup> However, she lacks dimension, being an automaton who serves an affective function in the play, and who accentuates the character of Guise. Her representation is not individuated from the victimised hero and distressed lover types.<sup>18</sup>

Whilst Gaspard de Coligny is presented as the hero of the play, as is typical of Lee's characterisations, his heroic status is adulterated so as to render his portraiture more complex and verisimilar. One of the first references to this figure in the play is to the "Haughty Admiral" (1.2.117), alluding to the excessive pride that is a principal trait of his character. Shortly after occurs a reference to his "proud Ambition" (1.2.146) to highlight the importance of this flaw. Another example of this characteristic appears in his immodest admission of his own achievements at 2.1.33ff. Along with his pride, a prominent feature is his religious zealotry. This is perhaps best displayed in his tactless attack upon Catholicism before the king, who was known to be a fervent adherent. The vociferous critique is immoderate and undiplomatic, and does little to bring the two religious factions together—the ostensible intent of the marriage. The pervading theme of the play—the deleterious effects of an obsession with a cause—is evident in the Admiral as much as in the duke. Like Brutus, Coligny presumptively assumes that he has been given a divine mandate, in this case to spread Protestantism

<sup>15</sup> Guise is a victimised villain who is minimally atypical, an instigator who is minimally stylised, maximally coherent, maximally whole, medially symbolic, medially accessible (modest complexity and maximal transparency), modestly derivative, substantially conventional (substantial in his societal role as courtier and medial in his functional roles as distressed lover and maximal as a revenger) and is static.

<sup>16</sup> Hers is a clinical example of a psycho-pathological study of love melancholy based on faculty psychology.

<sup>17</sup> As Rangno notes Marguerite is the moral arbiter of the play (p.50n.10).

<sup>18</sup> Marguerite is medially stereotypical, a reactor who is medially stylised, maximally coherent, modestly whole, substantially symbolic, medially accessible (modest complexity and substantial transparency), modestly derivative, substantially conventional (substantial in her societal role as princess and maximal in her functional roles as distressed lover and victimised heroine) and is static.

throughout France, and acts from an absolute conviction in the rightness of that belief. His claim that "I judg'd 'twas time to view [expose] the ghastly flaws / Of that Religion [Catholicism] that would rend the World" (2.1.49-50) demonstrates his arrogance.<sup>19</sup> Further mention of his own "dauntless Powers" (4.2.32), to being the "Judge and Arbitrator, / The Genius and the Oracle of France" (4.2.43-4) and the "Genius of the Kingdom" (4.2.94) confirm his immoderate self-love. This is especially the case given that his military prowess is limited—Guise derisively emphasises that the Admiral has been repeatedly defeated in battle whilst simultaneously gaining preferment (4.2.71ff). Whilst Guise is biased against him, there is a certain veracity to the claims, especially given that the Admiral never challenges the claim. In fact the main function of 4.2 is to highlight the Admiral's egotism and hubris and undermine his heroic pretensions.<sup>20</sup> His decision to remain in Paris is a choice based on pride—he has every opportunity to leave, even being warned that he should do so—but chooses to remain and so contributes to his downfall. His decision to preemptively attack the Spanish without permission is a direct violation of the royal prerogative and says a lot about his hubris, arrogance and loyalty. One must also remember that this is not his first offence against the crown—Coligny's many earlier transgressions (2.1.34ff), including having instigated the Huguenot uprising, are admitted by him.<sup>21</sup>

Lee follows Davila in illustrating hubris as a central trait of Chastillon's character, the historian accentuating the Admiral's pride, ambition and vainglory at the expense of all others. Yet to offset the unattractive aspects of the Admiral's character, Lee turned to more sympathetic historians such as Jacques-Auguste de Thou and Gilbert Burnet who stress his virtuous traits of nobility, chivalry, sincerity, rectitude, fortitude and devotion to the reformed church. For instance Lee ignores Davila's claim that it was Coligny's egotistical desire for advancement that drew him to Paris, instead making the decision a reluctant one, enforced by his loyalty to the Queen of Navarre, who is committed to this course of action.<sup>22</sup> It is also a decision tinged with suspicion, premonition of disaster and imminent death.<sup>23</sup> This allows Lee to focus upon the fact that the Admiral is willing to hazard death to demonstrate to both religious factions the extent of his loyalty to the state, his people, and his religion, and his desire to advance the interests of each. It is in his patriotism, loyalty and love that the character

<sup>19</sup> Leach's observation that the Admiral is the champion of religious freedom rather than of Protestantism (p.138) is ingenious, but devalues the vehemence with which Coligny prosecutes his cause. His intent is to convert the Catholics to his ideology (which he believes is his divinely ordained mission), rather than simply to exist in harmony with 'heretics'.

<sup>20</sup> Another reference to his ambition appears at 4.1.44, and to his pride at 5.1.136.

<sup>21</sup> The Admiral even confesses to being an outlaw who "often turn'd your Subjects Arms" (3.3.26).

<sup>22</sup> He also admits at 3.3.11 that part of his decision to come to Paris is a desire to prove that he is not a traitor.

of Coligny is ameliorated. His patriotism is emphasised in his repeated hope that the king would rule the kingdom alone (2.1.14, 27-8, 76 and 125), because Gaspard knows Charles to be a benevolent ruler who is easily manipulated into vice by his mother and those of her attitude at court. His desire to help make Charles an independent leader makes Chastillon admirable. Unfortunately he is somewhat misguided in the expression of his patriotism. He allows himself to be manipulated into believing that he is to replace the Queen Mother as the king's advisor, thus succumbing to his ambition, pride, and the sense of the superiority and rightness of his cause (2.1.87-8).

As Armistead suggests, nothing more clearly distinguishes the Admiral from his antagonists than this predestinarian assumption, which emphasises his allegiance to higher ideals than those of the self-serving and heretical court.<sup>24</sup> Particularly it brings into relief the weakness of the king and treachery of the Queen Mother. For, as Rangno correctly points out, Chastillon's errors were guileless and result from the adherence to principle, whereas the royal wrongs were more pernicious because covert, and guided by subtlety, hypocrisy and deceit.<sup>25</sup> Although he shares characteristics of the Aristotelian tragic hero (being a good but flawed figure whose hamartia—hubris—leads to proairesis, metabasis and thanatos), Coligny undergoes no regret or anagnorisis. In fact his absolute belief in the appropriateness of his position properly makes him an exemplary statesman-hero rather than a tragic one. These figures do not inspire pity and fear, but rather admiration for their fortitude, as Aristotle points out. His death becomes more of a celebration of martyrdom than a lament over a tragic downfall.<sup>26</sup>

Whilst neither Guise nor the Admiral display much psychological conflict, Charles IX undergoes considerable oscillation between his virtuous and vicious personality states. Throughout the king is represented as conscience-ridden, vacillatory, pusillanimous, neurotic and paranoid.<sup>27</sup> He epitomises the corruptive nature of the court environment—despite his wish to rule with benevolence, he is easily manipulated into vice. His capacity for virtue makes him an impediment to his mother who would rather see her younger son Anjou on the throne,

<sup>23</sup> Premonitions of catastrophe, such as those experienced by the Admiral (2.1.80bff; 3.3.4ff), are traditionally the province of the hero. That Charles experiences a premonition attests to the fact that he is meant to be seen in this manner.

<sup>24</sup> Armistead, *Nathaniel Lee*, p. 102.

<sup>25</sup> Rangno, p. 17.

<sup>26</sup> The Admiral is modestly stereotypical, a responder who is minimally stylised, maximally coherent, maximally whole, medially symbolic, medially accessible (modest complexity and maximal transparency), medially derivative, maximally conventional (maximal in his societal roles as Admiral, and maximal in his functional roles as statesman hero) and does not undergo anagnorisis.

<sup>27</sup> The very first reference to the king in the play is to his being "wary" (1.1.2). References to his fear (1.2.142) and his inability to sleep (1.2.151) further evidence his paranoia. Charles' environment heightens his anxiety which is then augmented and exploitatively directed at the Huguenots by the Queen Mother.

because he shares her ideology.<sup>28</sup> Charles suffers from a conflict between his love and admiration for the Admiral (his one time advisor) and his fear of losing suzerainty and the desire to illustrate his power so as to maintain control. He is torn between a desire to do good and Catherine's attempt to convert him into a conscienceless Machiavellian politician. It is she who instigates the conspiracy against the Huguenots, the king being traumatised by the idea but unable to oppose her influence.<sup>29</sup> She plays upon his fear of losing absolute power, and of the overthrow of the state's Catholic religion (of which he is a fervent devotee—3.2.197) to steel his resolve to act against the Protestants. Yet when allowed to consider the proposal he doubts its propriety. Evidently he must have had some continuing concerns over the intended massacre before 3.2.215ff for him to admit that, having just heard of the Admiral's attack on Mons, he *now* agrees to the proposal. His admission to having been "Reduc'd...to this state" (3.2.230) illustrates his continuing concern over the conspiracy. Through this irresolution Lee demonstrates that, like Guise, Charles is not an absolute villain, but capable of virtuous behaviour. Like Mithridates, the king is manipulated into vice against his better inclination and so is more sympathetic than a self-directed villain. His ultimate contrition also recalls the king of Pontus.

Despite being manipulated into vice, Charles is nevertheless capable of ignoble behaviour. From the moment that he hears of the attack on Mons (3.2.210ff), the king becomes a forceful, proactive, commanding and driven villain, acting with the conviction of an absolute monarch, if unfortunately in a malevolent manner. He feigns affection for the Huguenots, admits to ordering the assassination of Lignerolles, and warns his brother that he too is in danger of violence.<sup>30</sup> That he acts in this manner to prevent the plot being uncovered is proactive and blatantly politic. Even Catherine expresses surprise at his vehemence (3.2.270-2). Her astonishment demonstrates that it is extraordinary for him to act maliciously without having been manipulated to do so, that he is not normatively villainous.<sup>31</sup> Whilst this dynamic behaviour is almost inconsistent with the earlier pusillanimous state, the change results from a decision to accept the proposal absolutely and to act in the manner demanded by that choice, despite his many misgivings. Yet for all his dynamism, it is notable that Catherine continues to maintain influence over him—it is she who recommends that the Queen of Navarre be

<sup>28</sup> Catherine wishes to rule vicariously through her son, Anjou, whom she sees as her second-self.

<sup>29</sup> Charles' exasperated statement at 1.2.79 makes it clear that the Queen Mother has instigated the conspiracy against the Huguenots. Although he later claims (at 3.2.228) that the intended massacre was his idea, this statement occurs during an agitated, conscience-ridden state of guilt over the proposal. Like Brutus with Vinditius, Catherine is likely to have broached the subject in such a manner as to make it seem that he himself had thought of the solution.

<sup>30</sup> One must remember that dissimulation is not Charles' preferred method of attack, as he admits at 3.2.280ff.

<sup>31</sup> It is also worth noting that his actions are perpetuative rather than causative: it is requisite to the protection of a plot which he has been directed into.



poisoned (4.1.30) and suggests the ensuing course of action against Coligny (4.1.42ff). It should also be remembered that the king is disordered by a poison that impairs him both in mind and body.<sup>32</sup> That he needs to be physically assisted (at 3.2.278-9), and would presumably need similar assistance elsewhere, is intended to highlight that his impairment is directly associated with his poisoning (itself revealed at 3.2.193ff). His poison-instigated psycho-physiological disorder must be taken into consideration as a mitigating factor when determining the degree of his culpability.<sup>33</sup>

At the beginning of Act 5 Charles once again exhibits a conscious-ridden, vacillatory state. His "Genius" warns him that God is attempting to divert him from his odious course of action (5.1.19). This manifestation is a personification of his conscience, so the revelation is not so much irrefutable evidence of divine displeasure as it is an admission that the king knows his actions to be wrong.<sup>34</sup> The resultant continuation of the proposal must therefore be seen as a conscious and deliberate error (the most heinous type of hamartia) because of his awareness of its impropriety. It is, however, partly offset by the fact that he is duped into believing the warning to be demonic rather than divine (5.1.45-8), and placated by the claim that the two princes (Conde and Navarre) are not to be harmed (5.1.82). This further evidences the absolute power that Catherine, and the church, maintain over him. When left to his own devices he doubts the propriety of their proposal, but when accompanied by his mother and others, is easily coaxed into acceptance.

Lee imputes to Charles a degree of reluctance, pity and remorse for which the only historical warrant seems to have been the unconventional view expounded by Estienne that he was normatively "of a good disposition, had not [Catherine] practised at menes to corrupt his tender youth".<sup>35</sup> Armistead notes that Charles unsuccessfully struggles to reconcile the demands of conscience with political expediency, but lack the initiative and strength to exercise effective temperate rule.<sup>36</sup> Despite lacking the traits necessary to bring about a satisfactory conclusion, it is the king who is the Aristotelian tragic hero of the play. He is the good but fallible figure whose hamartia (his pusillanimity and susceptibility to the influence of strong willed individuals) leads to a reluctant participation in an odious plot, profound psychological conflict over the proposal, regret over the action, repentance, moral rehabilitation and death. His tragedy is that he lacks the strength of character to resist his mother and prevent the catastrophe. He places his trust in those (family and church) who

<sup>32</sup> Charles is most certainly not hyperchondriacal, despite Armistead's assertion (*Nathaniel Lee*, p.132).

<sup>33</sup> In this he is comparable with Alexander whose poisoning causes him to lose control of his mental faculties.

<sup>34</sup> Whether or not the manifestation is physical or psychological, Charles clearly believes the genius to have been sent by God to communicate the divine disapproval, as he reveals again at 5.5.19.

<sup>35</sup> Estienne, p.39.

<sup>36</sup> Armistead, *Nathaniel Lee*, pp.104-5.

outwardly appear to be loyal to him but who bring him to mental and physical destruction, whilst those who are truly loyal are destroyed as enemies. This predicament is accentuated by his intuitive fear of his "allies" yet he suppresses that instinct to his own detriment. Charles is to be sympathised with for his victimisation at the hands of his own mother and for his conscience-ridden suffering over his decision, and admired for the ultimate rehabilitation of his personal virtue. Lee admirably exploits the pathos inherent in the depiction of a pusillanimous king driven to ignoble acts by pressures he is unable to control. The extent of his conflict makes him by far the most complex, atypical and interesting character of the play.<sup>37</sup> To suggest, as Wong does, that the king is an "ineffectual cipher" is to ignore the fact that *The Massacre of Paris* is Charles' tragedy.<sup>38</sup>

To this end Lee divests the king of responsibility for the massacre (as was historically the case) and makes Catherine the prime mover.<sup>39</sup> The Queen Mother is a textbook Machiavellian, and out-Machiavel's Machiavel in the sheer extent of her depravity. To Guise she is "Cassiopeia" (1.1.96) and a "Dissembler" (3.2.45), to the Admiral a "tempter", a "Serpent equal to the first" (2.1.2ff) and a "Second Eve" (2.1.258), and to Antramont a witch who has sold her soul to the devil (2.1.222ff). Even Marguerite refers to her mother's devotion to "Glory, Vengeance, and Ambition" (3.1.9). Except for Alberto Gondi (1.2.60ff) nobody in the play has anything good to say about her.<sup>40</sup> Catherine is notable for her Machiavellian ideology, in particular her manipulative skill and the extreme to which she is prepared to go to achieve her intentions.<sup>41</sup> Guise refers to the fact that Marguerite has been taught "cunning" by her mother (3.2.44) as evidence of the influence that she maintains over her children. Charles' admission that "thy flames inspire me" (3.2.215) demonstrates her demoralising effect upon

<sup>37</sup> Charles is medially atypical, a responder who is modestly stylised, medially coherent, medially whole, modestly symbolic, maximally accessible (maximal complexity and transparency), modestly derivative, medially conventional (minimal in his societal role as monarch, substantially in his functional role as tragic hero, but only modest as a calculating villain) and achieves modest anagnorisis. Lee's portrait of a conscience-ridden king has little foundation in history. Not only did Charles IX survive the massacre, but he continued his persecution of the Huguenots. As Van Lennep notes, Lee may have derived the king's consternation before the massacre from Mezeray, and the presentation of a well-meaning weakling manipulated by a villainous mother from Estienne (pp.314, 317). Marlowe may have provided the impetus for his contrition. It is also entirely possible that the manipulation, conflict and repentance simply derives from Lee's characterological approach in many of his principal characters.

<sup>38</sup> Wong, p.22.

<sup>39</sup> By transferring the moral responsibility, Lee was able to focus on the recurring theme of the deleterious effects of Machiavellian counsel.

<sup>40</sup> It is interesting that Lee feels the need to introduce Gondi's defence of Catherine to complicate an otherwise melodramatic figure. His reference to the fact that she managed to administer the kingdom despite almost insurmountable opposition paints her as a dynamic, admirable woman, if censured for her policy elsewhere. Another example of amelioration occurs at 5.1.73bff where Charles notes that her previous policy had been to pardon rebellious subjects. That her current position is contrary can either be explained as this being the "utmost, last Necessity" or that she had hitherto advocated caution until such time as victory could be assured.

<sup>41</sup> The Admiral refers to her Machiavellian policies at 2.1.18ff and 2.1.257ff. When Chastillon refers to an incident in which Catherine's rage led to open retaliation, Cavagnes admits that such overt rage is uncommon (2.1.46-7). That is, she is normally far too subtle, conniving and rational for impassioned vengeance.

him. Even Guise is corrupted by her influence. Catherine's disdain for Marguerite's love of Guise (3.1.10ff), and "foolish Passions" (4.1.70), illustrate her antipathy towards the gentler emotions. This attitude is typical of Machiavellian politicians such as Machiavel and Brutus who see love as an impediment to the dispassionate administration of the state. Marguerite's passion, like Charles' conscience, are obstacles to her desire to mould them into conscienceless rulers. The extent of her evil is perhaps no better exemplified than in the fact that she poisons her own son because he fails to live up to her abstract notion of an absolute monarch. She blatantly lies to Charles about her affection for him (1.2.108ff)—we know from her soliloquy that she intends violently to replace him on the throne with his brother Francois who shares her political ideology and moral turpitude (1.2.1ff). She murders Charles because of his melancholic temper, conscience-ridden state and his devotion to religion, all of which are incompatible with her concept of Machiavellian rule. In her opinion he is too virtuous to rule in a manner that she deems appropriate and necessary. Her actions make her arguably the most completely villainous villain that Lee produces.<sup>42</sup>

Criticism of *The Massacre of Paris* as naïve propaganda is called into question by the manner in which Lee complicates the types of characters that in polemical literature are depicted melodramatically. Propaganda demands that the affirmed and rejected positions are clearly demarcated so as to convince the audience of the propriety of the preferred perspective. Lee must have been all too aware of this convention, yet deliberately contravenes the practice by presenting no one character or ideology uncritically.<sup>43</sup> As usual Lee presents an apolitical analysis of individual responses to personal, political and/or religious dilemmas rather than endorsing any one argument. The play is neither overtly anti-Catholic, nor anti-monarchist, rather it is concerned with an exploration of the ethics and effects of Machiavellian "policy" by a Catholic monarchy. Catholics are criticised but it is the method and application of their political power, not their religion that is condemned. As with *Brutus*, rather than concentrating upon a deleterious passion affecting the protagonist, Lee focuses upon the demoralising and dehumanising devotion to policy. Lee once again centres on the misuse of power and the effect it has upon the state and those who administer it, on the catastrophic effects of political action based either on revenge and ambition, or totally devoid of moral, ethical and religious

<sup>42</sup> Catherine de Medici is substantially stereotypical, a provocator who is substantially stylised, maximally coherent, moderately whole, substantially symbolic, medially accessible (modest complexity and maximal transparency), medially derivative, medially conventional (minimal in her societal role as Queen Mother and maximal in her functional roles as calculating villainess) and is static. Lee's figure more closely resembles those of Marlowe and Thuanus (who paint her as the principal conspirator) than that of Devila.

<sup>43</sup> This suggests that he was not writing propaganda at all. As Hunt poignantly notes, *Massacre* is not a propaganda statement about the Popish plot but an exploration of its implications (p.191).

principle.<sup>44</sup> That moderation is needed in one's civic and domestic affairs (because intemperance leads to chaos) remains Lee's central tenet.

Despite Hammond underwhelming assessment of the characters as "acceptably, if sketchily, drawn",<sup>45</sup> the principal figures, particularly the three protagonists, are all presented at Lee's now customary high standard. Much of the success of the play derives from the moral and psychological complexity, and from the ambivalence and ambiguity, of its characters. Of all the principal figures only Catherine is presented melodramatically, yet even in her case Lee could not resist the urge to ameliorate the depiction. The remaining principals are all endowed with considerable moral complexity. Guise displays characteristics of both the hero and the villain, combining the distressed lover, vengeful malcontent and ambitious villain categories. He is a noble figure whose obsessive hatred for the Admiral demoralises him and leads to vicious behaviour. He is divorced from the political motives of the court, and is criticised principally for his rejection of love because of revenge and ambition. The Admiral is both heroic and unheroic, worthy and hubristic. He shares characteristics of the Aristotelian hero, but the absolute devotion to his cause makes him exemplary rather than tragic. He inspires admiration for his fortitude, rather than pity over his plight. Pity and fear are properly the province of Charles IX whose depiction is the most efficacious of the play. He alone undergoes considerable psychological conflict between his virtuous and vicious personality states. He attempts to rule with conscience, but is easily manipulated into vice. His tragedy is that he lacks the strength of character to resist his mother and prevent this catastrophe. He is the good but flawed figure whose pusillanimity, and susceptibility to the influence of his mother and church, lead him to conspiracy, oscillation, regret, repentance, rehabilitation and death. He is the true Aristotelian tragic hero, and the play his tragedy. All the principal figures are presented with admirable skill, as is Catherine de Medici who is far and away Lee's exemplum of a Machiavellian. The characterological artistry with which each of the principal figures is presented makes it extremely difficult to concur with Elwin's assertion that *The Massacre of Paris* is Lee's worst play.

The Princess of Cleve (winter 1681-2 for post December 1682).

The exact date of the premiere of Lee's one attempt at comedy is a matter of contention. Stroup and Cooke suggest that it was presented at Dorset Garden prior to the union of the two

<sup>44</sup> Leach, p.136; Hunt, p.192; Rangno, pp.21, 45.

<sup>45</sup> Hammond, *Development*, p.587.

theatrical companies in 1682.<sup>46</sup> The terminus post quem is established by the death of John Wilmot, second Earl of Rochester (26 July 1680) who is satirised in the figures of Count Rosidore and the Duke of Nemours. This has led Ham, Van Lennep and Stroup and Cooke to all suggest that it was staged around August or September 1680, closely following upon his death.<sup>47</sup> It seems highly unlikely, however, that the play could have been researched, written, rehearsed and produced quite so rapidly. In his essay "The Satiric Design of Nat. Lee's 'The Princess of Cleve'", Robert Hume presents a compelling argument to suggest that the play was actually composed in late 1681 or early 1682, prepared for production in December 1682, and staged later in that season.<sup>48</sup> According to Downes, it was "well Acted, but succeeded not so well as the others".<sup>49</sup> Giles Jacob (p.162) suggests that the play was acted at the Queens Theatre, Dorset Garden in 1689, the year of its publication (recorded in the Term Catalogues for Easter term—II.252). The serious plot—the love triangle involving the duke and the Prince and Princess of Cleve—derives from the Countess de La Fayette's novel *La Princess de Clèves*,<sup>50</sup> the comic subplot an example of conventional Carolean sex comedy. There has been almost universal condemnation of the play's overt immorality, the desecration of the novel's dignified atmosphere, the degradation of the character of Nemours, and the impropriety of coupling a serious love triangle with a ribald subplot concerned with the sexual intrigues of low comic types.<sup>51</sup>

In a recent article Tara and Philip Collington have responded to this adverse criticism.<sup>52</sup> They argue that the debauched behaviour makes explicit what is implicit in La Fayette's original, that is Lee elaborates and elucidates rather than interpolates and adulterates. It is a 'low burlesque' of La Fayette's novel, itself a 'high burlesque' of her sources. To the Collingtons, Lee's anger over the censorship of *Massacre* in the dedication of *Cleve* should not be interpreted as proof that he deliberately distorted the novel, but that he set out to expose the truth of the Valois court which underlies La Fayette's decorous phrasing, subtle wit and delicate irony. They repeatedly demonstrate that traits and events which supposedly degrade

<sup>46</sup> Stroup and Cooke, *Works*, II.149.

<sup>47</sup> Ham, p.167; Van Lennep, *Sources*, p.383; Stroup and Cooke, *Works*, II.149. Leach and Hammond both date the play some time in 1681 (Leach, p.19; Hammond, *Development*, p.571).

<sup>48</sup> Hume, "Satiric Design", pp.119-23. Based on a reasonably assumed chronology of *Borgia* (spring or summer 1679), *Theodosius* (early summer 1680) and *Brutus* (by December 1680), Hume argues that it is unlikely that Lee was composing another play during 1680. Several other factors, such as the dedication of *Cleve* linking that play to *Massacre* (which he cogently argues was written in spring or summer 1681), point to a date of late 1681/early 1682.

<sup>49</sup> *Roscus Anglicanus*, p.38.

<sup>50</sup> Published in 1678 this novel was anonymously translated into English the following year.

<sup>51</sup> It is my intention to use Corder's act, scene and line division in preference to Stroup and Cooke's as it more accurately reflects the probable segregation of the scenes than appears in the quarto edition which is followed by Stroup and Cooke verbatim.

<sup>52</sup> Tara and Philip Collington, pp.196ff.

Lee's characters are inferred in the novel.<sup>53</sup> The Countess' portrait of Nemours as a hedonistic rake hints at what was common knowledge to her contemporaries. Lee simply portrays the identity behind the mask. He does not contaminate a chaste love affair between Chartres and Nemours but exposes the ever-present undercurrent of eroticism. Whereas Hume suggests that the play deliberately sets out to debase the heroic by combining "filth and heroic sentiment",<sup>54</sup> they argue that Lee's adaptation derives from an astute reading of the novel and of French history, and that he simply emphasises this treatment. I would suggest that both positions are equally correct and not incommensurate—throughout his career Lee has made a habit of presenting the real in preference to the ideal, complicating his characters and their codes of ethics, regardless of whether that code is romantic or depraved.

An important, and oft discussed, aspect of the character of Nemours is whether his rehabilitation is genuine or feigned. Throughout, the duke is notable for his moral turpitude, his inconstancy,<sup>55</sup> misogyny,<sup>56</sup> and lubricity, his emotional detachment, his prodigious (bi)sexual appetite, and that he is the libertine par excellence, the unrivalled alpha male of the state.<sup>57</sup> He is continuously presented as an amoral reprobate obsessed with pursuing sexual gratification.<sup>58</sup> His quoting of Ronsard (actually John Fletcher amended by Rochester) reflects a belief that virtue, honour and piety are impediments to pleasure (the ultimate desire of the will) and are valueless and nonsensical notions that require an unnatural suppression of one's innate tendencies.<sup>59</sup> As Corder suggests, to Nemours all people are congenitally polygamous: he is simply unashamed in his sexual appetite, and despises the moral hypocrisy of those who

<sup>53</sup> Even Knutson admits that the romance hints at the "dark hues of the portrait" of Nemours, and that Lee does not change the duke's amorous disposition (p.503).

<sup>54</sup> Hume, "Satiric Design", p.133. Hunt notes that in this play, like Lee's earlier ones, there is a violent clash between, and an intimate joining of, two entirely different worlds or ethical systems. In *Borgia* and *Massacre* there had been the worlds of political expediency and of honest affection, in *Mithridates* and *Rival Queens* reason and control opposed by unbridled passion, in *Gloriana* and *Sophonisba* public concerns conflict with private ones; in all the heroic ideal contrasts with the real world (p.229). As he suggests, in no other Leean play except perhaps *Nero*, do we find two physically, ethically, socially and formally distinct groups of characters and sets of values (p.239).

<sup>55</sup> There is an early emphasis on the common knowledge that Nemours is inconstant and that "his soul is bent upon variety" (1.1.63-4). Nemours later admits to dying (suffering from boredom) "without variety" (1.2.33-4).

<sup>56</sup> The duke has no intention of "be[ing] married to 'em, but [only] to [have them] serve my turn" (2.3.68-9)—that a woman's sole function and value is to satisfy his lust. Their ability to gratify his carnal desire is all that he sees as "good in 'em".

<sup>57</sup> Nemours is notorious for his sexual conquests, as St. Andre reveals at 1.1.87ff. His carnal obsession is illustrated by the threat to ravish Bellamore after having become sexually aroused by the image of Chartres' deflowering. Another occurs when he sensually caresses Poltrot to the extent that it causes Poltrot to become aroused (1.2.162ff).

<sup>58</sup> Nemour is acquisitive in his conquests, the quantity of successful seductions being far more important than the quality of those conquered. As Weber points out, Nemours' polymorphous desire cannot be satisfied (p.73).

<sup>59</sup> 1.2.66-72. His indifference to the code of honour is evidenced by his response to Bellamore's criticism of his behaviour towards Cleve, a man whom "loves you as his life" (2.3.7). Nemours claims an entitlement because he had saved the prince's life, devaluing the loss of honour to a cuckold as a trifling matter and small compensation for his greater service. The duke's 'friendship' to Cleve recalls that of Varanes to Theodosius—as he admits he does not know of a "man upon earth I love so well, or could take so much from" (4.1.268-9).



suppress that instinct.<sup>60</sup> The duke sustains his hedonistic attitude right up to his anomalous rehabilitation in the final lines. The question thus arises as to whether his reversion is i) disingenuous, ii) genuine and demonstrated by a progressive development in his affection for either or both of Chartres and Marguerite,<sup>61</sup> iii) sincere but abrupt—resulting from a conventional comic ending without the presentation of a discernible change in personality—or iv) disingenuous and serves an ulterior purpose. To resolve this issue one needs to determine the extent to which his libertine persona is reflective of his identity—whether he remains a typified example or if he transcends the type.

The degree of his affection for Chartres and Marguerite is important to this determination. From the outset Chartres is the object of the duke's desire, a chaste lady whom he professes to "love" and whom he intends to "leap" (1.1.21, 26), suggesting that his affection is little more than carnal lust. As Tournon suggests, he pursues her because she is "nice and precise"—a fitting conquest because so incorruptible and inappropriate.<sup>62</sup> Nemours even revels in the fact that he has succeeded in stimulating such a virtuous figure into emotional infidelity (2.3.213ff). Yet this is contrasted with examples like the aside immediately following the revelation of his misogyny (2.3.76-8). He appears to have two conflicting impressions of the Princess, one base and libidinal, the other exalted and ethereal. Cleve's revelation of the duke's sadness at Chartres' marriage suggests the presence of a deep-rooted affection for her, and a sincere distress at her loss (4.1.308ff). The prince's discovery of a change in Nemours' demeanour when he claims the duke to be in love (4.1.327ff) indicates the truth of this even more than Nemours' subsequent admission. This is augmented by the fact that he refuses to reveal the object of his affection to Cleve—nascent guilt preventing him from naming her to the 'friend' he would cuckold.<sup>63</sup> These factors suggest a degree of sincere affection for her.

However Nemours' passion for Chartres is complicated by his changing attitude towards Marguerite during the fourth act. His relationship with Marguerite is an innovative interpolation into the love-triangle and complicates the duke's affections. In a monologue he claims that if he cannot obtain Chartres he will fix himself to Jainville without doing an injustice to his inconstancy (4.1.252ff). This suggests that Marguerite is little more than a convenience, and that a union with her will not prevent him from continuing his libidinous

<sup>60</sup> Cordner, p.xxviii.

<sup>61</sup> I use the appellation 'Chartres' to describe the Princess of Cleve, and so distinguish her from 'Cleve' as a reference to her husband.

<sup>62</sup> Tournon also intimates that the demure nature of all such women simply masks a lascivious nature, that they merely repress their innate desires, and that exposing and overcoming this hypocritical repression is intoxicating and challenging to the duke.

<sup>63</sup> His attempt to divert the prince from duelling, his sparing him in victory, his concern for the Prince's wounds, and his protestations of love and vow that he has not cuckolded him all stem not from friendship (the level of this having already been amply illustrated) but from guilt.

pursuits. Yet when he finds himself in a position to possess Chartres, he begins to question whether he should marry her or Marguerite, whom he now admits to loving more than ever (4.3.5). When he discovers Jainville is entertaining the suit of the dauphin (5.2.1ff) he confesses that she is his ideal partner and hatches a plan to win her back. That he continues to pursue Chartres after Marguerite has displaced her as the principal object of his affection demonstrates an unchanged intent to consummate his lust for her. Rather than being undecided over whom he wishes to devote himself, Nemours actually reveals his enduring hedonism.<sup>64</sup> Despite experiencing moments at which his affection appears more elevated, this is and has always been his ruling passion—his conditional 'love' for Marguerite has overcome that for Chartres without diminishing his desire to copulate with her. Having said this, his claim that he will bed Chartres "eighteen months three weeks hence at half an hour past two in the morning" (5.3.256-7) strikes one as facetious. The exactitude of the claim suggests it to be comic bravado rather than a genuine statement of intent—the precision is evidently meant to be laughed at rather than taken seriously. That he makes this claim to the Vidam (a notorious gossip) suggests a desire to augment his reputation at court as a peerless libertine.

This brings us to the conclusion. Despite several critics accepting Nemours' rehabilitation as genuine, his contrition is dubious at best.<sup>65</sup> Of all the points raised in his 'reformation' only one can be said to be independently verifiable, and another qualifiedly veracious. All others are contrary to his established character. Firstly he states that the death of Cleve has wrought a change in him. His regret has been demonstrated previously, yet his qualification that it is "upon second thought" that the death has led to a change in demeanour merely serves to undermine the absolute veracity of the statement. His second claim—that he loathes his debaucheries—has no foundation in any of his actions to date, and renders the first even more dubious. So too does his intention to render satisfaction to his victims—his seduction of Chartres immediately preceding his conversion, rather than manifesting regret over his involvement in her husband's death (as his visit to her was ostensibly intended to do) demonstrates the reverse. His desire to marry Marguerite is believable since the events of the latter acts have illustrated a growing affection for her. However, as he has previously stated, marrying her would in no way impinge upon his libidinous activities, and his subsequent actions confirm this. In his last statement we discover his 'reformation' to be conventional and that it serves a satiric purpose. Nemours claims that he chooses to rehabilitate prior to his death so that he can continue to demonstrate the truth of it. This evidently derides Rochester's abrupt

<sup>64</sup> Nemours never once discusses marriage with Chartres in their last conversation, only ever attempting to convince her to consummate their passion.

death-bed reversion.<sup>66</sup> Lee has Nemours intimate that he has chosen to rehabilitate now because only enduring evidence of rehabilitation can redeem the behaviour of one's life. Given that the duke has previously revelled in his notoriety it is doubtful that he would suddenly regret that reputation and wish it invalidated, especially given that he vaunts his success with Chartres to the Vidam a mere few moments earlier. Lee himself stated that he intends to present a "Ruffian" rather than a "polish'd Hero", and genuine rehabilitation would have resulted in a progression towards the latter.<sup>67</sup> And as Weber points out, Nemours plainly states that he will repent when he can no longer sin, and this is obviously not yet the case.<sup>68</sup> The duke's simulated rehabilitation also recalls that of Wycherley's Horner. There is a suggestion that Nemours 'reforms' not only to gull Marguerite into marriage,<sup>69</sup> but also to mask his continuing activities, just as Horner has the knowledge of his 'impotency' disseminated throughout the town so as to appear inoffensive, and allow him to display his china. The result is that Lee presents in Nemours a figure that is a thoroughly unrepentant and enduring libertine.

Cordner questions the supposed equivalence of Nemours and Rochester, and the belief that Lee is denouncing Wilmot, claiming that with the exception of this play there is no evidence of any animosity towards the Earl.<sup>70</sup> Yet what would have begun as disappointment over Rochester's indifferent patronage, is likely to have rapidly turned to mutual disaffection after Wilmot's vehement censure in "Allusion to Horace". Lee's explicit hostility towards the Earl can be traced as far back as *The Rival Queens*. In the dedication to that play Lee explicitly denounced those libertines "whose Business is senseless Riot, Neronian Gambols, and ridiculous Debauchery".<sup>71</sup> This is an evident critique of the 'merry gang' and its most notorious member. Not only does Lee satirise Rochester through the depiction of Nemours,

<sup>65</sup> Stroup, "Princess", p.202; Stroup and Cooke, *Works*, I.3, II.150; Hammond, *Development*, p.616; Knutson, pp.502-3. Leach and Johnson both accept the contrition as veracious, but accept that it is ambiguous—that Lee provides evidence to support either reading (Leach, p.254; Johnson, p.132).

<sup>66</sup> There is absolutely no reason whatsoever to refer to death-bed contrition at this point other than to allude specifically to Rochester—there is no evidence in the text to suggest that Nemours' death is imminent.

<sup>67</sup> Lee's dedication refers to an expectation amongst the audience that this figure would parallel the commonly perceived image of the duke in La Fayette's familiar novel. As Tara and Philip Collington contend ("Adulteration", pp.196ff), Lee seems to have noted, and wished to emphasise, the fact that La Fayette's duke is far from an heroic lover, and had been subtly represented as a libertine throughout. Other than Lee's assessment of the character, the other contemporary analysis appears in Dryden's prologue (first published in his *Miscellany Poems*, 1684). Dryden claims that the duke is a "man that's false to love" (l.5), that is false to the conventional concepts and tenets of romantic love.

<sup>68</sup> Weber, pp.77-8.

<sup>69</sup> Hume rightly notes that Nemours' 'reform' is a "carefully devised piece of bait" to secure Marguerite ("Cleve", p.126).

<sup>70</sup> Cordner, p.xxiv.

<sup>71</sup> Significantly Lee dedicated *The Rival Queens* to the Earl of Mulgrave, Rochester's inveterate enemy.

and through the duke's own contempt for death-bed conversion,<sup>72</sup> but also in his references to Count Rosidore. It is a reflection of Lee's considerable dramaturgical skill that in describing Rosidore, the dramatist is also able to ridicule Wilmot whilst appearing to praise him. So far the subtlety used to deride the 'Count' has eluded all of Lee's critics with the possible exception of Hunt.<sup>73</sup> Sanders, Beers, Ham, Vivian de Sola Pinto, Stroup and Cooke and Cordner all conclude that Lee extols Rochester in his portrait of Rosidore.<sup>74</sup> Hume suggests that Lee ultimately critiques Rosidore, but that the "Count Rosidore is dead" speech is "high compliment", and that only later does Lee degrade this figure.<sup>75</sup> However I would suggest that this speech has a tacitly satiric undercurrent, Lee's emphasis on Rosidore's debauchery, failure, hesitant speech and limited wit is less than wholly complimentary.<sup>76</sup> At best the speech evokes an ambivalent attitude towards the Count, and obviously needed to be ambiguous for Lee to avoid possible violent repercussions. Lee's ongoing critique of Wilmot through the depiction of Nemours clarifies Lee's attitude towards the Earl of Rochester.

Stroup and Cooke suggest that Nemours is an exaggeration of the typical Restoration rake and debauchee.<sup>77</sup> Yet the duke is not a conventional example of the type, despite the fact that the characterisation concludes in a manner identical to the manner in which it began. As had been the case with Lee's depiction of Nero, the duke is atypically ameliorated during the course of the play. This seems to have been an inadvertent result of attempting to unite affective tragedy and satiric comedy through the character of Nemours, who must necessarily display traits of a character type from each genre—portraying the characteristics of an admirable heroic lover (specifically the pathetic lover type), whilst simultaneously presenting traits of an offensive libertine whom Lee wishes to satirise. However, satire is dependent upon

<sup>72</sup> Cordner claims that Nemours' derision serves to distance the character from Rochester, and calls into question a supposed analogy (p.xxv). However the limits of the parallel are consistent with Lee's characterological policy not to overemphasise similarity. From a structural perspective, it would have been highly unconventional for a sex comedy to end with the impending death of the rake. It would also have been counterproductive because death-bed conversion is likely to turn the libertine into a tragic hero—the rehabilitation would cease to be viewed as satiric, and acquire a sense of authenticity—which is obviously something Lee wished to avoid. Thus in order to critique death-bed conversions Lee needed it to be expressed by Nemours, rather than dramatised by him.

<sup>73</sup> Hunt alone concedes that it is difficult to know whether the elegy on Rosidore is to be taken seriously, or is a continuation of Lee's satire of Rochester (p.240).

<sup>74</sup> Sanders claims that Lee's "discriminating reference" to Rochester "showed that his boyish admiration was lasting" (p.499); Beers that Lee eulogised Rochester in Nemours' description of Rosidore (p.27); Ham that "to Lee the name of Rochester was almost beyond praise" (pp.49, 167); Vivian de Sola Pinto to the "touching tribute" to Rochester, "clearly the product of genuine affection and admiration" (p.232); Stroup and Cooke that he "pays glowing tribute to the brilliance of his former patron" (*Works*, II.586, note to l.ii.90); and Cordner to the elegiac commemoration of Rosidore (p.xxiii).

<sup>75</sup> Hume, "Cleve", pp.128-9. He again refers to the "obvious and glowing initial reference to Rochester" at page 130.

<sup>76</sup> The fact that he needs to repeat his witticisms, although to different people, suggests meagre capability. Although Nemours means the elegy to be complimentary, through him Lee subtly undermines the assessment. After all, Nemours' precepts are not to be sympathised with, and so his praise of Rosidore for behaving in the same manner is designed to elicit a contrasting view.

<sup>77</sup> Stroup and Cooke, *Works*, II.149.

typified representations to achieve its aims of ridicule and/or opprobrium. To ameliorate a characterisation is likely to result in the audience empathising and/or sympathising with the figure, and so to undermine the intent of the satire. The amelioration of the satiric portrayal of Nemours results in an ambivalent character whom we are unsure whether to admire or despise, thus reducing the impact of the satire.

In *Comic Character in Restoration Drama*, Agnes Persson identifies four groups of comic figures: caricatures, humours characters, morality characters and types.<sup>78</sup> Caricatures are constructed from ludicrous and grotesque representations of a specific individual's characteristic features—the Earl of Shaftesbury being a regularly caricatured figure in the literature of the period. Humours characters are similar, but do not represent a particular person. The traits ridiculed are better defined than in caricatures, the focus being placed upon the exaggeration of mental dispositions and inclinations. The 'type' category refers to conventional comic characters such as the archetypal affected fop, lecherous old man, the witwoud, the coxcomb, the wittol, the superannuated coquette, the rake-hero, the hypocritical puritan, and the pander. The last category—morality characters—applies to personifications of abstract vice figures such as Avarice, Greed and Hypocrisy, already examined in Chapter Two. Citing George Meredith's essay on comedy, Persson separates comic figures into three groups, i) abstract, general types which are humorous exaggerations (caricatures, morality characters, undifferentiated types and/or humours characters), ii) those which, like Falstaff, are individuated examples of one or more of the four comic categories listed above, and iii) those comic figures who are self-aware and are conscious of manners, morals and modes. This third group is itself divided into three sub-categories; a) those who are aware but cannot live up to the standards, b) those not willing to conform, and c) those who do live up to the standards. Nemours is unique because he combines aspects of high tragedy with low comedy, and so does not adequately fit into a comic nor a serious category; however, he comes closest to being an individuated combination of a self-aware libertine rake-hero and pathetic lover who is unwilling to conform to the societal standards, believing those standards to be hypocritical.<sup>79</sup>

Chartres is the tragic victim of *The Princess of Cleve*. Her tragedy stems from the fact that she suffers from an overwhelming and irresistible passion for Nemours. Although she is presented as a virtuous heroine, her character is undermined by the fact that she dissembles to

<sup>78</sup> Persson, pp. 7-36.

<sup>79</sup> Nemours is modestly atypical, a provocator who is minimally stylised, substantially coherent, substantially whole, maximally symbolic, medially accessible (modest complexity and substantial transparency), medially derivative, substantially conventional (maximal in his societal role as courtier and modest in his functional role as pathetic lover and maximal as libertine) and does not undergo anagnorsis—he is wholly unregenerate despite his claim to the contrary.

her husband from the outset.<sup>80</sup> She claims that her seeming frigidity towards him is because love is a new and strange emotion to her (1.3.95ff), but this is a patently disingenuous attempt to mask her passion for the duke.<sup>81</sup> He dominates her every thought and causes her considerable anxiety. She admits to loving Nemours despite her better judgment, yet wishes he were an ethereal, not a sensual, lover, as this would increase her love.<sup>82</sup> Although she has every reason to doubt his loyalty to her, she desires proof of his infidelity in order to effect an emotional divorce. Yet despite being provided with ample evidence, she cannot escape her passion for him.<sup>83</sup> That the discovery of his infidelity is a "stab to all [her] gathered resolution" (1.3.143) further illustrates her absolute and uncontrollable passion. She undergoes no conflict in her love for Nemours, only over whether he is loyal to her; never questioning the propriety of her affection, only if his is equal to hers. His disloyalty is not a relief (and an excuse to end the affair) but rather a "dreadful pang" (1.3.142). Despite her vows to forego the duke and transfer her affection to her husband, she is easily led to believe his spurious claim that the letter belongs to her uncle, despite having several other reasons to terminate their relationship. It is clear that she wishes to continue the affair, and the removal of his suspected infidelity allows her to do so.

Throughout the play Chartres continues to suffer from a conflict between an irresistible, deleterious and enchanting passion for an unworthy lover and an awareness of its impropriety and the pain it causes her dutiful husband, struggling between an appropriate but unappealing choice and an inappropriate but intoxicating one. She repeatedly describes this battle, but is unable to overcome her desire—a desire that is physically, as well as emotionally, painful. Even after her husband's death, when she sincerely intends to become an anchorite and spend her life in repentance, she is unable to withstand her passion. When Nemours arrives to further his suit, rather than rejecting him outright, the conversation rapidly turns to the fact that if she were to accept his suit, he would eventually tire of her—little effort was required to convince her to entertain the idea. Her most notable, and oft quoted statement, illustrates her enduring passion:

<sup>80</sup> Although her dissimulation is presumably intended to spare Cleve pain it nevertheless diminishes her virtue. She continues to dissemble in denying being a dissembler (2.3.114-6), and further prevaricates to him at 2.3.143-4. Her eventual confession, after he decides that he wishes to remain in ignorance, serves no purpose but to cause him distress and to unload her guilt, especially when she refuses to admit the name of her lover and so gives him just enough information to cause him even greater anxiety.

<sup>81</sup> Her subsequent soliloquy evidences that her dissimulation is conscious and deliberate.

<sup>82</sup> She is aware of the impropriety of their affair, especially given her knowledge of his reputation, his misogyny and his mundane attitude towards love.

<sup>83</sup> Chartres even admits (1.3.135-6) to being reluctant to read the letter, that part of her does not want to know the truth and have her illusion destroyed. She is briefly torn in her desire to maintain the illusion, further suggesting that she does not entirely want an excuse to forego her passion. She confesses her love for Nemours at 1.3.140 and her previous willingness to excuse his faults, reinforcing the extent of her dissimulation and deliberate emotional infidelity to her husband.



'Tis true, my lord, I offer much to duty,  
Which but subsists in thought. Therefore have patience.  
Expect what time, with such a love as mine,  
May work in your behalf (5.3.230-3).

She has been unable to achieve an emotional divorce to the extent of admitting the possibility of a future consummation. This is augmented by the fact that in parting she "looked back twice / And tottered on the threshold" (5.3.253-4).

That she leaves open the very real possibility of a union with the duke has led to widespread criticism of her character. Hasan argues that she is made to seem foolish rather than heroic or pathetic, Hammond that her love for Nemours is absurd. Hume discredits her because of her continuing devotion to him despite being aware that he is unworthy, while Cordner believes that Lee destroys her dignity and self-control by having her admit the possibility of a reconciliation.<sup>84</sup> It is true, as the Collingtons note, that Lee's Chartres falls because, as in the novel, the purity of her union with Cleve is a brittle façade,<sup>85</sup> but also because of the strength of her passion for Nemours. None have appreciated that the Princess' love is absolutely beyond her capacity to resist, and that it is as uncontrollable at the end as it is at the beginning. All that Nemours does is to bring that passion to Chartres', and our remembrance. The attempt to suppress her passion is, and will only ever be, reluctant. She is the victim of the duke's corrupting charms, but even more so is the victim of the sometimes deleterious power of love. Her conflict enters the realm of genuine human tragedy and suffering, as she repeatedly but vainly attempts to combat a destructive desire. That she fails to resist, despite her every attempt, makes her truly tragic. Her situation is made all the more pathetic because she experiences an intense passion for an affected image of Nemours, without ever discovering the unattractive reality.<sup>86</sup>

Between them Nemours and Chartres contribute almost half of the dialogue of the play, the tale principally concerned with his lascivious pursuit and her unsuccessful resistance. The remaining characters either serve as functionaries to this plot, form part of the comic subplot or serve in both capacities. The Prince performs the role of the suffering, unrequited lover in the high-plot love triangle, as well as exemplifying an outmoded chivalric code which cannot be sustained in a world ruled by base desires. He and his code are destroyed when he discovers in Chartres' emotional infidelity "the clearest proof / Of perfect honour that e're flowed from woman" (2.3.173-4). For him the whole world is false "since Chartres is not true" (3.2.163).

<sup>84</sup> Hasan, p.544; Hammond, p.237; Hume, "Satiric", p.132; Cordner, p.xxx.

<sup>85</sup> Collington, p.222.

<sup>86</sup> Chartres is minimally atypical, a responder who is modestly stylised, substantially coherent, substantially whole, medially symbolic, substantially accessible (substantial complexity and maximal transparency), medially derivative, medially conventional (modest in her societal role as princess and in her functional role as dutiful wife, substantial in her role as tragic heroine) and is static.

His love for Chartres may well be uxorious and impractical, yet he too suffers from an uncontrollable passion for one who does not requite that love.<sup>87</sup> This is as much the cause of his tragedy as it is of Chartres', the difference being that his adherence to an impractical belief system results in his death, whereas her partial remove from that code leads to an reluctant choice to live out her life in contrition.<sup>88</sup> Despite being allocated the fourth highest amount of dialogue in the play after Nemours, Chartres and Poltrot, Cleve basically serves a functional role as the saddened lover and an example of an outmoded ideal against which Nemours is presented in all his sordid detail.<sup>89</sup>

The remaining characters are conventional examples of the low comic types of Carolean sex comedy. Poltrot and St. Andre are traditional witwoud libertines—coxcombs who are the subject of ridicule for their outrageous pretensions, and who are cozened into becoming wittols. They are extreme exaggerations of the Falstaffian type, and, as Armistead notes, are coarser versions of Estridge and Modish from Sedley's *Mulberry Garden*.<sup>90</sup> Their respective wives, Celia and Elianor, are attractive, intelligent and dynamic heroines, who compete with their undeserving husbands in the obligatory wit-duels and are driven to cuckold them in retaliation for their rakish behaviour and the insults they endure. They are, however, also demonstrated to be eminently corruptible, as are all of the characters of the play with the sole exception of the Prince of Cleve. Like Poltrot and St. Andre, the Vidam and Bellamore serve as examples of the sordid world exemplified by Nemours, and are adherents of the prevailing hedonistic ideology. Marguerite is another dynamic and passionate termagant, a superannuated coquette who illustrates the degradation of the heroic ideal in the real world—a Princess who is the acknowledged mistress of the duke, and who is prepared to prostitute herself in order to seduce him.<sup>91</sup> Her ability and willingness to play Nemours at his own game demonstrates that she too is a willing infidel.<sup>92</sup> Her wit-duels with the duke parallel those of St. Andre and Poltrot

<sup>87</sup> Although not emphasised to the same extent that it is for Britannicus, Massina and Theodosius, the Prince is a mere boy (4.1.299) who expresses the same youthful impractical romanticism as his predecessors. His unequal friendship with Nemours also recalls that of Theodosius to Varanes—he even offers the duke his wife after his death "for you deserve her better" (4.1.388).

<sup>88</sup> Interestingly, because Lee's characterology does not allow for pristine heroic figures, Cleve's pride in his martyrdom, kindness and fortitude is introduced so as to slightly adulterate his character (3.2.48ff). Like Athenais he is aware of his own virtues and cannot help but emphasise them. The complication of Lee's serious characters in this and his other plays does not extend to his low comic types, however, which necessarily retain a maximal level of typicality.

<sup>89</sup> Cleve is maximally stereotypical, a reactor who is medially stylised, maximally coherent, modestly whole, substantially symbolic, modestly accessible (minimal complexity and medial transparency), maximally derivative, maximally conventional (maximal in both his societal role as prince and in his functional role as suffering lover) and is static.

<sup>90</sup> Armistead, *Nathaniel Lee*, p.153.

<sup>91</sup> Illustrious personages are rarely presented in such a common fashion in drama—it is indecorous to do so—yet this serves to highlight the extent to which all of the courtiers have abandoned their cavalier pretensions.

<sup>92</sup> Unlike Chartres who strides both worlds, Marguerite is the ideal partner of the duke. Nemours inadvertently admits as much in claiming to the masked Jainville that "thou and I were made for one another" (2.3.262-3).

with their wives, and like Elianor and Celia it is she who wins the battle if, in her case, not necessarily the war. She is as sexually liberated and aggressive as he, although of a purer virtue—she is no hedonist, despite being able to talk the talk—she simply fights to win his affection using his own methods. She is disturbed by his behaviour but is committed to win his love or to illustrate to him what he has foregone. Like Athenais to Varanes, Marguerite exhibits a love-hate relationship for Nemours—her attraction and repulsion are of equal measure and so her emotions are all the more intense. And, despite her claim to the contrary, Marguerite evidently loves the fact that Nemours is a “loving, lying, tinsel lord” and would not swap him for “an obedient, wholesome, drudging fool” (4.1.213-4) for all the world. Other than Marguerite, the only other intermediary character of any interest is Tournon. This figure plays the role of the conventional bawd but differs from the norm in the basis for her motivation, and in her villainous machinations. As Armistead has noted, she is the prime mover of all action in the play.<sup>93</sup> She acts on behalf of Catherine de Medici in attempting to seduce Nemours into new conquests so that Marguerite will abandon him in favour of the dauphin. Within the confines of the play Tournon is seen to fail in her intent because Marguerite is reconciled with Nemours and agrees to marry him, although one is left to suspect that, in direct contrast to Jainville, she has lost a battle but not the war.

Despite the vociferous criticism over the perceived obscenity of the sub-plot, it is no more vulgar than the comedies of Etherege, Wycherley or D'Urfey—the vulgarity is simply more overt. Lee refuses to sugarcoat the truth—in holding a mirror up to society he is prepared to display that society's depravity in no uncertain terms. His satire is deliberately intense, didactic and discomforting; the wit-duels are humorous but their levity fails to lighten the atmosphere and only serves to augment the fact that there is little to laugh at, and much to be disturbed by, in the action of the play. This extends to the treatment of Poltrot and St. Andre, the threat to their lives, and the fact that Poltrot is shot at, rather excessive actions for wit-duel comedy. Nemours may well be more offensive than Horner, but he is Horner as Lee sees him, just as the duke and Rosidore represent the real Rochester and those who share his hedonistic attitudes. Nemours is not a rake-hero to be admired but a vile figure to be despised for his viciousness and the damage he does to other individuals and to society—he may reflect society's profligacy and immorality but he also augments it, while the one character who opposes libertine values (Cleve) is destroyed by him. Lee is at pains to point out that Nemours, and those of his type, are not to be admired (and so imitated)—they are immoral and repulsive

Persson (p. 102), in her analysis of comic heroines, refers to their comprehensive knowledge of their rakish lover, being conscious of all of his virtues and vices, yet loving him despite his flaws. Congreve's *Cynthia*, Angelica and Millamant, Etherege's *Harriet* and Wycherley's *Hippolita* are all listed as examples; Marguerite is another.

<sup>93</sup> Armistead, *Nathaniel Lee*, pp. 145-6.

and should be seen as such. Although couched in a comic model, the play is a caustic tragic-satire with a serious and moralistic undertone throughout, exposing hedonism for what it is.<sup>94</sup> The audience are meant to be shocked and appalled—to see the likes of Nemours/Rochester for what they really are, and not be seduced by the affected image of the rake-hero, as is the case with his (and their) all too willing victims. In his own inimical manner, Lee strips away the façade of the sophisticated rake-hero and his ideology to display him in his naked repulsiveness, and to demonstrate that those who are corrupted into this world are no different. As Hughes points out, this makes *The Princess of Cleve* one of the most innovative and ambitious experiments in Carolean sex comedy.<sup>95</sup> It is unfortunate that so many critics have attacked the play for its lack of decorum, rather than lauding it for exposing and criticising the endemic immorality in the French (and by extension English) court. Lee is, after all, the son of a moralising cleric, and the fruit never falls far from the tree.

#### The Duke of Guise (by 18 July 1682 for 28 November 1682).

Just as *The Princess of Cleve* is an interesting social commentary, *The Duke of Guise* is an intriguing political one. The second collaboration between Lee and Dryden has proved to be one of the most controversial plays composed in the turbulent years of the Popish plot and succession crisis. After receiving complaints about the perceived parallel between the Guisard conspiracy and the Whig party, and of several analogous representations (particularly between the Duke of Monmouth and the title character, Henry III and Charles II, and Navarre and the Duke of York), the Lord Chamberlain suppressed the play on 18 July 1682.<sup>96</sup> Responding to several pamphlets attacking the characterisations, Dryden claimed (in *The Vindication... [of] The Duke of Guise*) that the play parallels factions not persons.<sup>97</sup> Arlington and/or the king must have come to the same conclusion as the order of suppression was lifted on 29 October. The play premiered on 28 November 1682, running for four days, the last of which was attended by the queen and her entourage. It was the first play performed by the recently united companies at the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane. Dryden claims that it enjoyed considerable

<sup>94</sup> I term this play “tragic-satire” rather than “tragi-satire” because “tragi-” carries with it a Fletcherian connotation of a tragi-comic serious drama that ends satisfactorily. In contrast this play combines two disparate genres—high affective tragedy and low satiric comedy.

<sup>95</sup> Hughes, p. 313.

<sup>96</sup> 18 July is the play compositional terminus ad quem, but was probably completed by early May (Van Lennep, *Sources*, p. 527n.3; Roper, *Works of Dryden*, xiv, p. 479).

<sup>97</sup> Dryden augments this by claiming to have initially undertaken a play on the Guisard insurrection immediately after the Restoration to compare those events with the English civil war, but abandoned the project after advice from friends. The scene of the Duke's return to Paris was supposedly retained from the earlier effort, and so does not parallel Monmouth's return to England (Roper, *Works of Dryden*, xiv, p. 309, ll. 1ff).

success during the season—repeatedly emphasising that it succeeded beyond his expectation.<sup>98</sup> Editions of the play were published in 1683, 1687 and twice in 1699, suggesting possible revivals at those times, although there are no recorded performances after the first season.<sup>99</sup> The principal source of the play is Davila's history as had been the case in *The Massacre of Paris*. Several scenes were adapted or drawn verbatim from *The Massacre of Paris*.<sup>100</sup> Other sources include François de Rosset's *Les Histoires Tragiques*, Pulci's *Morgante Maggiore* and Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*.

Roper claims that contemporary critics judged correctly that the value and enduring interest of this drama rests not in the tragedy *qua* tragedy, but in its status as a politically referential text that created considerable controversy.<sup>101</sup> This assumption has led analysts to focus upon the themes, and the analogous relationship of the characters, at the expense of an examination of the figures as heterogeneous entities. It is not my intention to concentrate upon the external aspects, such as the pamphlet war that the play inspired—these matters have been attended at length by Roper, Rangno, Richard Brown, Sue Owen and Victoria Hayne amongst others. After all, as Roper points out, Dryden and Lee may well be responsible for choosing a subject they could expect to be applied to their own times, but the responsibility for particular applications lies with the audience.<sup>102</sup> To me the value of the play lies as much in its characters as its political parallels and I propose to illustrate how skillfully constructed, complex and interesting they are as psychological existents, independent of contemporary significance, and of external events which impact upon, or result from, the tragedy. Given Lee's enduring characterological focus upon complex, substantively verisimilar human figures in his drama, it is pertinent to consider the characters of this play as examples of that practice. The play also offers a unique opportunity to assess the paradigmatic unity of a character (that is the degree of consistency of a specific figure across the various portions of the play written by the two dramatists) as well as the syntagmatic unity of those characters that appear in both *Massacre* and *Guise*.

One such character is the title figure. The syntagmatic unity between the protagonist of this play and Lee's previous portrayal appears in the repetition of two of Guise's principal characteristics—ambition (now replacing revenge as his ruling disposition) and love, the trait

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.311 (ll.29-31, 34), 320 (l.11).

<sup>99</sup> Leach suggests that the king may have seen a revival of the play on 24 May 1684 (p.21).

<sup>100</sup> Lee admits this to be the case in the dedication to *The Princess of Cleve* (*Works*, p.153, l.9). As Roper suggests, the tragic elements derive from the sources, the comic from the typical Tory response to Whig ideology (*Works of Dryden*, p.487).

<sup>101</sup> Roper, p.511.

<sup>102</sup> Roper, "Guise" in *Works of Dryden*, xiv, p.510. The same could be said of Lee's other plays, especially *Brutus*.

that rivals the ruling one for psychic and moral dominion.<sup>103</sup> His ambition is intimated by Dryden in the opening scene, and derives from Davila's account, but the opposing characteristics are almost entirely Lee's conception. The most notable aspect of Dryden's foundation for Guise, as well as his fellow antagonists, is that, unlike Lee's traditional conspirators, they provide little genuine justification for their actions. Although ostensibly motivated by the desire to exclude the Prince of Navarre from the succession, the Guisards are all principally concerned with personal gain. Despite claims that they must be either traitors to their king or country (1.1.88-90), the Guisards are not driven by patriotism, or a desire to prevent an injustice, but by self-interest.<sup>104</sup> Guise's one distinguishing feature in the opening scene is that he is opposed to the idea of regicide, preferring that Henry be incarcerated and forced to act in their interests.<sup>105</sup> Although exclusion is a motivating factor, it is clearly subordinate to the duke's overweening ambition. That he wishes to replace Navarre with a "worthier Choice", but that no such individual is ever named, increasingly illustrates that he designs the throne for himself.<sup>106</sup> There is no evidence to suggest that Guise "reluctantly" acquiesces to the demand of the Guisards, as Charles Hinnant claims.<sup>107</sup> Rather, as Anne Gardiner correctly points out, Guise and his disciples engage in legal posturing to cover up an uninhibited appetite for power.<sup>108</sup> Overall, the Guise of the opening scene lacks individuation from his disciples and as a psychological entity, merely forming part of a wider conspiratorial

<sup>103</sup> References to Guise's ambition pervade the text (1.2.67, 104, 130, 147, 156; 2.1.98, 2.2.2, 30; 4.3.91, 123, 140; 5.3.52, 84, 142). The duke's admission that his soul is "flush'd" with ambition (1.2.67) illustrates this to be his ruling disposition. His ambition and hubris is such that not only does he ignore the manifold warnings of the loyalists against challenging the king, but also those of his own servant Malicorne (3.1.390ff).

<sup>104</sup> 1.1.77, 82-4, 95ff. Even Guise is motivated by a personal desire to usurp the throne. The impropriety of the conspiracy is enhanced by the fact that the duke accepts the financial support of a foreign monarch to foment civil discord (1.1.102ff), and then uses a Machiavellian argument—that the ends justifies the means—to validate his treason. Notably there is no complaint from the Guisards over the source of their funding, in fact there is explicit support (1.1.108-9). The self-descriptively negative epithets such as "traitors" and treasonous, and reference to their "Dark designs", highlights the impropriety of their actions (1.1.14, 89, 106, 111, 143).

<sup>105</sup> 1.1.125ff. At 1.2.112 Guise reiterates that the king will not be harmed by him or those of his faction. Lee ameliorates the duke further by introducing the fact that he saves the life of Grillon and in the duke's insistence that nobody be killed unnecessarily because they are all of the same people (4.3.119-20). In this he is contrasted with his disciples who advocate mass slaughter. The fact that he is loved by Marmoutier accentuates the implication that he has some virtue. Like Marguerite, Marmoutier is a discerning and virtuous heroine who sees the goodness in him that is undermined by his deleterious ambition.

<sup>106</sup> This probably harks back to *Massacre* in which Guise sought to marry Marguerite de Valois and so place himself in the line of succession. Within *Guise* there are numerous indications that usurpation is the duke's ultimate ambition. His admission to wishing to "tug with Harry for a Crown" (4.3.40) evidences this, as does Marmoutier's claim that this is his desire (4.3.85ff). Guise's intention to pare the king of "all his Offices of Trust" (4.3.154) and then permit him to reign as a "led Monarch" is the most explicit example. Despite his advisors continuing to advocate regicide, Guise prefers a gradual method of obtaining power, first seizing the king and making him declare the duke Lieutenant-General, and excluding Navarre from the succession before assuming the throne himself after Henry's death (4.3.167ff).

<sup>107</sup> Hinnant, p.103.

<sup>108</sup> Gardiner, p.112.



menace to the throne, and permitting Dryden the opportunity to focus upon satirising Whig doctrine.<sup>109</sup>

It is not until the second scene of the play, and the first by Lee, that the undifferentiated figure acquires the dimension and complexity of his fictional forebear. Here the Machiavellian nature of Guise is accentuated, his ambition emphasised, as are the cognate traits of egotism, narcissism, hubris,<sup>110</sup> and disingenuousness.<sup>111</sup> But it is also the location at which his 'un-vellianous' characteristics are introduced, most notably his love for Marmoutier.<sup>112</sup> Guise is revealed to be passionate, fiery and subject to irrationality, yet hides his nature behind a clinically emotionless façade, to the point of seeming schizophrenic (1.2.43-6). Unlike the typical calculating velliian he is dispositionally choleric and needs to suppress his natural impulses in order to achieve his intentions.<sup>113</sup> The duke's other distinctively 'un-vellianous' characteristic is introduced in this scene in the revelation of his intense passion for Marmoutier (1.2.62ff). Emotions such as love are, as Mayenne emphasises, normally anathema to a "Politician".<sup>114</sup> It is true that Guise's love is revealed as subordinate to his ambition in his willingness to dissemble to her (1.2.154ff). But it is the continuing clash between his ruling disposition (ambition) and its rival (love) that provides much of the ongoing interest in this character. It is a conflict that ambition appears to win, but is a victory that is distinctly Pyrrhic.

Guise's relentless pursuit of absolute power throughout the play remains consistent with the historical events of the tale and is necessary to the fulfillment of the plot, and need not concern us here. It is the enduring conflict between his ambition and his passion from which the tragedy derives. The duke fails to engage our pity as an unregenerate conspirator whose assassination is affirmed as appropriate, but does as a flawed individual whose excessive ambition undermines, and costs him, his love. It is the eventual recognition of the extent and

<sup>109</sup> As Rangno suggests, for the most part the scenes that Dryden wrote develop and extend the political parallel between France and England. This is notable in the characterisations. The language used does not distinguish the Curate from the Cardinal or Guise from his disciples—the "voice" is that of faction distributed amongst several speakers. The effect is to emphasise conflicts between points of view, and between representatives of factions, rather than between individual characters (p. 174).

<sup>110</sup> These cognate traits are emphasised at 1.2.46ff, 67-8; 2.2.81; 4.3.24, 93, 95, 136ff, 5.3.48. His excessive pride is most clearly manifested in his misguided belief that he will regain Marmoutier's affections just as he will instigate Henry's overthrow (4.3.136ff). His hubris increases to the point of him considering himself to be an amalgam of ten thousand angels formed into a single entity (4.3.143-4), and then comparing himself with a god in having created a situation whereby he can usurp the throne, and in having so much power and influence over so many people (4.3.154-5). As Gardiner states, Guise speaks with unattenuated hubris, imagining himself a god whose mere will brings about effect from a distance (p. 112). Few Leean characters have been so overtly hubristic, ambitious, and certain of their own success.

<sup>111</sup> 1.2.154ff; 4.1.10ff; 5.3.77.

<sup>112</sup> I use the term 'un-vellianous' in the same sense as 'unheroic'—to describe the presentation of characteristics that are diametrically opposed to the typical traits of a velliian or hero.

<sup>113</sup> In this he differs from the Queen Mother in *Massacre* for whom passionate excess is a conditional (situation-specific) aberration rather than a normative characteristic.

<sup>114</sup> 1.1.63-4. Catherine's disdain for love in *Massacre* is another example, as is Machiavel's attempt to suppress Borgia's love for Bellamira in order to make him an absolute politician.

significance of his loss that renders Guise tragic. This struggle is presented at length throughout the play so as to emphasise how injurious his ambition is to a future salutariness. Guise's anger and love are repeatedly introduced during his machinations, such as when he discovers the king to be a rival for Marmoutier's affections.<sup>115</sup> His admission that his "Brain runs this and that way" (3.1.433) indicates the conflict that his passion engenders. He even admits that Marmoutier acts as a catalyst to his conscience, causing him some doubt over his proposal, but that his ambition is stronger (4.3.57ff). The degree of his affection for her turns out to be one of the most enigmatic aspects of the central episodes of the text.<sup>116</sup> For instance he claims to love her at 4.3.110, but in the aside which follows (4.3.111) intimates that he is lying. That he fears revealing the true extent of his love is the probable reality of this passage. Nevertheless, the passage is subject to variant interpretations, as are several similar instances, arousing suspicion whether his love for Marmoutier is genuine. The numerous examples of ambiguity are augmented by his repeated mendacity. It is only when she threatens to forsake him that he is pressured into admitting the extent of his passion. The first such occasion occurs at 4.3.125 when he pleads for her to stay when she decides to abandon him. The second occurs in 5.3 after she abandons him for the last time.<sup>117</sup> The passionate language of his speech, and the melancholy of his soliloquy (5.3.157ff), illustrates his affection and finally overcomes his ambition to the extent that he goes to his death with indifferent resignation. Although he ends the scene claiming that he will die a defiant "True Politician" (5.3.175), this is nothing more than bravado. His spirit has been broken and he goes to his death with a distinct lack of vigour.<sup>118</sup> Marmoutier dominates his every thought from the moment that she forsakes him and it is poignant that her name is the very last word that he speaks in life.

Although the Guise in *Guise* is not identical with the figure in *Massacre*, the syntagmatic unity between the two is considerable.<sup>119</sup> As a heterogeneous entity the duke is also of interest, a figure whose enigmatic nature is fundamentally Lee's creation. It is in his augmentation of Dryden's typically velliianous foundation that we find the amelioration of the character, particularly in his 'un-vellianous' characteristics, his ambiguity, psychological conflict and eventual pathos-laden demise. That he allows himself to be increasingly corrupted

<sup>115</sup> 1.2.197ff. His statement that "I wish that mine [hands] may both rot off" (1.2.208) suggests a moment of doubt over his proposed action. Guise's rage is again released when he 'discovers' Marmoutier's infidelity with the king (3.1.416ff). That such a matter would effect him so profoundly, and distract him from his intention, evidences the extent of his passion for her.

<sup>116</sup> That is, the signs at these locations are irregular and incomplete (ambiguous). Cf p. 58.

<sup>117</sup> Guise admits that Marmoutier is correct in claiming that he loves her more than glory (5.3.126).

<sup>118</sup> This is evidenced at 5.4.14-5a and from line one of Act Five Scene Five onwards.

<sup>119</sup> Guise's syntagmatic unity would be determined as being substantial on the quintuple scale. Or, using Margolin's terminology (pp. 44ff), Guise's continuity satisfies the requirements of the permanence-amidst-change model. That is, there are no profound differences in his core properties, only certain aspects—such as his

by his pursuit of absolute power whilst undermining a salutary relationship with Marmoutier is the great tragedy of this play. Although he might seem to be a tragic hero in the Aristotelian sense, he fails to achieve an heroic status because of his blatant lack of regret over his actions and his failure to rehabilitate.<sup>120</sup> He remains a dispositional tragic villain, a confirmed recidivist who nevertheless earns our pity (as is intended) because his obsessive ambition prevents the fulfillment of a salubrious affection.<sup>121</sup>

Much of the interest in the character of King Henry III stems from an attempt to determine whether his inaction results from inordinate mercy or paralysing irresolution. Gardiner, for instance, suggests that it is Henry's irresolution that causes him to lose power, requiring him to resort to immoral and illegal action (dissimulation and assassination) in order to regain control.<sup>122</sup> Grillon's refusal to assassinate Guise is felt to highlight the king's lack of integrity.<sup>123</sup> Gardiner contends that Dryden is advising Charles II that a monarch who does not assert his sovereignty during moments of national crisis may have to resort to ignoble means in order to reestablish his supremacy. That is, the play is essentially a critique of monarchical inaction, and Charles' in particular. Although I do not entirely share her view, it is an ingenious argument and demonstrates some of the difficulties in determining the basis of Henry's passivity.

An attentive analysis of this character should help to resolve this issue. From the outset the characteristics most frequently associated with Henry are his justice, mercy, nobility, rectitude, fortitude, forbearance, and benevolence – in short the types of traits apposite to an exemplary monarch.<sup>124</sup> His capacity for forgiveness, in particular, is repeatedly illustrated so as

obsessive hatred – are reduced and/or omitted as no longer necessary to the action. Some traits (particularly his ambition) have been augmented, whilst others (like his love) remain homogenous.

<sup>120</sup> Guise is expressly opposed to the idea of repentance (5.1.41).

<sup>121</sup> Guise is modestly atypical, a provocator who is minimally stylised, medially coherent, medially whole, medially symbolic, medially accessible (medial complexity and substantial transparency), medially derivative, medially conventional (minimally in his societal role as a loyal subject, maximally in his functional role as antagonist and medial as pathetic lover) and minimal anagnorisis. Symbolically the analogous relationship between the Dukes of Guise and Monmouth is well established, yet the character is sufficiently individuated as to make the parallel medial at best. According to Davila the duke was an extraordinary politician, who exercised religious and political power for the good of the state for more than a decade. Dryden and Lee's figure is only modestly comparable with that representation. However the character is substantially derivative when compared with his forebear in *Massacre*.

<sup>122</sup> Gardiner, pp. 110ff. Van Lennep is another, complaining that the inactions from *Massacre* presenting the king as a wavering, conscience-ridden monarch (initially assigned to Charles IX) is unsuitable to this figure, who carries out the "cold-blooded murder of Guise without consulting his mother" (*Sources*, p. 545).

<sup>123</sup> It should be noted that the king is not angered by Grillon's refusal, which is likely to have been the case if he had reverted to a committed villain. Rather it suggests that the murder is a necessity but that the king is honourable enough not to make any man act against his conscience.

<sup>124</sup> Even Melanax refers to Henry as a "Just Indulgent" king (1.2.26). Marmoutier adds that he is "so Good, so Just, so Great" at 1.2.178, and his mother refers to the "Natural Sweetness of his Temper / And dangerous Mercy" (2.1.37-8). It is notable of the extent of his mercy that even Marmoutier confesses that, if she were king and Guise came to Paris, she would have had him publicly executed (3.1.350-1). Henry reveals an antipathy towards assassination at 2.1.54ff, seeing it as ignoble, but is forced to order this action because of the duke's recidivism. Dryden admits in *The Indication* (*Works*, xiv, p. 316, ll. 4ff) that mercy was apparently not a trait familiar to the

to demonstrate that his eventual action was an absolute and unavoidable necessity. Although it is true that Henry is capable of irresolution (as is pointedly emphasised at 2.1.37) this is in part a result of his efforts at leniency and benevolent rule. There are several additional reasons given for his inaction. Firstly, there is a suggestion at 2.1.137-9 that the king's conscience prevents him from pursuing an aggressive course of action. Secondly, the king admits that part of his motivation for a bloodless solution is that he and Guise had been friends and he hopes for a reconciliation.<sup>125</sup> Melanax adds that the only reason that Guise was not killed the moment he arrived at court is that the devil had filled Henry's psyche with doubt and confusion to prevent the king from acting resolutely.<sup>126</sup> Henry also repeatedly attempts to prevent his recalcitrant subjects from acting treasonously and so avoid the necessity of a repressive response.<sup>127</sup> His reaction to Guise's return to Paris against his express command is one of disappointment rather than anger – Henry being repeatedly presented as a long suffering, but infinitely forgiving, father-king frustrated by an obstinate child-subject (3.2.6ff). The dramatists repeatedly provide valid reasons for Henry's inaction, demonstrating that it does not arise from an inability to act but a conscious effort not to, in the hope that the crisis would be resolved without the need for action. Nevertheless the king's mercy is also excessive, rendering him partly responsible for inviting the rebellion – his failure (both in the past and present) to exercise an appropriate level of judicious and temperate, but authoritative, command, encouraging transgression.<sup>128</sup> His clemency is viewed as pusillanimity by Guise, who feels emboldened to further encroach upon his prerogative.

The extent of Henry's suppressed anger over the duke's recidivism is evident from the opening lines of Act Four, yet he continues to forgive. The king eventually reaches the limits of his patience and admits (in an aside at 4.1.50-2) that Guise's death is absolutely necessary. At this point the dramatists make it plainly evident that the method used to punish Guise is appropriate. The repetitive use of the term "Sovereign Justice" (5.1.118, 285) serves to shade the offence with legality and propriety. Henry's admission that kings when "forc'd by strong Necessity may strike" (5.1.125) not only indicates his belief that this action is necessary, but also that the dramatists are of this opinion. It illustrates that the king's subsequent conduct,

historical king. It is, however, evidently a fundamental aspect of the fictional one, and results from the accentuation of the king's virtues and diminution of his vices.

<sup>125</sup> 2.2.150. Henry III's dilemma recalls that of Charles IX in *Massacre* who suffers from a similar conflict between his love for the Admiral (his one time advisor) and his fear of losing authority and desire to illustrate his power so as to maintain control.

<sup>126</sup> 4.2.29ff. Whilst it is pertinent to treat any claim by such a character with reservation, this statement does appear to be genuine, and was probably introduced to help justify the king's passivity.

<sup>127</sup> For example he has Grillon offer Guise the leadership in the war against the Huguenots (so as to appease his ambition) and by having him attempt to convince Guise of the errors of his ways (2.1.125ff).

whilst aggressive, is appropriate, and in accordance with the moral perspective that the play adopts.<sup>129</sup> Like Henry, Dryden and Lee imply that the impending assassination is "Unpleasant [but] wholsom work" (5.1.128). Yet for all his commitment to this course of action, Marmoutier is still able to convince him to spare the duke, partly because of the extent of his affection for her and her offer to reject Guise as a rival, but partly also because of his capacity for mercy (5.1.147ff). There is nothing in this reversal which intimates irresolution or the inability to act—it is an extension of his vain hope that the Guisards will end their rebellious activities. That Guise continues to offend against Henry's sovereignty finally renders him beyond redemption. It then becomes imperative that the duke be made an example of, so as to bring about a sudden and telling end to the crisis. As the king declares (and the dramatists emphasise) "[e]ven Heaven is wearied with [Guise's] repeated Crimes" (5.1.253). Guise himself admits as much, noting that he has provoked the king past pardoning, and that if Henry has him slain the punishment would be just (5.3.10). Because of the duke's intransigence, the king is forced to cast off his role as the cautious "fox" and assume that of the aggressive "lion".<sup>130</sup>

In *The Vindication* Dryden explains that Henry is a monarch who is naturally (dispositionally) severe, but has suppressed this instinct and acted with mercy and caution in a hope that a peaceful solution can be achieved.<sup>131</sup> When it becomes apparent that Guise will not comply, he acts with his natural severity to bring the crisis to a conclusion. That he behaves with judicial severity in no way reduces the necessity of his actions, merely enforcing that this was the inevitable response of a person of his nature after all attempts at mercy had been exhausted. Yet, as is always the case with Leean drama, the propriety of the king's conduct is not endorsed uncritically. Although the dramatists confirm his decision to be necessary to national preservation, there is a suggestion that the execution was a belated and not entirely ideal choice. Dryden and Lee imply that earlier action may have prevented the extreme

<sup>128</sup> As Gardiner notes, when Guise is in Henry's possession, the king has the opportunity to prevent the rebellion, but is convinced by his mother to act cautiously (4.1.53). In allowing the duke to depart he loses the initiative and (temporarily) his kingdom to the ascending rebels (p. 113).

<sup>129</sup> Henry's final speech, and that of the play, confirms the moral perspective of the play to be that Guise had been given ample warning and opportunity to refrain, but that his recidivism had forced Henry to resort to the most extreme form of discipline.

<sup>130</sup> 5.5.46. This is an evident allusion to Machiavelli's claim that the ideal prince "ought to serve himself of the conditions [characteristics] of the Fox and the Lion, for the Lion cannot keep himself from snares, nor the Fox defend himself against the Wolves" (Dacres (trans.) xviii 593). To prevent being the ongoing victim of the Guisard 'wolves', Henry is forced to cease acting like a "fox" and start behaving as a "lion".

<sup>131</sup> Dryden, "Vindication" in *Works of Dryden*, xiv, p. 316. There is, however, no internal evidence to suggest that the king of this play is naturally severe, until such time as he has Guise assassinated. Dryden's need to allude to a choleric disposition without dramatising it is a point Rangno has complained of, and finds as a flaw in the play (p. 181). However, I would suggest that anger is actually a conditional (situation-specific) trait, rather than a normative characteristic—a trait that is not apparent in his everyday behaviour and only emerges when aroused by specific circumstances, such as the rebellion. This likens his anger to Hamlet's cruelty (cf. pp. 40–1, 42n31).

response that he is forced to resort to.<sup>132</sup> The execution, whilst acceptable, is not without repercussions because it depreciates Henry's virtue, and, as is often the case with adulterated figures who are meant to be viewed emphatically, calls into question his ultimate salvation. Significantly, to alleviate the suggestion of a permanent adulteration of the king's rectitude, Henry then continues his display of mercy to the Guisards (5.5.18)—his order that they turn from their stubbornness evidently implies that he is willing to forgive them if they recant, rather than simply executing them out of hand. Their chastened response to this command indicates that they are contrite and so will be forgiven.<sup>133</sup> In displaying an authoritative but clement demeanour, Henry reveals that he has finally learnt that benevolence must be tempered with authority, lest it be viewed as weakness and invite provocation. Unfortunately for both the king and duke that lesson costs Guise his life, and Henry a dear friend.<sup>134</sup>

Despite Van Lennep's untenable assertion that Grillon is "the most original person of the play", he is a thoroughly typified figure upon whom far too much attention has been lavished.<sup>135</sup> Grillon is a conventional representation of the brusque (usually aged) soldier-counsellor in the tradition of Lee's Clytus, Archelaus and Marcian, and Dryden's Abenamar, Venditius and Raymond. The very first reference to this character most accurately summarises him as a "blunt, hot, honest, downright, valiant Fool".<sup>136</sup> Guise adds that he is undiplomatic and tactless in his forthrightness—he speaks his mind without due attention to his location or to those whom he addresses or who might overhear. His outspoken nature is revealed from the

<sup>132</sup> Obviously Henry's belated action serves a practical dramatic necessity—the dramatists cannot actually have Henry act earlier because to do so would prevent the tragic events from unfolding and so undermine the purpose of the play. It also serves as a didactic warning over monarchical inaction, as Gardiner suggests. However, I see this more as advice than a critique, in the same vein as Dryden's "Absalom and Achitophel".

<sup>133</sup> Although Dryden intimates further retribution against the Guisards post-play ("The Vindication", *Works of Dryden*, xiv, p. 317), as was historically the case, the play's conclusion suggests the contrary. The only way in which the two positions can be equated is if we accept that the king is dissembling here, in which case the character must ultimately be seen as villainous. It is equally probable that Dryden either misunderstood the subtlety of Lee's final lines or that he was writing *The Vindication* from an inexact recall of the particular fine details of the conclusion.

<sup>134</sup> Structurally the king is an exemplary statesman-hero who is modestly stylified (by virtue of his character development), a responder who is modestly stylised, maximally coherent, substantially whole, medially symbolic, medially accessible (modest complexity and medial transparency), substantially conventional (maximal in his societal role as monarch, and substantial in his functional role as benevolent king), and undergoes medial anagnorisis—although he develops an awareness of the appropriate method of administration, as is dramatised in the final scene, he does not enunciate that progression. Henry is minimally derivative—Davila presents a king manipulated by Guise, the Holy League and his mother, a pusillanimous ruler who was repeatedly forced to make politically expedient, rather than morally appropriate, decisions. Whereas Davila blames his failure on weakness and hedonism, Dryden and Lee depict his faults proceeding from an attempt to rule benevolently. Symbolically the analogy to Charles II is evident, but is generally restricted to the fact that both are presented as conventional images of the exemplary monarch. Also on symbolism, Rangno cogently points out that as a person Henry represents the tempered combination of authority with mercy, socially he exemplifies the values of restraint and of reconciliation through love, and politically epitomises the exercise of rational control in the state and the use of law rather than force (p. 181).

<sup>135</sup> Van Lennep, *Sources*, p. 616.

<sup>136</sup> 1.2.61. There are several references to his being aged (2.2.109, 131, 3.1.187) and to his honesty (2.1.108, 3.1.143, 205, 223).



moment that he appears onstage at 2.1.109ff. His moral rectitude is most notable in his refusal to murder Guise (5.1.281ff), yet notably he refuses not out of a belief in the illegality or impropriety of the act, but because he owes Guise a life-debt, and because executing Guise is properly the responsibility of a "Hangman" not of a "Soldier" (5.1.281). However, too much attention is devoted to this undifferentiated type—that he should be allocated the third highest amount of dialogue of the play (over fifteen percent in comparison to Guise's twenty and Henry's eighteen) was an artistic miscalculation.<sup>137</sup>

In contrast to the staid depiction of Grillon is the extraordinarily dynamic heroine Marmoutier. To date critics have viewed this character as nothing more than a functional figure of the affective sub-plot, and have patently failed to appreciate the extent of her dynamism.<sup>138</sup> This aspect of her character is emphasised in the duke's first reference to her as having the proactivity of the Queen Mother without the wickedness (1.2.65ff). She is outspoken, determined, provocative, sagacious, altruistic, devoted, chaste, temperate, is loyal to both her lover and her king, and displays considerable moral rectitude. She views the Guisards as traitors (1.2.117, 119, 122), and is opposed to the duke's proposal, but rather than testifying against him or remaining neutral, she actively attempts to divert him from his course of action, and from his association with the faction. This is all the more remarkable given that she does so initially out of a patriotic desire to prevent civil discord, and a platonic affection for both protagonists, rather than out of a romantic love of either. To demonstrate her commitment to his reversion she threatens to go to court and seduce the king if Guise refuses to forego his intention. Few heroines act so forcefully out of patriotism, usually acting out of a necessity inspired by love. In this she recalls the force used by Pulcheria to instigate change.

Marmoutier's character is further individuated when she finally admits the extent of her affection for Guise. Her psychological conflict (at 3.1.348ff) between love for, and reproach of, the duke is realistic and compelling, as she oscillates between two equally powerful emotions:

His charms prevail, no, let the Rebel dye  
I faint beneath this strong oppression here.

<sup>137</sup> Grillon is substantially stereotypical, a reactor who is medially typified, maximally coherent, maximally whole, maximally symbolic, medially accessible (minimal complexity and maximal transparency), maximally derivative, maximally conventional (maximal in his societal and functional roles as counsellor) and static.

<sup>138</sup> The most outrageous (and flagrantly inaccurate) criticism of her derives from Hammond. He claims that the "shadowy" Marmoutier is told to stay with the King to advise him, which she doesn't do (incorrect), criticises Guise until she learns of the scheme to have him assassinated (not entirely correct—she continues to criticise him over his actions throughout, and even leaves him because of it), thereafter pleading for him, not on grounds of policy, but merely for her sake as a woman (incorrect). The King agrees to spare Guise unless he should 'tempt Revenge' further, which the duke doesn't (incorrect). Hammond concludes that he hopes "it will be agreed from this summary that she is a perfect pest, who has nothing whatsoever constructive to do with the action" (*Development*, p. 624). Barring one partly accurate claim, none of these assertions is even remotely veracious, and are thoroughly inconsistent with the events of the play. Further his claim that Marmoutier is irrelevant to the plot ignores the important role she performs in the tragedy of attempting to prevent both men from acting deleteriously, as shall be considered in due course.

Reason and Love rend my divided Soul (3.1.360-2).

It is for this reason that she continues to attempt to divert Guise from his proposal.<sup>139</sup> Not only does she strive to prevent the duke from an offensive course of action, but so too Henry, and not because violent retribution would end in the death of her beloved (as one might expect) but because of a belief that it would be deleterious to the king's rectitude. She deliberately provokes the king into considering his proposed actions by claiming that he is mirroring his brother's malicious behaviour leading to the St. Bartholomew's day massacre, in feigning compliance to lull his enemies into a false sense of security to effect their overthrow (5.1.101ff). The accuracy of the claim causes Henry much consternation. Just as she has done with Guise, Marmoutier acts in an attempt to divert Henry from an ignoble course of action. For this reason she once again asks Henry to spare the life of Guise (5.1.140ff) so that the king may remain "extravagantly Good" (5.1.146) and not be degraded by Machiavellian policy, no matter how justified that policy might be. That she also begs Henry to spare Guise so that the duke "may be my Convert" (5.1.152) emphasises her attempt to save both men from themselves. Like Sophonisba, Pulcheria and Teraminta, Marmoutier is an example of an assertive woman of action who is not a villainess. She compares favourably with Pulcheria in the extent of her personal dynamism.<sup>140</sup> Hers is the voice of reason and moderation in the play, she epitomises moral rectitude and salutariness. She is absolutely loyal to both her king and her lover and attempts to prevent both from acting self-destructively. It is notable that neither heeds her advice—the former fatally, the latter to a lesser extent because the king's actions are felt, even by her, to be necessary and appropriate. And, although Roper objects that the dramatists could think of nothing to do with so important a character at the end,<sup>141</sup> Marmoutier's final resolution strikes me as entirely appropriate. Having failed to prevent the duke from rebelling, and having failed to evoke in him a love for her that could override his ambition, she quite plausibly retires from the world, knowing that whether he achieves absolute power or loses his life, he is lost to her.<sup>142</sup> It is difficult to conceive of a more poignant ending.<sup>143</sup>

<sup>139</sup> She remains loyal and devoted to Guise until the end, choosing to enter a convent when it becomes clear that she cannot divert him from his course of action.

<sup>140</sup> There is a general consensus amongst critics that Marmoutier is wholly Lee's creation. Her foundation is almost entirely that of his own Marguerite (both characters are only hinted at in Davila) augmented by the patriotic passion of Pulcheria.

<sup>141</sup> Roper, "Guise" in *Works of Dryden*, xiv, p. 511.

<sup>142</sup> Incidentally this decision was probably inspired by Chartres' final resolution in *L'Éve*.

<sup>143</sup> Marmoutier is a modestly atypical exemplary stateswoman, an initiator who is medially stylised, maximally coherent, maximally whole, modestly symbolic, substantially accessible (medial complexity and maximal transparency), maximally conventional (maximal in her societal role as dutiful subject and in functional roles as a stateswoman and dynamic lover), static and medially derivative (based on Lee's own Marguerite, Marmoutier being a virtually non-existent character in Davila). Scott sees Marmoutier as representing the Duchess of

Ironically whereas Marmoutier is particularly dynamic, the representation of the Queen Mother in this play is notably passive, and distinctly unlike her animatedly villainous Leean predecessor.<sup>144</sup> Despite being a lesser intermediary figure, Catherine warrants a brief analysis from a syntagmatic perspective. Although first referred to as a "Lady Regent" (the real ruler of the kingdom) who "never Pardons" (1.2.30-1)—intimating a continuation of Lee's prototype—this figure turns out to be quite passive and ineffectual in comparison.<sup>145</sup> She is considerably more sedate, less threatening and villainous here than in the earlier play, becoming a moderating force rather than an aggressive one.<sup>146</sup> As she herself intimates at 2.1.39, she exercises little political influence over her son. She repeatedly and judiciously advocates caution, never once offering an alternative course of action.<sup>147</sup> Rather than advising, she is herself guided by the Abbot at 4.5.33ff. Her syntagmatic unity is slight, through her lacking both the dynamism and villainous nature of her Leean foundation. Using Margolin's terminology, there has been a punctual change in the core property of the character in this play compared with her counterpart in *The Massacre of Paris*. Continuity has depended upon her extensional dimension and the suggestion of a history of advocating mercy and caution (referred to at note 40 above) to prevent the two representations from being thoroughly discontinuous.<sup>148</sup> Unfortunately the removal of her villainous characteristics leaves her dull and uninspiring, and not even of much value as a functional figure.

The one remaining character of passing interest is Malicorne. He is an amalgam of Marlowe's Faustus and Rosset's Canope—both of whom sell their soul to the devil for knowledge—and the physical and moral deformity of Shakespeare's Richard III and Lee's Creon.<sup>149</sup> Functionally Malicorne serves to emphasise the diabolical foundation of Guise's power. He is a loyal disciple of Guise, and there is a suggestion that his pact with the devil is

Monmouth (Scott and Saintsbury (ed.), *Works of Dryden*, vii, pp. 8, 35). As Van Lennep notes, the duchess had been Dryden's first patroness, and Lee had also expressed his admiration for her (*Sources*, p. 596).

<sup>144</sup> Stroup completely misinterprets Catherine's character in this play by claiming that "in the *Duke of Guise* the Queen Mother is the power behind the throne. She is ambitious for her son and is especially anxious to save him from the plot of Guise. Through her effective spy system, she gains all the necessary information in order to be able to attack Guise and his faction. She is a far superior ruler to her son, and she drives him with her sarcasm" (*Type-characters*, n.pn). This is utterly incorrect—the Catherine of *Massacre* is of this nature, but not the figure in *Guise*; yet it is self-evident that the latter play is the one from which the analysis derives. Later he and his fellow editor claim that whilst not as fully realised as in *Massacre*, she is still a "quiet, determined force" (*Works*, II, 392), further misinterpreting her influence.

<sup>145</sup> Guise continues this intimation by claiming her to be a "Cormorant"—a greedy or voracious person—who will never rest until all of her adversaries are dead (1.2.32-3). Other references to her "wickedness" (1.2.73) and "Cruel Wit" (2.1.50) intimate her villainy, yet this impression is not born out by her actions.

<sup>146</sup> She is, however, thoroughly consistent with that aspect of her prototype wherein she is described as having always advocated mercy except in the "utmost, last Necessity" (*The Massacre of Paris*, 5.1.73bff).

<sup>147</sup> 2.1.24ff, 3.2.33, 4.1.53ff. Her one proactive suggestion at 4.1.124ff is fairly moderate: advocating dissimulation is hardly a revolutionary concept for a politician.

<sup>148</sup> Cf. Margolin, pp. 47ff.

<sup>149</sup> Unlike his deformed predecessors Malicorne expresses no sorrow at his physical malformation, and so his moral distortion cannot be seen to result from it, but is rather congenital.

intended to serve his master. When the devil (later named Melanax) first appears onstage, rather than commanding a service, or asking advice, for his own gratification, Malicorne asks him what advice he has for Guise.<sup>150</sup> Even at the moment that he is to be dragged down to hell, Malicorne is concerned with Guise's fate rather than his own more perilous one (5.2.83ff). Clearly the devil simply uses Malicorne to corrupt the duke who is the principal objective. Melanax's statement that man "sinks blindfold into sin, / Betray'd by Frauds without, and Lusts within" (5.2.106-7) applies as much to Guise as to Malicorne, the devil being the prime mover of the fraud (manipulation) from without. Nevertheless the entire Malicorne subplot is dramatically redundant.

Roper adamantly, but rather excessively, claims that to attempt to praise this play as a dramatic work is to "build on sand".<sup>151</sup> Yet it possesses numerous literary merits other than the contemporary political parallels, not least of which is the sophistication with which the characters are produced, and the genuine sense of tragedy they elicit. No one disputes that the principal interest in the work is as a political document, but the characters are nevertheless also well-constructed, psychologically complex and verisimilar entities that warrant consideration and acknowledgement as such. Rangno and Roper both claim that the characters are insufficiently autonomous to be dramatically convincing,<sup>152</sup> yet each of the principal figures faces genuinely vexing emotional dilemmas that are the true focus of the drama. Guise in his conflict between love and ambition, Henry in his struggle between duty and affection, and Marmoutier in her divided loyalties. At no point are their thoughts and actions mechanical, predictable or unconvincing.<sup>153</sup> As had been the case in their previous collaboration, Dryden left the enrichment of the characters to his colleague, whose skill in this area was recognised and admired. In working from Dryden's villainous foundation, Lee makes Guise a complex, enigmatic and atypical figure, who is sympathetic despite his obsession with power. His sacrifice of a salutary affection for the delusion of power creates a truly tragic situation. And

<sup>150</sup> 1.2.13ff. When the pair next appear at 4.2, Guise is once again the topic of discussion. Notably the devil advocates regicide rather than simply abduction and incarceration. Throughout Melanax fulfills the role of Marlowe's Mephistophilis, from whom he is evidently derived. This extends to Melanax's ambiguous mendacity regarding the existence and nature of Hell.

<sup>151</sup> Roper, "Guise" in *Works of Dryden*, xiv, p. 511. Hammond also refers to lack of intrinsic literary merit in *Guise* (*Development*, pp. 620, 632).

<sup>152</sup> Rangno, pp. 162, 180, 188, 199n. 50; Roper, "Guise" in *Works of Dryden*, xiv, p. 511. Marmoutier's attempt to divert both Guise and Henry from their course of action means that each has ample opportunity to consider his actions and the ramifications and so is morally responsible for his subsequent behaviour. Neither acts in an a-psychological manner.

<sup>153</sup> Cf. Hunt, pp. 306, 311. Although acknowledging the evident complexity in the representations of Guise and Henry, Hunt admits that inconsistencies between Dryden's and Lee's segments undermines the complexity and invites an interpretation of incongruity (p. 311). This is, as I have previously suggested (cf. p. 148n. 158), a common concern in collaborative dramaturgy where character complexity is attempted. Nevertheless the supposed characterological inconsistencies in this play are far less evident than in *Oedipus*, and can be easily explained by the nature of the characters, and of the events they are embroiled in. None of the irregularities is overt, significant nor incommensurate, hence there has been little need for me to discuss them.

Henry is most certainly not, as Hammond describes him, "an unflattering, feebly vengeful character".<sup>154</sup> The king's struggle between action and affection is well-constructed, creating considerable uncertainty as to whether his inaction results from extraordinary mercy or paralysing irresolution. Further Lee develops this figure into an exemplary ruler who exhibited the requisite balance of temperance and authority. Lee's Marmoutier is also of interest—he produces in her a character who rivals Pulcheria as his most dynamic and influential heroine. Her depiction is further illustration of a return of interest to strong, independent heroines, rather than the passive victims of his central plays. All three of these figures is presented with Lee's customary characterological skill—they are all effective, affective and verisimilar psychological entities that engage, and maintain, our interest amidst the tragic action.

Despite Ham's ridiculous claim that Lee's part of *Guise* is impoverished by failing verse and unvigorous imagination,<sup>155</sup> his contribution to this play is, at the very least, the equal of Dryden.<sup>156</sup> To Dryden we owe the satire in the play,<sup>157</sup> whilst the tragedy—the love scenes, and the complex emotions in the main characters—is clearly the province of Lee.<sup>158</sup> He augments Dryden's political tract by adding the emotive elements, concentrating upon the same themes that have concerned him throughout his entire career—frustrated love, the conflict between love and ambition, the deleterious and dehumanising nature and effect of power, and the danger that ambition and political intrigue cause to the royal (and, by extension, national) peace. Moderation is once again illustrated to be the preferred option, emphasised by Henry's eventual progression towards the ideal prince, who, after losing his kingdom because of excessive temperance and being forced to regain it with excessive severity, thereafter balances temperance and authority in the maintenance of the state. As is always the case with plays written by Lee, the principal focus is on personal and domestic problems besetting an individual or individuals during a moment of political (national) crisis, and with moral conflicts and emotional states these dilemmas produce. Once again he was less concerned with advocating a Whig or a Tory position than with dramatising the tragic personal outcome of immoderate political or passionate action. So, as Van Lennep correctly points out, whilst the

<sup>154</sup> Hammond, *Development*, p. 625.

<sup>155</sup> Ham, p. 173.

<sup>156</sup> Hamant admits Dryden to be Lee's acknowledged superior as a controversialist, but not necessarily as a dramatist (p. 225). Cf. Richard Brown, "Dryden-Lee Collaboration", p. 23.

<sup>157</sup> As Roper notes Dryden wrote most of the politically provocative scenes—the conspiracy, the planned suppression of the king and the insurrection ("Guise" in *Works of Dryden*, xiv, p. 480)—scenes notable for the subordination of character to abstract conceptual arguments. The unadulterated objects of satire in the play are the Holy League, the Council of Sixteen, and the sheriffs and citizens of Paris, all of whom analogue contemporary Whig groups.

<sup>158</sup> This is admitted by Dryden who claims that "Two thirds of it belong'd to [Lee]—to me only the First Scene of the Play, the whole Fourth Act, and the first half, or somewhat more of the Fifth" ("The Vindication", in *Works*, xiv, 311, ll. 8-10).

play's merits as a polemic are due to Dryden, credit for its appeal as a drama must largely go to Lee.<sup>159</sup>

Constantine the Great (mid-1683 for 12 November 1683).

Lee's last dramatic production is likely to have been composed in mid-1683, and performed at Drury Lane by 12 November, the date Malone records for the publication of the separately issued prologue and epilogue.<sup>160</sup> The play does not appear to have been revived nor reprinted after the initial publication in 1684. Despite numerous biographies of Constantine being available to Lee, including a recent reprint of Eusebius' history of the early church,<sup>161</sup> there is little that is historical in this play. Van Lennep suggests that the accounts by Zosimus and Zonares may have provided a few details.<sup>162</sup> But, for the most part, Lee has produced the type of affective, domestic tragedy that had brought him pecuniary success—a practical necessity given his recent stage failures—loosely framed around events in the life of the most famous of Christian Roman emperors. Thematically the play revives the conventional motif of a rivalry between a father and son for the affections of the same woman, already seen in Lee's own *Mithridates*, Dryden's *Aureng-Zeb* and Otway's *Don Carlos*. Although Stroup and Cooke suggest that this play operates as a political allegory paralleling the events of the Rye-House plot, most critics now agree that there is more general topicality to the political themes than a continuing allegory.<sup>163</sup> As with all of Lee's plays written during the political crises of recent years, rather than representing current events in any specific way, Lee is concerned with dramatising universal political problems.<sup>164</sup> This accounts for Lee's unashamed (and often extreme) departures from his sources. Critically the play has received little attention—as Stroup and Cooke note that which it has received has tended to be impressionistic, rather than based on detailed analysis.<sup>165</sup> The following is an attempt to redress the balance, at least from a characterological perspective.

<sup>159</sup> Van Lennep, *Sources*, p. 617.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 618, 618n. 1; Stroup and Cooke, *Works*, II 604n. 3.

<sup>161</sup> Recent studies included George Gerbier's "The Life of Constantine the Great" (a translation of Andrew Thevet's "Prosopographia", appended to the 1657 and 1676 editions of North's Plutarch), William Winstanley's *England's Worthines* (1660), William Howell's *An Institution of General History... to Constantine* (1661, reprinted 1680), Joannes Zonares and Zosimus' *Histoire Romaine* (trans. Louis Cousin, 1678), and Eusebius' *Ancient Ecclesiastical Histories* (in numerous editions to 1683) amongst others.

<sup>162</sup> Van Lennep, *Sources*, p. 621.

<sup>163</sup> Cf. Hammond, p. 635; Rangno, pp. 230, 236-7; Armistead, p. 168.

<sup>164</sup> As Hunt correctly points out, Lee's plays embody political philosophy rather than propaganda (p. 300).

<sup>165</sup> *Works*, II 480. Hammond's is an excellent example of the 'appreciative' analysis of the play—despite emphasising this very problem in his own examination, he proceeds to assess the play in precisely the same manner. He claims that this is a better than average Restoration drama, without providing any argued basis for this assessment (p. 619).



As a play *Constantine* is another example of the merits and defects of Lee's dramaturgy. Part of the problem derives from the fact that, after Lee has pronounced the principal theme of the work in the opening lines, his every dramatic instinct is to work in violation of that structure. The angels' song, and the subsequent elaborative explanation by Sylvester, affirms that the play will centre on the torment to be endured by the title-character as a direct result of his deleterious passion for Fausta, and that he will eventually attain an harmonious emotional state when he overcomes that desire.<sup>166</sup> Yet, having emphasised this plot structure, Lee attempts to complicate the domestic design by introducing a superfluous political conspiracy, seemingly to provide the play with contemporary relevance. However, excepting Arius, none of the conspirators (Lycinius, Labienus and Eubulus) have any involvement whatsoever in either of the two love-triangles, and their participation ends with the execution of Lycinius at the close of the second act.<sup>167</sup> The inclusion of an irrelevant conspiracy is one of two main flaws that critics have highlighted, the other being a perceived lack of motivation for the actions of Arius and Constantine. Numerous other faults may be added, principal of which are i) the perfunctory conclusion to the play; ii) the fact that Arius and Dalmatius both receive too much textual attention for such undifferentiated stereotypes; iii) that despite being told that the play is to focus on Constantine's torment, the emperor experiences little suffering until well into the third act, the trauma of the first half of the play being reserved for Crispus and Fausta; iv) the complete lack of connection of the secondary love-triangle (concerning Annibal, Serena and Crispus) to Constantine or his torment; and, v) Serena's incomprehensible motivation.<sup>168</sup>

Hunt, Hammond and Rangno all highlight the absence of a rationale for Arius' behaviour; Rangno claiming him to be "a Machiavel without even the desire for vicarious power, an unmotivated evil whose various machinations are only ever loosely related".<sup>169</sup> But here Lee can be defended. Rather than being an example of 'motiveless malignity', his actions are founded in the very desire to rule vicariously. That he "stands for ever bound to serve

<sup>166</sup> Sylvester iterates that Constantine's "Bosom Foe" (1.1.43)—his passion—will cause his torment, the nature of that torment is revealed ("this Beauty [Fausta]...may bring confusion" (1.1.61)—that is, she will excite his emotional perturbation), and that she is guilty "Of all the ills, that shall [henceforth] attend your Life" (1.1.72).

<sup>167</sup> The conspiracy is confined to the first two acts of the play and only serves to augment the problems besetting Constantine, and so increase his torment. However, because of the extent of his personal problems, the political concerns have little impact upon him at all. Not only is Constantine unperturbed by the threat of insurrection, but Dalmatius is able to resolve this crisis with consummate ease, depriving the threat of any real menace. Even Arius' execution results from his involvement in the domestic tragedy—his participation in the marriage of the lovers—rather than because of his political activities. That the emperor is completely indifferent to the political situation undermines Hunt's suggestion that his actions in this regard are "impeccable" (p.319).

<sup>168</sup> Serena places absolute trust in Arius, whilst claiming to distrust him. Although she admits that "the Gods fram'd me of so plain a Temper, / I cannot hide my Thoughts, though to my undoing" (3.1.10-1), if she experiences such an antipathy towards Arius why would she openly reveal her innermost secrets to him?

<sup>169</sup> Hunt, pp.316-7; Hammond, p.635—"if he has a general motive at all, [it] is merely promoting heresy"; Rangno, pp.218, 228.

Lycinius" (1.2.9) suggests that to place Lycinius on the throne would serve Arius' ambition for power.<sup>170</sup> The priest confesses to an antipathy towards "the proud imperial Brothers" Constantine and Dalmatius,<sup>171</sup> augmented by a contrasting (heretical) religious ideology.<sup>172</sup> He further reveals his ambitious nature in admitting that his position of influence "might have been retriev'd; / And I [again] at [the] Helm" (2.1.15-6) but for Dalmatius' discovery of his involvement in the insurrection.<sup>173</sup> Later Arius enthusiastically claims that "[w]e shall shortly govern" (3.1.94), confirming the desire for power to be the foundation for his action.

Constantine's placing so much trust in so notorious a villain is consistent with current events, and with the emperor's all-absorbing desire. Dalmatius is the first to refer to Arius' treachery in the text (1.1.171a), and so influences Constantine's subsequent admission of the truth of the allegation.<sup>174</sup> That the emperor immediately absolves the priest of guilt, and continues to trust him, is felt by some critics to be incomprehensible. Yet this is entirely in keeping with the emperor's obsession with Fausta, in the matter of which he is entirely dependent upon Arius' assistance. Constantine's increasing confidence in Arius is made plausible by the priest being the only person to support his intended execution of the emperor's rival, and the ideal person to implement it.<sup>175</sup>

Sanders and Stroup and Cooke have praised the representation of Arius, presumably because his villainy is skillfully presented.<sup>176</sup> That Arius' exploitation of others is efficaciously depicted is not in dispute, but from a characterological perspective it is difficult to agree with

<sup>170</sup> Lycinius is an "ambitious, brawny Fool" (2.1.35), a dullard who is easily manipulated—at 2.1.43ff Arius successfully dupes him into attempting to assassinate Dalmatius. Arius is convinced that he would achieve absolute control over the empire if Lycinius were to ascend the throne because of the ease with which he can manipulate him.

<sup>171</sup> His antipathy towards the royal family, coupled with an innate love of diabolical mayhem, accounts for his involvement in the marriage of Fausta to Crispus, after having previously acted on behalf of the emperor in a contract of marriage to her. This action also serves a practical function: by attempting to sow discord in the family he improves the likelihood of the success of the political conspiracy.

<sup>172</sup> Labienus explains that Arius is opposed to all religion, and that his spiritual role masks his secular ambitions (1.2.12).

<sup>173</sup> The conspirators decide to assassinate Dalmatius, believing Constantine to be more susceptible to influence when distanced from his more assertive brother. Arius refers to Dalmatius as the "Master Enemy" (3.1.99) reiterating that he is the biggest threat to the success of the conspiracy. The assumption that Constantine can be controlled is affirmed by Labienus who states that Constantine had asked for Arius (3.1.95-6)—despite knowing of his duplicitous nature, the emperor increasingly comes to rely upon him.

<sup>174</sup> That Constantine used Arius to secure the contract of marriage with Fausta, suggests that the emperor had previously trusted him completely—such a sensitive mission would never have been entrusted to one who is suspect. Constantine's need to query Dalmatius over Arius' treachery (1.1.171b) illustrates his doubt over the allegation, and it is only Dalmatius' absolute conviction, and the irrefutable evidence that he claims to have, that convinces the emperor of Arius' treachery. Nevertheless Constantine immediately absolves Arius of guilt, even making his involvement in the conspiracy appear relatively inoffensive, and assigning real blame for the conspiracy on Lycinius. At 2.1.27ff, Arius confirms that Constantine had been unaware of his treacherous nature before Dalmatius' revelation, claiming the emperor would have been unlikely to have ever discerned his involvement except for his brother's intervention.

<sup>175</sup> It is important to remember that, conventionally, when a particular character contemplates vicious action to satisfy his or her desire, the support and assistance of a like-minded individual in that endeavour invariably endears the assistant to the principal.

these critics, principally because Arius fails to present any characteristics that would differentiate him from Lee's existing pantheon of villains. Previously, a representation such as this would have formed the foundation for, not the end-product of, a characterisation. Arius devolves into little more than a functional automaton—an agent of evil possessing scant individuality.<sup>177</sup> This is not to suggest that functional characters may not be dramatically effective; however, Arius is too central to the action to remain a purely functional figure, and warranted greater elaboration; the reduction of this character to an undifferentiated stereotype prevents Arius from being a successful example of a villain by Lee's own high standards.<sup>178</sup> Ironically the one aspect that might have ameliorated and complicated this character—the moment in which Arius experiences compassion<sup>179</sup>—is abandoned as quickly as it is introduced.<sup>180</sup>

Despite exhibiting numerous flaws, *Constantine* also has some merits, not least of which is the verisimilar presentation of the trauma experienced by Constantine, Crispus and Fausta as a result of their love-triangle. Whereas Arius is a stagnant example of his type, the emperor is provided with considerable psychological complexity through the presentation of the Manichaean struggle he undergoes between his benevolent nature and an uncontrollable passion propelling him towards evil. After Arius actuates Constantine's grief by subtly revealing Crispus to his rival, the emperor's characterisation progresses from typified to atypical.<sup>181</sup> From this point onwards Constantine undergoes profound oscillation between his normative, virtuous personality state, and an ascendant viciousness. His soliloquy at 3.1.258ff reveals the extent of his torment as he rapidly fluctuates between conflicting desires to forgive and to destroy his son.<sup>182</sup> Thereafter he behaves maliciously, tricking Fausta into admitting

<sup>176</sup> Cf. Sanders, p. 504, Stroup and Cooke, *Works*, II.481

<sup>177</sup> Arius' cowardly attempt to avoid death in the final moments of the play even deprives him of the grudging respect one derives for the wholly unregenerate villain like Iago or Pharnaces

<sup>178</sup> It is important to remember that Arius ultimately fails in his every endeavour, except the deaths of Annibal and Serena, neither of which serves his political ambitions, only his diabolical love of chaos

<sup>179</sup> During his conversation with Serena, Arius claims that her sorrow has caused him to "grow good... o'th' sudden" (2.1.91-2). Perhaps Lee momentarily contemplated individuating Arius in a manner similar to that of Nero, but the idea is quickly abandoned. This is one of numerous examples where Lee introduces a potential avenue of interest only to ignore it in favour of another.

<sup>180</sup> Arius is a substantially typified villain, a provocator who is medially stylised, maximally coherent, modestly whole, substantially symbolic, modestly accessible (minimal complexity and medial transparency), modestly derivative, medially conventional (minimal in his societal role as priest and maximal in his functional role as calculating villain), and thoroughly static. On symbolism, Van Lennep claims that Arius is "a full-length portrait of Shaftesbury" (*Sources*, p.626), as do Stroup and Cooke ("Political Implications", pp.506ff, *Works*, II.481). That an allegorical connection exists is accepted, however the degree of the association is now generally felt to be less comprehensive than these critics suggest.

<sup>181</sup> Constantine's initial discovery of the existence of a rival for Fausta's affections (late in the second act—2.1.472) results in the expression of anger, not torment. It is only after Arius interposes (at 3.1.166ff) to reveal the name of the rival, that Constantine's anger combines with grief to create genuine trauma.

<sup>182</sup> Fausta refers to the "natural goodness of [Constantine's] temper, / How e're transported" (3.2.188-9), illustrating an awareness that in his impassioned state, the emperor has lost control of his reason and given himself over to vice. A result of his irrationality is a reversion to paganism, Constantine claiming that "not all the Gods

their love (3.2.139ff), and threatening to kill Crispus unless she agrees to marry him.<sup>183</sup> He even reneges on a vow to pardon Crispus if Fausta proves him innocent. Henceforth Constantine experiences repeated vacillation over the decision to execute his son (4.2.76 and 4.2.87-90).<sup>184</sup>

Constantine's tormented state has been manifestly increased by his next appearance, when he claims to be "sick... even to death" (5.2.2-3), and that his "Physician" Arius could cure him by eliminating Crispus, the cause of his emotional illness. Arius is able to discern that the emperor's conscience-ridden state results from his oath to exonerate his son if found innocent, and that Constantine wants Crispus removed in a manner that relieves him of culpability as well as releasing him from torment. As Arius departs with the poison, the emperor again momentarily doubts his resolve (5.1.30-1) before committing to the course of action. Conscience again effects his decision at 5.2.43, continuing through 5.2.50a, before ordering the assassination implemented. By now the emperor is so hopelessly in conflict over his proposed course of action that he is totally dependent upon his villainous counsellor. Once again he prevents Arius from executing his command at 5.2.56b, the recollection of his love for Crispus causing the priest to lament "I like not this Remembrance" (5.2.60). Amidst his wavering Constantine imagines that he hears his dead mother and wife criticising his proposal, evidencing the extent of the battle for dominion being waged in his psyche between his vicious and virtuous personality states. It requires an external occurrence—the discovery of an insurrection designed to liberate Crispus—to arrest Constantine's indecision and enable him to order Arius to proceed. An equally incongruous situation (Serena's suicide) reverses that commitment by eliciting further doubt over the propriety of the decree.<sup>185</sup>

Two poignant assertions are made about Constantine's mental state in this scene. Sylvester acknowledges that "Passion manacles [his] Reason",<sup>186</sup> Dalmatius adding that the emperor's "broken Resolutions, / Are Symptoms... of a most noble Nature, / Where Judgment

shall save" Crispus from his doom (4.1.86), and when corrected by Sylvester, admits to being "eaten up with passion" and "o're-wrought, / With racking Love" (4.1.89-90) to the extent of not knowing what he had said. The emperor's irrationality extends to a suspicion that Dalmatius and Sylvester are plotting against him (4.1.1690), his paranoia recalling that experienced by Alexander.

<sup>183</sup> This recalls Mithridates' similar threat to Semandra to reject Ziphares. Constantine again attempts to coerce her with this offer at 4.2.5ff.

<sup>184</sup> This is an effective application of a potentiality ignored in *Brutus*. Several other ideas are also drawn from that play, such as where Fausta, in imitation of Teraminta, refers to the fact that Crispus is an exact imitation of his father, excepting the anger (4.2.77ff). Another is the repetition of the people's desire that Crispus be spared execution (5.1.22), but they too are arbitrarily overruled.

<sup>185</sup> 5.2.86. It is a reflection of the numerous irregularities in the text that Serena's suicide reverses Constantine's command. There is no discernible reason why this should be the case, and his motivation is never explained. Lee appears not to have sufficiently thought through the rationale here, simply using her death as an alternate method of effecting further oscillation and delay. In so doing Lee reduces the impact of both the suicide and the reversion.

<sup>186</sup> 5.2.106. Constantine admits as much in claiming that Sylvester and Dalmatius can expect no "hope for sober Actions from a Mad-man" (5.2.109).

seems half sunk, but not quite drown'd".<sup>187</sup> Both counsellors suggest the solution to his crisis is to overcome his passion for Fausta, Sylvester advising him to relinquish her to Crispus (5.2.122ff), Dalmatius advocating that he execute her instead of his son.<sup>188</sup> Constantine chooses the more extreme form of emotional dissociation, yet this decision fails to resolve his conscience-ridden condition. Fausta's tears over the emperor's refusal to allow her to see Crispus one last time causes him consternation and the need to expedite her death through poison (5.2.198ff), rather than the intended poisoned bath (which would take too long to prepare), lest his conscience should lead him to acquit her. Doubt again causes him to reverse his decision and choose the bath as the appropriate method. Her sorrow (5.2.214) continues to perturb him; once again he vacillates over the propriety of the punishment at 5.2.219, before finally and firmly committing to his course of action at 5.2.221b.

Whilst Constantine's psychological conflict is effectively depicted, it is undermined by the perfunctory dénouement.<sup>189</sup> After Arius offers Crispus a dagger so that he may suicide and join Fausta in death, her screams for aid lead to the arrival of the emperor who abruptly (and inexplicably) orders Arius thrown into the poisoned bath, and equally as suddenly yields Fausta to Crispus. Once again Constantine has needed the introduction of a crisis event to act as the catalyst for the resolution.<sup>190</sup> The abrupt ending depreciates the emperor's otherwise consistent motivation, and makes his anagnorisis appear somewhat artificial.<sup>191</sup> It is an

<sup>187</sup> 5.2.112-4. Despite being a poignant assertion, this too is an example of a flaw in the play because Dalmatius has not been present during Constantine's vacillation over Crispus' fate and so could not possibly have been aware of his irresolution.

<sup>188</sup> 5.2.128ff. To validate his argument, Dalmatius uses Othello's famous claim that if Constantine were to permit Fausta to live, she would invariably commit the same offences again.

<sup>189</sup> The abrupt conclusion may in part result from the fact that, throughout his career, Lee has repeatedly produced tragedies, but ends this play, which is ideally structured for a tragic conclusion, in a contrary manner.

<sup>190</sup> Once again an unrelated incident is used to help resolve the principal conflict, as had been the case at 5.2.69bff and 5.2.86. Whilst Constantine's actions ultimately resolve the moral conflict in his psyche and elicit the preordained tranquility, contextually his actions are both inconsistent and unexpected. The determination with which he makes his final decision regarding Fausta at 5.2.221b, steadfastly maintained until his departure at 5.2.285, is reversed with equal conviction the moment he returns. Both instances contrast the habitual indecision he has presented throughout. The situation would have been more consistent had Constantine departed indecisively (after tentatively ordering the execution in a manner akin to that at 4.2.83ff) and returned in a similar condition. This would have allowed for the discovery of Arius' involvement in the marriage (this is never actually revealed to the emperor, and so cannot motivate his actions), of the fact that the priest is responsible for subtly directing him towards his abnormal behaviour (again not explicated and so not a motivational factor), and of the punishment he deserves (Arius is actually executed because he is implicated in an attempt on Crispus' life, not because of the role he has played in the crisis). All of these factors would, in turn, have more reasonably led Constantine to realise the solution to his dilemma to be to adopt Sylvester's suggestion that he should accede Fausta to Crispus. Instead the perfunctory resolution leads to a situation in which effect does not logically follow cause, nor are the emperor's actions sufficiently motivated.

<sup>191</sup> Despite briefly associating his self-discovery with a (possible but dubious) resumption of Christian faith (claiming that it is "the hand of Heav'n, not mine that gives" Fausta to Crispus—5.2.328), no conspicuous reference is made to his intended conversion. Although Sylvester is present at this point, he provides no counsel and so in no way influences Constantine's decision, depriving his resolution of any religious association. The lack of an explicit connection makes his religious principles a superfluous gloss rather than an important and influential aspect of his character—his belief system (which is abandoned when he becomes irrationally impassioned) in no way assists him to resolve his crisis and to rediscover a tranquil state of mind. The fact that

unfortunate (and rare) characterological flaw in the presentation of the emperor that several of his actions stem from external (and unrelated) stimuli—the discovery of a mob uprising, Serena's suicide, Fausta's screams for aid—rather than being internally motivated.<sup>192</sup> The result is that it is difficult to determine the degree of success of the representation, Constantine being admirably presented in terms of his psychological trauma, and as a verisimilar, atypical heterogeneous entity, yet impaired by flagrant motivational contrivances. The extent of the emperor's internal conflict makes him anything but "an unexceptional lustful King", and pale replica of former creations, as is the view of certain critics.<sup>193</sup> However, the fact that Lee has repeatedly proven his ability to produce a high standard of psychological complexity in his conflict-ridden characters serves to highlight the flaws in this representation.<sup>194</sup>

Just as Constantine is interesting for his Manichaean struggle, Crispus' and Fausta's value rests with the verisimilar dramatisation of their distress. Much of the actual suffering experienced throughout the play (especially in the first half) is reserved for the lovers. Whilst Constantine remains, for much of the first two acts, blissfully unaware that Fausta loves another (and even longer until he discovers who his rival is),<sup>195</sup> the lovers suffer considerable anxiety from the moment they appear onstage—Crispus because he has married without his father's permission (and, moreover, to an acknowledged enemy of the state), Fausta because she has married the son despite being contracted to the father.<sup>196</sup> In his first exchange of the play, Crispus' thoughts rapidly change from concern over Annibal's melancholia to his own marriage to Fausta, "the first Fault of my unhappy youth" (1.2.104). That he needs to fight off "darkning Images" in his own mind suggests that he has been preoccupied with his indiscretion from the moment that the marriage was effected. In the intervening period Fausta has also been

Constantine does not correct his son for comparing him to a god, makes one suspicious of his immediate religious conviction, further undermining the already dubious association of his resolution being in any way connected to religion. An interrelated result is that *Constantine* lacks the religious circularity of *Theodosius*, an aspect that is invited by the structure but which is overlooked amidst the perfunctory conclusion.

<sup>192</sup> Despite Armistead's assertion there is no evidence in the text to suggest that Constantine "covertly watches as Arius provides Crispus the means of suicide" (*Nathaniel Lee*, p.164).

<sup>193</sup> Hammond, p.639; Van Lennep, *Sources*, p.627.

<sup>194</sup> Constantine is medially atypical, a responder who is minimally stylised, medially coherent, medially whole, modestly symbolic (whilst parallels are felt to exist between Constantine and Charles II, as with the other contemporary associations, the connection is limited), substantially accessible (substantial complexity and medial transparency), minimally derivative, substantially conventional (substantial in his societal role as emperor and maximal in his functional role as an exemplary statesman-hero), and undergoes minimal anagnorisis. In terms of character type, Constantine is an interesting study. Whilst the emperor presents many of the aspects of the Aristotelian tragic hero—he is the good but flawed figure whose deleterious passion leads him to conflict, suffering, anagnorisis, contrition, restitution, rehabilitation and a return to a pre-conflict state of tranquility—he is also not tragic because no real tragedy takes place, the catastrophe having been avoided at the last moment. Therefore he is more properly an example of the statesman-hero type.

<sup>195</sup> It is not until 2.1.471-2 that Crispus tells Constantine that Fausta loves another, and whilst the emperor is concerned by this, he is not tormented but annoyed. He does not discover the rival to be his son (or have the idea implanted in his head—which is enough to create genuine suffering) until 3.1.166ff.

<sup>196</sup> Crispus' trauma is manifestly increased when he discovers the existence of the marriage contract between his wife and his father.



contemplating her indiscretion, as is demonstrated by her 'Freudian slip' in inadvertently calling Crispus "my Constantine" (1.2.110). Both experience a dream of being caught in bed together by Constantine and stabbed by him.<sup>197</sup> Uncertainty is also evident in Fausta's attempt to broach the subject of her betrothal to Constantine with Crispus through a hypothetical situation (2.1.192ff). These scenes between the lovers, and their exchanges with Constantine and others, are effective, affective and verisimilar. It is therefore difficult to agree with Hammond that Crispus is not a memorable figure, and that his, and every other characters' "reactions to the dilemma are decidedly mechanical".<sup>198</sup> There is absolutely nothing artificial about his, Fausta's or Constantine's responses to their conflicts. Despite his critique of Crispus, Hammond believes him to be the real hero of the play,<sup>199</sup> presumably because of the suffering experienced by the lovers over the entire course of the play. However, whilst Crispus is certainly *a* hero of the play, he is not *the* hero in an Aristotelian sense. He may be a flawed but virtuous individual whose marriage is an act of hamartia—in the strict sense of the term as an act committed because of an error of judgment without a thorough knowledge of the circumstances—that contributes to metabasis and tragic agony, yet he undergoes no anagnorisis, contrition or rehabilitation, nor would this be expected because his offense (marrying without his father's permission) is trivial and his motive pure. Yet his hamartia does not result from a distinctive, and influential, character flaw. That is, he does not experience hamartia in the conventional, and familiarly understood, sense of the term, as is the case with Constantine's reversal of fortune directly resulting from his excessive passion. Thus, rather than being an example of a tragic hero, Crispus is more appropriately a victimised hero, derived from Lee's own Ziphars. But whereas Ziphars is a conventional and typified example, Crispus is individuated by the focus upon the realistic responses to his dilemma, as is the case with Fausta who is an atypical amalgam of aspects of the victimised heroine presented in Semandra and Teraminta. The realistic depiction of their suffering confirms Lee's characterological expertise in representing the pathological, physiological and psychological effects of conflict on the individual.<sup>200</sup>

<sup>197</sup> 2.1.168ff. Modern psychoanalysis suggests that unresolved issues manifest themselves in dreams of the type that Lee presents in this scene. In this regard Lee might be viewed as something of an intuitive pre-Freudian psychoanalytic characterologist.

<sup>198</sup> Hammond, p.639.

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.*, p.635.

<sup>200</sup> Crispus is modestly atypical, a responder who is modestly stylised, medially coherent, medially whole, medially symbolic (whilst parallels are felt to exist between Crispus and Monmouth, as with the other contemporary associations, the connection is limited), substantially accessible (substantial complexity and transparency), minimally derivative, maximally conventional (maximal in both his societal role as prince and in his functional role as victimised hero and enervated lover), and is static. Fausta is modestly atypical, a responder who is medially stylised, substantially coherent, substantially whole, medially symbolic, substantially accessible (substantial complexity and transparency), maximally conventional (maximal in her societal and functional role as

The remaining characters are typified figures that serve functional, affective and/or symbolic roles. Dalmatius is a conventional example of the soldier-counsellor type previously presented by Lee in Clytus, Archelaus, Marcian and Grillon. He is an adherent of old Roman stoicism, an exceptional warrior (illustrated by his repeated triumphs throughout the play) who expresses an absolute disdain for 'effeminate' emotion.<sup>201</sup> As is common to the type, Dalmatius is extremely patriotic, subordinating all personal concerns and responsibilities to matters of state, offering himself as "a pattern / Of the old Romans" (2.1.318-9) for his son and brother to imitate. His counsel regarding Fausta (first to exile, then to eliminate her), whilst designed to reestablish stability in the state, is deleterious to Constantine's personal harmony, Dalmatius failing to realise (as Sylvester does) that the two are co-dependent. Although his patriotism is admirable, his suppression of personal emotion in the service to the state is lamentable and occasionally offensive.<sup>202</sup> Several moments of suffering over the death of his son are introduced (at 4.2.252ff and 5.1.1ff) that may have provided an opportunity for amelioration and complication, yet these suggestions remain undeveloped. The result is, that whilst Dalmatius is an efficacious (and functionally successful) example of the soldier-counsellor, he receives too much attention to remain an undifferentiated version of the type.<sup>203</sup>

Sylvester contrasts Dalmatius as Constantine's spiritual counsellor. Symbolically he personifies Christianity, functioning as the objective correlative of this aspect of Constantine's personality, just as Dalmatius personifies, and correlates to the emperor's, pagan sympathies, and Arius his base desires. Based upon Lee's own Tiresias, Sylvester is a prophet who is

victimised heroine), and is static. Fausta is minimally derivative—there is little similarity between the noble heroine of the play and the incestuous, villainous historical figure.

<sup>201</sup> When Crispus tells Dalmatius that his son is in love, the soldier-counsellor abruptly replies that Annibal is a fool (2.1.289), illustrating his antipathy towards the gentler emotions. Dalmatius goes on to state that Crispus' suspected love of Fausta has caused him to "shun" the camp, "lurk" beneath the eaves, and "droop" in corners, all verbs that are charged with a negative connotation (2.1.292-3). The counsellor also refers to Annibal's loss of virtue and "weakness" in falling in love with an enemy of Rome (2.1.322-3). His callous emphasis upon the anticipated execution of Serena—ostensibly to temper and instill stoicism in his son—is particularly offensive. Like Scipio and Brutus before him, Dalmatius attempts to remake these men in his own misguided image. And like the first of those two Leean characters, Dalmatius attempts to compensate Annibal for the loss of his love by stating that the emperor has conferred upon him the rule of Cappadocia, erroneously anticipating that ambition will overrule his passion, and is dumbfounded by Annibal's refusal. Dalmatius treats Crispus' relationship in precisely the same manner. After Crispus tells him of his predicament (of his marriage to Fausta and of her existing contract to Constantine), the counsellor's response is to suggest that the incestuous adulteress be eliminated (3.1.116). As he had done with Annibal, Dalmatius attempts to convert Crispus from an 'effeminate' lover into a stoic Roman soldier. His misogyny extends to being critical of the fact that the heir to world-rule "should dote / On such slight stuff as Woman" (3.1.124-5).

<sup>202</sup> Dalmatius' lack of emotion is illustrated by his complete indifference to the fact that his sister Constantia has died from grief after hearing of the fate of her husband Lycinius. His assertion that he will have Lycinius executed in front of the mournful crowd which attend him (and who want him to be spared) further illustrates his lack of human sympathy.

<sup>203</sup> Dalmatius is a substantially typical ambivalent statesman, a reactor who is substantially stylised, maximally coherent, minimally whole, substantially symbolic (whilst parallels are felt to exist between Dalmatius and the Duke of York, as with the other contemporary associations the connection is limited), modestly accessible (modest complexity and medial transparency), minimally derivative, maximally conventional (maximal in his societal and functional roles as soldier-counsellor), and is static.

provided with foreknowledge of the forthcoming events, and who unsuccessfully attempts to dissuade Constantine from his course of action.<sup>204</sup> Yet after explaining the import of the opening song he all but departs from the play (presenting a mere twenty-eight lines of dialogue after the first scene), becoming even less significant when the play's conclusion ignores any suggestion that religion plays a part in Constantine's resolution.<sup>205</sup> The remaining two characters of even passing interest are Annibal and Serena, saddened lovers of the familiar type. Whilst their love-triangle is meant to provide a parallel line of action in the play, the only value of the subplot is in its contribution to the pathos-laden atmosphere, and the torment suffered by Crispus. Annibal presents all the characteristics of Massina, the quintessential example of the type in Lee's pantheon—like him, Annibal is an extremely young man (little more than a boy) raised in a martial environment, who has little familiarity with love and womankind.<sup>206</sup> He has absolutely no ambition except to acquire the object of his desire, and petulantly suicides when he fails in this endeavour. Serena is an undifferentiated imitation of an unrequited heroine of the type first presented by Lee in *Narcissa*. Yet having created this character, Lee appears not to know what to do with her after Annibal's suicide, and so carelessly uses her own pointless self-murder as motivation for Constantine. Overall the play would have been better without the entire subplot.

Throughout his dramatic career Lee has repeatedly focussed on the corruptive nature of power, on the malign effects of passion, and on the catastrophic consequences of hyperbolic love and/or ambition. *Constantine* continues this focus, the title-character undergoing considerable conscience-ridden oscillation between the desire to act with propriety and an uncontrollable passion propelling him to act inappropriately. As with all of Lee's previous rulers, Constantine initially succumbs to his passion, but ultimately overcomes his desire and achieves that which none of his predecessors had been able—a satisfactory and harmonious order in both the public and private spheres of influence. Whereas Nero, Augustus, Alexander, Mithridates, Borgia, Brutus, Guise, Catherine de Medici and Nemours all corrupt and/or destroy those who are virtuous and salutary, and in so doing forestall the possibility of a favourable resolution, Constantine's conscience (a product of his innate benevolence) enables him, after much trial and tribulation, to resist temptation. The fact that his passion, ungoverned

<sup>204</sup> Although far less ambiguous with regard to the degree of his foreknowledge than Tiresias, like that character Sylvester is not entirely free of culpability. Sylvester's repeated attempts to warn Constantine that Fausta is to be the cause of his torment, is such that he oversteps the bounds of what he is permitted to reveal (as he admits at 1.1.90ff), and so retracts his opposition. In so doing Sylvester gives his permission to the emperor to pursue his desire, and so inadvertently contributes to the crisis (1.1.101).

<sup>205</sup> Despite G. Wilson Knight's assertion, Sylvester's support does not assist Constantine to "gradually attain the self-conquest demanded by the new faith" (p. 193).

<sup>206</sup> Crispus, who is a young man himself (as he admits at 1.2.104), repeatedly refers to Annibal's youth (1.2.67, 98), suggesting that Annibal is a mere child.

throughout much of the play, is not ungovernable distinguishes him from his predecessors. Like Constantine, Crispus and Fausta are presented as victims of emotional distress caused by marital indiscretion. To varying degrees, each is a well presented example of Lee's enduring characterological focus of displaying realistic human responses to common concerns, of presenting an insight into the troubled state of mind of those who suffer from emotional conflict.

Despite the admirable depictions of Constantine, Crispus and Fausta, the numerous dramaturgical flaws, especially the perfunctory conclusion, result in a play that is perhaps Lee's most defective. All in all, insufficient consideration has been given to many of the ideas presented in the play, causing it come into the world half-made. Lee seems to have concentrated on producing a series of affective episodes (for which he was, and continues to be, justly praised) without sufficiently attempting to connect them. The suppressions and stage failures of his recent plays seem to have played a part in Lee's decision to depart from his conventional tragic format and produce a play that displays a triumphant monarch. Yet having made this decision, Lee seems not to know how to achieve his aim, and so composes a typical Leean tragedy for all but the last thirty-seven lines. The belated reversion of what appears to be a certain catastrophe (excepting, of course, for the knowledge gained in the opening lines that the play will end happily) results in a satisfactory conclusion that is unsatisfactory, and which may well account for the play's lack of stage success. As Harold Love facetiously notes, Lee finally wrote a play with a happy ending, then he went mad.<sup>207</sup>

### Conclusion.

As with Lee's earlier works, much of the interest in the final dramas lie in the characterological sophistication. In *The Massacre of Paris* complexity is to be discovered in the figures of the Duke of Guise, the Admiral de Coligny and King Charles IX. Guise is a tragic character whose all-consuming desire for revenge is deleterious to his morality. His willingness to sell his soul for revenge, and to reject a salutary relationship with Marguerite in order to achieve that desire, is one of several tragedies that occur amidst the events of the play. Although the Admiral is represented as the statesman hero of the play, and his death less tragic than heroic, his heroism is undermined by a hubris that creates a verisimilar and morally flawed character. Although neither of these characters undergoes much internal conflict, Charles IX experiences considerable oscillation between his virtuous and vicious personality states. Founded principally on Lee's own *Mithridates*, the king is the real tragic hero of the play. He is

manipulated into vice despite his conscience-ridden opposition, but achieves moral rehabilitation prior to his death. His tragedy is that he lacks the strength of character to resist his mother and prevent the massacre, placing trust in those whose 'loyalty' causes his destruction, whilst the truly loyal are destroyed as enemies. Catherine de Medici is also of interest because she is not only the first and only unregenerate calculating villainess in Lee's pantheon, but is also arguably the most villainous of all of his creations. From a characterological perspective, at the very least, this play is a success.

*The Princess of Cleve*, on the other hand, is a more ambivalent study of character. Nemours is unique in Lee's canon in that he combines characteristics of the hero of affective tragedy with the libertine of satiric sex comedy, and so does not adequately fit into any one comic, or serious type-category. However, by ameliorating his satiric portrayal of the duke, Lee presents a character that is an uneasy combination of attraction and repulsion, a problem never adequately resolved in favour of one position or the other. Being part comic libertine, part heroic lover, makes him wholly neither and so not particularly successful as an example of either. In contrast, Chartres is an interesting, unconventional and atypical figure who experiences a traumatic conflict between an irresistible but demoralising passion for an unworthy lover and an awareness of the impropriety of her adulterous desire, a genuinely difficult struggle between that which is appropriate but unappealing and that which is inappropriate but intoxicating. Hers is all-consuming passion that cannot be controlled or overcome. In presenting a psychologically and morally complex heroine, Lee continues a recent focus upon complicated female figures such as Teraminta, Pulcheria, and Catherine de Medici, an interest that peaks in the character of Marmoutier in *The Duke of Guise*.

Several admirable characters are produced in the Dryden-Lee collaboration, much of the credit for which belongs to Lee. The title-character is an enigmatic figure whose interest resides in Lee's amelioration of his colleague's typified foundation, turning a stereotypical villain into a tragic character whose obsessive pursuit of power prevents the fulfillment of a salutary union with Marmoutier. He derives from Lee's previous representation of the duke, revenge replacing ambition as the ruling disposition. Henry's struggle between action and affection is also well-presented, creating considerable uncertainty as to whether his inaction results from extraordinary mercy or paralysing irresolution. Rather than representing an ineffectual, substandard monarch, the dramatists illustrate him as a ruler who should be imitated, a king whose actions are affirmed as an appropriate last resort, and who eventually develops into a ruler who embodies the combination of temperance and authority. Marmoutier is of particular interest both from a characterological perspective and as a heterogeneous entity.

<sup>207</sup> Love, *Satire*, p.245.

She is an effective example of an independent heroine, derived from Sophonisba, Pulcheria and Teraminta. Her attempt to divert Guise and Henry from a deleterious course of action makes of her a rival to Pulcheria as Lee's most dynamic heroine. Her affection for Guise is also particularly compelling, realistic and heart-rending, her reluctant rejection of Guise because of his recidivism, adding another dimension to the tragic focus of this play. For, whilst this play provided Dryden with a platform to produce an abstract political commentary, it afforded Lee the opportunity to create another domestic tragedy; turning an intellectual disquisition couched in the dramatic medium into a genuine work of drama through his accomplished characterisations.

Lee's final dramatic production continues his focus upon the types of personal problems that beset men in power, and the resultant catastrophe for the individual and, ipso facto, the state. *Constantine the Great* returns to the familiar father-son rivalry for the affection of a maiden, a motif Lee had adopted with success in *Mithridates*, the foundation for the principal figures also deriving from the earlier tragedy. Like the king of Pontus, the emperor of the Eastern Roman empire undergoes profound conscience-ridden oscillation between the desire to act with propriety and an uncontrollable passion propelling him to act inappropriately, the dilemma for each made all the more difficult by being manipulated by a villainous advisor. Constantine is unique in Lee's pantheon in that he ultimately overcomes his desire, and avoids committing an offence, and so leads to the creation of Lee's only play without a tragic hero/ine. As with Constantine, interest in Crispus and Fausta centres upon the intensely realistic dramatisation of their distress. Derived from Ziphares and Semandra, Crispus and Fausta are victimised hero/ines, individuated through the focus upon the realistic responses to their dilemma, and on the revelation of interiority. Each reflects Lee's enduring characterological focus of displaying verisimilar human responses to common dilemmas. It is unfortunate that these characterisations are undermined by the many dramaturgical irregularities, that, in many respects, stem from Lee's attempt to write a play that is a triumph for the monarch and the state—happy endings, like comedy, being foreign to a dramatist with such a natural talent for tragedy.



## Chapter Seven. Conclusion.

Contemporary and modern opinion of Nathaniel Lee's dramaturgy shows a considerable degree of consensus. Criticism has focussed on his penchant for hyperbole, his excessive use of rant and his lack of restraint—that he rarely descended from the highest pitch of intensity.<sup>1</sup> Yet many of these same critics also praise his talent for producing exceptional tragic and pathos-laden episodes, and concede that he occasionally produced moments of sublime poetry, and that many of his characters are memorable. Amongst his contemporaries Lee's skill as a tragic dramatist was acknowledged. Dryden, Dennis and Addison all admitted his genius for tragedy.<sup>2</sup> Langbaine wrote that several of Lee's plays "gave him a Title to the First Rank of Poets", and that he epitomised the famous Senecan aphorism "Nullum fit Magnum Ingenium sine mixturâ dementiæ".<sup>3</sup> John Evelyn suggested that "When the aspiring *Grecian* [Alexander] in the East, / And haughty *Philip* [from Otway's *Don Carlos*] is forgot i'th' West, / Then *Lee* and *Otways* Works shall be suppress".<sup>4</sup> Perhaps the most laudatory evaluation came from Robert Gould. In "A Satyr against the Play-House", Gould said of the two dramatists that:

But thee, my *Otway*, from the Grave I'll raise,  
And crown thy memory with lasting praise:  
Thy *Orphan*, nay thy *Venice* [*Preserved*] too shall stand,  
And live long as the Sea defends our Land.

<sup>1</sup> In "A Parallel, of Poetry and Painting" Dryden claimed that in Lee's plays were a "Hurrican from the beginning to the end" (*Works of Dryden*, xx.65-6). Addison also laments Lee's unrealised potential for being an even greater dramatist "if instead of favouring the Impetuosity of his Genius, he had restrained it" (*Spectator*, no.39). As Leach cogently notes, Addison belongs to a large group of critics who see Lee's faults as excesses of his virtues (p.28). In contrast to those like Addison and Loftis ("Revels", p.270) who believe that Lee was incapable of varying his intensity, Richard Brown cogently notes that the tonal extremes of Lee's plays from the mad speeches of *The Rival Queens*, through the pathos of *Theodosius* to the nobility of *Brutus* suggest that Lee could turn various effects on or off, depending upon the demands of his subject ("Dryden-Lee Collaboration", pp.18-9). I would add that his complex characterology demonstrates that he exercised considerable control of his medium. His use of rant, for instance, was calculated to suit the taste of his audience, and so was a practical (and, I might add, quite successful) necessity. Further, fustian has a characterological function in his plays—it is a sign of a character's unbalanced emotional state. He uses heroic boasting as a means of exhibiting the unheroic failure of his characters to act in accordance with the ideals that they seem (and attempt) to exemplify. This suggests quite forcefully that Lee was always in control of his medium.

<sup>2</sup> In his commendatory epistle to *The Rival Queens*, Dryden said of Lee, with evident admiration, that:

Such praise is yours, while you the Passions move,  
That 'tis no longer feign'd; 'tis real Love:  
Where Nature Triumphs over wretched Art;  
We only warm the Head, but you the Heart (ll.33-6).

Later he acknowledged that his colleague "had a great genius for tragedy" (*Works of Dryden*, xx.65). John Dennis claimed that Lee's talent for writing tragedy was as considerable as Etherege's for producing comedy (*Original Letters*, ii.433). Addison agreed, stating that "[a]mong our Modern *English* Poets there is none who was better turned for Tragedy than Lee" (*Spectator*, no.39).

<sup>3</sup> Langbaine, *An Account* (1691), p.321. Dryden himself translated this famous maxim as "Great Wits are sure to Madness near ally'd" ("Absalom and Achitophel", l.163, *Works of Dryden*, ii.10).

<sup>4</sup> Evelyn, "The Immortality of Poesie", [ll.37-9], in Tate (coll.), *Poems*, p.92.

*The Pontick King* [*Mithridates*] and *Alexander* [*The Rival Queens*], Lee  
Shall, spite of madness, do the same for thee.  
But truth I love, and am oblig'd to tell  
Your other Tragick Plays are not so well,  
Not with that Judgment, that exactness writ,  
With less of *Nature*, *Passion*, *Fancy*, *Wit*:  
Yet this, ev'n in their praise, can't be deny'd,  
They are, a'most worth all our *Plays* beside...  
For *Oedipus* (of which, *Lee*, half is thine,  
And there thy *Genius* does with Lustre shine)  
Does raise our *Fear* and *Pity* too as high  
As, almost, can be done in *Tragedy*.<sup>5</sup>

This is high praise indeed from a critic whose poem is censorious of almost every other dramatist. Admiration for Lee has, for the most part, continued to the present, many critics comparing him favourably with Shakespeare, and ranking him second only to Dryden as the premiere dramatist of his age. In 1753 Theophilus Cibber spoke of the sublimity of the "great genius" Lee, and in 1789 Philip Neve averred that Lee was "the most original dramatic writer since Shakespeare".<sup>6</sup> Similar views have been expressed in the nineteenth century; Sir Walter Scott, for example, regarded Lee as "an excellent poet" if a "wild and ill-regulated genius", and B.W. Proctor that "[o]f all the dramatic writers since the return of Charles, *Lee* may be considered as the first...[and] had assuredly more imagination and passion than his rival [Otway]".<sup>7</sup> In the twentieth century Sanders suggested that in some respects Lee was the superior of Otway and Dryden, particularly in his instinctual flair for tragedy, and his skill in portraying the passions.<sup>8</sup> George Saintsbury claimed that Lee was "a far greater poet [than Otway], and one of much wider range", and Elwin that "[a]side from Otway, [he] is the only writer between Jonson and Shelley fit for the most careless comparison with Shakespeare".<sup>9</sup> To Stroup and Cooke Lee deserves similar praise to that given to Shakespeare—that he "handled the human passions well".<sup>10</sup> More recently Parsons has suggested that in his command of the full resources of the baroque stage, Lee surpasses Dryden and Otway as the outstanding creative figure.<sup>11</sup> Few, with the notable exception of Adolphus Ward and William Archer, share Dobrée's extremely negative view that "[i]t is impossible to regard Nathaniel Lee as a great writer".<sup>12</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Gould, pp.175-6.

<sup>6</sup> Cibber, pp.227-32; Neve, pp.96-101.

<sup>7</sup> Scott, *Life of Dryden*, p.151; "Remarks on English Tragedy", p.iv; Proctor, p.201.

<sup>8</sup> Sanders, p.497.

<sup>9</sup> Saintsbury, p.96; Elwin, p.132.

<sup>10</sup> Stroup and Cooke, *Works*, I.76.

<sup>11</sup> Parsons in Love (ed.), p.28.

<sup>12</sup> Dobrée, *Restoration Tragedy*, p.110.

As Stroup and Cooke suggest, Lee's status as *secundus inter pares* is not unjustified, for Dryden alone was a more successful dramatist.<sup>13</sup> Six of Lee's plays—*Sophonisba*, *The Rival Queens*, *Alfred*, *Theodosius*, *Cæsar Borgia* and *Lucius Junius Brutus*—equating to exactly half his output, rank amongst the greatest tragedies of the period. Whilst Dryden may have excelled Lee in terms of plot construction, complexity of idea, and as a propagandist, and Otway may have had a more restrained control of his verse and medium, neither surpassed Lee in characterological skill and innovation, a facet of dramaturgy in which he compares favourably with Shakespeare.<sup>14</sup> It is undoubtedly one of the reasons why Dryden, the premier poet of his age, preferred Lee of all of his contemporaries as a collaborator on two tragedies, and allowed his colleague to concentrate on the affective scenes and characters, aspects in which the older dramatist evidently appreciated his skill. Much of Lee's success (and his enduring value) as a dramatist rests with his superlative talent for producing complex dramatic character, and in his focus on private tragedies that dramatise universal concerns.

Throughout his career Lee's thematic and characterological preoccupation was to explore one of humanity's most fundamental issues—the cause and nature of evil—and to dramatise the human foundation for tragedy. That evil is a human rather than supernaturally driven phenomena, stemming from the inherent defects in postlapsarian man, is repeatedly illustrated. In his study of the motive force for tragic action, Lee portrays the pathological, physiological, psychological and sociological effects of the human condition, making evil concrete by demonstrating it to be the effect of discernible human causes. Structurally the *de casibus* fate of a great hero as a result of his ungoverned (and ungovernable) passions provided an ideal format for a consideration of evil. Central to this concern are the tyrannous misuse of absolute power, the seductive but corruptive nature of arbitrary rule, and the deleterious effect that it has on the individual and state.<sup>15</sup> Manipulation to vice, and the internal struggle between conflicting virtuous and vicious inclinations, are related aspects of this motif. Situating his tragedies in diseased social and political (court) environments, Lee returns to a Jacobean interest in despotism and depravity, murder, rape and incest, Machiavellian dissimulation, manipulation, factionalism, egotism, sycophancy and excessive desire—a return to worlds in which goodness is either corrupted or destroyed. By adding the conventional love triangle, Lee was also able to produce affective episodes of impeded love—to depict the insoluble struggle

<sup>13</sup> Stroup and Cooke, *Works*, I.2.

<sup>14</sup> As Richard Brown correctly notes, in his pursuit of some political point, Dryden was willing to subordinate his characterisations, which balanced well with Lee's "usually richer sense of character" ("Dryden-Lee Collaboration", p.21).

<sup>15</sup> As Beal correctly notes, Lee's plays' anticipate Lord Acton's dictum that "all power tends to corrupt; absolute power corrupts absolutely" (p.81).

between conflicting duty and inclination—and so intensify the pathos of the situation.<sup>16</sup> Attention is repeatedly drawn to the contrast between the deleterious and salutary characters who surround the protagonist, and to the catastrophic results of the protagonist's trust in the demoralising figures, and to dispose of the salubrious.

Historical (social, political and religious) events provided Lee with a framework for dramatising domestic dilemmas, yet that structural foundation is, for the most part, the limit of his concern with matters ideological.<sup>17</sup> Whilst these issues are important aspects of his plays, they are not the *raison d'être*. Rather contemporary political events (or historical occurrences that could be applied analogously) serve to define and develop the implications of his central themes. Lee remained an apolitical 'dramatiser' of contemporary events; rather than using the dramatic medium for debating abstract issues of ideology, and endorsing a particular position, Lee consciously undermined each argument and its exponents. This prevented his plays from degenerating into simplistic partisan propaganda, instead making his characters and situations more complex, ambivalent, and reflective of the genuine ambiguity of the human condition.<sup>18</sup> Ignoring the vagaries of circumstance, Lee chose to concentrate on the universal (read human) problems that underlie all social, religious and political discord. To this end he was content to modify radically historical events to suit his dramatic emphasis. Following Aristotelian advice, Lee choose to depict what might have happened in a particular situation, rather than what actually happened. Because Lee's are character-, rather than plot-centred plays, greater attention is placed on individuals' reactions to the situation, than on depicting the events accurately, or with a partisan flavour. Thus a seemingly overt political play like *The Massacre of Paris* is less concerned with depicting the political and religious bases for the massacre than with the personal causes and effects on the three protagonists.<sup>19</sup> For even in those plays written during the Popish plot and succession crisis, where political issues intrude more overtly, it is clear that Lee is dramatising problems rather than dogmatising. In this he chose to stage an issue common to all peoples in all places at all times—the nature of authority, and the merits and defects of various (but inherently flawed) systems of government. His refusal to endorse

<sup>16</sup> In Lee's hands the love and honour conflict becomes an irresolvable dilemma. In this he departed from the format used in the heroic play where the conflict was satisfactorily resolved, even if that resolution required the use of a *deus ex machina*.

<sup>17</sup> As Hunt succinctly notes, historical accuracy is not as important to Lee as human accuracy (p.267). Armistead adds that Lee retains historical characters and universally relevant incidents while ignoring the "accidents" of time and space (*Nathaniel Lee*, p.165).

<sup>18</sup> Lee is concerned with dramatising all aspects of a political problem, rather than energetically advocating one ideology and denigrating all others. Significantly (and intentionally) Lee never comes to a firm conclusion, allowing the assessment of each position to remain ambivalent. Lee sometimes uses analogy to make a point but was not given to developing extended parallels.

<sup>19</sup> As Leach cogently notes, Lee dramatised Catholicism not to challenge its religious principles, but because it gave him the opportunity to deal with another aspect of his common theme of the misuse of power—this time religion meddling in temporal affairs (p.115).

any one position, and his consistent criticism of hyperbole (be it either excessive passion, ambition or obsession, or the equally inappropriate extreme stoicism), illustrates his one demonstrable conviction to be that, regardless of the mode of government adopted, moderation and stability is required in the administration of one's personal, social, religious and political affairs, and that devotion to an abstract ideal should never be enforced at the expense of one's humanity, integrity and moral rectitude. The moral concluding *Cæsar Borgia*, that "No Power is safe, nor no Religion good, / Whose Principles of growth are laid in Blood" most succinctly sums up Lee's personal attitude.

Importantly Lee's thematic concerns are character-, rather than plot-centred, because he was first and foremost a character-driven dramatist, and his plays tragedies of character. Using the antiquated heroic tradition as a point of departure, Lee transformed and transcended the genre (particularly the simplified type-characters that form part of that convention) in order to conduct complex studies of the human condition. From the outset Lee's aim was to produce realistic human beings who are neither absolutely virtuous nor vicious, and to provide insight into the inner workings of the psyche. Thus, what begins as subtle, but deliberate, adulteration or amelioration of traditional types, is magnified exponentially as his characterological skill develops. In Lee's hands conventional epic heroes are examined critically, presenting them as aged conquerors unfit for peacetime rule, and/or as exponents of an antiquated code that is unsustainable in the society that they inhabit. Characteristics that had previously been conceived of as virtues are illustrated to be defective and the cause of tragedy. And just as the heroes are adulterated, Lee ameliorates the villains, transforming them into tragic figures, by providing the previously unregenerate characters with conscience-ridden conflict over their actions or desires.

As part of his singular approach to characterology, Lee instituted a distinctive metamorphosis of the traditional heroic typology. Complication of simplistic heroic types lead to the development of, and focus upon, alternate categories. The most notable development in this respect is the reintroduction of the Aristotelian tragic hero to the typological pantheon, an imperfect figure who was incommensurate with the aims of heroic drama. This is the good but flawed character whose *hamartia* causes a reversal of fortune (*proairesis*), agony, *anagnorisis* and rehabilitation, and who evokes catharsis from an awareness that goodness or greatness has been corrupted or destroyed. In Lee's pantheon the foundation can be traced to Poppea, an innocent who is corrupted into iniquity, undergoes a Manichæan struggle between conflicting virtuous and vicious inclinations, succumbs to her base desires, but then atones before death. In *Massinissa* the type is expanded into a central character—transforming the conventional heroic lover, whose love and honour conflict was traditionally resolved satisfactorily, into a tragic

figure for whom suicide is the only viable option. Augustus derives from an opposing foundation, continuing a study of the conflicted tyrant that Lee had begun in Nero. Like Alexander who follows, a distinctive feature of Augustus is that he is unequal to the task of administering the empire that he had conquered—the very characteristics that made him a world-conqueror diserving him in a pacific society—and so he resorts to iniquitous action to maintain his preeminence. This foundation was repeated in Mithridates, one of Lee's most superlative examples of the tragic hero. In this figure, Lee accentuates all of the aspects of the types considered so far—the foundation of the aged despot, the Manichæan inner conflict, tragic agony, self-discovery and redemption. By adding the father-son rivalry for the heroine, and that he is consciously and malevolently manipulated into vice and his downfall, Mithridates becomes the exemplum of the type. Not content to discontinue interest in the type, or to resort to derivative repetitions, Lee takes the type to another level by basing the representation on the most antithetical position. Previously the type had derived from dispositional villains (figures whose excessive desires make them easily corruptible), whereas now Lee derives a tragic hero from the calculating, unregenerate and deliberately malevolent villain. Using the antagonist as a foundation, Lee focusses on discovery and remorse resulting from an awareness of the impropriety, and catastrophic results, of clinically dehumanised political action. Lee's characterological ingenuity is affirmed in his ability to produce complex, psychologically conflicted entities who are affective, effective and verisimilar, from such disparate foundations as the heroic lover, the lustful tyrant and the calculating villain, and to make characters as seemingly dissimilar as Poppea, Augustus, Mithridates, Machiavel, Varanes, Theodosius and Charles IX all of a type.

Tragic resolutions to inter- and intrapersonal conflict not only encourage the creation of tragic heroes, but also of pathetic victims. The victimised hero differs from the tragic in that the vicious actions of others cause their downfall—they are passive victims of external forces rather than active contributors to their own misfortune. This requires a diminution of their formerly epic characteristics. Lee's intent is to present their pathos-laden situation and make their suffering and inner conflict (especially that between conflicting impulses towards love and duty) poignant and believable. Examples include Britannicus and Cyara, Sophonisba and Massina, Gloriana, Narcissa, Marcellus and Julia, Titus, Crispus and Fausta, Statira, Sysigambis and Parisatis, Ziphæres, Semandra and Monima, Jocasta and Eurydice, Bellamira and Palante, Athenais, Titus and Teraminta, Marguerite, Crispus and Fausta, making this the largest segment of Lee's pantheon. Each reflects Lee's enduring focus on displaying verisimilar human reactions to common dilemmas. Typological complexity (variation within



the type, or in the foundation out of which the character derives) is unnecessary, all that is important is that the lover is presented in his or her suffering for affective purposes.

Because of Lee's 'unheroic' and tragic approach to character, few examples of the epic hero appear in his plays, and none in an unadulterated form. The conventional type is a larger-than-life figure; a superhuman lover and warrior who succeeds in his every desire. These figures are inappropriate subjects for tragedy, where defeat in love and war is the aim because loss is pathos-laden. Thus few examples appear in Lee's pantheon, and then only in his foundational plays. Even here there is clear intent to undermine the type, the epic nature being diminished because artificial, and the heroic code repudiated because obsolete and untenable. In Lee's plays such figures fail to live up to the claims they make, or are shown to be examples of an antiquated chivalric code, a code that cannot be sustained in the corrupt society that they inhabit. For the most part the epic type serves as the foundation for tragic, victimised or exemplary representations. In Lee's hand the epic foundation is transformed into the statesman hero, itself sub-divided into those whose actions are ambivalent, and those whose actions are exemplary. The former are intensely stoic and patriotic figures whose service to the state often comes at the expense of their rectitude. Their attention to civic responsibility makes them admirable, yet this is often marred by the fact that they suppress their emotions and neglect their personal obligations in the process. Several of Lee's most interesting, ambiguous and ambivalent characters belong to this category. Scipio is Lee's first principal example of the category, being responsible for instituting a new world order, but whose obsessive devotion to the cause is dehumanising. The apotheosis of the type appears in the profoundly ambiguous Brutus, Lee focussing the entire play on the ambivalent behaviour of the dispassionate patriot. A variant of the statesman hero category is the exemplary figure, a realistic (complex, verisimilar) outgrowth of the earlier epic variety. Marcian is the epitome of this variant, combining the soldier-counsellor (derived from Lee's own Clytus and Archelaus) and the statesman-hero, evolving into a humanised amalgamation of these two dispassionate types, successfully overcoming the ultra-stoicism and hypercriticism of the former, and the disparity between public and private inclinations that characterise the latter, without sacrificing his morality or humanity. Other efficacious examples of the exemplary type include Pulcheria, Admiral de Coligny, Marmoutier and Constantine; Henry III being a later example of the ambivalent type. As with the tragic and victimised hero categories, emphasis is placed on representing effective, affective and verisimilar psychological entities who are flawed, conflicted, and morally ambiguous.

As with his singular approach to heroism, Lee's distinctive approach to villainy is evident from the outset. Like his Jacobean predecessors, Lee was fascinated with the human

foundation of evil, and of the types of individuals who create political and domestic discord. The calculating "villian", as I term the Machiavellian villain, refers to the consciously provocative, malevolent and unregenerate villain popularised in 'Italianate' tragedy. Cassander is Lee's first fully developed example, and the prototype of his more sublime examples. This character's ongoing value lies in his multiform and legitimate motivation, and in his skill at manipulation, aspects which are repeated and accentuated in the later types, particularly Pharnaces, Pelopidas and Catherine de Medici, who is interesting not only as the first and only unregenerate calculating villianess in Lee's pantheon, but arguably the most villianous of all of his creations. Yet more so than the clinical villian (characters who are reasonably melodramatic, and reside at as extreme a position on the hero-villain/virtuous-vicious/angelic-diabolical axis as the epic hero), Lee was interested in flawed, reluctant, ambiguous—tragic—examples of villainy. Along with the tragic and victimised hero types, the tragic villain is Lee's most successful category, because of the pathetic and affective nature of the examples. The category is sub-divided into the "ambivalent", "dispositional" and "victimised" villain types. The fundamental aspect of the former is that they vacillate over their actions, and are often manipulated into action because their ruling disposition and flaw (usually ungoverned desire) is exploited. That they are not entirely self-directed makes them more sympathetic than the calculating type, and so judging them as good or evil is much more difficult than with a villian. Nero provides the foundation for the type; despite popular belief in the typicality of the representation, by ameliorating the emperor through internal conflict and focussing on his corruption into vice, Lee turns a conventional lustful tyrant into a tragic villain. In Borgia Lee creates not only the most enigmatic and psychologically traumatised example of the type, but also arguably the greatest character in his entire corpus. Modelled on Othello, Lee accentuates the extent to which the duke is manipulated into vice, the degree of internal oscillation he undergoes, and the self-discovery he achieves. Only a lack of contrition deprived him of an heroic status. The result is a complex character who combines aspects of Shakespeare's figure with characteristics drawn from Lee's own Augustus and Mithridates. Unlike the ambivalent type, the dispositional variants do not undergo internal conflict over their actions, nor are they corrupted into vice by others (or at least not overtly so), but are seduced into action by their ruling disposition. That is they are influenced by their own a-psychological choices, and do not hesitate over their actions. Because of Lee's interest in internal conflict, Alexander and Guise in *Guise* are Lee's only examples of this sub-category. The "victimised" division derives from classical characters like Medea, Clytemnestra and Procne and Philomela, and applies to those figures whose villainy is deliberate, but is a reaction to an offence previously committed against them. Their actions are vicious, yet are mitigated by the anguish they have endured

which enforces retaliation. They only ever act out of the desire for revenge (it now being their *raison d'être*), never out of a wish for personal gain. In this they are distinguished from dispositional villains, and differ from the ambivalent in that they do not vacillate over their actions. Roxana and Guise in *Massacre* are Leean examples of the type. As with the tragic hero, the tragic villain categories are all examples of the Aristotelian tragic protagonist: all that separates the two positions is the lack of rehabilitation, unrepentance often resulting from the fact that the characters have been driven insane with power, or because of the recent events, are beyond comprehension of their guilt and therefore unable to atone.

Despite widespread presumption that Lee was a derivative heroic characterologist who produced simplistic type-characters lacking in individuation, coherence, intricate motivation, moral and psychological complexity, ethical development and substantive verisimilitude, and was unconcerned with profound studies of character or ethical distinctions,<sup>20</sup> Lee repeatedly demonstrates himself to be an astute student of the human condition, a masterful creator of vivid and accurate psychological and behavioural detail, and an exceptional characterologist who produced a significant body of estimable representations. Nero and Poppea, Massinissa, Sophonisba, Scipio and Rosalinda, Caesario, Augustus, Gloriana and Julia, Alexander, Roxana, Statira, Clytus and Cassander, Mithridates, Ziphares, Semandra and Pharnaces, Oedipus, Creon and Jocasta, Borgia, Machiavel and Bellamira, Brutus, Titus and Teraminta, Varanes, Marcian, Athenais and Pulcheria, Guise, de Coligny, Charles IX, Marguerite and Catherine de Medici, Nemours and Chartres, Henry III and Marmoutier, Constantine, Crispus and Fausta, all demonstrate Lee's considerable skill in the creation of complex character. Of these Poppea, Sophonisba, Augustus, Cassander, Mithridates, Borgia, Machiavel, Marcian, Pulcheria and Brutus warrant special mention for their importance, not only to the development of Lee's characterology, but also that of Carolean tragic drama. Several are even worthy of comparison with the most sublime characterisations in English drama. Thus Lee's reputation as a first-rate dramatist rest not only with his typological artistry and innovation, but with his talent for effectively and affectively producing substantively verisimilar anthropomorphic simulacra who are psychologically and morally complex; atypical combinations of contradictory virtuous and vicious desires and attitudes, enigmatic figures who experience genuinely vexing inner turmoil, and for whom ethical and moral judgement is difficult. To quote Lee himself "such Characters *Every Dawber cannot draw*".<sup>21</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Nicoll suggests that Lee was incapable of indulging in subtle studies of mind-states (*Restoration Drama*, p.123). In contrast Wilson Knight emphasises "his subtlety and realism in psychological diagnosis" (*Golden Labyrinth*, p.157).

<sup>21</sup> Dedication to *Theodosius*, l.55.

## Appendix A: Mechanical Analyses.

KEY: Style to Function: 1=Minimal, 2=Modest, 3=Medial, 4=Substantial, 5=Maximal, NA=Not Applicable, U=Unable to determine (based on insufficient data).

Chooser: P=Provocator, I=Instigator, IN=Initiator, RS=Responder, RA=Reactor.

Principal Character Type (PCT): HT=Hero (Tragic), HE=Hero (Epic), HS=Hero (Statesman)—A (Ambivalent), E (Exemplary), HV=Hero (Victimised), VC=Villain (Calculating)—DI=Diabolical, VT=Villain (Tragic)—A (Ambivalent), D (Dispositional), V (Victimised), O=Other.

Level and Method of Typification (LMT): A1=Maximally atypical, A2=Substantially atypical, A3=Medially atypical, A4=Modestly atypical, A5=Minimally atypical, D=Distypical, S1=Minimally typified, S2=Modestly typified, S3=Medially typified, S4=Substantially typified, S5=Maximally typified.

### THE TRAGEDY OF NERO, EMPEROR OF ROME (1674).

NAME <sup>1</sup>	STYLE	COHERE	WHOLE	SYMBOL	COMPLEX	TRANS.	ANAGN.	DERIVE	SOCIETAL	FUNCTION	CHOOSE	PCT	LMT
Nero	1	4	4	3	(4) 3 <sup>2</sup>	5	0	4	(3) 1	5	I	VT/A	A4
Britannicus	3	5	5	3	(3) 3	3	0	1	(4) 3	5	RA	HV	S2
Piso	3	4	5	2	(3) 3	4	0	1	(3) 3	3	RA	HS/A	S3
Poppea	2	3	3	1	(3) 4	3	5	3	(2) 1	4	RS	HT	A3
Otho	4	5	2	4	(2) 2	3	0	1	(4) 4	4	RS	HS/A	S4
Petronius	4	4	4	4	(3) 3	4	5	3	(4) 4	4	P	HT	A5
Cyara	4	4	2	4	(2) 1	3	0	NA	(5) 5	5	IN	HV	S4
Octavia	5	5	1	4	(1) 1	1	0	1	(5) 5	5	RA	HV	S5
Plautus	5	2	1	5	(1) 1	1	0	NA	(5) 5	5	RA	VT/A	S5
Drusillus	5	1	1	5	(1) 1	1	0	NA	(5) 5	5	RA	O	S5
Minors <sup>3</sup>	5	5	1	5	(1) 1	1	0	U	(5) 5	5	U	U	S5

<sup>1</sup> Characters are listed according to the number of lines spoken (from greatest to least).

<sup>2</sup> The number in brackets applies to the character's position in the category overall.

<sup>3</sup> Calpurnia, Agrippina, Seneca, Flavius, Boy, Mirmillon, Roman, Sylvius, Burrhus and Syllana are analysed collectively.

## SOPHONISBA, OR HANNIBAL'S OVERTHROW (1675).

NAME	STYLE	COHERE	WHOLE	SYMBOL	COMPLEX	TRANS.	ANAGN.	DERIVE	SOCIETAL	FUNCTION	CHOOSE	PCT	LMT
Massiniss.	1	4	5	3	(2) 3	2	2	2	(3) 3	4	RA	HT	A4/D
Hannibal	3	5	5	3	(3) 3	3	0	4	(4) 3	5	RS	HE	S2
Scipio	2	5	5	3	(1) 1	1	1	1	(5) 5	5	IN	HS/A	S3
Sophonisb	3	5	3	1	(3) 4	2	0	3	(3) 4	2	P	HV	A3
Rosalinda	3	4	3	1	(5) 5	5	0	NA	(1) 1	1	IN	HE	A5
Massina	4	5	2	4	(3) 2	4	0	NA	(4) 5	4	RA	HV	S4
Maherbal	4	5	2	5	(1) 1	1	0	2	(5) 5	5	RA	O	S5
Bomilcar	5	5	1	5	(1) 1	1	0	2	(5) 5	5	RA	O	S5
Minors <sup>4</sup>	5	5	1	5	(1) 1	1	0	U	(5) 5	5	U	U	S5

## GLORIANA, OR THE COURT OF AUGUSTUS CAESAR (1675/6).

NAME	STYLE	COHERE	WHOLE	SYMBOL	COMPLEX	TRANS.	ANAGN.	DERIVE	SOCIETAL	FUNCTION	CHOOSE	PCT	LMT
Caesario	1	4	5	3	(3) 4	2	0	1	(2) 2	2	RS	HE	A4/D
Augustus	1	4	3	3	(3) 4	3	0	1	(3) 1	4	I	HT	A2
Gloriana	3	5	5	4	(3) 2	4	0	1	(3) 3	2	IN	HV	S3
Narcissa	3	5	2	4	(3) 3	3	0	NA	(5) 5	5	RS	HV	S4
Marcellus	4	5	2	5	(2) 2	2	0	3	(4) 3	5	RA	HV	S4
Julia	4	3	3	1	(3) 3	2	3	3	(4) 3	5	RS	HV	A4
Tiberius	5	5	2	4	(2) 2	1	0	1	(3) 1	5	P	VC	S4
Minors <sup>5</sup>	5	5	1	5	(1) 1	1	0	U	(5) 5	5	U	U	S5

<sup>4</sup> Menander, Cumana, Lelius, Aglave, Trebellius, Rezambe, Varro and Merna are analysed collectively.<sup>5</sup> Ovid, Mecaenas, Agrippa, Araspes, Leander and Captain are analysed collectively.

## THE RIVAL QUEENS, OR THE DEATH OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT (1676/7).

NAME	STYLE	COHERE	WHOLE	SYMBOL	COMPLEX	TRANS.	ANAGN.	DERIVE	SOCIETAL	FUNCTION	CHOOSE	PCT	LMT
Alexander	1	3	3	2	4 (3)	3	1	4/2	1 (2)	3	I	VT/D	A5/D
Roxana	2	4	4	3	2 (3)	4	0	4	4 (4)	4	RS	VT/V	A5
Cassandra	3	5	2	4	1 (3)	5	0	3	3 (4)	5	P	VC	S2
Statira	3	5	2	3	2 (3)	3	0	4	5 (5)	5	RA	HV	S2
Clytus	4	5	5	4	1 (2)	2	4	5	4 (4)	5	RA	HT	S3
Lysimach.	4	5	2	4	1 (3)	5	0	5	4 (4)	3	RA	HE	S4
Conspire <sup>6</sup>	5	5	1	5	1 (3)	5	0	5	1 (3)	5	P	VC	S4
Hephestio.	5	5	1	5	1 (1)	1	0	5	5 (5)	5	RA	VT/D	S4
Sysigamb.	5	5	1	4	2 (2)	2	2	1	1 (3)	4	RA	HV	A5
Parisatis	5	5	1	5	1 (3)	5	0	5	5 (5)	5	RA	HV	S4
Minors <sup>7</sup>	5	5	1	5	1 (1)	1	0	U	5 (5)	5	U	U	S5

## MITHRIDATES, KING OF PONTUS. A TRAGEDY (1677/8).

NAME	STYLE	COHERE	WHOLE	SYMBOL	COMPLEX	TRANS.	ANAGN.	DERIVE	SOCIETAL	FUNCTION	CHOOSE	PCT	LMT
Ziphares	2	5	2	4	2 (3)	3	1	4	5 (5)	5	RS	HV	S2
Mithridate	1	3	3	2	5 (5)	5	5	3	1 (3)	5	RS	HT	A1
Semandra	4	5	2	4	3 (3)	2	0	NA	5 (5)	5	RS	HV	S2
Pharnaces	3	3	4	3	3 (4)	5	0	4	1 (3)	5	P	VC	A5
Archelaus	4	5	1	4	1 (1)	1	0	5	5 (5)	5	RA	HS/E	S4
Pelopidas	4	5	2	3	1 (2)	4	0	NA	1 (3)	5	P	VC	S3
Monima	5	5	1	5	1 (1)	1	0	5	5 (5)	5	RA	HV	S4
Minors <sup>8</sup>	5	5	1	5	1 (1)	1	0	U	5 (5)	5	U	U	S5

<sup>6</sup> Polyperchon, Thessalus and Philip are analysed collectively.<sup>7</sup> Perdiccas, Aristander, Darius, Queen Statira, Meleager, Eumenes and the Slave are analysed collectively.<sup>8</sup> Andravar, Ismenes, Aquilius, Captain and others are analysed collectively.



## OEDIPUS. A TRAGEDY (1678).

NAME	STYLE	COHERE	WHOLE	SYMBOL	COMPLEX	TRANS.	ANAGN.	DERIVE	SOCIETAL	FUNCTION	CHOOSE	PCT	LMT
Oedipus	1	5	5	1/5	3 (4)	5	5	4	5 (5)	5	RS	HE	S2
Creon	2	5	4	3	2 (3)	5	0	3	1 (3)	4/3	I	VC	A5
Jocasta	3	5	5	1	3 (4)	5	5	1	5 (5)	5	RS	HV	S2
Tiresias	3	2	3	1	1 (1)	1	0	2	3 (3)	4	P	HS/A	S3
Adrastus	4	5	2	4	1 (1)	1	0	2	5 (5)	5	RA	HE	S4
Eurydice	4	5	2	4	1 (1)	1	0	2	5 (5)	5	RA	HV	S4
Conspire. <sup>9</sup>	5	5	1	5	1 (1)	1	0	NA	5 (5)	5	P	VC	S4
Minors <sup>10</sup>	5	5	1	5	1 (1)	1	0	U	5 (5)	5	U	U	S5

## CÆSAR BORGIA; SON OF POPE ALEXANDER THE SIXTH. A TRAGEDY (1679).

NAME	STYLE	COHERE	WHOLE	SYMBOL	COMPLEX	TRANS.	ANAGN.	DERIVE	SOCIETAL	FUNCTION	CHOOSE	PCT	LMT
Borgia	1	3	3	1	3 (3)	3	4	3	3 (3)	4	RS	VT/A	A2
Machiavel	2	3	3	3	2 (3)	5	3	4	3 (3)	3	P	HT	A5/D
Bellamira	3	4	2	4	2 (2)	2	0	4	4 (4)	4	RS	HV	S3
Sforza	4	5	2	5	1 (1)	1	0	4	5 (5)	5	I	VC	S4
Palante	4	5	2	5	1 (1)	1	0	1	5 (5)	5	RA	HV	S4
Minors <sup>11</sup>	5	5	1	5	1 (1)	1	0	U	5 (5)	5	U	U	S5

<sup>9</sup> Diocles, Pyracmon and Alcander are analysed collectively.<sup>10</sup> Haemon, Aegeon, Phorbas, Lajus, Manto, Dymas and citizenry are analysed collectively.<sup>11</sup> Alonzo, Paul Orsino, Adorna, Don Michael, Vitellozzo, Seraphino, Enna, Butler, Singer, Adrian, Ange, Gravina, Oliverotto and Executioners are analysed collectively.

## THEODOSIUS, OR THE FORCE OF LOVE (1680).

NAME	STYLE	COHERE	WHOLE	SYMBOL	COMPLEX	TRANS.	ANAGN.	DERIVE	SOCIETAL	FUNCTION	CHOOSE	PCT	LMT
Varanes	1	5	5	1	2 (3)	5	2	4	4 (4)	4	RA	HT	A4
Marcian	2	4	5	3	3 (4)	5	4	3	4 (3)	3	P	HS/E	A4
Athenais	3	4	5	3	3 (4)	5	0	2	5 (5)	5	RA	HV	S2
Theodos's	3	5	5	3	2 (2)	3	2	4	2 (3)	2/4	RA	HV	S4
Pulcheria	4	4	2	3	3 (2)	5	0	2	4 (4)	4	P	HS/E	A5
Minors <sup>12</sup>	5	5	1	5	1 (1)	1	0	U	5 (5)	5	U	U	S5

## LUCIUS JUNIUS BRUTUS; FATHER OF HIS COUNTRY (1680).

NAME	STYLE	COHERE	WHOLE	SYMBOL	COMPLEX	TRANS.	ANAGN.	DERIVE	SOCIETAL	FUNCTION	CHOOSE	PCT	LMT
Brutus	1	4	3	2	3 (4)	5	0	2	5/2 (3)	5	P	HS/A	S1
Titus	2	5	5	3	2 (3)	4	0	3	3 (3)	4	RA	HV	S3
Teraminta	3	5	5	4	2 (3)	5	1	1	1 (3)	5	RS	HV	S3
Tiberius	3	5	5	4	1 (3)	4	0	2	1 (3)	5	P	VC	S3
Vinditius	4	5	2	4	1 (3)	5	0	3	5 (4)	4	RA	O	S4
Minors <sup>13</sup>	5	5	1	5	1 (1)	1	0	U	5 (5)	5	U	U	S5

## THE MASSACRE OF PARIS (LATE 1679 OR EARLY 1681).

NAME	STYLE	COHERE	WHOLE	SYMBOL	COMPLEX	TRANS.	ANAGN.	DERIVE	SOCIETAL	FUNCTION	CHOOSE	PCT	LMT
Guise	1	5	5	3	3 (2)	5	0	2	4 (4)	3/5	I	VT/V	S1
Admiral	1	5	5	3	3 (2)	5	0	3	5 (5)	5	RS	HS/E	S2
Charles	2	3	3	2	5 (5)	5	2	2	1 (3)	4/2	RS	HT	A3
Marguerit.	3	5	2	4	2 (3)	4	0	2	4 (4)	5	RA	PV	S3
Catherine	4	5	2	4	2 (3)	5	0	3	1 (3)	5	P	VC	S4
Minors <sup>14</sup>	5	5	1	5	1 (1)	1	0	U	5 (5)	5	U	U	S5

<sup>12</sup> Leontine, Atticus, Arantes, Lucius, Delia, Marina, Flavilla, Julia, Priests and Chorus are analysed collectively.<sup>13</sup> Collatinus, Valerius, Horatius, Aquilius, Vitellius, Junius, Fabritius, Lucretius, Lartius, Herminius, Mutius, Flaminius, Fecilian Priests, Flamen, Citizens, Sempronia, Lucrece, Aquilia and Vitellia are analysed collectively.<sup>14</sup> Cardinal, Gondi, Anjou, Cavagnes, Langoiran, Colombier, Queen of Navarre, Antramont, Lignerolles, Servant, Morvele, Genius, Angolesme, Provost, Bernie, Colonel D'O, Elboeuf and Soldiers are analysed collectively.

## THE PRINCESS OF CLEVE (1681-2).

NAME	STYLE	COHERE	WHOLE	SYMBOL	COMPLEX	TRANS.	ANAGN.	DERIVE	SOCIETAL	FUNCTION	CHOOSER	PCT	LMT
Nemours	1	4	4	5	2 (3)	4	0	3	5 (4)	2/5	P	O <sup>15</sup>	A4
Chartres	2	4	4	3	4 (4)	5	0	3	2 (3)	2/4	RS	O	A5
Poltrot	3	5	2	5	1 (1)	1	0	5	5 (5)	5	RA	O	S3
Cleve	3	5	2	4	1 (2)	3	0	5	5 (5)	5	RA	O	S5
Tournon	4	5	1	5	1 (1)	1	0	2	5 (5)	5	P	O	S5
Marguerit.	4	4	2	5	1 (2)	3	0	1	1 (3)	5	IN	O	S2
Minors <sup>16</sup>	5	5	1	5	1 (1)	1	0	U	5 (5)	5	U	O	S5

## THE DUKE OF GUISE (1682).

NAME	STYLE	COHERE	WHOLE	SYMBOL	COMPLEX	TRANS.	ANAGN.	DERIVE	SOCIETAL	FUNCTION	CHOOSER	PCT	LMT
Guise	1	3	3	3	3 (3)	4	1	3	3 (3)	5/3	P	VT/D	A4
Henry III	2	5	5	3	2 (3)	5	3	1	5 (4)	4	RS	HS/E	A4
Grillon	3	5	5	5	1 (3)	5	0	5	5 (5)	5	RA	O	S4
Marmout.	3	5	5	2	3 (4)	5	0	3	5 (5)	5	IN	HS/E	A4
Malicorne	4	5	2	4	1 (3)	5	0	5	1 (3)	5	I	VT/D	S5
Catherine	5	5	1	5	1 (1)	1	0	1	1 (3)	5	RS	HS/A	S5
Minors <sup>17</sup>	5	5	1	5	1 (1)	1	0	U	1 (3)	5	U	U	S5

<sup>15</sup> Because *The Princess of Cleve* combines affective tragedy and satiric comedy, the characters of that play cannot adequately be described using the character typology that has been instituted for works of serious drama. Attention should be directed to the analysis in Chapter Seven.

<sup>16</sup> Bellamore, Jaques, St. Andre, Vidam of Chartres, Pedro, Boy, Elianor, Celia, Irene and La March are analysed collectively.

<sup>17</sup> Melanax, Bussy, Polin, Curate of St. Eustace, Cardinal, Aumale, Mayenne, Abbot, Alphonsus, Sheriffs, Spirit, Bellieure, Archbishop, Citizens, Servant, Page, Larchant and Revol are analysed collectively.

## CONSTANTINE THE GREAT (1683).

NAME	STYLE	COHERE	WHOLE	SYMBOL	COMPLEX	TRANS.	ANAGN.	DERIVE	SOCIETAL	FUNCTION	CHOOSER	PCT	LMT
Constant.	1	3	3	2	4 (4)	3	2	1	4 (4)	5	RS	HS/E	A3
Crispus	2	3	3	3	5 (5)	5	0	1	5 (5)	5	RS	HV	A4
Fausta	3	4	4	3	5 (5)	5	0	1	5 (5)	5	RS	HV	A4
Arius	3	5	2	4	1 (2)	4	0	2	1 (3)	5	P	VC	S4
Dalmatius	4	5	1	4	2 (2)	3	0	1	5 (5)	5	RA	HS/A	S4
Serena	4	5	1	5	2 (2)	3	0	NA	5 (5)	5	RA	HV	S4
Annibal	4	5	1	5	2 (2)	3	0	1	5 (5)	5	RA	HV	S4
Minors <sup>18</sup>	5	5	1	5	1 (1)	1	0	U	5 (5)	5	U	U	S5

<sup>18</sup> Sylvester, Lycinius, Labienus, the Angels and Eubulus are analysed collectively.

Appendix B: Glossary of Terms.<sup>1</sup>

**\*Accessibility:** *n.* The overarching term used by the author to combine Hochman's categories of *complexity* and *transparency*. Cf. pp.51-2.

**Affective:** *adj.* This term refers to the *character/s* who affect us emotionally, that is those with whom we most associate and sympathise.

**Agent:** *n.* An alternative term for a *character*. "Agents" is the literal translation of the Aristotelian term *prattontas*.

**\*Ambiguous sign:** See *Sign*.

**\*Ambivalent hero/villain:** See *Hero*, *Villain*.

**\*Anagnorisis:** *n.* Greek word (ἀναγνώρισις) lit. "recognition" (cf. Liddell and Scott, p.92). This term refers to the extent to which a character develops (changes) in the course of the text. Whilst some characters achieve partial self-discovery, others make profound life-changing discoveries. Thus the scale for this category ranges from zero development (the thoroughly *static* character), through minimal to maximal anagnorisis. An interrelated aspect of this category pertains to moral rehabilitation. Whilst some characters discover why they acted (that is, they become aware of their *hamartia*, the cause of their actions), or discover the truth of their identity (a common motif of the heroic play), others do not but nevertheless regret their behaviour. This constitutes a form of character development and so belongs on the scale, although at the lower end. The term anagnorisis is used in preference to Hochman's *dynamism*, because dynamism conflicts with a more familiar connotation of a *character* being active in opposition to passive. Cf. pp.52-3; *stylisation*, *coherence*, *wholeness*, *literalness*, *complexity*, *transparency*, *accessibility*, *derivative*, *conventional* and *closure*.

**Antagonist:** *n.* Used in the traditional sense of the opponent of the *protagonist*.

**Appetitive:** *adj.* Refers to the innate tendency of a *character* to act in a specific manner. It is opposed in the binary by the *intellective*, a term used by the author in a similar sense to that in which *dianoia* is used by Aristotle. Cf. pp.8-9; *ruling disposition*.

**Apsychological:** *adj.* A term developed by Tzvetan Todorov to separate *characters* into those whose choices are predictable ("apsychological") from those whose actions are less self-evident ("psychological"). Choices made by the former are influenced by their *ruling disposition*, leading them always to act in a manner consistent with that *trait*. The actions of the apsycho-logical character follow immediately after the dilemma, whereas those of the psychological (*deliberative*) character only occur after pre-meditation. Cf. pp.37-8, 55-8.

**\*Atypical:** *adj.* A term used to describe one of three principal categories of *character* (and methods of characterisation). *Atypes* (an atypical character) are the least *stereotypical*, and are notable for the accent placed upon *interiority*. That is not to suggest that they lack typicality, but rather the emphasis placed on the workings of their psyche precludes us from essentially viewing them as stereotypes. The quintuple scale is used to distinguish the degree of atypicality between characters. At the minimal end are found those characters who subtly defy the conventions of their type, such as the hero acting viciously, or the villain virtuously. At the modest position are found those characters that undergo a modicum of conflict between their virtuous and vicious personality states. Thereafter atypicality increases with the degree of internal conflict, substantive verisimilitude and centrality in the text. At the maximal end are found the most profound examples of a dramatist's pantheon. Cf. pp.111-3; *distypical*, *stereotypical*.

**Calculating villain/ess:** *n.* See *Villain/ess*.

**Card characters:** *n.* See *Intermediary characters*.

<sup>1</sup> Terms that are in italics are cross-referenced. An asterisk preceding the term indicates that it has been instituted by the author in a specific sense.

**Catharsis:** *n.* Greek word (κάθαρσις) lit. "purification" (cf. Liddell and Scott, p.753). Aristotle uses the term *παθημάτων κάθαρσιν* to explain that the purpose of tragedy is to cause the purgation (*katharsin*) of the emotions of pity and fear (*pathematon*). Cf. p.30.

**\*Causative:** *adj.* A term used to describe the type of choice that (and type of chooser who) instigates a chain of events in the plot, often with tragic consequences. *Characters* who act causatively may be either viciously or virtuously motivated. Vicious causative characters are sub-divided into those who are *psychological* (*deliberative*) in that their choices are pre-meditated and their actions consciously designed (alternatively termed a *provocator*), or their decisions may be *apsychological* (*instinctive*), unconsidered and driven by their *ruling disposition* (an *instigator*). The legal distinction between murder and manslaughter provides an excellent example; murder is a pre-meditated action (and so would be enacted by a *provocator*), whilst the latter is committed impulsively and without consideration (and so perpetrated by an *instigator*). These sub-categories are also distinguished from the virtuously based causative chooser (an *initiator*). The actions of an initiator also instigate a chain of events and follow deliberation, yet differ from the behavior of the *provocator* and *instigator* in that the motivation is virtuous in its foundation. A conventional example is the heroine who adopts male dress to test her lover's fidelity, often (in *Leean* drama especially) with tragic results. Cf. pp.55ff, and related terms *responsive*, *responder* and *reactor*.

**Centrality:** Refers to the relative emphasis placed upon a particular *character* in a text. The *protagonist* is more complex and fully developed than the *secondary* characters and the *intermediaries*, who are themselves more complex than the *choral* figures. As Bert States suggests, centrality is not simply a matter of dominating textual exposure, but of being the subject of the other characters' lives. Cf. pp.47-8.

**Character:** *n.* A 'nonactual' anthropomorphic creation inhabiting a 'nonactual' world "who" is ascribed humanoid properties and tendencies and "who" is presented to an audience via a combination of action, dialogue and/or narratorial exposition for the purpose of expressing human-like actions, reactions and emotions. It refers to the type of literary character "who" is individuated and has certain requisite qualities that are defined and can be abstracted. Character is alternated with other terms such as *agent*, *entity* and *figure*.

**Charakter:** *n.* A term used in chapter one of this survey to distinguish the Theophrastan character type from the more familiar connotation of the term described above.

**Characterology:** Literally the creation and study of *character*. In this survey, characterology refers not only to the study of Lee's characters, but also to a study of Lee's own study of character.

**Choral characters:** A term used to describe the *centrality* of those stereotypical *characters* who form the background (that is, the least central) of the text. These characters are primarily *functional* and symbolic in value, rather than self-referential.

**Chrestos:** *n.* Greek word (χρηστός), lit. "good" (cf. Liddell and Scott, p.1831). Used by Aristotle as one of the four aspects that must be satisfied in the construction of the *agent*. The subject of enduring debate, the term is most often felt to refer to the extent to which a *character* conforms to the standards that constitute the type of character presented. By the Restoration the term had adopted this "poetical" sense, unlike the moral interpretation followed in the Renaissance. Cf. pp.10-2; *harmottos*, *homoios* and *homalos*.

**\*Circumstantial (-cum-normative) personality state:** A term used to describe the new *personality state* of a *character* that occurs after a *conflict* has led to the manifestation of the *conditional* behaviour that reflects a change in personality state. This new demeanour is permanent, or at least continues until another circumstantial change occurs to supplant it. Presuming that there is no reversion to the earlier *normative personality state* (a rare occurrence), the circumstantial position is said to be "circumstantial-cum-normative", that is, it becomes the norm. The circumstantial state can be summed up as the "out of character" character, affected by current events. It is differentiated from the pre-conflicted *normative*



*personality* which applies to the character as s/he had been familiarly known to other characters in the text until the conflict leads to a circumstantial change. Cf. pp.41-4.

**Closure:** *n.* One of the eight categories formulated by Hochman for analysing *character*. This is the only category that holds little value as a criterion because it does not apply to the qualities of character, but rather with the degree to which closure is achieved in the text. *Openness* is the term used for the binary position. Cf. p.46; *stylisation, coherence, wholeness, literalness, complexity, transparency and dynamism*.

**Coherence:** *n.* One of the eight categories formulated by Hochman for analysing *character*. It refers to the extent to which a character is unified and consistent, and is assessed on a quintuple scale (augmented by the author) of minimal, modest, medial, substantial and maximal. At the minimal end are found those schizophrenic entities who are almost two separate characters, and whose unity rests solely upon what Margolin calls *existence*; the provision of a proper name, pronoun or definite noun phrase. At the maximal end are those figures whose coherence is posited on one thoroughly *dominant trait* of character, such as allegorical and stereotypical figures. The binary opposite of coherence is *incoherence*. Cf. pp.48-9; *stylisation, wholeness, literalness, complexity, transparency, dynamism and closure*.

**Colloquy:** See *Internal dialogue*.

**Commonplaces:** See *Rhetorical commonplaces*.

**Complete sign:** See *Sign*.

**Complexity:** *n.* One of the eight categories formulated by Hochman for analysing *character*. It describes the degree of inner tension presented by an entity in the text. Essentially it represents a division between those characters who are conflicted (and who are likely to be presented with greater psychological depth through internal monologue and *internal dialogue*) and those who are not. Complexity is assessed on a quintuple scale (augmented by the author) of minimal, modest, medial, substantial and maximal. Because this and the category of *transparency* are both concerned with *interiority*, the author has combined them under the title *accessibility*. The binary opposite of complexity is *simplicity*, and *opacity* of transparency. Cf. pp.51-2; *stylisation, coherence, wholeness, literalness, dynamism and closure*.

**Conditional trait and/or behaviour:** Described by States as the aberrant behaviour of a *character* brought about by circumstance and not typical of him or her, in contradistinction to his or her inherent (*dispositional*) *traits*. Unlike States, the author holds both dispositional and conditional traits to be equally important as aspects of character, because the *identity* underlies both positions. The change in *personality state* which result from current events (and the appearance of conditional behaviour) is permanent, or at least continues until another circumstantial change in state occurs. A permanent change in state differentiates conditional behaviour from *contradictory behaviour* that is only ever a temporary change before a reversion to the earlier (*normative*) state. Cf. pp.40-1; *conflict and circumstantial personality state*.

**Conflict:** Situations of conflict provide the circumstances that cause *conditional* behaviour—which leads to a change from the existing (*normative personality* or *circumstantial-cum-normative personality*) state to a new (*circumstantial personality*) position—or alternatively it provides the circumstance for *contradictory behaviour*, which causes a change from the existing (*ruling* or *servile personality* state, as the case may be) to its opposing position. Conflict may be intrapersonal (internal, occurring within the psyche of the one *character*) or interpersonal (external, occurring between characters).

**Conformatio:** *n.* Latin term (lit. "personification") used in the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* to describe the personification of abstractions. Equates to the Greek word *prosopopæia*. Cf. p.21.

**Contradictory behaviour:** This type of behaviour differs from *conditional behaviour* because it does not result in a permanent change in *personality state*. Both types of behaviour are effected by circumstance but contradictory behaviour is only ever temporary (in most cases the change in personality state will not outlast the scene in which it occurs). See also *ruling personality* and *servile personality*. Cf. pp.41-4.

**\*Conventional:** *adj.* Formulated by the author to supplement Hochman's categories for analysing *character*. It describes the extent to which agents conform to, or differ from, the societal and functional roles that they perform in the text. The societal role is the position that the character holds in the 'nonactual' world of the text, such as being a king, queen, prince, general, counsellor, soldier etc. The function applies to the actantial role that the agent performs in the tale, like being the helper, opposer, sender or receiver (in a Proppian or Griemassian sense), or the more traditional typological roles such as hero, villain, revenger, malcontent, foil etc. Assessment is based upon a quintuple scale of minimal, modest, medial, substantial and maximal conventionality. Cf. pp.54-5; *stylisation, coherence, wholeness, symbolism, accessibility, anagnorisis and derivation*.

**\*Deliberative:** *adj.* An act committed by a literary *character* may either be intentional and pre-meditated, or intentional but unconsidered, such as those committed in the heat of anger or passion. The former are described as deliberative (that act of *hamartia* occurring after consideration), the latter *impulsive* (occurring as a result of being influenced by their ruling disposition, and without reflection). Impulsive choices are likely to follow immediately from the situation presenting the choice, whilst deliberative actions leads to pre-meditated analysis that is revealed to the audience through *interiority*. Cf. pp.56-7.

**\*Derivative:** *adj.* Formulated by the author to supplement Hochman's categories for analysing *character*. It describes the extent to which an agent imitates or distorts the source materials that form the basis for the characterisation. Assessment is based upon a quintuple scale of minimal, modest, medial, substantial and maximal derivation. This category specifically applies to those characters who have a mythical or historical foundation. As such it is inapplicable to those agents who are wholly invented, and the analysis of those characters will not be adversely affected by ignoring this category. The binary opposite of this term is *transformative*. Cf. pp.53-4; *stylisation, coherence, wholeness, symbolism, accessibility, anagnorisis and conventionality*.

**Deuteragonist:** *n.* Used in the traditional sense of the second most *central* character of a text. This *character* is often the principal figure of the subplot.

**\*Developmental fallacy:** A term used to describe the misguided notion that a character must undergo change to be considered efficacious. Cf. p.44n33.

**Dianoia:** *n.* Greek word (διάνοια) lit. "thought, intention" (cf. Liddell and Scott, p.364). Used by Aristotle to describe the *agent's* intellect—his capacity for thought, as well as the revelation of his ethical qualities. Cf. p.8; *ethos*.

**Dimensionality:** *n.* Used by Hochman as an alternative term for *wholeness*, but used by the author throughout the survey to indicate *character complexity*.

**Disposition:** *n.* An alternative term for a *character trait*.

**Dispositional trait:** Described by Bert States as an inherent *trait* of *character*, in contradistinction to the behaviour of character that is felt to be a *conditional* aberration brought about by circumstance. However, it is my contention that dispositional and conditional traits are equally important aspects of character, because the *identity* underlies both positions. By abstracting the character's dispositional traits from his or her conditional ones we are able to determine his or her *type foundation*. Cf. pp.40-1; *normative personality*.

**Dispositional villain/ess:** *n.* See *Villain/ess*.

**Distressed lover:** *n.* See *Lover*.

**Distype:** *n.* A *distypical* character.

**\*Distypical:** *adj.* A term created to describe one of three principal categories of *character* (and methods of characterisation). The *distype* undergoes one or more notable and meaningful changes in *personality state* over the course of a text, but retains a fundamentally *stereotypical* position within the various states. That is, the character changes from one stereotype to another, and to another, and so forth. More accurately, the distype is a sub-category of the

atype—after all that which is not stereotypical is necessarily atypical. Disytypicality is also assessed upon the atypical scale, although with the added necessity to emphasise that the character is a distype. A lesser distype (one that only undergoes one change in state) is equated with minimal atypification, whilst a greater distype (one who experiences several changes, like Massinissa and Caesario) is modestly atypical. Cf. pp.111-3; *atypical, stereotypical*.

**Dominant:** *n.* An alternative term for the *ruling disposition* and the *ruling personality state*.

**Dominated:** *n.* An alternative term for the *servile personality state*.

**Dynamism:** See *Anagnorisis*.

**Effictio:** *n.* Latin word (lit. "portrayal") used in *Rhetorica ad Herennium* to describe the portrayal of the external (physical) features of an individual. Cf. p.21n.50; *notatio*.

**\*Enervated lover:** *n.* See *Lover*.

**Entity:** *n.* See *Character*.

**Epic hero:** See *Hero*.

**Ethe:** *n.pl.* Greek word (ἦθη) lit. "manners, habits" (cf. Liddell and Scott, p.426). Used by Aristotle to describe the innate and characteristic moral qualities and *appetitive* dispositions of an *agent*. Cf. p.8; *pathe* and *praxis*.

**Ethopoeia:** *n.* Greek word (ἠθοποιία) lit. "imitation, mimesis" used by Quintilian to refer to an orator's imitation of another person's characteristics. Cf. pp.21-2.

**Ethos:** *n.* Greek word (ἦθος); singular of *ethe*. The term is used throughout in the same sense as Dryden who follows Quintilian in describing *ethos* as the temperate (and permanent) emotions in contrast to *pathos* that applies to the vehement (and temporary) ones. Cf. p.8; *dianoia*.

**\*Exemplary hero:** *n.* See *Hero*.

**Existence:** *n.* According to Margolin, existence is the minimal requirement for the constitution of *character*. The basic criterion of this category is the provision of a proper name, pronoun or definite noun phrase. Alternatively referred to as "extensional dimension". Cf. p.44; *individuation, uniqueness, paradigmatic unity* and *syntagmatic unity*.

**Ficelle:** *n.* See *Intermediary characters*.

**Figure:** *n.* See *Character*.

**Flat:** One of the two terms used by E.M. Forster to describe *character*. Flat characters are stereotypes constructed around a single dominant trait, and are contrasted with round figures, atypical characters who display a believable confluence of personality traits—some of which may appear to be contradictory; three-dimensional individuals, complex in temperament and motivation, who are represented with subtle particularity. The behaviour of a flat character follows a predictable pattern, whereas round characters sometimes act unexpectedly, yet always credibly. Being "flat" is not to be viewed pejoratively, for it is sometimes preferable to build a character around a single dominating attribute. Cf. p.35.

**Foil:** *n.* See *Intermediary characters*.

**Fragmentariness:** *n.* See *Wholeness*.

**\*Functional role:** See *Conventional*.

**\*Functional types:** Refers to the conventional character-types, such as the soldier-counsellor, the rival friend, the nurse, the confidant, and so on, all of which are functional roles that are secondary to the *principal character type* that the agent represents, being an example of one of the *hero* or *villain* categories.

**Hamartia:** *n.* Greek word (ἁμαρτία), lit. "a failure, fault, sin or defect" (cf. Liddell and Scott, p.70). Used to describe either an *agent's* innate (and inherently destructive) character flaw or to an erroneous choice made by a character. Cf. pp.9-10.

**Harmottos:** *n.* Greek word (ἁρμοτὸς) lit. "appropriate"; used by Aristotle as one of the four aspects that must be satisfied in the construction of the *agent*, and refers to the extent to which s/he acts appropriately to his or her type. Cf. p.12; *chrestos, homoios* and *homalos*.

**\*Hero, The:** *n.* This overarching category is sub-divided into four types: the tragic, epic, statesman (itself divided into ambivalent and exemplary) and victimised. The tragic hero derives in principal from Aristotle's concept of the ideal tragic protagonist.<sup>2</sup> It applies to the good but flawed figure whose *hamartia* causes a reversal of fortune (*peripeteia*), tragic agony (suffering, conflict), *anagnorisis* and contrition.<sup>3</sup> These characters may commit heinous crimes (often as a direct result of the manipulation of others), but nevertheless repent of their behaviour and so undergo moral rehabilitation. Tragic heroes are also likely to evoke Aristotelian pity and fear (*catharsis*) which derives from an awareness that goodness or greatness has been corrupted or destroyed. Although Aristotle restricts the province of the tragic hero to the male protagonist, female heroes may also be of this type, as well as intermediary characters. Lee's examples of the tragic hero include seemingly disparate figures such as Poppea, Massinissa, Mithridates, Machiavel and Charles IX. These are all tragic heroes, rather than *tragic villains*, because they are manipulated into vice, realise their error and repent of their actions; rehabilitation being the most important distinction between the tragic hero and the unregenerate villain.

The principal characteristics of the epic hero are that he is a superlative lover and superhuman warrior who is meticulously honourable and morally upright. Love is his foremost concern, and for the object of his affection he will abandon or conquer a kingdom and single-handedly defeat entire armies. The type derives from Greco-Roman epic poetry (Hercules, Achilles *et al.*) and from Marlowe's Tamburlaine, reaching its apotheosis in Dryden's Almanzor. Being an epic figure, these heroes are not the appropriate subject for tragedy. The pity and fear elicited by the tragic death of the hero, is incompatible with the aim of the heroic play and its protagonist to evoke admiration and to act as a model worthy of imitation. Because of Lee's 'unheroic' and tragic approaches to character, no examples appear in his plays in an unadulterated form. Most often the heroic type-character serves as a foundation for a tragic, statesman or victimised representation.

The statesman hero is divided into two categories—those whose actions are ambivalent, and those whose actions are exemplary. The former are intensely stoic and patriotic figures whose profound service to the state often comes at the expense of their rectitude. Their attention to civic responsibility makes them admirable, yet this is often marred by the fact that they immoderately suppress their emotions, and neglect their personal obligations. Scipio and Brutus are two examples of the type, both are responsible for instituting new world orders, but their obsessive devotion proves to be deleterious to their ethical integrity, virtue, and/or compassion. Regret over their behaviour is not necessary for them to retain a heroic status because their actions (no matter how morally questionable and deleterious) at least serve the greater good of the state (and so are ultimately heroic). These enigmatic figures are distinguished from the exemplary hero, a realistic (complex, verisimilar) outgrowth of the epic hero. Marcian is Lee's epitome of an exemplary hero in that his behaviour is unimpeachable and effected without sacrificing either his morality or his humanity.

<sup>2</sup> Aristotle did not separate the tragic protagonist into heroic and villainous categories. However, in order to account more thoroughly for the diversity of character, a division is felt to be necessary. The presence of contrition (moral rehabilitation), which is not considered by Aristotle, divides the hero from the villain.

<sup>3</sup> My definition of *anagnorisis* is more expansive than Aristotle's limited definition. His explanation is restricted to the discovery of the protagonist's real identity (such as the discovery of Oedipus' parentage and crimes). This definition is not concerned with a self-awareness of the cause of one's downfall, for instance, which is an interrelated aspect. Most seventeenth-century tragedies are not concerned with the discovery of a person's true identity (it is actually often the province of comedy), although it is a convention of the heroic play genre. Although many otherwise ideal tragic heroes may not make such a self-discovery, this aspect is not an absolute prerequisite for being a tragic hero.

The last category, the "victimised heroes", differ from the tragic figures in that it is the actions of others that lead to their downfall. Aristotle refers to such agents as *epieikes* (ἐπιεικής), characters who may inadvertently commit offensive actions that in part contribute to their downfall but who are nevertheless pristinely good (and so are not the appropriate subject for tragedy in his opinion). They may not be totally blameless but are sufficiently so as to remain virtuous. They are essentially passive victims of external forces rather than active contributors to their misfortune. Lee's main concern is to make their suffering believable. Cyara, Massina, Statira, Ziphares and Semandra all belong to this category.

Whilst characters may illustrate aspects of more than one category within the overall class, they can be segregated on the basis of a greater affinity with one position.<sup>4</sup> For example, Massinissa may be epic in certain aspects but is a tragic hero overall. Obviously when a character fits the profile of more than one division, this information needs to be recorded in the analysis. Finally, it is necessary to reiterate that the principal difference between a character being a "hero" or a "villain" is that, whilst a heroic character may act villainously, s/he ultimately repents of his or her actions whereas the villain does not.

**Homalos:** *n.* Greek word (ὁμᾶλός) lit. "consistent" (cf. Liddell and Scott, p.1094). Used by Aristotle to describe one of the four aspects that must be satisfied in the construction of the *agent*, and refers to the extent to which the *character* remains consistent to his or her type throughout the course of the play. Cf. pp.13-4; *chrestos*, *harmottos* and *homoios*.

**Homoios:** *n.* Greek term (ὅμοιος) lit. "similar" (cf. Liddell and Scott, p.1098). Used by Aristotle to describe one of the four aspects that must be satisfied in the construction of the *agent*, and refers to the extent to which the *character* is like ourselves. When the figure is similar to us we are likely to affiliate and associate with him or her, making *catharsis* possible. Cf. pp.12-3; *chrestos*, *harmottos* and *homalos*.

**Humo(u)rs:** *n.* After extensive analysis of the various definitions of the term (pp.24ff), the Jonsonian sense of the term is adopted as the standard. This combines the Galenic theory (that the body is an admixture of four bodily fluids—blood, phlegm, and yellow and black bile, to create a disposition that is either sanguine, phlegmatic, choleric or melancholic) with Jonson's own application of the term as a unique characteristic distinguishing an individual *character* from all others. The term *manners* is cognate.

**\*Identity:** *n.* Quite simply, the essence and unifying principle of a *character* (what in metaphysics would be termed the 'self'), and the principal subject of characterology. Following Locke, the author views identity to be that which is permanent amidst change; the structural aspects (*traits* and *dispositions*) that are consistent and unchanging throughout, uniting the characterisation as it is presented at one time and place within the text, with that compared at another time and place. This position underlies the *normative* and *circumstantial personality* states, the *dispositional* and *conditional* or *contradictory personality* positions. Cf. pp.41ff.

**\*Impulsive:** See *Deliberative*.

**Incoherence:** *n.* See *Coherence*.

**Incomplete sign:** See *Sign*.

**Individual-like type:** *n.* See *Type-like individuals*.

**Individuation:** *n.* According to Margolin, this is the second requisite category for the constitution of *character* after *existence*. This condition identifies and qualifies the agent's characteristics, achieved through the ascription of *traits* and attributes. The degree of ascription can vary enormously from a single brief predication—just enough to distinguish him or her from all others—to a substantial composite of complex signs. Also referred to as "intensional dimension". Cf. p.44; *uniqueness*, *paradigmatic unity* and *syntagmatic unity*.

**Inferential sign:** See *Multiple sign*.

<sup>4</sup> None of the positions are rigidly demarcated—like the colours of a rainbow that meld into one another, a character may satisfy elements of several categories, but can be placed into one group based on greater affiliation.

**\*Initiator:** *n.* A descriptive term instituted by the author to the type of *character* that is a virtuously based *psychological chooser*. A *character* who is *causative* in the specific sense used in this survey. Cf. p.57; and related terms *responsive*, *apsychological*, *provocator*, *instigator*, *responder*, *reactor*.

**\*Instigator:** *n.* A descriptive term instituted by the author to describe an *apsychological causative chooser* whose choices and actions instigate a chain of events in the plot, often with tragic consequences. Being *apsychological* their choices are *impulsive* (habitual, unconsidered) in nature. These characters are essentially vicious in foundation, as are the choices they make. Cf. pp.59ff, and related terms *causative*, *responsive*, *psychological*, *causer*, *provocator*, *responder*, *reactor*, *causer*.

**Intellective:** *adj.* See *Appetitive*.

**\*Interiority:** *n.* A term used to describe the explication of a character's internal thoughts and feelings. This explication occurs in the form of the internal monologue (the soliloquy and the aside) and the *internal dialogue*.

**Intermediary characters:** *n.* A term used to describe those *characters* whose textual *centrality* resides between the *secondary* and *choral* groups. Harvey subdivides this group into the "card" (the comic "character", such as Shakespeare's Falstaff and the Dickensian types) and the Jamesian "ficelle" (the "foil" types, like conspirators, confidants, counsellors and rivals). Cf. p.48n43.

**\*Internal dialogue:** A term used to describe dialogue held between a *principal* and his or her *partisan/s* where the accent is upon the revelation of the principal's *interiority*. Russell Hunt uses the term *colloquy* in the same sense (p.153). Cf. p.51.

**\*Leean:** *adj.* A term developed by the author as the adjectival form of Lee. No form currently exists, unlike his contemporaries such as Dryden (Drydenesque), Shadwell (Shadwellian), and Otway (Otwayian). It is used in preference to Eric Rothstein's "Lee-esque" which suggests "Lee-like" rather than pertaining to the works of Lee.

**Literalness:** *n.* See *Symbolism*.

**\*Lover, The:** The melancholy lover (of either sex) is divided by the author into the *saddened*, *enervated*, *distressed* and *pathetic* types. Saddened lover refers to the type of *character* whose love is, and remains, unrequited.<sup>5</sup> An ideal Leean example is Massina. All of the remaining types are required in their affection but are nevertheless distinguishable. The enervated lover is notable for being incapable of taking any action against his or her rivals. Notable examples of this type are Caesario and Ziphares. The distressed lover is opposed in the love triangle not by a personal rival for the affections of his or her lover, but by a political opponent to their union. The exempla of this type are Massinissa and Sophonisba. This type differs from the pathetic lover who does have a personal rival, and also differs from the enervated type because they are capable of action, compelled to defeat their rival or risk losing the object of their affection to that person. Two notable examples of the pathetic lover are Statira in *The Rival Queens* and Cleopatra in *All for Love*. The lover category, like the *functional types*, is a sub-type of the hero-villain binary.

**Manners:** *n.* See *Humo(u)rs* with which this term is cognate.

**Moral reading:** Robert Langbaum differentiates this from a *psychological reading* of a text. A moral reading of a text (and, by extension, of the *characters* within it) is dependent upon a sympathetic understanding of the world-view to which the characters and events adhere. Thus a modern reading of a tragedy can result in a different interpretation of character and event because of differing ideologies. For instance, a moral reading of Shakespeare's Richard III views Gloucester's physical deformity as an outward manifestation of his moral deformity,

<sup>5</sup> The term "saddened lover" is derived from Stroup's thesis (*Type-characters*, p.270).



whereas a psychological reading might view his malformation as one of the causes of his moral corruption. Cf. pp.58-60.

**Multiple sign:** See *Sign*.

**Naturalism:** *n.* See *Stylisation*.

**\*Normative personality state:** *n.* A term used to describe the *personality state* of a *character* before s/he undergoes a *conflict* that leads to a change in state to the *circumstantial* position. The normative position equates to the character as s/he is familiarly known to the other characters of the text, before s/he undergoes the climactic change in demeanour. Cf. pp.41-4.

**Notatio:** *n.* Latin term (lit. "character delineation") used in *Rhetorica ad Herennium* to describe the portrayal of the internal (psychological) features of an individual. Cf. p.21n.50; *effictio*.

**\*Oedipal curse:** Based upon the self-fulfilling vow of Sophocles' Oedipus (cf. *Oedipus Tyrannus*, II.233ff), the Oedipal curse describes the type of imprecation which, when broken, is realised upon the imprecator. This is a particularly notable example of *hamartia*. Cf. pp.124-5.

**Opacity:** *n.* See *Transparency*.

**Openness:** *n.* See *Closure*.

**Paradigmatic unity:** *n.* According to Margolin, this is the fourth requisite category for the constitution of *character* after *existence*, *individuation* and *uniqueness*. It is concerned with determining what type of character the entity belongs to. Cf. p.45; *syntagmatic unity*.

**\*Partisan:** *n.* Traditionally referred to as *confidants*, these *characters* are active and zealous followers of the *principal* to whom they are attached. Their primary *functions* are to permit that character to reveal *interiority* (via *internal dialogue*) and to expose information pertaining to the current and background situations. Partisan is used in preference to the original term, because *confidant* lacks the requisite emphasis on the avid support and agreement with the *principal's* principles. It is also felt to be necessary to segregate the partisan from those *confidants*, like Horatio to Hamlet, who are friends, but not slavish followers, of the principle. Cf. p.51n.46.

**Passions, The:** *n.* Another term for *humo(u)rs* and *manners*. Cf. pp.24ff.

**Pathe:** *n.pl.* Greek word (πάθη) lit. "a passive, suffering state". Used by Aristotle to describe the emotions of an *agent*. Cf. p.8; *ethe* and *praxis*.

**Pathetic lover:** *n.* See *Lover*.

**Pathos:** *n.* Greek word (πάθος), singular of *pathe*. Used throughout in the same sense as by Dryden who follows Quintilian in referring to pathos as the vehement (and temporary) emotions, in contradistinction to *ethos* which applies to the temperate (and permanent) ones.

**Peripeteia:** *n.* Greek word (περιπέτεια) lit. "reversal of fortune" (cf. Liddell and Scott, pp.1248-9). Used by Aristotle to describe the reversal of a character's state from good to bad. Oedipus' situation is used as an example—*anagnorisis* (his self-discovery) creates *peripeteia* which leads to tragic agony and (in the case of the Dryden and Lee version) suicide.

**\*Perpetuate:** See *Perpetuative*.

**\*Perpetuative:** *adj.* A term used to describe choices that perpetuate events that have already been set in motion, as distinct from those that cause a chain of events to occur (*causative*). This category is felt to be necessary on the grounds that it could be argued that all choices cause subsequent actions and choices, and so it is important to differentiate between those that begin a chain of events and those that perpetuate an existing chain. For example, the second domino in a line does not cause the third and subsequent dominoes to fall, it simply perpetuates the motion began by the first.<sup>6</sup> Only the first domino (action) is *causative*. Cf. p.57.

<sup>6</sup> Assuming for the sake of argument, that the first domino pushes itself and is not pushed.

**Personality:** Specifically used throughout in relation to a character's particular state of being. See *personality state*.

**\*Personality state:** *n.* The state (overall demeanour or nature) of a *character* at a particular place and time, and which differs from the state of being of the same character at another place and time within the same text. A character can be one of two possible types, with two associated sets of *personality state* attendant upon each. The first category applies to the character who undergoes a permanent change in demeanour (for whom the *normative personality* and *circumstantial personality states* are applicable) and the second to the character who only undergoes a temporary change in demeanour (for whom the *ruling personality state*—which is equable with the normative personality state—and the *subordinate personality state* are applicable). Cf. pp.41-4.

**Prattontas:** *n.pl.* Greek term (πρατοντας) lit. "agents"; used by Aristotle to describe what we would now term the *characters* or *personae* of a drama. Cf. p.10.

**Praxis:** *n.* Greek word (πράξις) lit. "action" (cf. Liddell and Scott, p.1322). Used by Aristotle to describe the actions and behaviours of an *agent*. Cf. p.8; *ethe* and *pathe*.

**\*Pre-conflicted position:** This is the state of being (demeanour, nature) of a *character* prior to a conflict that results in a change in *personality state*, and is simply another term for the *normative personality state* or the *ruling personality state*.

**Principal:** *n.* Refers to the type of *character* who has attached to him or her one or more *disciples*, who echo his or her ideology and who serve to enunciate and elucidate those principles.

**\*Principal character type:** Refers to the overall type category to which a particular *character* belongs. The PCT applies to either one of the four types of *hero*, or five types of *villain*.

**Proairesis:** *n.* Greek word (προαίρεσις), lit. "an act of deliberate choice" (cf. Liddell and Scott, p.1329). Used in precisely this sense.

**Prosopographia:** *n.* Greek word (προσωπογραφία); used variously (and sometimes invertedly with *prosopopoeia*), but most often as the dramatisation of real persons. Cf. pp.21ff.

**Prosopopoeia:** *n.* Greek word (προσωποποιία); used variously (and sometimes invertedly with *prosopographia*), but most often as the personification of abstract concepts or inanimate objects. Equates to the Latin word *conformatio*. Cf. pp.21ff.

**Protagonist:** *n.* Used in the traditional sense of the most *central* character of the text.

**\*Provocator:** *n.* A term used to describe a *psychological causative chooser* whose choices and actions deliberately provoke a chain of events in the plot. These characters are essentially vicious in foundation, as are the choices they make. Cf. pp.59ff, and related terms *responsive*, *perpetuative*, *apsychological*, *instigator*, *initiator*, *responder*, *reactor*.

**Psychological reading:** See *Moral reading*.

**Pure individual:** *n.* The premier position in Fishelov's quadripartite division of *character*, equating to the most complexly generated entities of the text, such as the *protagonist* and those *secondary* characters who are included principally for their literal rather than symbolic features. Cf. p.48n.43; *type-like individual*, *individual-like type* and *pure type*.

**Pure type:** *n.* The fourth position in Fishelov's quadripartite division of *character*, and applies to the *choral* stereotypes who are not particularly individuated. Although I do not use his divisions as such, it is similar to the quintuple division used to distinguish characters within the *stereotypical* and *atypical* categories. Cf. p.48n.43; *pure individual*, *type-like individual* and *individual-like type*.

**\*Reactor:** *n.* A term used to describe an *apsychological responsive chooser* who choices and actions *perpetuate* a chain of events in the plot, already begun by a *provocator*, *instigator* and/or *initiator*. Cf. p.56; and related terms *causative*, *psychological*, *perpetuative*, and *reactor*.

**Responder:** *n.* A term used to describe a *psychological responsive chooser* who choices and actions *perpetuate* a chain of events in the plot, already begun by a *provocator*, *instigator*

and/or *initiator*. Cf. p.56; and related terms *causative*, *apsychological*, *perpetuative* and *reactor*.

**\*Responsive:** *adj.* A term used to refer to the type of *perpetuative* choice made by a specific type of *character* who responds to a given situation. This type of figure may be either a *responder* who acts only after pre-meditation (that is *psychological*, *deliberative*), or a *reactor* whose actions are *impulsive* (*apsychological*). Invariably these characters, and the choices that they make, are virtuously based. Cf. pp.55-8; and related terms *causative*, *provocator*, *instigator* and *initiator*.

**Rhetorical commonplaces:** *n.* Refers to the categorised attributes which constitute the *persona* provided by the Greco-Roman rhetoricians (Cicero, "pseudo-Cicero", Quintilian and Priscian). Cf. pp.14ff.

**Round:** See *Flat*.

**Ruling Disposition:** The one trait (usually a potent passion, such as anger or lust) which is felt to be the principal, and dominant, trait of an individual *character*. Restoration theorists held this to be a requisite component of character. Cf. pp.24ff.

**\*Ruling personality state:** *n.* Akin to the *normative personality* state, this term is used in preference where the changes undergone are only temporary. Some *characters* undergo a psychological *conflict* between their virtuous and vicious aspects, each half of their *identity* allocated its own *personality state*. The ruling state is the normative position in which the character is discovered and is invariably associated with his or her *ruling disposition* (and its cognate *traits*). This state is regularly in psychological and behavioural ascendancy. However, when the character becomes conflicted it can lead to his or her *subordinate personality* position gaining temporary control over his or her faculties. For example, otherwise villainous characters (whose ruling state is naturally vicious) may find themselves acting virtuously, and so their subordinate (virtuous) state would be said to be in ascendancy. This state will influence their actions until such time as they oscillate back to their ruling state. The principal difference between the ruling/subordinate binary and the *normative/circumstantial* is that change (as a result of conflict) in the former is temporary, and in the latter permanent. Occasionally the terms *dominant* and *dominated* are used in respect to the ruling and subordinate positions. Cf. pp.41-4.

**\*Saddened lover:** *n.* See *Lover*.

**Secondary characters:** *n.* An overarching term used by the author to describe *characters* such as the *deuteragonist*, *antagonist* and the protagonist's lover. Secondary characters reside in a position of textual *centrality* beneath the *protagonist*, and above the *intermediaries* and *choral characters*. Cf. p.48.

**Sign:** According to Olson, a sign (a piece of data) in a text can be either complete, incomplete or multiple in nature. A complete sign is used to describe a single thing, such as a trait, emotion, a physical condition, the probability of an act, and so on. They are expository in nature, and refer to the types of details provided in the text that are unlikely to cause the audience any consternation or to require interpretation. An incomplete sign, on the other hand, refers to data that requires conjunction with other signs to complete its implication. That is, the initial information is insufficiently revelatory, remaining vague and elusive either until another sign completes the explanation (that is, when the missing data is provided), or it may remain incomplete, in which case the sign might more properly be called *ambiguous*. A *multiple sign* is a single sign (solitary piece of data) that permits a number of possible inferences, rather than evidencing one clear meaning. This term is alternatively referred to as an inferential sign, because it infers (or implies) information rather than revealing data outright (and is, therefore, slightly vague and elusive). Cf. p.58.

**Simplicity:** *n.* See *Complexity*.

**\*Societal role:** See *Conventional*.

**\*Statesman hero:** See *Hero*.

**Static:** *n.* See *Dynamism*.

**Stereotype, A:** *n.* A *stereotypical character*.

**Stereotypical:** *adj.* A term used to describe one of three principal categories of *character* (and methods of characterisation). This is the only term in the quadripartite division to retain its traditional denotation. The quintuple scale is used to distinguish the degree of typicality between characters, differentiation being based principally on the relative centrality of the stereotype in the text. At the minimal end are found those principal characters who, although remaining typified, are provided with considerable attention and individuation in the text. Thereafter the degree of typicality increases in relation to the decreasing level of importance, centrality and attention to individuation of the character in the text. Thus at the maximal end of the scale are found those characters who are undifferentiated types like the Messenger. Cf. pp.111-3; *atypical* and *distypical*.

**\*Stereotypical fallacy:** A term used to describe the tendency in literary criticism to focus on one familiar *character*, making him or her the exemplum of a type, and then to gather all other characters with similar characteristics into that group. The problem is that the grouped characters are more often notable for their differences than their similarities. This is not to suggest that one cannot demonstrate that a character is descended from another, but this does not make them identical in all respects (and therefore able to be summed up under a common title), only similar in some of them. A typological analysis of a playwright's "heroes", for instance, will invariably demonstrate that s/he has produced several types of hero, rather than one type common to all plays. Given this, it becomes evident that if one dramatist has several types of hero, there cannot possibly be one type of hero common to several playwrights. Cf. pp.54-5.

**Stylisation:** *n.* One of the eight categories formulated by Hochman for analysing *character*. Stylisation is dependent upon the norm from which such characterisations deviate; that norm being the resemblance to real people. The category is assessed upon a quintuple scale, augmented by the author, of minimal, modest, medial, substantial and maximal. The binary opposite of stylisation is *naturalism*. Cf. pp.46-7; *coherence*, *wholeness*, *literalness*, *complexity*, *transparency*, *dynamism* and *closure*.

**Subordinate personality state:** *n.* The binary opposite of the *ruling personality state*. Cf. pp.43-4.

**Symbolism:** *n.* Used by Hochman as the binary opposite of his category of *literalness*, which is one of eight formulated by him for analysing *character*. It refers to the extent to which a character is literally an individual (self-referential) as well as being symbolic of something else. This category is assessed upon a quintuple scale (augmented by the author) of minimal, modest, medial, substantial and maximal. I prefer the term "symbolism" to "literalness" as the title for this category. Cf. pp.50-1; *stylisation*, *coherence*, *wholeness*, *complexity*, *transparency*, *dynamism* and *closure*.

**Syntagmatic unity:** *n.* According to Margolin, this is the fifth (and last) category for the constitution of *character* after *existence*, *individuation*, *uniqueness* and *paradigmatic unity*. This category is not always pertinent as it is concerned with the identification of the one character across several texts. Continuity is assessed on a scale of the degree of change in the core *traits* of the character from i) zero change, ii) permanence-amidst-change (where some traits differ, but not enough to endanger character continuity), iii) singular progressive (or processual change), where there is a marked difference in the essential properties of the character, where the change is gradual. Processual change may also be iv) punctual (immediate, as the result of *conflict*). Finally unity may be v) abrupt, and discontinuous, to the extent that the character may appear schizophrenic; two wholly different characters who are united by existence alone. Cf. pp.45-6.

**\*Tragic hero:** *n.* See *Hero*.

**\*Tragic villain:** *n.* See *Villain*.

**Trait:** *n.* The basic unit of *character*, which are described as an aggregate (or paradigm) of traits. A trait is described as a predicate, feature or attribute applied to a character through an explicit or implicit reference in the text, and which can be isolated and analysed in exegesis. Cf. pp.39-41.

**Transformative:** *adj.* See *Derivative*.

**Transparency:** *n.* One of the eight categories formulated by Hochman for analysing *character*. It is concerned with the extent to which the audience is provided with access to a character's motivation. Transparency is assessed on a quintuple scale (augmented by the author) of minimal, modest, medial, subordinate and maximal. Because this and the category of *complexity*, are both concerned with *interiority*, the author has combined them under the title of *accessibility*. The binary opposite of transparency is *opacity*. Cf. pp.51-2; *stylisation*, *coherence*, *wholeness*, *literalness*, *dynamism* and *closure*.

**Type foundation:** The stereotypical basis or bases out of which complexly generated *characters* are formed.

**Type-like individual:** *n.* The second position in Fishelov's quadripartite division of *character*, which applies to most *secondary* characters. As the term suggests, these characters are individuated characters with a modicum of typicality, in contradistinction to the third position (the *individual-like type*) who are typified characters with a modicum of individuation. Cf. p.48n43; *pure individual* and *pure type*.

**Unconventional:** *adj.* A term used by the author as the binary opposite of his *conventional* category. Cf. pp.54-5.

**Uniqueness:** *n.* According to Margolin, this is the third requisite category for the constitution of *character* after *existence* and *individuation*. It implies that adequate detail exists so as to distinguish each individual in the text from one another. For any two characters there must be some difference between them in the nature of one or more of their *traits*. Also referred to as "singularity" and "differentiation". Cf. pp.44-5; *paradigmatic unity* and *syntagmatic unity*.

\***Victimised hero:** *n.* See *Hero*.

\***Victimised villain:** *n.* See *Villain*.

\***Villain, The:** *n.* This overall category is sub-divided into two types: the calculating (and diabolical) and the tragic (itself subdivided into the ambivalent, dispositional and victimised groups). The calculating villain class refers to the consciously provocative, malevolent and unregenerate Machiavellian villain popularised in Jacobean 'Italianate' tragedy.<sup>7</sup> Being "diabolical" is interrelated, and applies to those villains who revel in villainy for its own sake. Whilst calculating villains may also be diabolical, some are clinically villainous and are entirely politically motivated to act viciously. Motiveless malignity is likely to impede the fulfillment of their aims.

The term "tragic villain" is split into the ambivalent, dispositional and victimised types. The fundamental aspect of the former is that s/he vacillates over his or her actions, and is often manipulated into action because his or her *ruling disposition* and flaw (usually ungoverned desire) is exploited. They are more sympathetic than the calculating and diabolical types because they are not entirely self-directed, and so judging them as virtuous or vicious is much more difficult than with a villain. The term "ambivalent" is used in two connotations—both in the sense that the character is him- or herself rendered ambivalent (vacillatory) by conflicting emotions, as well as in the sense that the representation causes an ambivalent (mixed) evaluation of the character in the audience. Lee's Nero and Borgia are notable examples of the ambivalent type. The "dispositional villain" is akin to the ambivalent although these figures are not deliberately manipulated into vice, merely corrupted into action by their ruling disposition. That is they are affected by their own *psychological* choices. Manipulated (tragic) villains

<sup>7</sup> The term "calculating villain" is derived from Stroup's thesis (*Type-characters*, p.339).

may also be a-psychological, but dispositional villains differ from tragic ones in that the latter will deliberate over his or her actions. Alexander is an example of the dispositional villain. The last variant, the "victimised villain", refers to those figures derived from the likes of Medea, Clytemnestra and Procne and Philomela. Strictly speaking these characters are villains because their actions are vicious (murder, for example, is vicious regardless of the merits of the motivation), yet this behaviour is mitigated by the fact that the anguish they have endured at the hands of another has forced them to retaliate. They are reactionary villains responding to an offence committed against them, and are emotionally compelled to respond. These figures only ever act out of the desire for revenge (it now being their *raison d'être*), never out of a wish for personal gain. Because of Lee's focus on rehabilitation, his only examples of this type are Roxana and Guise in *Massacre*.

Whilst a character may demonstrate aspects of more than one category within the overall class, s/he can be segregated based on a greater affinity with one position.<sup>8</sup> For example, Cassander may be "victimised" by injuries done to him and his father by Alexander, yet he nevertheless acts in part out of a desire for personal gain, and so is properly a calculating villain who is partly justified and who admits to being diabolical. Nero is perhaps an even better example because he combines four of the five types. He is both manipulated and corrupted into vice—manipulated by Petronius, having long since been corrupted by his environment—and, having embraced his vicious inclinations, he can also be quite Machiavellian in his actions. He also admits to revelling in evil for its own sake, and so is diabolically villainous. However, amidst the action the influence of Petronius is poignant and significant and so causes him to be located in the tragic position, rather than the dispositional, calculating or diabolical. Obviously when a character strides the divide between sub-categories this information needs to be recorded in the analysis. Finally, the principal difference between a character being a "hero" or a "villain" is that, whilst a heroic character may act villainously (*hamartia*), s/he ultimately repents of his or her actions and is morally rehabilitated.

**Wholeness:** *n.* One of the eight categories formulated by Hochman, and adapted by the author, for analysing *character*. It applies to the extent to which the fragmentary data providing the characterisation is representative of the whole character. A central tenet of the category is the level of predictability in a character; the extent to which figures are capable of surprising us in their behaviour, and therefore suggesting themselves to be elusive. It is intimately associated with typicality and the degree to which a character conforms to, or transcends, his or her foundation. Wholeness is assessed on a quintuple scale (augmented by the author) of minimal, modest, medial, substantial and maximal. Hochman uses the term *dimensionality* as an alternative, but because this term is different to the sense used by the author they are treated separately. The binary opposite of wholeness is *fragmentariness*. Cf. pp.49-50; *stylisation*, *coherence*, *literalness*, *complexity*, *transparency*, *dynamism* and *closure*.

<sup>8</sup> None of the positions are rigidly demarcated—like the colours of a rainbow which meld into one another, a character may satisfy aspects of several categories, but can be placed into one group based on being more of one class than any other.



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