

SOCIAL CRITICISM IN SCOTTISH LITERATURE 1480-1560

Robin William Macpherson Fulton

Ph.D.

University of Edinburgh

1972



SUMMARY

The purpose of this thesis is to examine how Scottish poets, in the eighty or so years before the Scottish Reformation, described and interpreted the society in which they lived. While it is clear that they were all fervently committed to analysing and criticising their society, and that they did so in the most particular and practical terms, it is equally clear that they consistently regarded social and political problems from a double point of view. For they considered the secular aspects of human society not only in its own terms but also in terms of a much wider moral and religious framework. This framework conditioned not just specifically ecclesiastical criticism, but it conditioned the total range of social criticism in the works discussed: each writer's work can be seen as a whole only from the point of view of those beliefs informing every aspect.

In The Thre Prestis of Peblis, for instance, the first two tales deal with secular matters, respectively the shortcomings of the estates and the shortcomings of the king. They deal with worldly evil and worldly good. The third tale, however, postulates a wider context, containing but reaching much further than the secular context of the first two: it asks us, not to reverse any judgments we may have earlier accepted, but to subject these now to a more fundamental discrimination. (Thus the character of Fictus is developed through several processes, in each of which we are asked to

reinterpret our previous view of him.) In its scale, in its representation and interpretation of contemporary society, in its development of this interpretation at several levels of significance, and in the highly wrought and integrated structure it evolves to present this multiple view, The Thre Prestis of Peblis must be counted among the highest literary achievements of the period.

Henryson's recreation of his society (in terms of beast fable) also carries the most wide-ranging implications (in terms of theological interpretation). The Preaching of the Swallow sets out a universal context in which all the fables have their place. The other four fables under discussion all refer, with varying degrees of explicitness, to that universal context, and with that in view, each of them focusses on a particular aspect of the corruptibility of worldly affairs. The Trial of the Fox describes the treatment of abuses but within a qualified worldly context; The Sheep and the Dog and The Wolf and the Lamb give particular examples of injustice with very pointed contemporary applications; and The Lion and the Mouse offers a working example of a possible contract or form of interdependence between ruler and ruled, albeit still within a worldly context.

The apparent heterogeneity of Dunbar's work, and the small scale of many of his poems, makes it less easy to see an integrated world-view of the kind Henryson explores in the fables; yet it is possible to see his work as a self-consistent whole when we accept that the primary point of

reference is a moral and religious one. His moral and religious convictions, either implied or stated, provide an intellectual basis from which poetic development is possible. The directions taken by such development are very varied, from the allegory of 'Rycht as the day begouth to schyne', to the vigorous narrative of the Tretis, and the simple but compelling imagery of 'Quhom to sall I compleine my wo'. It is evident too in the fierce irony that pervades 'Schir, ye have mony servitours' (e.g. ll.67-80). Thus his vision of political, ecclesiastical, legal and commercial corruption is most characteristically expressed in terms of our propensity to be deluded by appearances, to be swayed by Blind Affection rather than by Reason.

The content (doctrinal, political, social) of Lindsay's work is more directly orientated to polemical ends than is the case with the other major writers considered. His teachings, not merely analytical but aimed at reform, are relatively few in number and are repeated often throughout the body of his work. That Lindsay's testimony on the condition of the church can be historically substantiated has been shown by W. Murison's study of his ecclesiastical criticism in relation to a body of very similar criticism from withⁱⁿ the church, i.e. there is no need to depend on avowedly Protestant sources to authenticate Lindsay's strictures. When we approach Lindsay via his predecessors we notice two important changes of emphasis: a greater stress on the idea that the king is an officer, delegated to serve as on trust from God, and a more vigorous support of the poorer commoners. In the Satyre, for instance,

some of his most forceful and bitter attacks on corrupt authority are delivered by John the Common Weill and Pauper as protagonists of the oppressed labouring classes.

From historical sources such as letters, chronicles, council resolutions, sermons, parliamentary acts, treasurers' accounts, we can validate individual points of social criticism made by the authors discussed. But the major works of the period survive on a different level from chronicles and tracts because the imaginative power of their authors can communicate with us through (not in spite of) their particular historical concerns and beliefs. Despite very different literary intentions between one individual work and another, and however far literary creations may develop beyond their intellectual framework (and, as literature, they must), they remain firmly based, at the intellectual level, on the beliefs provided by that framework. Yet those basic beliefs are all the more cogently realised, in those major works, for being expressed through the most finely gauged literary means.

CONTENTS

	Page
Preface	iv
CHAPTER ONE	
THE MORAL AND RELIGIOUS FRAMEWORK	1
1. William's tale from <u>The Thre Prestis of Peblis</u>	3
2. Henryson's <u>The Trial of the Fox and The Preaching of the Swallow</u>	16
3. Douglas - <u>Eneados</u> , Prologues X and XI, and <u>The Pallice of Honour</u>	30
4. Dunbar: the moral and religious poems, and the poems about love	40
5. Lindsay's <u>Testament</u>	60
CHAPTER TWO	
ECCLESIASTICAL SATIRE	67
1. The first tale of <u>The Thre Prestis of Peblis</u> and Henryson's <u>The Sheep and the Dog</u>	67
2. Dunbar's ecclesiastical satire	72
3. Lindsay's <u>Dreme</u> , <u>Complaynt</u> and <u>Testament</u>	77
4. Lindsay's <u>Satyre</u>	97
5. John Davidson's 'Ane Dialogue or Mutual Talking betwix a Clerk and Courteour'	112
CHAPTER THREE	
THE LOT OF THE COMMONS AND THE STATE OF THE LAW	119
1. Some lines from the <u>Liber Pluscardensis</u> ; from <u>Lancelot of the Laik</u> ; and Archebald's tale in <u>The Thre Prestis of Peblis</u>	120

THE LOT OF THE COMMONS AND THE STATE OF THE LAW (ctd)

2. Henryson's <u>The Sheep and the Dog</u>	. . .	125
3. Henryson's <u>The Wolf and the Lamb</u>	. . .	134
4. Dunbar's legal satire	. . .	141
5. Lindsay's <u>Satyre</u>	. . .	144
6. Alexander Scott's <u>Ane New Yeir Gift to the Quene Mary; and The Lamentatioun of Lady Scotland</u>	. . .	156

CHAPTER FOUR

THE FUNCTIONS OF KINGSHIP	. . .	165
1. Barbour's <u>Bruce</u> ; Harry's <u>Wallace</u> ; <u>Golagros and Gawane</u> ; <u>Lancelot of the Laik.</u>	. . .	166
2. John's tale and Archebald's tale in <u>The Thre Prestis of Peblis.</u>	. . .	182
3. Henryson's <u>The Trial of the Fox and The Lion and the Mouse</u>	. . .	202
4. Dunbar's Court Poems	. . .	220
5. Douglas' <u>Eneados</u>	. . .	240
6. Lindsay's <u>Dreme, Complaynt and Testament</u>	. . .	245
7. Lindsay's <u>Satyre</u>	. . .	254
CONCLUSION	. . .	264
BIBLIOGRAPHY	. . .	280

A NOTE ON THE QUOTATIONS:

In general texts have been altered as little as possible. Alterations which have been made are in accordance with the following:

- i) z and β have been eliminated, as have contractions (like w^t).
- ii) capitals have been regularised.
- iii) g, i, j, u, v, w, y have been regularised not invariably but when it was clearly useful to do so.
- iv) very occasional clarification has been made in punctuation (mainly commas).
- v) very occasional clarification has been made in spelling (such as adding an '-e' to 'the' when the 2nd person pronoun is intended and when a slight confusion with the definite article is possible).

The texts used are those indicated in the booklist and footnotes.

PREFACE

The purpose of this thesis is to examine how Scottish poets, in the eighty or so years before the Scottish Reformation, described and interpreted the society in which they lived. Since much of the best poetry written in Scotland during this period was concerned with analysing social and political problems the area from which our texts will be chosen is a wide one. At an immediate level we may select at once from works of a definitely satirical nature, and from works which deal specifically with matters of social criticism. But a point of view which restricted itself to explicit satire on explicit social problems would not only exclude the fundamental issues which lay behind such satire but would also, thereby, distort our consideration of those particular problems.

For, while we in our age may talk about society entirely within its own terms, medieval writers diagnosed the ills of society only in relation to accepted religious bases. They believed that human (or secular) society was subject to divine intentions and so any prescription had to take account of these. For instance they viewed the functions and duties of a king not simply as 'administrative' problems in our sense of the word - a king's first duty was to God, so in order to be a good earthly king he had first to realise his proper relations with the heavenly king. From this point of view a tyrant would arrogate the powers of his position to his own selfish ends whereas a wise king would rule his people as in trust from God.

In other words, the writers under discussion regarded their society from a double point of view: the secular aspects of human society were viewed not only in their own terms but also in terms of a much wider moral and religious framework. Therefore the first chapter of this thesis must examine how the principal writers of our period expressed, in various literary forms, the basic moral and religious attitudes which conditioned their view of the world. Only then is it possible to examine in their proper context the many aspects of their specifically social or secular criticism. In this field it will be logical to deal first with ecclesiastical criticism (Chapter Two) because there are very obvious connections between the practical points raised here and the fundamental issues discussed in the first chapter. However, these fundamental attitudes conditioned not just ecclesiastical criticism but criticism of all aspects of society, so it is equally relevant to the subject-matter of the two concluding chapters - Chapter Three will deal with the lot of the poorer commons and the state of the law, and Chapter Four will deal with the functions of kingship. There are strong thematic links between Chapters Two and Three in that many writers saw oppression of the poor and corruption of the law as an aspect of the church's failure in its responsibilities. And there are equally strong links between Chapters Three and Four in that many writers saw a failure of justice as an aspect of the king's responsibility. The functions of kingship were also, of course, discussed at more than one level: not only from the point of view of

the practical performance of individual kings, but also from the point of view of the theological beliefs concerning the king's position as secular head of society and his primary responsibility to God.

Clearly, our immediate concern is with the content of the literature to be discussed, both when we outline the moral and religious framework and when we consider, in relation to that framework, the more specific details of social criticism. To that extent this study is a preliminary one: preliminary, that is, to a further study which would utilise this material in an examination, more specifically as literary criticism, of how our understanding of the way in which these writers interpreted their society can help us to discriminate more finely between their varied literary achievements. The starting-point of such discrimination would be, not the question 'How comprehensively do these writers analyse their society?' but the further question 'How do these writers use their analysis of society in the process of creating literary works to which we can still respond on several simultaneous levels from the literal to the metaphysical?' So, while this study may be largely occupied with the first question, the possibilities of the second question cannot be ignored, and wherever possible indications will be given of directions in which an attempt to answer the second question could be made.

CHAPTER ONE

THE MORAL AND RELIGIOUS FRAMEWORK

Today we can view human society on its own terms, as an entity in its own right, but a medieval writer would be more likely to view human society with reference to a double scale of values. This double scale can best be signified not by two parallel lines but by two concentric circles. The smaller inner circle represents purely secular society, the society of fallen fallible human beings. Within this context ills can be diagnosed and cures effected: this circle contains not only worldly evil but also worldly good. But the outer circle, which contains the inner one but is larger, represents spiritual values, the wisdom that surpasses human understanding, a more durable kind of order, justice and happiness than can be found on earth. The greatest perfection that can be realised within the smaller circle is still subject to the decays of time and the changeableness of Fortune: it is still a shadow of the perfection represented by the outer circle.

Clearly, then, any examination of the social criticism embodied in the literature of this period must see this criticism in its proper context, for while complaints on very particular scores were often made in very practical terms we cannot properly understand their motivation without reference to the wider ideals signified by the outer circle of the figure I suggested. This may be

obvious enough when we consider specific items of ecclesiastical satire, but it is worth stressing here that the beliefs conditioning purely ecclesiastical criticism also conditioned the total view of society in both its spiritual and its secular aspects. Criticism of a bishop for instance would be governed by the same fundamental assumptions which governed criticism of a king, a nobleman, a lawyer, a merchant or a commoner.

Therefore the first main part of this thesis must examine and illustrate a number of texts whose content is primarily the expression of these fundamental beliefs. In time, these texts are drawn from the whole range of the period. In quality, they include some of the most accomplished Scots verse ever written. In mood, they are sufficiently varied to discredit the view that the religious preoccupations of the age were largely morbid - if a corrective to this view is required we need point no further than the virtuosity and elation of Dunbar's 'Rorate celi despuer' and 'Done is a battell on the dragon blak'.

The texts chosen range from comparatively simple moralising verses to highly wrought narrative poems which operate on a number of levels of meaning simultaneously, from the literal to the metaphysical. They are: William's tale from The Thre Prestis of Peblis; two Henryson fables, The Trial of the Fox (in particular the Moralitas) and the whole of The Preaching of the Swallow; two of the prologues which Douglas added to his Vergil

translation (Eneados, Prologues X and XI) and extracts from The Palice of Honour; some of Dunbar's moral and religious poems and some of his poems about love; and finally part of Lindsay's Testament. From a literary point of view many of these texts are of a high quality in that they succeed in fulfilling their various intentions: the broad consensus we can see in their underlying beliefs does not for a moment obscure their individuality as separate literary entities.

1. William's tale from The Thre Prestis of Peblis.

Formally, The Thre Prestis of Peblis¹ is very symmetrical: three priests each tell one tale, and each tale has three distinct parts, the parts within the second tale being less closely knit, structurally, than the subdivisions of the first and third. However the three tales do not exist all on the same level: from the very beginning of William's tale, the third one, we are aware that this final part of the book is related to the first two parts in such a way as to make us see the earlier parts in a different light. What we are asked to do is to re-interpret the first two tales from a wider point of view. The first two deal with worldly matters, both worldly evil and worldly good, and thus belong to the area of life represented by the smaller of the two concentric circles

¹ ed. T.D. Robb (S.T.S., 1920). The text I quote from is the Charteris - as given by Robb.

in the figure I suggested at the beginning of the chapter. The third tale, however, postulates a wider context, containing but reaching much further than the worldly context of the first two, and thus refers to the area represented by the larger circle. It asks us, not to reverse any judgments we may have earlier accepted, but to subject these now to a more fundamental discrimination. The double scale of values, the simultaneous levels of interpretation, are maintained. For example, in the second tale we see Fictus, the pretended fool, accepting a bishopric as a worldly reward for worldly services and at the most literal level we recognise that a bishop, as an administrator, must to that extent accept the secular world on its own terms. The necessity, even the worldly virtue, of such acceptance is not denied by the implications raised in William's tale, but it is qualified. The relation between the last tale and the first two is therefore the key to the whole structure and purpose of the book, which we then see as a highly integrated work.

We are even given a hint of this structure in the opening pages, because in the descriptions of the three priests William is already marked off as being somewhat different from his two companions.

Both John (who tells the first tale, about the summoning of the three estates) and Archebald (who tells the second tale, about the advice given to the king by Fictus) are travelled men. John has been in 'monie uncouth land', in Portugal and Seville, in the five kingdoms of Spain, in

Rome, Flanders, Venice and 'uther lands sundrie up and doun' (ll.51-56). Archebald does not presume to such extensive knowledge of foreign parts but he has been to Rome. These two, then, have seen the world and their tales are of worldly matters. By contrast William (who tells the third and last tale) disclaims such knowledge :

To grit clargie I can not count nor clame,
Nor yit I am not travellit, as ar ye. (40-41)

He disclaims worldly knowledge: his tale is about spiritual matters. The difference in kind between this and the other tales is at once apparent.

A king thair is and ever mair will be,
Thairfoir the KING of kings him cal we. (1013-14)

The tales of both John and Archebald open with these words:

A king thair was sumtyme and eik a queene,
As monie in the land befoir had bene. (63-64 and
451-52)

i.e. just one king among many, whereas William's king is unique.

The faults of John's king become clear in the course of the first tale: both the nobles and the clergy seek him as responsible at least in part for their own alleged failings. The faults of Archebald's king are more exactly specified: he neglects justice, he pardons too readily and he is not as faithful to his queen as he is expected to be. In the first paragraph of the tale indeed his character is made plain:

... feil falts him befell:
Hee luifit ouer weil yong counsel;
Yong men he luifit to be him neist;
Yong men to him they war baith clark and preist.
Hee luifit nane was ald or ful of age,

Sa did he nane of sad counsel nor sage.
 To sport and play, quhyle up and quhylum doun, -
 To al lichtnes ay was he redie boun. (455-62)

But in William's tale we have not a fallible human king who is going to be criticised for his shortcomings, but God himself.

The narrative section of the tale is as follows¹.
 The king's officer summons a rich man to appear before the king and give an account of his affairs. The man is frightened.

Allace, how now, this is ane haisty fair!
 And I cum thair my tail it wil be taggit,
 For I am red that my count be our raggit. (1042-44)

The last word here almost certainly refers to the notching of a stick (to keep tally): he fears that his debt will be more than he can pay. He refers to himself as a 'cumbred man' (l.1046).

He turns to his friends, to prove them (l.1053). The first friend is one whom he loves more than himself: but this one refuses to help.

The devil of hell, he said, now mot me hing
 And I compeir befoir that crabit king;
 He is sa ful of justice, richt and resoun,
 I lufe him not in ocht that wil me chessoun. (1066-70)

This first friend thus exposes himself as wishing to have no truck with justice, right and reason. He further explains how everything he believes in is, in the king's view, worthless; how everything he delights in is, in the king's view, a mere fantasy and delusion. He is therefore

¹ Robb's discussion (pp. xxviii-xxxii) of the possible sources of this tale is worth attention.

of little use as an advocate for the rich man.

Agane him can I get na gude defence,
 Sa just he is and stark in his conscience;
 And al things in this warld that I call richt
 It is nocht worth ane eg into his sicht;
 And it that is my lyking and my eis
 To him alway will neither play nor pleis;
 And that to me is baith joy and gloir
 As fantasys judgit him befoir. (1075-82)

The second friend is one whom the man loves as much as himself. He offers to come as far as the king's gate, but is unwilling to risk going further.

I am ful red that I cum never agane.
 Quha sal me mend and of my bail me beit.
 To take the sower and for to leif the sweit?
 Quhat I have heir daylie in faith I feill,
 And thair quhat I sall have I wait not weil.
 Thairfoir this tale is trew into al tyde,
 Quhair ane fairis weil the langer sould he byde.
 (1120-26)

This second friend is also exposed as being worldly, but this is worldliness of a milder sort; he is self-regarding and has no intention of sacrificing the comfort and pleasure he knows he can have, even to help his friend.

The first two friends have been tested and found wanting. The man realises he has deluded himself:

Me to begyle quha hes mair craft and gin
 Than thay in quhome my traist ay maist is in? (1143-44)

Appearance and reality, again, are at odds. The man is now in a quandary: the friend he loved more than himself and the friend he loved as much as himself have both disappointed him, thus leaving the third friend, but this is the one he has loved less than himself.

For in him I have lytil trowth or traist
 Becaus to him I was sa oft unkynde. (1160-610)

But just as the first two friends do not respond as the man

expected, so the third friend surprises him. After a due reprimand -

To me thow had ful lytil clame or count (1190)
 - he promises to repay the man generously for what little kindness he had shown him. Indeed he will come with him all the way.

Thocht he the bind and cast the in a cart,
 To heid or hang, fra the I sal nocht part. (1221-22)

The first friend was exposed as the king's enemy: the third friend is now revealed as the king's trusted representative.

The king he lufis me ful weil, I wait,
 Bot ever allace to me thow come ouer lait.
 And thow my counsal wrocht had in al thing,
 Ful welcum had thou bene ay to that king.
 Betwixt us twa wit he of unkyndnes,
 Sone wil thou feil he wil the lufe the les;
 Wit he betwixt us twa be onie lufe,
 He wil be richt weil payit and the apprufe. (1199-1206)

The true value of the three friends is thus shown to be the opposite of what the man had allowed himself to believe.

The significations of these allegorical figures are clear enough in the course of the narrative but they are clarified further in the latter part of the tale. The king is God. The rich man is humanity,

baith thow and he
 And al that in the world is that mon die. (1261-62)

The officer is death. In the lines describing death we have more than a conventional memento mori, because here we have one of the central meanings of the whole tale. The rich man's hopes for his defence were proved false. The general truth thus illustrated is this:

Is na wisdome, riches na yit science,
 Aganis his officer may mak defence;
 Is neyther castell, torret nor yit tour
 May scar him anis the moment of ane hour;
 His straik it is sa sharpe it will not stint,
 Is nane in eird that may indure his dint. (1251-56)

The ultimate in human achievement, intellectual and physical, is not proof against death: and death's loyalty to his duties is totally unimpeachable. Unlike the king's officers in Archebald's tale this officer can never be bribed.

He is sa trew in his office and lele,
 Is na practik agane him to appele;
 Gold nor gude corne cattell nor yit ky
 This officer with bud may nocht ouerby. (1257-60)

The first friend, whom the man loves more than himself but who refuses to accompany him, is 'gude penny and pelfe'. The second, whom he loves as much as himself but who will come no further than the king's gate, is 'wyfe and barne and uther freinds'. The third, whom he has treated merely as a 'quarter freind' but who surprises him by offering to come all the way and plead for him, is 'almous deid and cheritie'. There is an allusion to hell-fire:

For as thow seis watter dois slokkin fyre,
 Sa do I, almos deid, the judges ire. (1319-20)

Skeat (Proverbs, p.2) cites two earlier occurrences of the saying:

Al swa thet water acwencheth thet fur, swa
 tha elmesse acwencheth tha sunne.

and

Almes fordoth alle wykkednes
 And quenchyth synne and makyth hyt les.¹

¹ The first is from Old English Homilies, ed. R. Morris (E.E.T.S., 1867) Series I, pp.37, 39; the second is from Handlyng Synne (l. 7079).

These significations apply not solely to William's narrative but by implication they refer to the entire set of tales. In general terms John's tale is about greed, about excessive devotion to the values represented by the first friend. The merchants are corrupted by pursuing wealth; justice is corrupted by desire for gain; bishops are appointed not for their learning but for worldly ends. Similarly, Archebald's tales are about the values represented by the second friend - relationships between people - exploited instead of protected; murder is unchecked; temporary 'licht' relationships are preferred before permanent ones.

But more particular connections can be seen. In John's tale the king's welcome to the merchants is on a par with the man's attitude to his first friend: he calls them 'my beild and blis', 'the caus of my lyfe and my cheir', and when their ventures succeed 'in riches, gudes and weilfair I abound'. The tale of the merchant's son demonstrates the falseness of this friend. The corrupting power of wealth (sought for its own sake) was already apparent in the merchant and his wife before their son squandered the inheritance. The second friend represents relationships between people, particularly those in a close relationship, and a corrupt form of this is demonstrated in the king's question to his lords and their reply. The king admits he is in 'sturt' when his lords are in 'stryfe', when they upset the proper interdependence of different members of society, and he wonders

why they are no longer

Sa full of fredome worship and honour,
Hardie in hart to stand in everie stour. (119-20)

In their reply the lords accuse the king's justice - it is corrupted by pride, greed, extortion, deceit. In other words the legal system which ought to regulate society harmoniously is perpetuating discord. There is another example of false relationship, an 'unworthy' marriage arranged for financial gain:

They sel thair sonnes and aires for gold and gude
Unto ane mokrand carle, for derest pryse,
That wist never yit of honour nor gentryse. (308-10)

The connection between the third friend and the clergy is obvious. The king recognises their importance but complains that they 'warie', they have deteriorated and lost virtue. In their turn they accuse the king of perverting the clerical office: this is the opposite of 'almous deid' -

For now on dayes is nouthar riche nor pure
Sal get ane kirk al throw his literature;
For science, for vertew or for blude
Gets nane the kirk, bot baith for gold and gude. (417-20)

A similar set of connections can be seen between William's tale and Arcebald's. The wounded man is a victim of excessive greed and extortion: the king's servants are so intent on gain that they are like flies on the wound, they go about their extortions so energetically that 'they pluck the pair as they war powand hadder'. In the tale of the murderer who bribes the courtier to obtain pardons we see another example of corrupted social relationships: we see ineffective justice leading to

further crime. The king's initial reaction to the culprit is, admittedly, one of kindness:

To slay that man he thocht ane greit pitie,
 but in its context this is meant to be seen as an instance of the wrong kind of 'almous deid'. Thirdly, the man's failure to recognise the true value of his third and best friend and his discovery that the friend he valued least is his truest one is paralleled by the king's indifference to his wife and his discovery that he has spent three nights with her when he imagines he has been with the innkeeper's daughter.

The tales told by John and Archibald are worldly in a particular sense: all the characters in them are worldly, they are all fallible, they are all to an extent corrupted by their devotion to worldly ends. This is true of the merchants in an obvious sense. The lords disrupt the order of society with their strife. Worldly bishops misuse their office. False justices pervert the law for personal gain so that the poor are exploited and murderers can buy themselves off. There is degeneration, for the world is subject to Fortune: merchants' sons do not have the thrift and industry that made their fathers rich, the lords no longer have the truly noble qualities which characterised their forebears, churchmen have lost the power of physical and spiritual healing.

At the head of this worldly society is the king. It is his office to rule and direct but he is as worldly as his subjects. He rejoices in his merchants' money-making.

He allows bribery and extortion to corrupt his legal system. He utilises church appointments for his own ends. He is so light-hearted that when a wise man wishes to gain esteem he has to adopt the guise of a fool. He tolerates the oppression of his poor subjects. He is moody (like Fortune he is fickle), he neglects his proper advisers in favour of 'yong counsel', he is easily deceived. The characterisation of such a king in a poem written in the 1480s has undeniable affinities with the popular estimate of James III,

yet while it is clear that the poet intends his allusions to be recognised, it is equally clear, as we consider William's tale, that the poet is not just mirroring contemporary conditions. These are mirrored, they are criticised, but they are also set within a wider context. This can be illustrated in relation to the character of Fictus. At first sight he might be taken as a criterion against which to judge worldly society. He adopts the manner of a fool in order to be accepted by that world and gradually reveals his wisdom by giving some sound advice. His advice, however, is also worldly. His advice to the king in Archebald's first tale shows the wisdom of expediency - leave the flies alone, he says, and their bad effects will be softened. He accepts the existence of bribery and extortion and does not suggest a way of abolishing it. Again, look at the rewards he is offered in Archebald's third tale:

Thow sal have gude, gold, lordships and land,
 Or cast fra the thy cote and be thow wyse,
 Ane bishoprik sal be thy benefyse. (946-48)

These are seen as worldly rewards for worldly services, and the bishopric is offered as having the same kind of value as the material prizes. He accepts the bishopric on the terms offered

And quhen this syde gown on him nicht be
 Ane cunning clark and wyse than semit he. (995-96)

'Cunning' here means learned or skilful and can be read without pejorative associations (the earliest pejorative use of the word given in N.E.D. is dated 1590). But notice the implications of 'semit'. Fictus is wise only within his worldly context - he is a criterion but only a worldly one and the ultimate criterion is the third friend in William's tale:

Thairfoir, gud folkes, be exempil we se
 That thair is nane thus of thy freinds thre,
 To ony man that may do gude bot ane,
 Almos deid ... (1321-24)

In the tellers of the tales themselves, in the three priests, there is a hint of worldliness. In the preface we are told that for their collation they retire to a 'privy place' (1.4), that they 'luifit not na rangald nor repair' (1.6), i.e. they avoid the milling crowds. From company they keep themselves 'coy' (1.16).

Thay lufit nocht with ladry nor with lown
 Nor with trumpours to travel throw the town,
 Bot with themself quhat they wald tel or crak,
 Umquhyle sadlie, umquhyle jangle and jak. (17-20)

So their apparent withdrawal from the noisy worldly crowd is not after all a sign of sobriety or abstention: they withdraw simply for the greater enjoyment of their own

worldly pleasures. They sit 'richt soft and unfutesair'
(1.5).

... they sat ful easilie and soft,
With monie lowd lauchter upon loft.
And wit ye weil thir thrie thay maid gude cheir -
To them thair was na dainteis than too deir -
With thrie fed capons on a speit with creische
With monie uther sindrie dyvers meis (9-14)

They 'wantis nocht' (1.33).

On two occasions (11.38, 450) Archebald declares that the telling of tales will help to keep his foot 'out of this felloun fyre'. Literally this means they will prevent him from dosing off and getting his toes scorched at the fire-side. But sleep is another hint of worldliness, signifying the sleep of the soul in earthly pleasures. It will be recalled how the lion in The Lion and the Mouse lies sleeping in a fair forest and how this is clearly meant to signify his absorption in worldly concerns. The 'felloun fyre' suggests hell-fire. Hence the moral purpose of the tales. Hence too the final couplet is more than just a tag:

And than speiks the tother twa ful tyte,
'This gude tale, sir, I trow God will you quyte'.
(1343-44)

Hence, in its scale, in its representation and interpretation of contemporary society, in its development of this interpretation at several levels of significance, and in the highly wrought and integrated structure it evolves to present this multiple view, The Thre Prestis of Peblis must be counted among the highest literary achievements of the period, and by no means far short of the kind of achievement we have been more ready to accord to Henryson himself.

2. Henryson's The Trial of the Fox and The Preaching of the Swallow.

In Henryson's fables¹ we find this same twofold frame of reference - a view of society both in human terms and sub specie aeternitatis - expressed through narrative

1 I use the Bannatyne MS of the fables - see W.T. Ritchie, ed., The Bannatyne Manuscript (S.T.S., 4 Vols., 1928-34). (Hereafter referred to as Bannatyne). Since this is slightly earlier than the other versions which have survived and has been subject to less tampering by protestant scribes it has much in its favour. For material not in Bannatyne, or for illustrating versions that differ, I use H. Harvey Wood's edition, The Poems and Fables of Robert Henryson (Edinburgh, 1933). Useful notes of textual differences can be found in D. Laing, ed., The Poems and Fables of Robert Henryson (London, 1865) (hereafter referred to as Laing) and G. Gregory Smith, ed., The Poems of Robert Henryson (S.T.S., 1906-14) (hereafter referred to as Gregory-Smith). The notes given by C. Elliott in his Robert Henryson, Poems (Oxford, 1963) (hereafter referred to as Elliott) are scantier and too infrequently is any reason given for accepting one reading rather than another. See John MacQueen, Robert Henryson, A Study of the Major Narrative Poems (Oxford, 1967), pp.189-99 (hereafter referred to as MacQueen, Henryson). Henryson's use of his sources has been thoroughly treated by I.A.W. Jamieson, The Poetry of Robert Henryson: a Study of the Uses of Source Material (unpublished Ph.D. thesis in the library of the University of Edinburgh, 1965) (hereafter referred to as Jamieson). Much of this will be available in due course but in the meantime see the following three articles by I.A.W. Jamieson: 'Henryson's Fabillis: an Essay towards a Revaluation', Words, Waite-Ata Studies in English (Wellington, N.Z.), II (1966), 20-31; 'A further Source for Henryson's "Fabillis"', Notes and Queries (November, 1967), 403-5; 'Henryson's Tail of the Wolf and the Wedder', Studies in Scottish Literature, VI (1969), 248-57. On the same topic see MacQueen, Henryson, pp.94-100 and appendixes. Finally, four other relevant articles are: D.K. Crowne, 'A Date for the Composition of Henryson's Fables', Journal of English and Germanic Philology (1962), pp. 583-90; D. Fox, 'Henryson's Fables', ELH (1962) pp. 337-56; D. Macdonald, 'Narrative Art in Henryson's Fables', Studies in Scottish Literature, III (1965), pp. 101-13; and H.E. Toliver, 'Robert Henryson: From Moralitas to Irony', English Studies, XLVI (1965), 300-9.

designed to operate simultaneously as beast-stories in their own right, as analogies for contemporary human society, and as interpretations of that society. Moreover, however successful each individual fable may be, in literary terms, it has a further significance, both as a literary creation and as an interpretation of society, when read as part of the group. We have no means of knowing whether the surviving group is as complete as Henryson intended it to be, and there is always the possibility that some fables have not survived, but it is clear enough from the group we do have that not only was Henryson able to fulfil his intentions within the scope of individual fables but also he could relate the fables to each other in such a way as to build up an integrated and comprehensive description and analysis of his world. In all, five of the fables will be discussed in this thesis - The Trial of the Fox, The Preaching of the Swallow, The Sheep and the Dog, The Wolf and the Lamb and The Lion and the Mouse - and it will be shown how even within this group Henryson's recreation of his society (in terms of beast fable) carries the most wide-ranging implications (in terms of theological interpretation).

For the purposes of this chapter the most suitable fables to examine are The Trial of the Fox and The Preaching of the Swallow, the former on account of its Moralitas, and the latter because the universal significance it postulates is applicable to all the fables.

The relation between Moralitas and story is never simple and it varies from fable to fable. Some comment on the Moralitas of The Trial of the Fox is relevant here because it asks us in a very clear way to add another level of interpretation to the story. That story does, after all, leave a question apparently unanswered.

The lion (the king) summons his subjects to appear before him under pain of death: the mare fails to obey the summons. The fox and the wolf are despatched to her and the main concern of the narrative thereafter is the trial and punishment of the fox for having killed a lamb while on this mission, i.e. for having broken the king's peace. But why is the mare not punished for having failed to obey the king's summons? What does the mare stand for?

The significance given to the animals in the Moralitas may seem at first to introduce difficulties. We are told that the lion is the world, or worldly power, and that the mare, by contrast, represents 'men of contemplatioun' who are abstracted 'fra this worldis

wretchidness'.¹

If the lion stands for justice, as may be suggested in the fable, then the mare, by refusing to attend, could be seen as obstructing the course of justice. Yet if, as

¹ It is essential to read the Bannatyne Text here because it is freer of Protestant emendations than the text which Wood offers. Bannatyne, ll. 302-8, reads:

This mere is men of contemplioun
 Off pennance walkand in this wildernace
 As monkis and othir men of religioun
 That presis God to pleiss in every place
 Abstrackit fra this warldis wretchidnes
 In wilful povertie fra pomp and all pryde
 And fra this world in mynd ar mortifyde.

whereas the version in Wood, ll. IIII-17, reads:

The meir is men of gude condition,
 As pilgrymes walkand in this wildernes,
 Approvand that for richt religioun
 Thair God onlie to pleis in everilk place;
 Abstractit from this warldis wretchidnes,
 Fechtand with lust, presumptioun, and pryde,
 And fra this world in mynd ar mortyfyde.

The revisions are consistent. In Bannatyne, ll. 325-6 we have vain thoughts

That daylie sagis men of religioun
 Cryand to thame Cum to the world agane

whereas in Wood, ll. II34-35 they are

Assaultand men with sweit perswasionis,
 Ay reddy for to trap them in ane trayne;

Agg in compare Bannatyne, ll. 330-32:

O lord eternall medeator for us mast meke
 Sitt doun before thy fader celestially
 For us synnaris his celsitude beseke ...

Even in the Bannatyne MS itself in l. 330 the words 'lord eternall medeator for us mast' have been interlined to replace the deleted words 'mary myld medeator of mercy', and in l. 331 'fader' has replaced 'sone'.

the Moralitas states, the lion stands for worldly power, then the mare, the man of religion, is right to stand aside and assert the existence of a higher power and a more durable kind of justice: and it is right that the mare, the true clerk, should kick the wolf, the false clerk.

Jamieson's comment on this Moralitas is worth quoting: it causes us, he writes, 'to look at the poem in a completely new way, at least as far as the King and the mare are concerned - the Fox is condemned whatever way we look at the poem. The poet has shown us our own predicament: we too esteem the world as important and consider those who oppose it wrong; the shock of the unexpected interpretation is perhaps an important part of the poem' (pp.232-33). He quotes the version of the fable given by Odo of Cheriton, 'De asino nolente venire ad Parliamentum Leonis' (in which the ass takes the part of the mare in our narrative). Odo's moral is the expected or ordinary interpretation which Henryson has to a certain extent reversed:

Mistice. Per Leonem moraliter intelligo reacionem que de omnibus que fecerat homo disponit, per Lupum fortitudinem, per Vulpem prudenciam, per Asinem carnem pondorosum (sic) et delicias appatentem, que racioni contempnit obedire at prudenciam nimis appropinquantem execat et confundit.

Yet Henryson's Moralitas ought not to come completely as a surprise - some such interpretation has already been

1 ed. Leopold Hervieux, Les Fabulistes Latins depuis le siècle d'Auguste jusqu'à la fin du moyen âge: Eudes de Cheriton et Ses Derives (Paris, 1896), pp.365-66.

hinted at in the course of the actual tale. We see how imperious and self-willed the lion is, and how the animals, in their multitude, submit to him fearfully. We can take it for granted that Henryson will not leave such worldly pride unqualified. The lion may indeed be king but in his nature he is not far removed from the fox in The Fox, the Wolf and the Cadger - just as the fox deceived the wolf into a false sense of security.

Richt swa this warld with vane glore for ane quhyle
Flatteris with folk, as they suld failye never,
Yit suddanlie men seis it oft dissever.

(Wood, 2221-23)

Henryson implies repeatedly that reliance on purely worldly values is the great temptation of fallen humanity.

This impression of the lion's character is strengthened when we notice how the influence of Fortune is suggested, for example in his reference to his ability to raise and lower the status of his subjects at will (ll. 143-47). The idea that the lion's parliament exists within a secular context is established by the setting, in which we see the natural order following its course (ll. 71-77). In The Lion and the Mouse such a setting is given a clear signification:

The fair forrest with levis loun and le
With fowlis song and flouris ferly sweit
Is bot the world and his propertie
As fals plesandis myngit with cair repleit
Rycht as the rose with frost and wintir weit
Faidis so dois the world and thame dissavis
Quhilk in thair lust confidens havis (260-66)

A similar interpretation can be seen in The Fox, the Wolf

and the Husbandman (Wood, ll. 2441-45).¹ The very nature of the beasts who assemble should warn us not to accept the lion's justice entirely at face value. Their mixed species, their fear, their vast numbers all contrast sharply with the solitary independence of the mare.

As in the Fables generally, Henryson is dealing with matters wider and more fundamental than simply contemporary events. Yet contemporary circumstances are included. With regard to this fable, for instance, we can refer to the strained relations between crown and church. It will be recalled that the good intentions behind the attempts to prevent trading in Scottish benefices in Rome were somewhat annulled by the increasing practice of securing appointments which would be convenient to the king. From the church's point of view this meant the growth of a body of prelates whose main interests were secular and political. Thus, in the fable, the fox represents the temptation, to a clergyman, to take part in worldly struggles for power. And the mare, by remaining aloof from the secular court, is asserting her other allegiance.

The Trial of the Fox is an important fable. It is central to any consideration of what Henryson is saying about politics and society because it stipulates an ideal.

¹ Cf Dante's 'selva oscura' at the beginning of the *Inferno*:

Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita
mi ritrovai per una selva oscura,
che la diritta via era smarrita.

In pictorial art, too, trees could indicate a worldly context: see for instance the left-hand leaf of the Wilton diptych (in the National Gallery).

Within a worldly context the king's power is acknowledged by the whole of society: in return for this allegiance the king rules with justice and mercy. Those who pervert the king's justice are tried and punished decisively. At the same time, those who wield power of a secular nature must remember that such power is transitory and that there is another more enduring power, represented (again ideally) by the church, which ought to be acknowledged on its own terms. The implications of such a lesson in the 1480s could hardly have been missed.

No matter how much Henryson believed in such an ideal he would be bound to recognise that, as a secular ideal, it would have to be seen in relation to the extra dimension represented by religion. Within the recognised limits of fallible human nature a better society can be made and ought to be fought for: yet those limits cannot be forgotten. If they are, then human greed and pride bring suffering and chaos.

In The Lion and the Mouse it is similarly made clear that the king's subjects are beasts -

O lamit lyoun liggand heir so law
 Quhair is the mycht of thy magnificens
 Off quhome all brutall beist in erd stud aw (211-13)

Thus the mice, 'repleit' with great abundance of food are

engrossed in their dancing, their worldly pleasure. Their sin is uncorrected. The lion is in need of correction. And the advice to the king to mitigate justice with mercy is also directed to the lords. Anyone, no matter what his renown,

Rolland in worldly lust and vane plesandis
 May be ourthrowin distroyit or put down
 Throw fals fortoun quhilk of all varians
 Is hail maistres and leder of the dans (281-84)

No-one is exempt. The narrator is himself asleep in the forest. Thus again we see implications of the fable being widened to indicate a universal significance.

This significance is set out in The Preaching of the Swallow. The fable carries a wealth of scriptural, philosophical and literary allusion¹ but is in no manner weighed down by it: the material is skilfully organised and the verse taut. There are three closely related sections: an introduction (ll. 1-91), the fable proper (ll. 92-266) and the Moralitas (ll. 267-329).

The introduction discussed the problem of how mere humans can understand anything of God:

The he prudence and wirking mervellus
 The profound wit of God omnipotent
 Is so perfyt and so ingenious
 Excelland fer all manis argument
 For quhy till him all thing is present
 Rycht as it is or ony tyme salbe
 Befoir the sicht of his devinite. (1-7)

In contrast Henryson stresses (in Platonic terms) the limitations of human understanding:

Oure mirk and deidly corsse materiale
 Blindis the spirituell operatioun
 Lyke as man war bundin in presoun. (12-14)

¹ See MacQueen, Henryson, pp. 153-65.

The idea is further emphasised by recalling Aristotle's comparison between man's soul and a bat's eye - the latter is so weak that it can see only when the sun has set.

So is oure saule with phantasye opprest
To know the thingis in nature manifest. (20-21)

It seems then that the limits of human comprehension are indeed narrow.

Non suld presume be reasoun naturale
To serche the secretis of the trinetie
Bot trow fermlie and lat dirk ressounis be. (26-28)

'Yit nevirtheles' - there is a mode of understanding open to us: we can apprehend certain aspects of God's existence 'be his creatouris'. By studying his works we can see how 'God in all his warkis wittie is'. Thus God's wisdom can be deduced from the way in which the universe has been ordered. The description of the seasons can then be seen as highly functional to the main theme of the fable. First, they are an example of the orderliness of nature as created by God. Secondly, the cycle of the seasons is related directly to the sequence of events in the narrative section: there we move from spring through summer and harvest to winter. The foolish birds are enslaved to their natural habitat, to the recurring cycle of natural life. A strong hint of this is given in the description of winter -

All wyild beistis than fra the bentis bair
Drawis for dreid unto their dennis deip
Couchand for cauld in cowis thame to kep. (82-84)

The wild animals are overcome by dread, by a wholly natural fear. In the story, it is in winter, when nature is least alluring and when the birds are oppressed by the season -

they 'hyit on in houssis thame to hyde' (l.217) - it is then that they succumb to the fowler's trickery. They are fatally deluded at the moment of their greatest thralldom to natural forces.

With the description of spring the narrative is unobtrusively introduced ('that samin seasoun ... I passit furth') and the references to the soil (ll. 96-98) and to sowers (ll. 102-3) are pointed. The soil (the fertile human soul) is

richt seasonable
Sappie and to ressave all seidis hable,

i.e. both wheat and tares. The sower is casting his seed 'fast fra place to place'.

The narrator is present throughout the narrative: he reports what he has seen and by this device Henryson is able to strengthen the Moralitas by making it appear as a comment on personal observation. Having recounted what he has observed, the narrator turns to the reader(s) with the words 'Lo worthie folk' (l. 267). But the narrator is also a human point of reference, human in that he half belongs to the world of nature and feels beguiled by its beauties:

... I baid under a bank full bene
In hert gritlie rejosit of that sicht. (106-7)

Several points about the foolish birds are worth emphasising. Like the beasts gathered in the assembly in The Trial of the Fox, they are very numerous: 'rycht marvelous a mekle multitude'. The lark's first response to the swallow's warning is to laugh: we are meant to feel this heedlessness and scorn as ominous. When the swallow

repeats her warning in the summer-time the language is stronger. She addresses the birds as 'blind' and 'full of negligence'. This blindness is of the kind we read about in the introduction, the kind in which our 'spirituall operatioun' is darkened by 'oure mirk and deidlye corss materiale'. The birds themselves confirm their spiritual blindness by refusing to believe the swallow, by insisting that their main desire is to eat and sing:

We think quhen that yone lint bowis are rype
 To mak us feyst and fill us of the seid
 Maugre yone churll and on it sing and pype. (183-85)

The net that finally traps them is made from this very substance from which they hope to derive their natural pleasures. When winter comes and tempts the birds with chaff, the swallow's final warning, with its three-fold 'grite fule', is urgent:

Grite fule is he that puttis in danger
 His lyfe his honor for a thing of nocht,
 Grite fule is he that will nocht glaidlie heir
 Counsale in tyme quhill it availl him mocht,
 Grite fule is he that na thing hes in thocht
 Bot thing present and eftir quhat may fall
 Nor off the end hes na memoriall. (239-45)

But the foolish birds remain 'indurate'.

The swallow, by contrast, is solitary. She is on a different level: we first see her sitting high on the hawthorn tree delivering her first warning; when the other birds settle on the ground to eat the fowler's chaff she stands aside, on a branch; and when they reject her final plea she flies up into a tree. She is never in danger of being trapped herself. On the other hand her advice is not presented as that of a lone voice crying in the

wilderness: tradition and learning are invoked.

For clerkis sayis it is nocht sufficient
 To consider that is befoir thine ee
 Bot prudence is ane inward argument
 That garris a man provyde befoir and see
 Quhat guid quhat evill is likly for to be. (134-38)

The narrator himself shows his approval by describing the swallow's advice as 'hir hailsum document'.

We do not need to wait for the Moralitas to tell us that the fowler is the devil, because very definite indications are given in the course of the narrative. He is 'rycht cawtelous and full of subteltie' and the swallow prays that God and 'the hellie rude' may keep her from him. He sets his trap 'with diligence' and 'full priveleie'. In the Moralitas (which confirms the fowler as the devil) we are told that he

nevir weryis to ga
 Sawand poysoun and monye wickit thoct
 In mannis saule quhilk Christ full deir hes bocht.
 (278-80)

Thus the reference to soil and sowing in the introduction is now taken up and utilised for the spiritual interpretation of the story. When the soul 'giffis consent in delectatioun' then the wicked thought begins to flourish in deadly sin and 'reason is blindit with affectioun'. Thus blinded the birds cannot distinguish between appearance and reality. The chaff with which the fowler tempts them represents the worldly (empty) enticement of worldly pleasure.

The feind plettis his nettis stark and rude
 And under pleasaunce priveleie dois hyde
 Syne on the feild he sawis calf full wyde
 Quhilk is bot tome and verrye vanitie
 Of fleschlye lust and vaine prosperitie. (290-94)

The idea of blindness is further stressed by comparing the chaff ('tome without substance') to

... the mow befoir the face of wind
Wiskis away and makis wretchis blind. (299-300)

Lines 316-19 sum up the moral:

Thir hide nettis for to persave and see
This soryeaffe wyislie to understand
Best is be war in maist prosperitie
For in this world thair is no thing lestand.

The Preaching of the Swallow is central to the entire group of fables. Its use of seed imagery links it directly to the prologue. There, several images are presented to demonstrate the connections between story and sentence. For example, the 'morall sweit sentence' springs out of the 'scitell dyt of poetre' as seeds quicken and grow in the soil. Allied to this we have the idea that the doctrine lies within the fable as the 'sweit and delectable' kernel lies within the 'hard and tuich' nutshell.¹ Yet in literary terms this reference to a 'hard and tuich' exterior can hardly be taken in a literal sense - The Preaching of the Swallow presents us not with an abstract programme but, at the immediate level, with a detailed and lively narrative whose events and images (the seasons, growth, soil, birds, etc) enact on their own fully realised terms the interpretation which Henryson wants to reveal. We apprehend this interpretation because, primarily, we react to the concrete particularity of the story as he recounts it.

¹ See D.W. Robertson, Jr., A Preface to Chaucer (Princeton, 1962), pp. 32-33, 57-58 (hereafter referred to as Robertson, Preface); The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, ed. F.N. Robinson (Oxford, 2nd ed., 1957), p.69, ll. 701-2, and p.205, l.3443 (hereafter referred to as Chaucer, ed. Robinson); also Jamieson, pp. 30-38, and J. Bastin, Récueil general des Isopets (Société des Anciens Textes Français, Paris, 1930), II, 7 (hereafter referred to as Bastin).

3. Douglas - Eneados, Prologues X and XI, and The Palice of Honour.

Any discussion of this period's highest literary achievements, moving from The Thre Prestis of Peblis on to Henryson's fables and beyond, must encompass Douglas' Palice of Honour, and moreover the religious bases of that work are highly relevant to this chapter. As a prelude to a consideration of The Palice of Honour however it is worth making some reference to two of the prologues which Douglas added to his Scots version of the Aeneid - Prologue X (also included in the Bannatyne MS 'ballatis of Theologie') and Prologue XI. The prologues as a whole, running to over 2,400 lines, are a substantial body of verse: the popularity of, say, the description of winter in Prologue VII must not be allowed to hide the merits of less well-known items. Prologues X and XI are not outstanding compositions but they take their place in the over-all scheme of the work and they allow Douglas to state his religious position directly. This position is orthodox, and much of the substance of these two prologues is commonplace and conventional - yet this would not diminish the importance to Douglas of the tenets expressed, and from our point of view we find here direct statements of beliefs which, in The Palice of Honour, are subsumed in a literary creation of a much higher order.

Prologue X opens with an assertion of God's creative power, his incomprehensibility to mankind and his providential ordering of mankind:

He plasmator of thyngis universall,
 Thou renewar of kynd that creat all,
 Incomprehensibill thy warkis ar to consave,
 Quhilk grantit hess to every wight to have
 Quhat thing mast ganys onto hys governall. (1-5)¹

The trinity is described by way of two analogies, both of which are conventional: Father, Son and Holy Ghost are related like the three aspects of a man's mind (intelligence, reason, memory) or like the three aspects of fire (flame, light, heat). Douglas hastens to stress the inadequacy of human analogies:

Thocht, God by hys awin creaturis to preif,
 War mair onlikness than liknes to discern. (84-85)

It would not say much for God if he could be comprehended by a mere human:

For mycht thou comprehend be thyne engyne
 The maist excellent majeste dyvyne,
 He mycht be reput a pretty God and meyn. (88-90)

The Christian content of pagan writers had been a subject of debate since the times of the Early Fathers: and naturally this gained a fresh interest as writers like Douglas looked anew at the classical heritage. He felt it necessary to devote Prologue VI to this subject: e.g. to repudiate the supernatural elements of Aeneas' descent to the underworld (ll. 17-24), to recapitulate the alleged Christian content in Vergil (ll. 41-48), to list the theological 'imperfections' of Vergil (ll. 129-36) and to re-interpret the Sybill as an analogy of the Virgin Mary (ll. 145-49). Here in Prologue X, he feels he must again repudiate Vergil's paganism. He declares to God:

¹ The edition I use is that of D.F.C. Coldwell, Virgil's Aeneid, translated into Scottish Verse by Gavin Douglas, in 4 vols (S.T.S., 1957-64). In a note (Vol. I, p.234) Coldwell cites a number of contemporary examples which illustrate how conventional Douglas' theology here is.

From the begynnyng and end be of my mus^e:
 All other Jove and Phebus I refuss.
 Lat Virgill hald hys mawmentis to him self;
 I wirschip nowder ydoll, stok nor elf,
 Thocht furth I write so as nyne autour dois ...
 (151-55)

I compt not of thir paygane goddis a fudder,
 Quhais power may nocht help a haltand hen. (159-60)

The prologue ends with a description of the heavenly court:
 this is the perfect unattainable pattern for earthly courts,
 which are but corrupt reflections.

Thow haldis court our cristall hevynnys cleir,
 With angellis, sanctis and hevynly spretis seir,
 That, but cessyng, thy glor and lovyng syngis ...
 (166-68)

Concord for ever, myrth, rest and endless blyss,
 Na feir of hell, nor dreid of ded, thar is
 In thy sweit realm, nor na kynd of ennoy,
 Bot all wilfair, eyss and everlastand joy;
 Quhais hie plesance, Lord, lat us never myss!
 (171-75)

Prologue XI is an exhortation to Christian endeavour.

Four points are worth citing. First, Douglas again
 stresses the utter weakness of man in face of God:

For warldly strenth is febill and impotent
 In Goddis sicht, and insufficient. (27-28)

But it is the Christian's duty to use bravely what strength
 he has: the idea of the faithful Christian as a knight is
 commonplace.

Gyf Crystis faithfull knyghtis lyst us be,
 So as we aucht, and promyst hess at font,
 Than mon we byd baldly, and never fle,
 Nowder be abasyt, tepyt nor yit blunt,
 Nor as cowartis to eschew the first dunt. (57-61)¹

The wiles of the old enemy are thousand-fold and he deludes
 us into mistaking appearance for reality.

¹ Again see Coldwell's relevant note (Vol. I, p.242): he
 cites The Book of the Ordre of Chyvalry as a source for
 further instances of this idea.

He kendillis oft thy flesch in byrnand heit,
 He causys wrachit plesans seym full sweit,
 And, for nocht, of this fals warld makis the fane.
 (94-96)

But the Christian cannot rely entirely on his own efforts. Douglas introduces the related doctrines of grace and of merit. Grace has a cumulative power:

for quhen thou art in grace,
 Thou may eik grace to grace, ay mor and mor;
 Bot quhen thou fallys be syn tharfra, allace,
 Of thy meryt thou gettis hyr nevirmor;
 Yit quhen thou dewly disponys the tharfor,
 Doand all that in the thar may be done,
 Of hys gudnes and stern Lord allsone
 Restorys the meryt, with grace in arlys of glor.¹
 (153-60)

Then towards the close of the exhortation, 'prynce' Aeneas himself is adduced as an example - if his great deeds were undertaken for the sake of an earthly kingdom, by how much more should we strive for a heavenly one (ll. 177-84)?

While such beliefs may underpin the conceptual content of The Palice of Honour², that work of course attempts much more than the direct expression of general attitudes. It is an ambitious work in that its subject is large and its means are elaborate. It is more highly organised than many critics have wished to admit: C.S. Lewis for instance postulated a greater distinction between 'fantasy' and 'allegorical justification' than can in fact be upheld.³

1 The allegorical shipwreck in The Palice of Honour is interpreted in terms of faithless people who have sacrificed their chance of grace (ll. 1384-86).

2 The Shorter Poems of Gavin Douglas, ed. P.J. Bawcutt (S.T.S., 1967), pp. 1-133; for date and attribution, both of which are determined with reasonable certainty, see pp. xxvii-xxviii.

3 C.S. Lewis, The Allegory of Love (Oxford, 1963 ed.), p. 290 (hereafter referred to as Lewis, Allegory).

The detail with which Douglas describes the approach to the palace is in pointed contrast to the minimal information he is able to give us about the final revelation. He attains to little more than a key-hole view of Honour and even this is too resplendent for his weak human powers:

Enthronit sat ane God Omnipotent,
 On quhais glorious visage as I blent,
 In extasie be his brichtnes atanis
 He smote me doun and brissit all my banis.
 Thair lay I still in swoun with colour blaucht,
 Quhill at the last my Nimphe up hes me caught.

(1921-26)

The power of human art and understanding can lead us to the verge of revelation: but no further. The approach to the palace passes through the areas which can be comprehended by human art and understanding. The first two parts of the book therefore deal with the usual means of achieving honour - through wisdom (Minerva), love (Venus) and art and learning (the Muses). In relation to each of these the narrator's behaviour and attitude are important.

When the Court of Sapience passes, the narrator hides 'richt privelie' and looks out, like a spy; twice he reminds us that he remained alone in the tree while the principal part of the procession moved near him. And at the end of this section he creeps back into his miserable hiding-place:

And I agane, maist like ane elriche grume,
 Crap in the muskane aikin stok misharrit. (299-300)

(i.e. into a misshapen and rotten oak stump.) The reference to 'elriche grume', with its suggestion of unreality, further distances the narrator from the events he has

witnessed: he has seen Queen Sapience as splendid and active, whereas he hovers passively in the background. He cannot even learn about the procession directly - he waits till two 'catives' appear at the tail-end and it is from them that he learns the nature of what he has seen. He has to learn about wisdom from those who represent the corruption of wisdom: as Achitophel confesses,

Our wit aboundit and usit wes lewdlie.
My widsome ay fulfillit my desire ... (275-76)

So not only does the narrator hide from the Queen of Sapience but he discovers her identity in a devious manner. He is doubly removed. The comic aspects of the self-mockery in this passage are therefore functional to the development of the over-all themes.

This apparent inaccessibility of wisdom has a parallel in the third part, where the narrator undergoes the difficult approach towards the final revelation of Honour. This includes the traverse of an inferno-like area, from which they view the shipwreck of the faithless (ll. 1315-95). Throughout the approach he is fearful. From the start his guide adopts a hustling manner with him and the result is some lively dialogue. Within a single line the contrast between the brisk mentor and the timid pupil is pointed with a nice self-mockery:

'Ascend, galland!' Than for feir I quoik. (1308)

As he is crossing the inferno he pauses - 'trimbland I stude, with teith chatterand gude speid' (1330). He is overcome by incomprehension. His guide has to scold him.

Thus in a stair quhy standis thow stupifak,
 Gouand all day, and nathing hes vesite.
 Thow are prolix, in haist returne thy bak.
 Ga efter me and gude attendance tak. (1460-63)

Later, when about to enter the palace of Honour itself, the narrator stops to admire the carvings on the gate and again his guide has to chivvy him along:

'Quhat devill', said scho, 'hes thow nocht ellis ado
 Bot all thy wit and fantasie to set
 On sic doting?' And tho for feir I swet
 Of hir langage. Bot than anone said scho,
 'List thow se farleis, behald thame yonder, lo!
 Yit studie nocht ouir mekill, a dreid thow varie,
 For I persave thee halflingis in ane farie.' (1866-72)

And with these words she ushers him towards the palace.

While he had been overcome with shame and secretiveness at the approach of the Queen of Sapience, he is now bemused by wonder and curiosity. But the naive and bumbling character is maintained: his 'nymph' has to nag and bully him.

When Venus herself asks him how he overcame the difficulties of the approach, he replies 'I not mair than ane scheip' (1737).

He is not so abashed at the approach of Venus' court: indeed he is eager for her arrival (ll. 314-15). He is much more directly involved here than he was with the court of Sapience. He has already depicted himself as a lover (ll. 91-99). Venus upbraids him for not being wholehearted in his allegiance:

First quhen thow come, with hart and haill intent
 Thow thee submittit to my commandement.
 Now now thairof me think to sone thow faillis. (712-14)

And later he is disdainfully referred to as 'that rebald rennigait' (l. 954).

His objection to the competency of Venus' court to try him on the ground that he is a cleric introduces a new element (ll. 696-99) but it is not developed. It could have been developed to show another path to honour, treating celibacy as a converse of love, but the idea gets no further than Venus' outburst against clerics (ll. 716-26).

The court of Venus is unstable, full of strife and the abruptness with which it vanishes suggests its insubstantiality. The contrast with the entourage of Wisdom is pointed. The latter ride past 'in steidfast ordour' and 'with stabilnes ygroundit' (ll. 209-10), whereas the narrator recognises Venus' court in these terms:

I knew that was the court sa variabill
Of eirdly lufe quhilk sendill standis stabill.
(484-85)

The multitude following Venus is innumerable (l. 597) and subject to worldly variance:

Sum levis in hope and sum in greit thirlage,
Sum in dispair, sum findis his panis swage. (601-2)

The entire treatment of Venus indeed is reminiscent of Henryson's description of her and her power in The Testament of Cresseid:

Thus variant scho was, quha list tak keip,
With ane eye lauch, and with the uther weip.
In takning that all fleschlie paramour
Quhilk Venus hes in reull and governance,
Is sum tyme sweit, sum tyme bitter and sour
Right unstabill, and full of variance,
Mingit with cairfull joy and fals plesance,
Now hait, now cauld, now blyith, now full of wo,
Now grene as leif, now widderit and ago. (230-38)

In the Palice the narrator's confrontation with Venus' court occupies a substantial part of the work (ll. 355-1053)

and the whole passage can be viewed as an extension and illustration of the lines just quoted from Henryson. In the final vision the relative inferiority of the values represented by Venus is shown allegorically. Her place in the palace of Honour is peripheral: those who strive in her service are found in the first ward, just within the gate (ll. 1442-43) and Venus' throne is seen in a garth (l. 1466), i.e. in a separate enclosed area. Her mirror captures the narrator's attention and gives rise to a somewhat cramped list of historical personages, yet its thematic relevance is clear.

In that mirroure I might se at ane sight
 The deidis and fatis of everie eirdlie wicht:
 All thingis gone like as thay war present ... (1495-97)

It thus imitates the omniscience of God and his power to see past, present and future simultaneously. Moreover it shows us the pageant of history only in reflection, at a remove from reality, and this too suggests that Venus' skill in devising enthralling appearances may be deceitful. The narrator, himself, having gazed his fill, concludes ('to declair the veritie') that what he had been watching was 'all plesand pastance and gannis' (l. 1730). However, the simplest allegorical device whereby the worth of Venus' court, relative to Honour, is distinguished, is that by which the narrator has to turn his back towards Honour's palace in order to see Venus' garth (l. 1462).

Contact between the narrator and Sapience is devious; his relationship with Venus is closer yet troubled; but with the advent of the Muses he comes into his own. His

heavy spirits lighten even before they appear:

All haill my dreid I tho forget in hy
 And all my wo, bot yit I wist not quhy
 Save that I had sum hope till be releivit. (781-83)

Again, as they arrive

My curage grew; for quhat caus I nocht wait,
 Saif that I held me payit of thair estait,
 And thay war folk of knowledge ... (829-31)

His sense of belonging here is confirmed when Calliope acts as his 'companioun and defence' (l. 1048) against Venus' complaints and undertakes to guide him to the palace of Honour itself. The Muses remain 'on the bent' after the abrupt disappearance of Venus and her populous following. And Venus' own acceptance of the narrator's chosen role is sealed when the command to write down everything he has seen is given by her when he visits her in her garth. Yet in the palace the muses also have a position which is clearly aside from the centre: their proper area is variously described as an harbour (l. 1960), a garth (l. 2071) and an isle (l. 2104).

Honour represents the enduring values against which the corruptible and subordinate human powers, as typified by Minerva, Venus and the Muses, must be judged. The allegory here gives way to direct statement, such as:

Honour ... to this hevinlie king
 Differris richt far fra waddlie governing,
 Quhilk is bot pompe of eirdlie dignitie,
 Gevin for estait of blude, micht or sic thing.
 And in this countrie prince, prelate or king
 Allanerlie sall for vertew honourit be.
 For eirdlie gloir is nocht bot vanitie
 That as we se sa suddanlie will wend,
 Bot vertuuous Honour never mair sall end. (1972-80)

Isolated from their context such lines may be read on

a similar level to the kind of writing in the Eneados prologues earlier referred to: but within their context their function is quite different. Direct statement of abstract belief they may well be - but the statement is presented to us only after we have read and responded to a very particularised (and often vigorous) narrative. We respond to this narrative primarily as a narrative, only secondarily as an allegory with an underlying intellectual structure, and such a direct statement then comes post factum as a confirmation of this conceptual basis. We still read the Palice of Honour not because it tells us about Douglas' beliefs but because as a literary creation it establishes a sequence of events and concrete details to which we can respond at an immediate level.

4. Dunbar: the moral and religious poems, and the poems about love.

'While the personality of Henryson eludes us', writes R.L. Mackie, 'William Dunbar is the most clearly defined of all the shadowy figures that haunted the court of King James'.¹ Granted that many of these figures are to us mere shadows and that we do in fact know a little about Dunbar, my own impression of the two poets is the contrary. As J.W. Baxter's study has amply demonstrated, the material for a biography of Dunbar is indeed scanty²; and as

1 R.L. Mackie, King James IV of Scotland (Edinburgh, 1958), p. 175 (hereafter referred to as Mackie, James IV).

2 Monsieur J.J. Blanchot of the College Litteraire Universitaire, Metz, is working on a new biographical study of Dunbar: much of this will perforce cover ground already covered by Baxter but not necessarily from the same point of view.

D. Laing's researches published in his 1865 edition of Henryson show, the material for a biography of Henryson is even scantier. Yet any reader who is familiar with Orpheus and Euridyce, The Testament of Cresseid and The Fables has the means of a reasonable understanding of how Henryson regarded the world about him, as distinct from what he actually did in it. The reader is aware of a sharp mind well-stocked with the learning of the day and capable of a keen assessment of contemporary society, both with respect to its particular secular limits and, according to the religious thought of the time, sub specie aeternitatis. But when we compare what survives of Henryson's work with what survives of Dunbar's, the latter gives much less help towards such an understanding. Different poets of course are able to make poetry out of different things, and it may well be that Dunbar the man to a great extent shared the outlook of Henryson the man, though it is reasonable to say that learning touched Dunbar more lightly. Yet what survives of Dunbar the poet does not at first sight include any attempt to recreate and criticise his society on a level of comprehensiveness like that of Henryson's Fables. The very particularity, the vivid reaction to events, the bad temper, the high spirits, the purely personal grumbles - such aspects of his work may constitute a temptation to regard him merely as an interesting creator of marginalia. On the other hand, the opposite temptation, to take his occasional pieces as material for some kind of credo, is equally misleading:

thus it is less than a half-truth to say that 'Dunbar was more concerned with his own "heid-ake" than the great malaise which was racking all Europe'¹. While it is easy enough however to recognise that some of Dunbar's work is occasional and some of it obviously of much more serious import, the difficulty comes when we try to sort out his eighty-odd surviving poems in such a way as to demonstrate how he regarded his world. It must be admitted that at times his attitude is enigmatic.

Not ~~enigmatic~~ enough however to prevent us seeing an overall perspective - as becomes clear when we consider the goodly number of his surviving poems that are overtly moral (like the 'Lament for the Makaris') or religious (like 'Rorate celi desuper'). Indeed, if we try to see his work as any kind of self-consistent whole, then the primary point of reference must be a moral and religious one. Hence a brief account of the principle themes and moods of his moral and religious poems is appropriate here, and then some comment on his poems about love will reinforce the view that the beliefs directly expressed in the former group conditioned the attitudes underlying some of his most vigorous satire.

John Speirs, discussing the religious poems but surely over-stressing one particular aspect, comments: 'The obsession with death was inevitable to some part of Dunbar's poetry coming where it did; Dunbar inherited a world part

¹ Tom Scott, Dunbar, A Critical Exposition of the Poems (Edinburgh, 1966), p. 132. (Hereafter referred to as Scott).

of which was mouldering in decay'.¹ And Baxter comments: 'It is customary to regard his religious poems as the product of his last years. There is, in truth, no compelling reason why they should not be earlier poems, but the tradition is not without some cogency. Most of these religious poems are concerned with recurring occasions in the Christian year, and several give the impression of being composed by a pastor whose mind is on his priestly ministrations'.² Now it is true that in much fifteenth century painting and devotional writing³ we can see an attitude to the details of physical corruption which strikes us as morbid: it is not impossible that Dunbar's religious poems represent the thought of an older man; and it is true that a priest would have frequent reminders of the four last things. Yet the search for external causes for the religious poems is misleading.

Firstly, no great intelligence is needed, in any age, to observe that individual human life is fragile. Secondly, and more important, the attitudes expressed in the moral and religious poems are central to Dunbar's way of thinking, and only they can give some pattern, if anything can, to the various aspects of the vivid social criticism which is the moving force of so many of his poems. Thirdly, his

-
- 1 John Speirs, The Scots Literary Tradition (London, rev. ed., 1962), pp. 67-68 (hereafter referred to as Speirs); of However Scottish Poetry, A Critical Survey, ed. J. Kinsley (London, 1955), p. 32 (hereafter referred to as Kinsley).
- 2 J.W. Baxter, William Dunbar, A Biographical Study (Edinburgh, 1952), p. 211 (hereafter referred to as Baxter).
- 3 J. Huizinga, The Waning of the Middle Ages (London, 1924), Chap. XI (hereafter referred to as Huizinga).

religious poetry must not be thought of entirely in terms of death and decay - the vigorous 'Done is a battell on the dragon blak'¹ surely represents an important aspect of his religious thought and feeling. 'I synnyt, Lord! that nocht being strong as wall'² may be a competent and sincere account of catholic teaching on confession, but competence and sincerity alone would not I think account for the powerful prompting which produced the resurrection poem.

The most obvious feature of the religious poems is of course the straightforward contrast between the secular and the eternal. In 'Off Lentren in the first mornynge'³ for instance we have a conventional memento mori:

Maif mynd that eild ay followis youth;
 Deth followis lyfe with gaipand mowth,
 Devoring fruct and flowring grane;
 All erdly joy returnis in pane. (9-12)

-
- 1 The Poems of William Dunbar, ed. W. Mackay Mackenzie (London, 1932), p. 159 ('On the Resurrection of Christ'). This edition is hereafter referred to as Mackenzie: Dunbar's poems are referred to by their first lines, and for each poem thus cited, the page in Mackenzie is given in a footnote, together with Mackenzie's title if that is different from the first line. From time to time references will also be made to The Poems of William Dunbar (S.T.S., 1893) with notes and glossary by W. Gregor - this edition will be referred to as Small, and the notes etc. as Gregor.
- 2 p. 165 ('The Tabill of Confession').
- 3 p. 145 ('All Erdly Joy Returnis in Pane'). The idea of death the devourer is obvious: e.g. I Peter, v, 8. Cf 'Illuster Lodovick, of France most Cristin King', p. 133 ('Elegy on the Death of Bernard Stewart'), ll. 17-19. See Isabel Hyde, 'Primary Sources and Associations of Dunbar's Aureate Imagery', *MLR*, 51 (1956), pp. 481-92.

offset by an equally conventional solution:

Sen erdly joy abydis nevir,
Wirk for the joy that lestis evir;
For uder joy is all bot vane:
All erdly joy returnis in pane. (37-40)

Similarly, in 'Memento, homo, quod cinis es!'¹ we find the instability of the world:

Thy lustye bewte and thy youth
Sall feid as dois the somer flouris;
Syne sall thee swallow with his mouth
The dragone Death that all devouris. (25-28)

contrasted with the security offered by the Christian religion, the security of a ship which has a firm anchor to prevent it drifting and a strong helm to keep its course true:

Thy Ransomer with woundis fyve,
Mak thy plycht anker and thy steiris,
To hald thy saule with him on lyve,
Cum tu in cinerem reverteris. (45-48)

In 'O wreche, be war! this world will wend the fro'² the pilgrim is advised

Bend up thy saill and win thy port of grace (13)

because nothing in this world can be trusted:

Heir nocht abydis, heir standis nothing stabill,
This fals world ay flittis to and fro;
Now day up bricht, now nicht als blak as sabill,
Now eb, now flude, now freynd, now cruell is;
Now gled, now said, now weill, now in to wo;
Now cled in gold, dissolvit now in as;
So dois this world transitorie go:
Vanitas Vanitatum, et omnia Vanitas. (17-24)

The theme of the world's treachery and fickleness recurs,

1 p. 149 ('Of Manis Mortalitie'). Cf Genesis, iii, 19; Job, viii, 9; Psalm, ciii, 15; I Peter, i, 24. For l. 45 see Gregor, III, 120, note on l. 23 of 'I Cry The Mercy'.

2 p. 150 ('Of the Worldis Vanitie'). Cf Hebrews, xi, 13. For l. 17 see Gregor, III, 330-31.

as in 'I seik about this warld unstable'.¹

For yesterday, I did declair
 Quhow that the season, soft and fair,
 Com in als fresche as pako fedder;
 This day it stangis lyk ane edder,
 Concluding all in my contrair. (6-10)

Baxter includes these poems among the 'seriously reflective' pieces which it is 'customary' to relate to a period of illness and despondency which Dunbar seems to have gone through in 1508.² Certainly their mood is despondent (the fact that summer follows winter is as obvious as the fact that winter follows summer) but such a pronounced attitude towards the untrustworthiness of the world cannot be labelled simply as a mood. In 'Full oft I mus and hes in thocht'³ the mood is different but this central attitude is similar:

This world evir dois flicht and vary;
 Fortoun sa fast hir quheill dois cary ... (6-7)

Had I for warldis unkyndnes
 In hairt tane ony havines,
 Or fro my plesans bene opprest,
 I had bene deid langsyne, dowltes;
 For to be blyth me think it best. (31-35)

In 'In May as that Aurora did upspring'⁴, despite the appearance of a debate between the merle (earthly, or more exactly courtly, love) and the nightingale (heavenly, or more exactly priestly, love) no debate in fact takes place.

1 p. 140 ('Of the Changes of Lyfe'). With reference to ll. 6-9 Gregor (III, 314) alludes to the old proverb 'April sud come in like an adder, an gang oot like a peacock's tail', and gives an interesting extract from 'Pricke of Conscience' in which variability in the weather is seen as a token of the variable nature of worldly life.

2 Baxter, p. 12.

3 p. 143 ('Best to be Blyth').

4 p. 134 ('The Merle and the Nychtingaill').

Up to l. 96 both sides are presented fervently but they are kept quite separate, without any attempt to reconcile them or to find a third position. The merle, according to a pre-arranged pattern, simply capitulates:

Myn errour I confess;
 This frustrir luvè is all bot vanitie;
 Blind ignorance me gaif sic hardiness,
 To argone so agane the varite ... (97-100)

There is no need to labour the point - it allies Dunbar, not surprisingly, with the authors of The Thre Prestis of Peblis and the Moral Fables. Again, we detect a double sense of values, a view of the world which takes account simultaneously of its limited secular context and of its wider transcendental context. This is what must be kept in mind when considering his social criticism generally. That criticism is wide ranging and often fierce, but much of its sense is lost if we forget that to Dunbar human society, as an organism per se, was inconceivable: it is the religious basis of society which was the primary foundation.

We can see this is so if we examine some of his poems about love, for in these poems we find this double awareness most evident in a concern with the disparities between appearance and reality, in a desire to peel aside the alluring surfaces of life to expose the inner truths, in a wish to prove that real values are to be found in inverse proportion to worldly or apparent values.¹

¹ With regard to Dunbar's attitude to women there are personal queries which probably cannot be answered but are not in any case part of our concern at the moment. See Scott, pp. 60-62, 206-8.

'Rycht as the sterne of day begouth to schyne'¹ is one of a group of poems whose highly wrought surfaces have often distracted critics from the fact that Dunbar is saying something which he thinks is important and is not just idly pasting together some allegorical decorations. Thus - 'They are like robes of ceremony, hard and glittering with jewels, so stiff with embroidery and gilt thread that they hide the form of the man beneath'. Or again - 'Dunbar is less interested in allegorical profundity than in the world of the senses, in rapid dramatic action, and in distinct, instantaneous sense images'. Granted that Dunbar's manipulation of allegory is at times perfunctory, surely it is clear what this poem is about? The efficiency of the means may be debatable but that is no cause for ignoring the end.

But Resoun bure the Targe wyth sik constance,
 Thair scharp assayes mycht do no dures
 To me, for all thair afull ordynance. (169-71)

It is only reason which can hold out against the forces of love, but when 'presence' throws powder in his eyes the battle is lost. This is surely not a glorification of the power of love but an assertion of the irrational or unreasonable nature of love.

A verse from Alexander Scott's 'Leif, luve, and lat me leif allone' may be cited for comparison:

¹ p. 112 ('The Goldyn Targe'). The two quotations are from Smith, p. 62 and Wittig, p. 66. See also Lewis, Allegory, pp. 251-52.

Cupeid, thow kennis I burd to knau
 The langsum leving in thy law,
 Bot this is not the first ourthraw
 That thow hes done to me;
 Bot of the now I stand not aw,
 Sen rессoun dois my benner blaw
 Aganis the feid of the. (29-35)

It is clear throughout Dunbar's poem that the kind of love under discussion is a distinctly worldly sort, with allusions to the so-called 'courtly' love tradition. Dunbar is using some of the trappings of courtly love allegory to say that this is an inferior kind of love.

Quhen he was blynd, the fule wyth him thay playit,
 And banyst hym among the bewis grene;
 That sory sicht me sudaynly affrayit. (205-7)

The poet is 'affrayit' by the 'sory sicht' of reason that has lost the power of reasoning, that has become no better than a fool. The banishing of blinded reason to the 'bewis grene' signifies the relapse of reason into a natural or non-rational state, Lady Beauty seems different now:

Me thoct scho semyt lustiar of chere,
 Efter that Resoun tynt had his eyne clere,
 Than of before, and lufliare of face ... (211-13)

The emphasis is on appearances - chere, face, thocht, semyt - and the contrast with reason's clear eye is obvious. And what rewards await the poet when, 'woundit to the deth wele nere', he becomes a 'wofull' prisoner of Lady Beauty? Dissimulance, Fair Calling, Cherishing, New (i.e. fickle) Acquaintance, Danger (dourness) and Heaviness. But Eolus, Lord of Winds, gives a blast on his bugle

And sudaynly, in the space of a luke,
 All was hyne went, there was bot wildernes,
 There was no more bot birdis, bank, and bruke.(232-34)

The pageant of worldly love is so insubstantial that it can be dispersed in a moment: it belongs to the wilderness, to the changeful natural world. The insubstantiality is further emphasised by the fact that the story itself is presented as a dream. One may recall the court of Venus which appears before the narrator in The Palace of Honour:

I knew that was the court sa variabill
Of eirdly lufe quhilk sendill standis stabill.
(484-85)

There is a similar illusion of brightness and fecundity in a landscape which in fact is a barren desert: in Douglas' case the illusion fails to relieve his melancholy.

Me thocht the feild ouirsprede, with carpettis fair
(Quhilk was tofoir brint, barrane, vile and bair)
Wox maist plesand, bot all, the suith to say,
Micht nocht ameis my grevous panefull sair. (660-63)

When Venus and her court finally vanish (ll. 1051-52) it is 'suddanlie' and 'in ane instant'.

With much less elaborate means the short poem 'Quha will behald of luve the chance'¹ declares the fickleness and unreliability of this kind of love:

It is ane pount of ignorance
To lufe in sic distemperance,
Sen tyme mispendit may avance
No creature;
In luve to keip allegiance,
It war als nyc an ordinance,
As quha wald bid ane deid man dance
In sepulture. (17-24)

¹ p. 100 ('Inconstancy of Luve'). In medieval art worldly or natural love was frequently represented by dancers: see Robertson, Preface, passim. For another literary example see Chaucer, ed. Robinson, p. 21, l. 476.

Note again the stress on lack of reason: ignorance is lack of understanding and distemperance is lack of order and harmony. The last two lines constitute more than a picturesque emphasis: those who are caught in love's dance are themselves in danger of being dead to reason.

The blunt contrast to earthly love is heavenly love. We have already seen how in their debate the merle suddenly capitulates to the nightingale: she was not meant to try to have the last word. In 'Now culit is Dame Venus brand'¹, surely a late poem, we read such lines as

Quhill Venus fyre be deid and cauld,
Trew luvis fyre nevir birnis bauld;
So as the ta lufe waxis auld,
The tothir dois increas moir kene ... (7-10)

No man hes curege for to wryte
Quhat plesans is in lufe perfyte,
That hes in fenyeit lufe delyt,
Thair kyndnes is so contrair clene ... (13-16)

D.W. Robertson suggests that such a "non-dialectic" relationship between the two loves accounts in part for the fact that medieval writers can juxtapose them in more or less extreme forms without seeking to create the jarring effect that such juxtapositions create in us'.² The theme had the character of a commonplace, though it was given some memorable literary expressions.³ It gained more generalised expression in the difference between the cult of Courtly Love and the cult of the Virgin Mary, both of which were idealisations, one secular and the other spiritual. The growth and continuation of such idealisations

1 p. 101 ('Of Lufe Erdly and Divine').

2 Robertson, Preface, p.28.

3 e.g. Dante, Purgatorio, XVII, 91ff; Chaucer, ed. Robinson, ll. 1835-48. See Lewis, Allegory, pp. 1-23.



were closely related to the fact that in daily life marriageable women were often treated as an item of goods and chattels, another pawn in the negotiation of political or financial deals. At the other extreme, the more anti-feminist sections of the clergy preached against women as a snare and temptation, as an embodiment of worldly concern.

This passage from Richardinus is an example:

A muliere autem praeter caetera cavendum dicit, propterea quod praeter caetera nocumento humano generi semper fuerit. Estque mulier animal, animali leone brutorum ferocissimo atque superbissimo, superbius: symia lascivius, aspide venenosius, et syreneis monstris fallacius, et decipientius. Neque ferocissimorum animalium, aliquod digne cum muliebri monstro conferri potest.¹

Less fierce, but still castigating women as lowly and untrustworthy is the proverbial idea expressed in The Wife of Bath's Prologue:

Deceite, wepyng, spynnyng God hath yive
To wommen kyndely, whil that they may lyve.²

Looking ahead again to Alexander Scott we find references to the untrustworthiness and contrariness of women, as in 'The slicht remeid of luvē' -

... knew ye wemenis natur, course and strynd,
Ye wald nocht be so trew to thair untrewth,
Quhilkis hes no petie thocht your hairtis be pynd,
Nor of your restless womenting no rewth. (5-8)

1 "He [St. Augustine] says that above all woman is to be guarded against, because she has always been especially harmful to the human race. She is an animal, prouder than the fierce and proud lion; more lustful than the ape; more poisonous than the viper; and more false and deceitful than the Siren. Not one of the most ferocious beasts can be compared with woman." Robertus Richardinus, Commentary on the rule of St. Augustine, ed. G.G. Coulton (Scottish History Society, 1935), p. 112 (hereafter referred to as Ricardinus).

2 Chaucer, ed. Robinson, p. 80, ll. 401-2.

Because of this, says Scott, 'lat be the frennessy of luve' and 'cast yow to conqueiss luve ane uthir kynd'. In 'Of wemenkynd' he rails against their contrariness, summing up thus:

... famenene ar of this figour,
 Quhilk clippit is antiphritis;
 For quhy thair haili affectioun
 Is contrair thair complexioun. (69-72)

In practical terms the clear solution to the dilemma is a form of marriage which can be freely entered by equal partners, and the importance given by Dunbar to Matrimony in 'Sen that I am a presoneir'¹ suggests he was aware of this. But it is in Scott's love-poetry that we find this fully accepted, e.g. in 'Ye blindit luvaris, luke' -

Yit thair is lesum lufe
 That lawtfully suld lest;
 He is not to reprufe
 That is with ane possest;
 That band I hald it best,
 And not to pass attour. (57-62)

With this one may contrast the ending of 'To luve unluvit', written 'quhen his wyfe left him' -

My hairt, sen thow may now hir pleiss,
 Adew, as gude luf cumis as gaiss,
 Go chuss ane udir and forget hir;
 God gif him dolour and diseiss,
 That brekes thair hairt and not the bettir. (21-25)

Dunbar's vows however would not only deny him marriage but would be likely to strengthen his awareness of a direct contrast between the 'lower' and the 'higher' loves. And what makes the lower kind unworthy and dangerous is the very reliance on appearances which so clearly impressed Dunbar

¹ p. 104 ('Bewty and the Presoneir'), ll. 97-104.

as a distortion of values. It is this same distortion he castigates in King, courtier, bishop, lord, lawyer and merchant.

And women, since they sometimes have an attractive appearance, are well suited to play this game of deceit. In 'Thir ladyis fair, That makis repair'¹ the ladies who can do more in three days than their husbands can in ten to get a legal matter conveniently settled, have a useful commodity:

Suppois they spend, It is unkend,
Thair geir is nocht the les ... (31-32)

Sic ladyis wyis Thay ar to pryis,
To say the veretie,
Swa can devyis, And none suppryis
Thame nor thair honestie. (45-48)

Such wisdom, price, verity and honesty are special qualities: they are like the mercy of the women who oblige the monks in 'Ane murlandis man of uplandis mak', and like the mercy of the widow in 'Apon the Midsummer evin, mirriest of nights'.²

I am so mercifull in mynd, and menys all wichtis,
My sely saule salbe saif ... (501-2)

The latter poem, better known as The Tretis, is Dunbar's most substantial achievement: more than any other of his surviving works it unites a greater range of his various capabilities and demonstrates more comprehensively

¹ p. 97 ('Of the Ladyis Solistaris at Court').

² p. 85 ('The tretis of the Tua Mariit Wemen and the Wedo'). Scott, pp. 179-211 is worth attention. The four quotations are from, in turn, A.M. Mackenzie, An Historical Survey of Scottish Literature to 1714 (London, 1933), p. 86; Baxter, p. 53; K. Wittig, The Scottish Tradition in Literature (Edinburgh, 1958), p. 72 (hereafter referred to as Wittig); Mackie, James IV, p. 180; See also A.D. Hope, A Midsummer Eve's Dream, Variations on a Theme by William Dunbar (Edinburgh, 1971).

his prevailing attitudes. In view of this it is difficult to understand some of the judgments that have been passed on this poem. A.M. Mackenzie remarks that the three women are 'completely satisfied with their own outlook as a natural and adequate view of life.' After quoting this comment Baxter continues: 'The same critic describes these revelations as "ghastly", but there is no sign that Dunbar himself regarded them in that light. To him also, as well as to his ladies, their reminiscences present themselves as "a natural and adequate view of life" ... the poet is indifferent to the moral aspects. It is a distortion of the poem to claim that Dunbar represents the ladies as objects of infamy.' Kurt Wittig declares that Dunbar here 'uses no moral yardstick ... is not concerned to classify things as good and evil' and takes 'far too much mischievous delight in his chosen subject for that'. And R.L. Mackie, after talking about Dunbar's 'contemptuous interest in the whole business of sex', confesses that to him 'it is difficult to realise that the author of this poem, and of the even more frankly naturalistic "In Secret Place", also wrote, in addition to one or two conventional love-poems, the tender and reverent "In Prais of Wemen".'

Surely Dunbar is here is using more subtle methods than applying yardsticks or classifying as good or evil? Surely the poem 'In Prais of Wemen'¹, so far from being incompatible with The Tretis, does in fact indicate the

¹ p.43.

scale of values against which Dunbar imagines his three un-ideal examples of womankind? And surely the very last two lines of the poem should throw suspicion on the above opinions:

Of thir thre wantoun wiffis, that I haif writtin heir,
 Quhilk wald ye wail to your wif, gif ye suld wed one?
 (529-30)

As a closing line this is meant to raise a laugh, and the point of the laugh is that these women are atrocious, are seen to be so by both poet and audience, and who on earth would want such women? As with all carefully sprung satirical jokes, the sober realisation follows that perhaps these women represent only slightly exaggerated features of our own characters.

Again, the poem is not just about a simple contrast between courtly ideals and 'real' life, but rather about the contrasts between two complementary falsifications, the courtly falsification on the one hand, and the debased falsification on the other. The widow's fantasy, a straightforward dream-compensation, is as 'unreal' as any courtly fantasy.

One of the main themes of The Tretis is one we have encountered often: the deceitfulness of mere appearances, the folly of accepting a worldly good on its own terms. The contrasts between seems and is can be observed in the broad patterns of the poem - the contrast between the setting and the content, between the women's appearances and their characters - and also in the smallest details. For instance:

He semys to be sumthing worth, that syphyr in bour,
 He lukis as he wald luffit be, thocht he be litill
 of valour (184-85)

or

And thus beswik I that swain with my sweit wordis:
 I cast on him a crabit ee, quhen cleir day is cummyn,
 And lettis it is a luf blenk, quhen he about glemys,
 I turne it in a tender luke, that I in tene warit,
 And him behaldis hamely with hertly smyling.
 (226-30)

One of the most effective instances of this kind of contrast is in the simile describing the widow's behaviour in church:

And, as the new mone all pale, oppressit with change,
 Kythis quhilis her cleir face through cluddis of sable...
 (432-43)

It is a beautiful image in itself but its force derives from the context. The contrast between the real purpose of the church service and the actual purpose of the widow's attendance is only the most obvious disparity. The moon is oppressed by change but the widow lusts after variety. The moon's pallor is part of its nature while the widow's appearance of mourning is part of her act. The moon is the symbol of chastity while the widow is busy spying out those most suited to Venus' chamber:

So keik I through my clokis, and castis kynd lukis
 To knychtis, and to cleirkis, and cortly personis.
 (434-45)

The bald contrast between the worldly and the spiritual which we saw earlier in some of the religious poems indicates a habitual attitude. It is an attitude basic to his entire criticism of society: that those who ought to know better allow themselves to be deluded by appearances into choosing the lesser good. Thus in the king's court

which ought to set a pattern for the whole realm, Blind Affection rather than Reason holds sway, as Dunbar sees in his dream ('This hinder nycht, halff sleiping as I lay'):

Than spak ane wicht callit Blind Affectioun,
 'I sall befoir yow be, with myne electioun,
 Of all the court I have the governance. (58-60)¹

Church appointments are used for ends contrary to their professed function. The law is used not to extirpate corruption but to facilitate it. Commercial integrity is set aside in favour of short-term gains. And is it surprising that women sometimes behave like those in The Tretis in a society where men use women as business commodities?

Quha that dois deidis of petie,
 And leivis in pece and cheritie,
 Is haldin a fule, and that full nyce;
 And all thruch caus of covetyce.²

The deceitfulness of the world has only one end:

So warryit is this warldis rent,
 That nane thairof can be content,
 Off deathe quhill that the dragoun stang thame;
 Quha maist hes than sall maist repent,
 With largest compt to pairt amang thame.³

1 Cf 'Doverrit with dreame, devysing in my slummer', ll. 6-13:

Sic pryd with prellattis, so few till preiche and pray;
 Sic hant of harlettis with thame bayth nicht and day,
 That sould haif ay thair God afoir thair ene;
 So nyce array, so strange to thair abbay,
 Within this land was never hard nor sene.

So mony prestis cled up in secular weid,
 With blasing breistis casting thair clathis on breid,
 It is no neid to tell of quhome I mene ...

2 'Fredome, honour, and nobilnes', p. 141 ('Of Covetyce'), ll. 33-36. The complaint that wisdom is foolishness in the world's eyes is age-old; cf I Corinthians, i, 20.

3 'Of benefice, schir, at everie feist', ll. 26-30.

In 'Off benefice, schir, at everie feist' we have an image of the world as a kind of goddess who because of her blindness (i.e. because she does not have the power to discriminate reasonably) automatically favours the rich: to them that hath it shall be given.

This blynd warld ever so payis his dett,
 Riche befoir pure spreidis ay thair nett,
 To fische all watiris dois belang thame:
 Quha na thing hes, can na thing gett,
 Bot ay as syphir set amang thame. (16-20)

And in 'Quhom to sall I compleine my wo'¹ we find a series of most striking images. Through their greed and selfishness men themselves become stone-like, they acquire the apparently durable qualities of the hardest materials in the world, but even this degree of natural toughness does not protect them from the fragility of human life. They have come to resemble the world they desire and rely upon, and are cheated.

Towngis now are maid of quhite quhale bone,
 And hartis ar maid of hard flynt stone,
 And eyn ar maid of blew asure,
 And handis of adamant laithe to dispone;

Yit hart and handis and body all
 Mon anser dethe, quhome he dois call
 To compt befoir the juge future:
 Sen al ar deid or de sall,
 Quha sould in to this warld assure? (46-55)

In many of the poems quoted from we again find that the moral and religious convictions, either implied or stated, provide an intellectual basis from which poetic development is possible. The directions taken by such development are very varied, from the allegorical (but by

1 p. 44 ('None May Assure in this World').

no means 'stiff') narrative of 'Rycht as the day begouth to schyne', to the vigorous narrative of the Tretis, and the simple but compelling imagery of 'Quhom to sall I compleine my wo'. As we have seen throughout this chapter, however far literary creations may develop beyond their intellectual framework (and, as literature, they must) they nevertheless remain firmly based, at the intellectual level, on the beliefs provided by that framework.

One more example will suffice.

5. Lindsay's Testament.

There are certain aspects of the Testament¹ which deserve mention here because of the literary means used to present Lindsay's beliefs, and those means are such that the Testament thereby becomes more than simple statement of belief. That Lindsay subscribed to the kind of beliefs we have been discussing hardly needs illustration: the bulk of his work was written to propagate these beliefs. Often his literary means were subservient to this aim of propagating his views on society, but in certain respects the Testament, as a literary creation offering us characters, an allegory, detailed incidents to which we can respond, transcends the basically didactic purpose.

Granted, the poem is presented as an illustration of

¹ All references from the works of Lindsay are from D. Hamer's edition, The Works of Sir David Lindsay (S.T.S., Vols. I and II, 1931; Vol. III, 1934; Vol. IV, 1936).

a text or sententia:

Quho clymmis to hycht, perforce his feit mon fail:
Expreme I sal that be experience. (73-74)

The point is then stressed at several stages in the tale (e.g. ll. 353-59, 365-66, 468, 552, 583; cf also Monarche, ll. 4984-87). The poem is not just an attack on the church: the protagonist, the king's parrot, represents fallible humanity, subject to the vicissitudes of the world, in need of spiritual help but denied it because of the corrupt nature of the church. The narrator, it should be noted, appears as a good catholic in that he says his hours (l. 152) and so is the papyngo in that in her distress she calls for a priest (l. 170).

In his warning to the bird as she climbs higher into the tree the narrator says:

Thou are rycht fat, and nocht weill usit to fle
(159)

While this may appear as a rather unconvincing reason for a bird falling off a tree (and the moral of the narrative demands a literal fall) its thematic relevance is more convincing: the bird's fatness and her inability to use her proper function to live in her proper element, suggest the limitations of fallible humanity. Indulgence and sloth are implied. And why does the bird fall? The immediate cause is a wanton desire for display, on the highest twig:

With ^wing displayit, scho sat full wantounlie.
(165)

The papyngo then is clearly in need of the succour which

it is the clergy's professed function to provide.

The fall of the papyngo provides a suitable illustration of the variability of worldly pleasure (ll. 145-49), the falseness of Fortune -

Vaine hope in the my reason haith exilit,
Havyng sic traist in to thy fenyeit face. (194-95)

Again there is the suggestion that in being at court at all the parrot had forsaken her proper habitat:

Had I in forrest flowin, amang my feris,
I mycht full weill have levit mony yeris. (197-98)

Court life was notoriously unstable, for the practical reason that whenever the government (or king) changed so did the whole body of officials and favourites. The court was thus the example par excellence of worldly variance and untrustworthiness. In the present instance the plight of the papyngo gives a certain personal authority to her epistles to James (ll. 227-345) and to her brothers at court (ll. 346-646). Having herself fallen from a high place she has lost her illusions and can speak the truth to those who are still in their high but precarious positions.

As an answer to this worldly mutability the obvious contrast is presented between the earthly court and the heavenly court:

Traist weill, thare is no constant court bot one,
Quhar Christ bene king, quhose tyme interminabyll
And heych tryumphant glore beis nevir gone.
That quyet court, myrthfull and immutabyll,
But variance, standith aye ferme and stabyll.
Dissimilance, flattry, nor fals reporte
In to that court sall never get resorte. (612-18)

i.e. the heavenly court is the ideal of which the earthly

court is an imperfect reflection.¹ The papyngo declares that her description of the one reliable court is 'no fenyeit fare' (l. 619) and asserts that the presence of her own death forces her to speak the truth.

It is within this context that the social criticism of the poem is made. All of society is surveyed. The papyngo's first epistle, to the head of society, warns the king against presumptuously forgetting the divine origin of his high office: he has the obligations of a special kind of servant and it is in view of these responsibilities that he is given his special privileges. The papyngo's second epistle, to the upper classes as represented by the courtiers, warns against climbing too high in a treacherous world and advises them to remember the one true court, the heavenly one, against which all earthly ones stand to be judged and found wanting. The tale of the papyngo's treatment by her clerical executors exposes ecclesiastical deceit and the oppressive effect of this on the laity, as represented by the fallen courtier/parrot. The three executors are reduced to the level of beasts of prey.

In general terms the advice to the church is (i) to

¹ See Hamer, III, 101-2, also C.S. Lewis, The Discarded Image (Cambridge, 1964), p. 74 (hereafter referred to as Lewis, Discarded Image). Cf for example the prologue to The Buke of Knychthede in Gilbert of the Haye's Prose Manuscript (1456), ed. J.H. Stevenson (S.T.S., 1914), I, 1. The pattern of earthly rule is seen as a continuation, on a smaller scale, of the pattern of heavenly rule; for just as God has dominion over the planets and their power influences 'the ordinaries of all erdely corporale thingis', so kings have power over knights, and knights in their turn, 'be semblance of syk like figure', have power over 'small peple'.

fill offices only with those who are capable of guiding the church towards its professed ideals and (ii) to allow clerical marriage in order to bring more order to the private lives of the clergy. No particular advice or consolation is offered to the commons-except that the plight and treatment of the papyngo as described in the allegory do themselves offer recognition and sympathy and by strong implication point towards the need for reform. In particular terms, however, the imaginative force of the final act of the 'executors' not only provides a memorable action to reinforce the total message of the poem, at the intellectual level, but also provides an emotional stimulus calculated to evoke a response at a level deeper than that merely of intellectual assent.

* * * * *

The discussion of the texts examined in this chapter has shown how, despite very different literary intentions between one individual work and another, the writers of this period regarded their society within a framework of generally accepted fundamental beliefs. Although the purposes of literary creation extend far beyond the expression of abstract or generalised attitudes, nonetheless all the writers we have discussed made abundantly clear their allegiance to the beliefs I have illustrated. Their methods of doing so ranged from comparatively simple moral verses to highly elaborate allegorical and fable structures.

In the latter category (e.g. The Thre Prestis of Peblis, Henryson's fables, Douglas' The Palice of Honour and some of Dunbar's longer poems) these basic beliefs are all the more cogently realised for being expressed through the most particular and finely gauged literary means.

To return again to the figure of the two concentric circles which I suggested at the beginning of this section - what we have so far examined pertains to the outer circle, the wider or universal context within which all worldly matters as such were regarded. Having demonstrated this wider context we must now examine how the writers of our period dealt with matters which pertained more narrowly to the inner circle and this will be the concern of the remaining chapters of the thesis. It is worth stressing that this distinction is made primarily as an aid to discussion, and as such it is a useful one: but it does not represent any rigid division in the minds of the authors, or in their individual creations.

Having shown the moral and religious framework within which our writers worked, it is logical to examine, first, the more particular aspects of ecclesiastical criticism in the literature of the period. The assumptions behind this criticism are of course very closely related to the matters so far discussed. Chapter Two will therefore examine selected texts which illustrate concrete criticisms levelled at contemporary ecclesiastical conditions. This will lead naturally to a briefer but necessary discussion of two related topics - the lot of the commons and the state of

the law - which received close attention from all of our principal authors. This will be the subject of Chapter Three. Having then referred to the Spirituality and the Commons, we conclude with a discussion of the Royal Estate (Chapter Four): how the monarchy as an institution was viewed, and how the performance of individual kings was interpreted, by our several authors.

CHAPTER TWO

ECCLESIASTICAL SATIRE

In Chapter One we examined the basic religious beliefs commonly accepted in Scotland throughout the main part of our period, as expressed in a variety of literary forms, and these provide the proper context for the specific ecclesiastical criticism which appears so strongly in many of the works considered. The purpose of this chapter is now to discuss selected items of that criticism as they appear in a number of chosen texts, and we shall see, emerging from these works, the sharpening of certain issues which became more crucial as the events leading to the Scottish Reformation polarised distinct groupings around the issues of reform. Because of Lindsay's importance in this context the bulk of the examples drawn upon will come from his work, first from the Dreme, the Complaynt and the Testament, and then principally from the Satyre. Before considering Lindsay however there are several brief but important references to be made from earlier parts of the period - from parts of the first tale of The Thre Prestis of Peblis and Henryson's The Sheep and the Dog, and from some of Dunbar's ecclesiastical satire.

1. The first tale of The Thre Prestis of Peblis and Henryson's The Sheep and the Dog.

Both of these texts will be considered more fully later, but in both of them there are references which must

be discussed here.

The first tale of The Thre Prestis of Peblis, in which each of the three estates in turn is required to defend itself against criticism, will be discussed as a whole in Chapter Four because the theme which unites the tale is the duty of the king. Here however we must notice the specific references to the clerical estate, who are charged by the king with having degenerated in virtue, and virtue here is intended to have the meaning of good works and miracles:

quhairfoir and quhy
In auld tymes and dayes of ancestry
Sa monie bishops war and men of kirk
Sa grit wil had ay gude warkes to wirk ...

And quhairfoir now in your tyme ye warie? (151-54, 161)

And to this the clergy reply that the three traditional modes of choosing new bishops have been set aside and that the king now chooses prelates to suit himself.

Bot, sir, now the contrair wee find,
Quhilk puts al our heaviness behind.
Now sal thair nane of thir wayis thrie
Be chosen now ane bishope for to be,
Bot that your might and majestie wil mak -
Quhat ever he be, to loife or yit to lak -
Than heily to sit on the rayne-bow. (401-7)¹

¹ The general meaning of these lines is apparent but some of the details are less clear. In l. 402 'Heaviness', Robb suggests, must be understood in the sense of gravitas, i.e. importance or influence. As they stand, ll. 403-4 are obviously unsatisfactory. Robb admits that there seems to be confusion between two ways of expressing the idea - 'Now shall there be none of these three ways chosen in the election of a bishop' and 'Now shall no-one, by any of these three ways, be chosen to be a bishop.' I doubt if total clarity is achieved by his proposal to put commas after nane and thrie and to construe of as by means of. Since l. 403 seems metrically deficient it is possible a word has been dropped - e.g. the insertion of by after thair may complete both rhythm and sense. Then in l. 407 the rainbow idiom is somewhat obscure in its application here: presumably the line means 'to sit proudly in a high place'.

The burden of the clergy's complaint is that those bishops created by the king are unsuitable for their offices and thus degrade the church. Learning, piety and good blood (family) are no longer the accepted qualifications for promotion when profit ('gold and gude') is the only motive (ll. 417-20); simony is no longer counted as a sin (l. 426). Apparently, the clergy allow 'blood' as a suitable qualification alongside 'literature', 'science' and 'vertew'.

Thir bishops cums in at the north window
 And not in at the dur nor yit at the get,
 Bot over waine and quheil in wil he get.
 And he cummis not in at the dur
 Gods pleuch may never hald the fur.
 He is na hird to keip thay sely sheip,
 Nocht bot ane tod in ane lambskin to creip.
 How sould he kyth mirakil and he sa evil?
 Never bot by the dysmel or the devil. (408-16)

The implication of 'north' in these lines is that such 'intruded' bishops are agents not of God but of the devil because in popular lore the north was associated with the abode of Lucifer. This notion is perhaps connected with the practice in the Mass of reading the set gospel for the day from the north end of the altar, signifying the carrying of God's message towards the heathen.¹

The claim that the king has dispensed with the allegedly traditional ecclesiastical methods of promotion to high

¹ See Isaiah, xiv, 12-15, and The Vision of William concerning Piers the Plowman, ed. W.W. Skeat (Oxford, 1886, new ed. 1961), C, i, 14 and ii, III (hereafter referred to as P.Pl.). The astronomical allusions in l. 410 reinforce this idea. Jamieson's Etymological Dictionary quotes ll. 408-16 as a 'remarkable passage' and comments on its use of 'dysmal'.

offices and now intrudes his own candidates for secular reasons is a common one throughout our period and of course this reflects the historical situation. As late as 1558 we find Quintin Kennedy declaring:

Geve the kirk had the auld ancient libertie (as perchance sum tyme it had) that ane bischop wer frelie chosin be his chapitre, the abbot and prior be the convent, and of the convent, than sulde be qualifeit men in all the estatis of the kirk; than sulde all hereseis be flemit, and the peple weill techeit. This wer the way to cum in at the dur to be ane minister in the kirk of God, quhilk our salveour spekis of; quhare now be tyrannie and avarice (for the maiste part) as it wer thevis or brygantis, we creip in at wyndoys or bak durris.¹

The historical situation here referred to was complicated and it involved in principle far-reaching questions about the limits and definitions of secular and ecclesiastical powers and in practice certain urgent economic problems with a bearing on the life of the entire community. In view of this complexity it is difficult to see how a simple 'return' to purely ecclesiastical modes of election could have helped to solve these problems. The king in this tale promises his clergy:

With kirk-gude sal I never have ado,
It to dispone to lytil or to large:
Kirk men to kirk sen thay have al the charge. (434-36)

¹ D. Laing, ed., The Miscellany of the Wodrow Society (Edinburgh, 1846) pp. 151-52. J.H. Pollen, ed., Papal Negotiations with Mary Queen of Scots (Scottish History Society, 1901), pp. 127, 138 (hereafter referred to as Papal Negotiations). D. Patrick, ed., Statutes of the Scottish Church 1225-1559 (Scottish History Society, 1907), p. 176 (hereafter referred to as Patrick).

If the author is seriously putting this forward as a practicable solution (and presumably he is) then it ignores the fact that since the church had a major share of the nation's wealth and had strong overseas allegiances no king could possibly leave the church to look after itself. Even as an ideal solution, and it is as an ideal that it is presented here, this comes to have less and less practical relevance to the historical state of affairs which developed in the following decades. By Lindsay's time, for instance, the distinctions between 'secular' and 'spiritual' control of the church were almost totally blurred.

Henryson's The Sheep and the Dog properly belongs to Chapter Three because its main themes are the oppression of poor commoners and the corruption of the law: there it will be discussed as a whole, but here it is worth noting how in the narrative section of the fable, where the force and particularity of the events and the characterisation are most immediately experienced by the reader, it is a consistory court which corrupts the law. The story tells

How that a dog because that he wes pure
Callit a scheip unto the consistory (2-3)

The sheep is constrained to attend the court under threat of spiritual sanctions,

Under the panis of suspentioun
And gret cursing and interdicioun (11-12)

The suggestion that the church is prepared to use the full weight of its sanctions for trivial ends (the five shillings demanded was not for a poor man a trivial sum) is not

inconsistent with historical fact.¹ In the fable the churchmen, whose profession demands that their attitude to their parishioners should be that of a good shepherd to his sheep, in fact unite to arrange a false judgement against their victim:

stret in to ane band
 Agane the scheip to procure the sentens
 Thocht it wer fals thay haif no conscience (33-35)

When the false sentence is procured the sheep has to comply again under pain of interdiction (l. 101).

As will be discussed more fully later, in the Moralitas of this fable Henryson re-interprets the events of the story in terms applicable to a civil court, thus through the one tale attacking both secular and ecclesiastical justice. As suggested above, it is in his attack on the church court that he realises the greater emotional impact. In polemical terms, Lindsay was to return to this topic many times, with great vigour, although in literary terms Henryson's treatment remains outstanding because of its concision.

2. Dunbar's ecclesiastical satire.

Dunbar's main ecclesiastical butts are of course office-holders who, in his opinion, gained their position not through ability but through trickery, flattery and shameless greed. Both James III and James IV tended to use church appointments for their own ends and thus can be seen not only to have failed to attack the abuse but positively by example to have encouraged it; and the

¹ See Chapter Three, page 129, note I.

difficulties arising from this became acute in the reign of James V. Dunbar's criticism implicates the king, and at times with a seeming ambiguity in his own attitude. For the refrain of his complaints is that he himself lacks a benefice and he wants one. James is never allowed to forget this.

Sum schames to ask, as braidis of me,
And all without reward he stervis:¹

He certainly was not ashamed to ask, as his numerous poems on the subject testify. There are, it must be admitted, personal enigmas which make it difficult at times for us to see Dunbar's work clear and whole, but in the present context there are three points which, if borne in mind, go some way towards resolving these difficulties. (i) As a graduate in orders Dunbar was in fact qualified to hold a living and if he really wanted one it is hard to understand how he could have failed. (ii) In financial terms,

Dunbar's patronage from James IV was generous.² (iii) We must allow for a certain element of convention, of play, in his numerous complaints - the grumble as a subject for performance obviously appealed to him.

And if Dunbar does not explicitly question the system whereby the king hands out ecclesiastical livings and offices for political, financial or personal reasons (as the writer of The Thre Prestis of Peblis did question), we

1 'Off every asking followis nocht', p. 31 ('Of Discretioun in Asking'), ll. 13-14.

2 See page 22I.

can certainly detect an implicit questioning of a very serious kind in several poems. 'Schir, at this feist of benefice'¹ is an example. The complaint, at face value, may seem reasonably fair: which is more praiseworthy, to give drink to a thirsty man or to give it to a man who is already sated?

It is no glaid collatioun
 Quhair ane makis myrrie, ane uthir lukis doun;
 Ane thristis, ane uthir playis cop out:
 Lat anis the cop ga round about,
 And wyn the covanis banesoun. (11-15)

From the pleader's point of view the metaphor is apt. But surely its use here is double-edged - theoretically the sole consideration which ought to govern church appointments is the good of the parishioners, yet here we find benefices being handed out solely with a view to the good of the recipients, as items in the king's hospitality. The apparent appeal to reason in this poem conceals an unspoken appeal to a severer reasoning.

Again, in 'Schir, yir remembir as of befoir'² he complains about Jok (ll. 66-69) and Michell (ll. 71-74). However right or wrong he may be in complaining that not so long ago such men were mere cattle-minders, his allegation of plurality is straightforward enough: Jok has a 'cleik' or whole fistful of churches and Michell has two or three cures plus a 'knitchell' or bundle of dispensations.

Jok, that wes wont to kiep the stirkis,
 Can now draw him ane cleik of kirkis,
 With ane fals cairt into his sleif,
 Worthe all my ballattis under the byrkis: (66-69)

1 p. 27 ('Quhone Mony Benefices Vakit').

2 p. 41 ('To the King').

mentioned in 'Off benefice, schir, at everie feist'.¹

The basic abuse of the worldly parsons is this:

Swa thai the kirk have in thair cure,
 They fors bot litill how it fure,
 Nor of the buikis, or bellis quha rang thame:
 Thai pans nocht of the prochin pure
 Hed thai the pelfe to pairt amang thame.
 (21-25)

And among the various indiscreet ways of making gifts listed in 'To speik of gift or almous deidis'² the final one is:

Sum givis parrochynniss full wyd,
 Kirkis of Sanct Barnard and Sanct Bryd,
 To teiche, to rewill, and ourse,
 That hes na wit thame selfe to gyd:
 In geving sowld discretioun be.
 (56-60)

Similarly in the related poem 'Eftir geving I speik of taking'³ which is a catalogue of greed, we find:

The clerkis takis benefices with brawlis,
 Sum of Sanct Petir, and sum of Sanct Pawlis;
 Tak he the rentis, no cair hes he,
 Suppois the divill take all thair sawlis:
 In taking sowld discretioun be.
 (6-10)

1 p. 28 ('To the King').

2 p. 33 ('Of Discretioun in Geving'). Lines 36-37 may well be a further jibe at Damian:

Sum givis to strangeris with face new,
 That yisterday fra Flanderis flew ...

3 p. 35 ('Of Discretioun in Taking'). Gregor cites John Leslie, The Historie of Scotland, tr. J. Dalrymple, ed. E.G. Cody and W. Murison (S.T.S., 1888-95), II, 110 (hereafter referred to as Leslie), and suggests that 11.6 - 7 refer to the contention for supremacy between the bishops of Glasgow and St. Andrews in 1491. See The Acts of the Parliament of Scotland, ed. T. Thomson (London, 1814), II, 232 (hereafter referred to as A.P.S.). But the allusion to brawling clerks is surely of wider import: see for example John Major, Historia Majoris Britanniae, tr. A. Constable (S.H.S., 1892), pp. 43-44 (hereafter referred to as Major, H.M.B.).

Like Jok and Michell, Sir Johne Kirkpakar and Sir Bet - the - kirk in 'This hinder nycht, halff sleiping as I lay'¹ have accumulated livings. The former has seven already and boasts that he will have eleven before 'yone ballet maker' gets even one; the latter has four or five servants all eagerly awaiting the deaths of the various clergymen whose livings they confidently expect. Dunbar makes Reason rebuke them:

The balance gois unevin,
That thow, allace, to serff hes kirkis sevin,
And sevin als worth kirk nocht haifand ane,
With gredines I sie this world ourgane,
And suffiencie dwellis nocht bot in heavin. (96-100)

Again, the content of such criticism is taken up by Lindsay, with reference to the conditions developing about a generation after Dunbar, and repeated many times, with appropriate changes of emphasis. It is doubtful however if the sheer skill commanded by Dunbar, his virtuosity as a performer, was matched by his successors.

3. Lindsay's Dreme, Complaynt and Testament.

It is to Lindsay then that we turn for the most prolific source of illustrations. The diagnosis of the ills of the church is one of his main concerns as a writer: his teachings (they are aimed at reform and are not merely analytical) are relatively few in number, they are simple both in

¹ p. 127 ('The Dream'). Tom Scott's conclusion that the poem is 'more of a curiosity than an achievement' is reasonable: the needs of dream-allegory and satire-complaint are not easily met simultaneously. Nevertheless the content of the poem is relevant here.

content and in their literary embodiment, and they are repeated often throughout the body of his work. Before looking at parts of the Satyre from this point of view, we must first notice some important passages in the Dreme, the Complaynt and the Testament.

In comparison with the more highly wrought descriptions of cosmic journeys¹ Lindsay's account in the Dreme of an expedition through hell, purgatory, limbo and the heavens is rather perfunctory. His attention is fully engaged only when his narrative makes it possible to make the kind of social criticism on which the later parts of the poem concentrate. Finding the clergy in hell is an obvious device to enable the narrator to ask Dame Remembrance why they are there:

... the cause of thare unhappy chance
Was covatyce, luste and ambysioun,
The quhilk now garris thame want fruitioun
Off God ... (185-88)

Als, thay did nocht instruct the ignorent,
Provocand thame to pennence, be precheing,
Bot servit warldlie prencis insolent,
And war promovit be thare fenyeit flecheing,
Nocht for thare science, wysedome, nor techeing.
Be symonie was thare promotioun,
More for deneris nor for devotioun. (190-96)

Thay maid nocht equale distributioun
Off haly kirk the patrimonie and rent (199-200)

Thare kirkis rewin, thare ladyis clenely cled,
And rychelye rewlit, boith at burde and bed. (209-10)

Unleifsumlie thay usit propertie,
Passing the boundis of wylfull povertie. (230-31)

¹ Hamer (III, 20-21) has a useful note on medieval 'ascents'. See also Lewis, The Discarded Image for a description of the growth of the model of the medieval universe - the kind of universe in which such 'ascents' were possible.

Greed, lust, ambition; neglect of preaching; service of worldly princes and manipulation of benefice-giving for selfish ends; neglect of the proper uses of church money (the proper uses are church maintenance, administration of church estates and poor relief); neglect of vows of celibacy and poverty - what we have here is a summary of Lindsay's basic complaints against the clergy, complaints which he makes again and again throughout his work. It will be recalled that in Henryson's Orpheus and Eurydice there are clergymen in hell for very similar reasons:

Thair saw he mony paip and cardynall,
 In haly kirk quhilk did abusioun,
 And bischopis in thair pontificall,
 Be symonie and wrang intrusioun;
 Abbottis and all men of religioun,
 For evill disponyng of thair place and rent,
 In flame of fyre wer bittirly torment. (338-44)

Lindsay's bewailing clergymen blame the Emperor Constantine for their unhappy state - he it was who gave the church temporal power.

Quhowbeit thy purpose was tyll ane gude fyne,
 Thow baneist frome us trew devotioun,
 Haiffand sic ee tyll our promotioun. (236-38)

In referring to the allegedly wicked results of Constantine's Gift Lindsay was following an old tradition. Dante, for instance put Constantine in hell for the same cause:

Ahi, Constantin, di quanto mal fu matre,
 non la tua conversion, ma quella dote
 che te prese il primo ricco patre! (Inferno, XIX,
 115-17)

Again, this is a theme to which Lindsay returns: in, for example, the Testament (ll. 803 ff), the Satyre (ll. 1450-61) and the Monarche (ll. 4413-36).

After leaving hell and purgatory Lindsay remarks:

Bot, yit, I do beleve, and ever sall,
That the trew kirk can no waye erre at all. (347-48)

and his assertion of this kind of belief in the ideal and incorruptible church as distinct from its worldly and corrupt manifestation is surely important in relation to Lindsay's stance as a reformer.

It is worth adding that later in the poem, in 'The Complaynt of the Comoun Weill of Scotland', when Comoun Weill's sister Justice is trying in vain to find hospital-
:ity she
meets the same negative response from the clergy:

For I have socht throw all the spirituall stait,
Quhilkis tuke na compt for to heir me complene.
Thare officiariis, thay held me at disdane;
For Symonie, he rewlis up all that rowte;
And Covatyce, that carle, gart bar me oute. (976-80)

The Sheep and the Dog can be considered as an illustration of ll. 976-78; and it should be noted that the blame for this state of affairs is again related to simony, the trading in benefices for 'covatyce'.

Lordis of religioun, thay go lyke seculeris,
Taking more compt in tellyng thare deneris
Nor thay do of thare constitution,
Thus ar thay blyndit be ambitiou. (984-87)

Instead of telling their beads the clergy tell (count) their pence ('deneris'). They are blinded (their reason is clouded) by ambition; justice 'almaist haith tynt hir sycht' (l. 948): the former blindness leads to the latter.

In that part of the Complaynt which deals with the troubles of the later minority of James V Lindsay claims that those who had usurped temporal authority were making

equally unscrupulous use of ecclesiastical offices:

Thay lordis tuke no more regaird,
 Bot quho mycht purches best rewaird.
 Sum to thare freindis gat benefyceis,
 And uther sum gat bischopreis. (301-4)

The record of the clergy at this period he claims was discreditable:

The proudest prelatis of the kirk
 Was faine to hyde thame in the myrk
 That tyme, so failyeit wes thare sycht.
 Sen syne thay may nocht thole the lycht
 Off Christis trew gospell to be sene,
 So blyndit is thare corporall ene
 With warldly lustis sensuall,
 Takyng in realmes the governall,
 Baith gyding court and cessioun,
 Contrar to thare professioun,
 Quhareof I thynk thay sulde have schame,
 Off spirituall preistis to take the name. (309-20)

In then likening priests who can't preach to dogs that can't bark Lindsay alludes to Isaiah, lvi, 10-11:

His watchmen are all blind: they are all ignorant,
 they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping,
 lying down, loving to slumber. Yea, they are greedy
 dogs which can never have enough, and they are
 shepherds which cannot understand: they all look
 to their own way, every one for his gain, from his
 quarter.¹

We have already encountered the belief that the proper sphere of the clerical profession is the spiritual as opposed to the secular and that the troubles arising from the secular use of benefices could be cured if the king left the clergy to look after their own affairs (e.g., The Thre Prestis of Peblis, ll. 434-36). But it has also been pointed out how impractical such a separation of ecclesiastical and civil administration would have been, since the

¹ Lindsay uses this allusion elsewhere: see Satyre, ll. 3887-88, Monarche, ll. 5364-67.

clergy had a monopoly of education and control of a vast proportion of the nation's wealth. Here at any rate Lindsay supports the complementary view that kirkmen should keep to the kirk and leave the running of the state to the secular authorities.

Geve for to preche bene thare professioun,
 Quhy sulde thay mell with court or cessioun,
 Except it war in spirituall thyngis;
 Referryng unto lordis and kyngis
 Temporall causis to be desydit?
 Geve thay thare spirituall office gydit,
 Ilke man mycht say, thay did thare partis. (325-31)

It is in keeping with such a view that the principal blame should lie with the king who makes use of such prelates:

Prencis that sic prelatis promofis
 Accompt thareof to geve behuffis,
 Quhilk sall nocht pas but puneischment,
 Without thay mend and sore repent. (337-40)

In part this is a plea against the abuse of absenteeism and is thus consistent with one of Lindsay's main proposals for reform. The twelfth act in the Satyre declares that

Ilk bischop in his diosie sall remaine,
 And everilk persone (i.e. parson) in his parachoun,
 Teiching thair folk from vices to refraine. (3910-12)

The above lines from the Complaynt do raise wider issues in that as proposals they would appear to ignore the two facts mentioned above, i.e., the wealth of the clergy and the fact that if the king wanted able and educated men to operate his government he had to rely heavily on the clergy. Clearly Lindsay is not going to brush such facts aside - but all protest, to be effective as protest, must simplify, and Lindsay's first concern here is to protest against the abuses which developed in those circumstances.

As a contrast to the troubles of the minority Lindsay draws an idealised picture of the state of affairs following James' establishment of his personal rule. Part of Lindsay's purpose here is to flatter James; but it is also to arraign the church for its corrupt condition because, he alleges, in this happy restitution of good order the church is a notable exception.

Dissimulance dar nocht schaw hir face,
 Quhilk wount was to begyill thy grace;
 Foly is fled out of the toun,
 Quhilk ay was countrar to ressoun;
 Polyce and Peace begynnys to plant,
 That vertuous men can no thyng want;
 And, as for sleuthfull idyll lownis,
 Sall fetterit be in the gailyeownis.
 Ihone Upeland bene full blyith, I trow,
 Because the rysche bus kepis his kow. (399-408)

The rush-bush here is a token for the suppression of cattle-stealing¹ and signifies the efforts of James to bring some justice to his realm after 1528. But here is the exception:

Swa is thare nocht, I understand,
 Withoute gude ordour in this land,
 Except the spiritualitie. (409-11)

And this, Lindsay tells James, is the king's responsibility as well. The advice which follows is specifically related to that aspect of the movement for reform which sought to curb what were alleged to be idolatrous elements in the church ('superstitious pilgrimages' and 'graven images' are mentioned). Not only are these 'against the Lord's command,' but they are the means by which a corrupt clergy can delude their simple parishioners (the 'silly sheep' - silly in the sense of simple or uneducated). The traditions upon which these practices are founded are

¹ In Leslie, II, 77, the idiom is used with reference to James II's reign.

castigated as 'vain'.

Prayand thy grace thareto have ee,
 Cause thame mak ministratioun
 Conforme to thare vocatioun,
 To preche with unfenyeit intentis,
 And trewly use the sacramentis,
 Efter Christis institutionis,
 Levying thare vaine traditionis,
 Quhilkis dois the syllie scheip illude,
 Quhame for Christ Iesus sched his blude,
 As superstitious pylgramagis,
 Prayand to grawin ymagis,
 Expres againis the Lordis command. (412-23)

In his attacks on the degeneracy of the church Lindsay resorts on several occasions to the figure of the 'silly sheep' being abused by their false shepherds. The figure shows the church to be acting in defiance of its original mission as described in John, xxi, 15-17. It occurs for instance in the Monarche:

Christ did command Peter to feid his scheip,
 And so he did feid thame full tenderlye,
 Off that command thay take bot lytill keip,
 Bot Christis scheip that spolye petuouslye,
 And with the woff thay cleith thame curiouslye.
 Lyk gormand wolfis, thay tak of thame thare fude,
 Thai eit thair flesche, and drynkis boith mylk and blude.
 (4799-805)

The clergy, it is thus claimed, are not only bad shepherds, but they behave like the wolves against whom they are supposed to defend their flocks. In the Testament, in the criticism of the church ironically put into the raven's mouth, we are told that

... sillye saulis, that bene Christis scheip,
 Ar gevin to hungre gormande wolfis to keip. (995-96)

And in the Satyre the merchant uses the figure to describe the effect of benefices being given to those who cannot use their offices in the proper manner:

The sillie sauls that bene Christis scheip
 Sould nocht be givin to gormand wolfis to keip.
 (3037-38)¹

To return to the Complaynt, Lindsay warns James not to follow the example of Jeroboam², not to assert men's laws

1 W.W. Skeat, in his Early English Proverbs (Oxford, 1910), p. 110 (hereafter referred to as Skeat, Proverbs) gives this from Alanus de Insulis (Liber Paraboliarum, i, 31):

Sub mōlli pastore capit lanam lupus, et grex
 Incustoditus dilaceratur eo.

This occurs in P.Pl., C, X, 265-66, and cf Chaucer, ed. Robinson, p. 146, ll. 101-2:

Under a shepherde softe and necligent
 The wolf hath many a sheep and lamb torent.

See also Satirical Poems of the Time of the Reformation, ed. J. Cranstoun (S.T.S., 1890-93), I, 193-200 (hereafter referred to as Satirical Poems), where the bishop confesses:

Quhen I was hird the scheip was in ane snair,
 Lyke till ane flok of hennis befoir ane tod.
 (111-112)

2 I Kings, xii, 25-33, and 2 Corinthians, xiii.

'aganis the lordis commandiment', for as they

... puneist war rycht pieteouslie,
 And frome thare realmes wer rutit oute,
 So sall thow be, withouttin doute,
 Baith heir and hyne, withouttin more,
 And want the everlastyng glore. (430-34)

Instead he must follow the example of those who, like David¹
 'destroyed idolatry',

Quhose ryche rewarde was hevinly blys,
 Quhilk sall be thyne, thow doand this. (447-48)

Before returning to Lindsay's Testament it may be worth looking back about eighty years to one of the most famous Scottish examples of bird-allegory, The Buke of the Howlat². The most summary comparison will show the economy with which Lindsay used the tradition. Granted, the author of the Howlat wanted to encompass the whole spirituality and the whole temporality but he becomes engrossed in working out his bird/human analogies to the extent that he lists no fewer than sixty-four of them. Some depend upon appearance: the peacock because of his splendour is the pope, the wren because of his smallness is the dwarf. Some depend upon a voice characteristic: the cock is the chanter, the thrush, blackbird, ousel, starling, lark and nightingale are minstrels, and the rook is an Irish

1 2 Samuel, v, 20-21.

2 Scottish Alliterative Poems, ed. F.J. Amours (S.T.S., 1897), pp. 47-81 (hereafter referred to as Alliterative Poems); for date (c.1450) see pp. xxvi-xxix and for a summary of the narrative see pp. xxix-xxxii. It is worth referring to the possibility that this work is a satire on events at the Council of Basle (1431-49) though an assessment of this would be outside the scope of the present study.

bard. Alliteration of course plays a decisive part in some of these significations, e.g. 'the martoune, the murcoke, the myresnype' are a group of learned men. In others, hunting habits determine the human equivalent, either humorously:

Thar come the curlewe a clerk, and that full cunnand,
 Chargit as chancillar,
 For he couth wryte wounder fair,
 With his neb for mistar,
 Apon the se sand. (204-8)

or satirically, as in the case of the pitill and the pype gled (kinds of hawk) who are the king's purveyor:

For thai couth chewiss chikinnis, and perchess pultre,
 To cleke fra the commonis, as kyngis caytouris.
 (644-45)

Lindsay's Papyngo falls through pride. Without suggesting 'influence' one can for comparison point to the overweening pride of the owl in the Howlat. His change of form has served only to reveal a corruption of character: he becomes 'elate', 'unsufferable' and bears himself 'so hie and so haltane',

So pomposs, impertinat, and reprovabell,
 In excess our arrogant, (924-25)

that the other birds plead with Nature to reduce him to a lowly estate. At the end of the story the owl, repentant, sees himself as an 'example'.

Now mark your mirour be me, all maner of man,
 Ye princis, prentis pryde for penneis and prowel,
 That pullis the pure ay,
 Ye sall syng as I say,
 All your welth will away,
 Thus I warn yow. (970-75)

This reference to the 'merror for princes' places the Howlat in a tradition which remained strong throughout and

beyond our period: but the theme as such is subservient to the ecclesiastical satire, and the moral theme there concerns the deceitfulness of appearances.

The basis for the ecclesiastical criticism which is the main motive of the second half of Lindsay's Testament (ll. 647-1185) is the contrast between the proper function of the priest which the dying papyngo needs and the actual behaviour of the clergy who attend upon her. Their appearance suggests the opposite of what in fact they are.

The magpie (a canon regular), the raven (a black monk) and the kite (a friar) are wordly/bestial imitations of the clergy. Their falsity is declared directly by the narrator - note 'fenyeit' in l. 648:

The pye persavit the papingo in paine.
He lychtit down, and fenyeit him to greit. (647-48)

Note also 'fenyeitlye' and 'contrafait' and l. 663:

The revin come rolpand quhen he hard the rair,
So did the gled, with mony pieteous pew,
And fenyeitlye thay contrafait gret cair. (661-63)¹

Their falsity is also manifested in the opening words of the birds themselves, wherein the most obvious form of irony indicates that the words mean the opposite of what they say, e.g. l. 671:

It is weill knawin, my conscience bene full cleir.

This false relation between appearance and reality is exposed by the papyngo in terms which are blunt in comparison with the sophisticated arguments in which the three

¹ In 'The Bischoppis lyfe and testament' the bishop compares himself to a gled in his greediness:

The first that ever vaikit was Dunkell,
And I was gaipand lyke ane gredie gled. (73-74)

clerics indulge.

Howbeit your rayment be religious lyke,
Your conscience, I suspect, be nocht gude. (676-77)

... your facunde wordis fair,
Full sor I dreid, be contrar to your dedis. (710-11)

It dois abhor my pure perturbit spreit
Tyll mak to yow ony confessioun. (717-18)

Moreover she is reluctant to leave her gear to them because of their exemption 'frome the senye and the sessioun'

(l. 720) - clerical claims of exemption from civil jurisdiction are referred to just briefly but elsewhere Lindsay lays some stress on this aspect of clerical abuse, e.g.

comically in the Satyre where the second sergeant suggests that the friars will claim to be exempt even from the

resurrection (ll. 3639-42).¹ More important at the moment

is the reference to teinds - the papyngo accuses the kite of stealing a chicken and the kite claims he is taking no

more than his right. It is under pretence of claiming

such rights that the three birds of prey devour the papyngo.²

The operative words in the following lines are 'prevelye',

'pyke' and 'under ane dyke'.

I did persave, quhen prevelye ye did pyke
Ane chekin frome ane hen, under ane dyke.
I grant, said he; that hen was my gude freind,
And I that chekin tuke, bot for my teind.
Ye know the faith be us mon be susteind:
So be the Pope it is preordinate,
That spirituall men suld leve upon thair teind.

(678-84)

Before the brutal conclusion and the exposure of the cleric's cynicism, however, the birds 'debate' the causes

1 J. Dowden, The Medieval Church in Scotland (Glasgow, 1910), pp. 302-5 (hereafter referred to as Dowden, Medieval Church).

2 See note in Hamer, III, 154-5.

of the church's degeneration. It is not a real debate because the papyngo is clearly Lindsay's protagonist and the clerics avoid meeting the argument on its own terms.

In her two epistles, to the king and to her fellow courtiers, the fact that the papyngo is dying gives her the authority to speak of the untrustworthiness of the worldly court: having fallen, she could legitimately warn others of the danger. Similarly Lindsay now gives her certain qualifications for reporting on the reputation of the church - her wide travel, her service of princes and her understanding of the 'vulgare pepyllis Iugement' (ll. 745-58). By making her concentrate on 'what the common people say', Lindsay is able to add considerable weight to the force of his arguments.

The common^u peple sayith ye bene all
 Degeneritⁿ frome your holy prematyvis,
 As testyfeis the proces of your lyvis. (770-72)

The 'holy primitives' had the virtues which present-day clergymen conspicuously lack:

Thay tuke no cure of land, ryches, nor rent:
 Doctryne and deid war boith equevolent. (785-86)

They worked miracles. The complaint on this score is markedly similar to that made by the king in The Thre Prestis of Peblis (ll. 151-61). The course of the church's degeneration is then mapped out in an allegory: originally the church was married to poverty and their daughters were chastity and devotion, but as a result of Constantine's Gift poverty was banished and in her place the church took property, and their daughters were riches and sensuality.

Again we notice the crucial role attributed to Constantine¹, though in spite of the allegedly disastrous results he is acknowledged to have acted

With gude intent, and movit of pietie. (805)

The plight of chastity, rejected wherever she asks for protection (until she comes to Sciennes), is a piece of allegory highly suited to stage treatment and Lindsay uses it in the Satyre (ll. 1192-1263). It also gives scope for argumentation like 'Why should we receive what Rome has rejected?' (ll. 892 ff) and jokes like the friars' rejection of Lady Chastity on the ground that they won't have dealings with ladies (l. 914).

The papyngo lays great stress on the value of choosing office-holders by election, 'unthrall to ryches, or to povertie'.² In his reply the raven readily admits that something is amiss with the quality of the church leadership but like the clergy in The Thre Prestis of Peblis he shifts the responsibility onto the shoulders of the temporal princes who make unwise appointments.

I saye, the temporall prencis hes the wyte,
That in the kirk sic pastours dois provyde,
To governe saulis that not thaimselfis can gyde.
(980-82)

He claims that long after the church took property the prelates lived in 'great perfection' and were indeed chosen by election (ll. 983-89). He makes no attempt to answer criticism of the corrupt life of the clergy - he meets the

1 See above, with reference to Dreme, ll. 236-38.

2 See above, with reference to The Thre Prestis of Peblis, ll. 375-430.

accusation simply by admitting it and passing on the blame to others:

Now dyke lowparis dois in the kirk resort,
Be symonie and supplycatioun
Off prencis be thare presentatioun. (992-94)

No marvell is, thocht we religious men
Degenerit be, and in our lyfe confusit:
Bot sing and drynk, none uther craft we ken,
Our spirituall fatheris hes us so abusit:
Agane our wyll, those treukeuris bene intrusit.
(997-1001)

The raven concludes with an eloquent plea for a method of awarding benefices only to those with the proper learning¹ though he despairs of seeing his hope realised:

I tyne my tyme, to wys quhilk wyll nocht be. (1036)

As we shall see in connection with the charges brought against the church in the Satyre, there was a considerable volume of criticism and desire for reform expressed within the church: it would not have been unusual therefore for a 'corrupt' clergyman to call for the renewal of the church. But here the device is primarily a rhetorical one: Lindsay puts such criticism into the mouth of a cleric who is himself the target of criticism, and in view of the raven's sincerity as demonstrated by the narrative the implication is that such 'self-criticism' is just another example of the sophistry by means of which the corrupt clergy justify themselves. The raven, for instance, knows he can safely 'wish for what will not be' - he would not be wishing for it if there were a real chance of reform coming soon, for

¹ The church itself was to make this very plea, e.g. Patrick, p. 176.

that would be his undoing.

Clerical marriage is another reform repeatedly advocated by Lindsay: it is treated in the Satyre and finds a place in the fifteen acts for the reformation of the realm. The argument is that the vow of chastity for many clergymen is simply a means of avoiding the responsibilities of marriage and in fact gives clergymen more licence than a married man has.

Thus, chaistyttie thay turne in to delyte:
Wantyng of wyffis bene cause of appetyte. (868-70)

Les skaith it war, with lycence of the Pape,
That ilk prelate one wyfe had of his awin,
Nor se thar bastardis ouirthort the cuntre blawin:
For, now, be thay be weill cumin frome the sculis,
Thay fall to work, as thay war commoun bullis.
(1055-59)

Hamer claims that 'far more indignation was caused in Scotland by the immorality of the clergy than in any other country, and the evidence supporting the complaints is overwhelming'.¹

The greed and rapacity of the clergy however are the main topic here and the action of the poem closes with a vivid illustration. The papyngo wants her worldly possessions to be used for the general good, for those who need them - e.g. her gay plumage for the owl, her eyes for the bat, her beak for the pelican, her musical gifts for the cuckoo, her eloquence for the goose. Her bones are to be taken to the phoenix and her heart to the king and her clerical executors are left with the humblest part, her

¹ III, 109.

tripes. To the last she is uneasy about trusting the three of them -

Sore I suspect, your conscience be to large,
(1128)¹

The dishonesty of clerical executors was seemingly a fairly common complaint, so again Lindsay is touching on a matter of first-hand concern to his audience. Dowden, for instance, mentions attempts to debar from the function of executor clergy who belong to orders which claim exemption from episcopal jurisdiction.² And the following comment in Robertus Richardinus' Commentary on the Rule of St. Augustine, written by a churchman for churchmen, is surely significant in this connection:

Ut cum quis opinione sacerdotis dives adversa
valetudine tantari incipit: illi tanquam mili
rapaces infirmorum circumvolitant domus, non ut
Dei servum consolentur: sed ut ab intrantibus
et vicinis sciscitentur, quando morientur at
peribit nomen eius?³

In the poem the true nature of the magpie, the raven and the kite is revealed when they set upon the remains of the papyngo and devour her; her last wishes and their professed functions are ignored as they squabble about the division of the spoils. The clergy grasp for themselves what ought to be shared for the common good: singular profit again, at the expense of the common wealth. The pointed attack achieved by Lindsay's allegory at this point has a fierce simplicity of the kind often achieved by a

1 Cf Dunbar, 'This waverand warldis wretchidnes', ll. 41-43.

2 Dowden, Medieval Church, pp. 302-5.

3 Richardinus, pp. 28-29; see Patrick, pp. 17, 115.

modern cartoonist like Low: it cannot have failed to arouse strong feeling. In this case the last two verses, with their conventional gesture of modesty¹, have an extra significance. The 'lytill tragedie', which is too rough and rude for the eyes of the educated or the high-born, is told to 'steil in ane nuke' and to associate with someone of the order of a cook (ll. 1172-85). This hardly means that Lindsay wanted to be discreet about his attack on the church - if in his Satyre he could publicly (and before the court) arraign the clergy with such vigour as he did² then there is no reason to suppose that he wanted any kind of underground readership for the Testament. The dedication of the poem to the lower orders of society however can be seen as a reflection of the fact that the clerical abuses attacked in it are those which were most evident to the common people. The avarice of the clergy in exacting to the full their alleged rights bore most heavily on the poorest level of society.

In content, the ecclesiastical criticism so far cited from the Dreme, the Complaynt and the Testament can be cited again, at greater length, from the Satyre, and at even greater length, from the Monarche. In form and in potential audience, however, there are important differences. The three earlier works belong specifically to a court

1 For the topic of affected modesty see E.R. Curtius, European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages (Bern, 1948; London, 1953), pp. 83-85 (hereafter referred to as Curtius).
 2 See for instance the story about James V's reaction to the play: Hamer, IV, 128.

milieu, and whether read privately or listened to, are primarily literary (i.e. written) works. Although serious works, there is enough of conscious performance in their realisation to make them highly suitable for recitation. A recitation of the kind of writing we find in the Monarche however, though not improbable, would be much more a matter of edification: and on the whole the Monarche must have been meant for private reading. The Satyre is a very different kind of work: what we have is not a literary creation per se but a text for realisation in live performance; the 'work' is therefore the theatrical experience which can be created on the basis of the text. No doubt the audiences for all three categories overlapped to a certain extent, but it seems reasonable to suppose that the Satyre had immediate access to a wider and more mixed audience than the other works. This function (immediate communication with an audience who are looking and listening) must be kept in mind when we consider the comparatively simple literary means chosen, the thematic repetitiveness, the polemical insistence. So while Lindsay's most immediate aim may have been to entertain his audience his real purpose was didactic: to drive home as vividly as possible the sharpest points of his ecclesiastical satire. Ultimately the content determined the means, and the principal outlines of that content will now be given.

4. Lindsay's Satyre.

Lindsay's main concerns in the Satyre are the ills of the church and the wider associated ills of society: true, it is as satire on the three estates but the clerical estate receives the most substantial and severe treatment. As Hamer remarks (III, 21), 'Lindsay's picture of Scotland in the early sixteenth century can be held worthy of consideration only in so far as its testimony is borne out by other writers and official records'. That his testimony can be borne out in this way has been shown by William Murison's study of his church criticism in relation to a body of substantially very similar criticism from within the church, i.e. there is no need to depend on avowedly Protestant (and therefore biased) sources to authenticate Lindsay's strictures.

The terms of Lindsay's charges against the clergy are summarised by Murison like this: the clergy pay scant heed to their vow of celibacy; they are excessively grasping of dues like teinds and corpse-presents; they utilise the belief in purgatory to enforce payments; instead of using their revenues as they ought, for the proper upkeep of the church and for the relief of the poor, they trade in benefices to satisfy their greed; they are so ignorant that they are incapable of performing their most elementary duties; they neglect both church buildings and church services; their pride and ambition and devotion to worldly amusements are plain for all to see; they misuse the privacy of confession; pilgrimages are notorious;

indulgences are peddled unscrupulously; consistory courts prevent justice and oppress the poor; friars behave like licensed swindlers; clergy are always quick to claim exemption from ordinary legal codes by appealing to papal authority; and Lindsay feels strongly also about the prevalent use of sacred pictures and the clergy's unwillingness to adopt the vernacular.¹

With regard to four of his principal points of censure, an indication of the chief references in the course of the Satyre will illustrate the density of Lindsay's attack and the frequency with which he reiterates his charges:

(a) The failure of the clergy to observe their vow of chastity: they interpret their vow not to marry as a pretext for the greatest possible freedom, e.g. they will castigate a married person for infringing the bounds of marriage while they themselves totally disregard these bounds.²

(b) The dealings of the consistory courts: as we have seen already (e.g. in Henryson's Fables) these were accused of preventing justice and extorting from the poor.³

1 W. Murison, Sir David Lyndsay (Cambridge, 1938), pp. 80-119 (hereafter referred to as Murison). On these points Murison gives copious references to the whole body of Lindsay's work, not just the Satyre.

2 ll. 40-45, 58, 237-38, 255-56, 261-62, 283-86, 508-10, 1226-27, 1315, 1334, 1362-63, 1412-15, 1722, 1831-32, 2023-25, 2514, 2751-66, 3396-99, 3404-9, 3424-25, 3655-56, 3660-61, 3672-73, 4236-37.

3 ll. 1967-68, 2002-4, 2008-10, 2013-14, 3055-56, 3059-78, 3079-80, 4220-23.

(c) The great wealth of the church: criticism under this head concerns both the way in which the church obtained its wealth and the way in which this wealth was wrongly spent; closely allied topics include the economic problems associated with the outflow of cash to Rome and the social problems associated with the ability of prelates to give their daughters large dowries.¹

(d) The activities of the friars: their claim to be exempt from normal jurisdiction for instance was used as an excuse for the greatest licence.²

Allied to the abuses wrought by the friars were those of pardoners.³

(The ignorance of the clergy, the total inability of many priests to fulfil their teaching function, is of course another principal line of attack, but this is better considered later, in relation to Lindsay's attitude to the reformation.)

Lindsay's main charges re-appear throughout his work, both in the 1528-30 poems, in the dramatic Satyre and in the later Monarche: there is no doubt that these opinions were held consistently. But, as I remarked above, the important point is that these criticisms can be substantiated from other contemporary sources - and not just from

1 ll. 1450-61, 1971-2000, 2502, 2514, 2723-36, 2745-46, 2749-50, 2751-54, 2822-24, 2952-61, 2976-81, 3089-92, 2838-46, 2847-58, 2859-68, 2881-82, 3181-91, 3348-71.

2 ll. 739-42, 747-49, 753-600, 776-78, 2615-18, 3000-3, 3024-25, 3378-79, 3604, 3628-29, 3639-42, 4249-59, 4440-43.

3 ll. 2037-89, 2193-97, 2246, 2255-57, 2269, 2272-75.

reformist writers but also and much more significantly from church officials, historians and commentators who were themselves loyal Roman Catholics. Thus in the course of a chapter on the celibacy of the clergy at this period,

Dowden comments:

Nothing could be more unreasonable than to accept the picture presented by a humorous satirist such as Sir David Lyndesay, if it were unsupported by other evidence. But the evidence for the immorality of the Scottish clergy in the middle of the sixteenth century is, unhappily, so copious and unimpeachable, that one hesitates to say that the poet was guilty even of exaggeration in the indictment which he sets forth in The Thrie Estatis.¹

What Dowden says of the clergy's neglect of their vow of celibacy can be said of all of Lindsay's charges. And after specifying what these charges are Murison sets out 'to show that Lyndsay, satirist and humorist though he was, had a solid foundation for his charges, that in fact they are substantially true'. And he shows this 'from official documents of the Roman Church, from state records, and from the writings of faithful members of the Roman Church'.² From the decisions of provincial councils alone³ the bulk of Lindsay's complaints can be substantiated; further it is significant that some reforming enactments made in, say 1549, had to be repeated in^{1559.} Records of legitimation⁴ give

1 Medieval Church, p. 314.

2 Murison, p. 120; his evidence is given on pp. 120-200.

3 Given by Patrick; see also Thomas Winning, 'Church Councils in Sixteenth Century Scotland', Essays on the Scottish Reformation, 1513-1625, ed. D. McRoberts (Glasgow, 1962), pp. 332-58 (hereafter referred to as Essays on Reformation).

4 D.H. Fleming, The Reformation in Scotland (London, 1910), pp. 540-69 (hereafter referred to as Fleming).

ample proof that many prominent churchmen had families: Murison calculates that between 1529 and 1559 over 450 sons and daughters of some 300 clergy were legitimated. Murison's evidence here does not of course prove that a greater number of natural children were born to priests in those years than had previously been the case: what it does show is that churchmen were more prepared to admit openly that they had children and that they had few scruples in trying to ensure for these children the financial and legal rights of legitimate offspring. It is one thing to take a vow publicly and break it privately; to break it publicly is quite another and the fact that so many clergymen were prepared to do just this surely indicates a widespread indifference to the vows they formally accepted.

Archbishop Hamilton's Catechism¹ represents a move from within the church to reform some elementary abuses and this gives further evidence of what these abuses were.

Archibald Hay's Panegyricus² to his superior, David Beaton, tells, inter alia, of similar shortcomings, as does the Commentary of Richardinus already referred to³. Various papal negotiations of the time indicate that concern for the state of the church in Scotland was of wider than local

1 ed. T.G. Law (Oxford, 1884).

2 See J.F.K. Johnstone and A.W. Robertson, Bibliographia Aberdonensis (The Third Spalding Club, Aberdeen, 1929-30), I, 38-39. A summary of Hay's criticisms is given by Murison, pp. 192 ff.

3 See also G.G. Coulton, Scottish Abbeys and Social Life (Cambridge, 1933), pp. 240-49. Coulton claims that Richardinus gives us a general picture of the state of the Augustinian order in 1531, and recognises that many of the conditions described must have been prevalent for some time.

interest¹. Murison further draws upon the historians John Major, John Bellenden, John Leslie and the author (or rather, adaptor) of The Complaynt of Scotlande; and finally the tract writers Quintin Kennedy, Ninian Winyet, and George Conn².

The evidence presented by Murison is conclusive of a general state of decay whose characteristics are those outlined by Lindsay. In the course of his conclusion Murison comments:

Here, then, was a community which to a very great extent had lost all trust in priests and all respect for them because of their faithlessness, negligence, avarice, ignorance, immorality; a community maddened by the exaction of teinds as well as by other grievances, and grimly asking why these men should engross the wealth of the nation. To the community in this mood had come the polished wit of Buchanan's Latin, the piercing sarcasm and flashing mockery of Lyndsay's vernacular, besides the plain, pointed home thrusts of songs and ballads, such as The Gude and Godlie Ballatis.³

1 Papal Negotiations, to which several references are made in the course of these notes.

2 Quintin Kennedy: see Wodrow Miscellany, op. cit., also ed. C.H. Kuipers, Quintin Kennedy (1520-1564: Two Eucharistic Tracts (Nijmegen, 1964). Ninian Winyet: see Certain Tractates, ed. J.K. Hewison (S.T.S., 1888-90). For George libri duo, Romae: Typis Vaticanis. MDCXXVIII.

3 Murison, p. 203. In considering the adaptation of source material in The Complaynt of Scotlande W.A. Nielson comments that 'it seems significant that in urging the duty of patriotism, the Scottish author omits Chartier's appeal to "la foy Catholique".' See 'The Original of The Complaynt of Scotlande', Journal of English and Germanic Philology, I (1897), 411-30; the case against the churchmen is expanded by the Scottish author. The edition of The Complaynt of Scotlande used is that by J.A.H. Murray (E.E.T.S., 1972) (hereafter referred to as C.S.).

↳ Conn Murison cites: De duplici statu Religionis apud Scotis

Lindsay's attack on the abuses of the church was therefore in practical terms: his offer of a remedy was in equally practical terms, taking the form of a series of parliamentary acts. These are presented to a parliament in the play,¹ i.e. Lindsay is saying that these are the measures which ought to be approved and implemented by the real parliament in Edinburgh. The need for action on each of these points has already been dramatically demonstrated in the course of the play. As can be seen from this summary of the contents of the acts, their scope is the whole of society, but within this the reformation of the church is viewed as having a vital role.

The acts call for:

1. the upholding and strengthening of the kirk;
2. the upholding of the laws passed by the 'last' parliament and the punishment of law-breakers;
3. the setting in feu of all temporal lands, 'the common weil for til advance'.
4. the firm treatment of thieves;
5. the establishment of 'ane sute of clarkis sapient' to administer justice 'equallie without impediment' in the north;
6. the payment of proper pensions to those in charge of the law (the money could be obtained by using the rents of nunneries);

¹ Satyre, ll. 3793-951.

7. the separation of temporal and spiritual justice (e.g. the removal of temporal business from the consistory courts);
8. the granting of benefices only to those 'of gude eruditioun' and those qualified to preach;
9. the weeding out from the church of vast numbers of ignorant priests (a tailor is not tolerated if he cannot make clothes properly, so why should an incompetent priest be tolerated?);
10. the prohibition of benefice-buying from king or pope;
11. the abolition of corpse-presents;
12. the injunction on bishops to stay in their dioceses and on parsons to stay in their parishes;
13. the severe curbing of cash transactions with Rome;
14. the liberty of the clergy to marry;
15. the prohibition of marriages between noble families and the bastard offspring of prelates (to prevent the 'degradation' of the nobility).

The acts grow out of the action of the play, yet they provide us with a synopsis of Lindsay's views on the society he knew and his prescription for its better ordering. Several of the acts, not surprisingly, recall topics already encountered in previous chapters. Nos. 4, 5 and 6 for example, on the need for a more efficient administration of justice, reflect concerns we have noted throughout the period; so does No. 7, which recognises the influence of ecclesiastical courts on purely secular matters. Nos. 8,

9, 10, and 12, on the proper use of church offices, refer to one of the most pressing and complicated problems of the age, though the terms in which a solution is here formulated seem over-simple in relation to the complexity of the situation. Large-scale economic changes were occurring and were not always understood as such by commentators; at least the need to prevent money leaving the realm in the form of cash payments had by this time been long realised (No. 13). The problem referred to in No. 15 (reminiscent of the noblemen's complaint in The Thre Prestis of Peblis) also had intricate economic ramifications. Lindsay's particular view of it reflects his sympathy for the nobility's class attitude.

In Chapter Three I shall discuss aspects of the Satyre which deal with the plight of the frequently oppressed and neglected poorer commoners; and in Chapter Four aspects which deal with the function and duty of a king. Here, for the rest of the present chapter, follow examples which illustrate in detail Lindsay's handling, in the Satyre, of the general points raised above.

Lindsay's championship of the vernacular New Testament, for instance, is made clear in various parts of the play: it is part of his attack on ecclesiastical ignorance and neglect. When Flattrie warns Spiritualitie of the approach of Dame Veritie and urges her immediate banishment,

Now quhile the king is with his luif sleipand (1096)
he describes her as carrying the New Testament; Spiritualitie

agrees on the urgency of defence against her,

Now quhile the king misknawis the veritie. (1102)

And when Flattrie 'exposes' Veritie it is her possession of the English New Testament which calls forth the accusation of heresy:

Quhat buik is that harlot, into thy hand?
Out walloway, this is the New Testament,
In English tounge, and printit in England,
Herisie, herisie, fire, fire incontinent. (1144-47)

It is worth noting that in the course of this episode Veritie is closely identified with a Lutheran context: the Parson exclaims

And go distroy all thir Lutherians:
In speciall yon la die Veritie. (1118-19)

Sir Robert Rome-raker, the 'perfite publicke pardonner', declares

I give to the devill with gude intent,
This unsell wickit New-testament,
With them that it translaitit. (2050-52)

And later, when Gude Counsell tries to make Spiritualitie read a passage from Paul's letter to Timothy (I Tim., iii, 1-3) on the vitues which ought to reside in a bishop, he refuses thus:

I never red that, thairfoir reid it your sel. (2910)

The point is stressed by having Spiritualitie swear by both Judas Iscariot and the Cross that he will never read the New Testament. This is combined with another jibe at the ignorance and influence of the friars.

Gude Counsall: Schir red ye never the New Testament?
Spiritualitie: Na sir, be him that our Lord Jesus sauld,
I red never the New Testament nor Auld:
Nor ever thinks to do sir be the Rude,
I heir freiris say that reiding dois na gude.
(2918-22)

St. Paul seems to be specially irksome to the clergy for the pardoner wishes he had never been born (l. 2075) and Spiritualitie later echoes this sentiment (ll. 2915-16).

Ignorance of the basic text of their profession is closely related to the failure of the clergy to fulfil their basic teaching duties. For example when Merchant and Gude Counsall agree that the proper purpose of teinds is to furnish competent preachers, Pauper interrupts with:

Sir, God nor I be stickit with ane knyfe,
Gif ever our persoun preichit in all his lyfe.
(2938-39)

Gude Counsall points to the extraordinary disorder in a realm whose menial craftsmen are more competent in their business than prelates are in theirs (ll. 3147-52) and the point is echoed in the ninth act (ll. 3873-88).

A more comic demonstration of clerical ignorance can be found in the reactions of the parson and the abbot to the doctor's sermon, in the course of which the doctor reminds them

Luife bene the ledder quhilk hes bot steppis twa,
Be quhilk we may clim up to lyfe againe,
Out of this vail of miserie and wa. (3492-94)

(i.e. first love God and second love your neighbour as yourself.) But the parson interprets this with a ridiculous piece of arithmetic: heaven is 10,007 miles away so a short-legged man could never manage this distance in two steps. The abbot's interpretation is equally literal: on such a high ladder lame or blind men could never climb and as for himself he is too fat to get up it (ll. 3511-28).

The parson's response is also designed to reveal a harsher attack on the church's degeneracy - for the parson accepts the seven sins as seven virtues and the church is viewed as working in direct and wilful contradiction to its own professed ideals.

Personne: Cum doun dastart and gan sell draiff,
I understand nocht quhat thow said ...
Quhair thou sayis pryde is deidlie sin,
I say pryde is bot honestie.
And covetice of warldlie win
Is bot wisdom, I say for me.
Ire, hardiness and gluttonie,
Is nathing ellis but lyfis fude:
The naturall sin of lecherie
Is bot trew luife. All thir ar gude.

Doctor: God and the kirk hes givin command,
That all gude Christian men refuse them.

Personne: Bot war thay sin I understand,
We men of kirk wald never use them. (3529-30,
3533-44)

In the play the clergy meet criticism and attack in a variety of ways but they all amount to an evasion of the issue at stake.

After being confronted, for instance, with the verses from 1 Timothy iii, 1-3, on the qualities desired in a bishop:

This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous ...

- when faced with this Spiritualitie simply retorts

Ye temporall men, be him that heryit hell,
Ye are ovir peart with sik maters to mell. (2911-12)

(though he has just shown by his own ignorance that he is not fit to 'mell' in such matters himself).

The clergy claim exemption from the normal processes of the law, as when Divyne Correctioun threatens Spirituallitie with punishment unless he comes to reasonable terms with Johne the Commoun Weill, and Spiritualitie claims:

Schir we can schaw exemptioun,
Fra your temporall punitioun,
The quhilk wee purpois till debait. (2699-701)

Again, when Flattrie, disguised as a friar, faces the threat of banishment, he objects:

I am exemptit fra Kings and Queens,
And fra all humane law. (3628-29)

The Second Sergeant takes him at his word:

On Dumisday, quhen Christ sall say

Venite benedicti:

The freirs will say without delay

Nos sumus exempti. (3639-42)

In the Testament (ll. 980-1038) we saw clergymen meet criticism simply by accepting it and in turn blaming the king for having appointed such unworthy men as their superiors. There is a similar passage here.

Merchant: We mervell of yow paintit sepulturis,
That was sa bauld for to accept sic cuiris,
With glorious habite rydand upon your muillis.
Now men may se ye are bot verie fuillis.

Spiritualitie: We say the kings war greiter fuillis nor we,
That us promovit to sa greit dignitie.

Abbot: Thair is ane thowsand in the kirk but doubt,
Sic fuillis as we gif thay war weill socht out.
(3723-30)

On other occasions the clergy react by threatening critics with heresy proceedings. The parson tries to silence Johne thus:

To speik of preists be sure it is na bourds:
 Thay will burne men now for rakles words,
 And all thay words ar herisie in deid. (2773-75)

And later, when Divyne Correctionoun proposes, with Rex's approval, to deprive the prelates for their negligence, Spiritualitie falls back on the same line of defence:

I mak ane vow to God and ye us handill,
 Ye salbe curst and gragit with buik and candill:
 Syne we sall pas unto the Paip and pleinyie,
 And to the devill of hell condemne this meinye.
 For quhy sic reformatioun as I weine
 Into Scotland was never hard nor seine. (3717-22)

Arguing from the status quo, from consuetude, is another common defence. There is a comic example when Spiritualitie is asked why he walks backwards into the assembly of the estates:

Soveraine we have gaine sa this mony a yeir.
 Howbeit ye think we go undecently,
 Wee think wee gang richt wonder pleasantly. (2384-86)

When Pauper curses the practice of taking corpse-presents the parson retorts:

Fals huirsun carle I say that law is gude,
 Becaus it hes bene lang our consuetude. (2795-96)

And Spiritualitie similarly refuses to countenance any alteration in present practice:

Na, na, never till the day of Iudgement.
 Wee will want nathing that wee have in use,
 Kirtil nor know, teind lambe, teind gryse nor guse.
 (2822-24)

Earlier, when the matter was still at the discussion stage, Spiritualitie tried to postpone the whole proceedings.

In doing so he does not deny that reformation may be necessary:

Quhat thing is this sir, that ye have devysit?
 Schirs ye have neid for till be weill advysit:
 Be nocht haistie into your executioun,
 And be nocht our extreime in your punitioun.
 And gif ye please to do sir, as wee say,
 Postpone this parlament till ane uther day.
 For quhy? the peopill of the region
 May nocht indure extreme correctioun. (2399-406)

Such postponement was characteristic of the Scottish church in the years preceding the Reformation, and Lindsay's allusions would be readily appreciated. It is of course Spiritualitie who needs extreme correction, and not 'the peopill of this region'. This is another side-stepping argument, for Spiritualitie tries to use an apparent concern for 'the people' as a guise behind which to avoid the real issue.

The actual content, doctrinal, political, social, of the Satyre was clearly of paramount importance to Lindsay as he conceived and wrote the play: its main purpose was to persuade and provoke and the literary means used were chosen to serve that end. On the other hand Lindsay's skill in handling those means transformed what could have been a series of debating points into a visible theatrical creation, and as modern revivals of the play have shown, its capacity to entertain and stimulate is more than sufficient to enliven for us the issues of the debate. For its contemporary audiences, therefore, the impact must have been strong: a skilfully devised entertainment plus a very sharp treatment of the most fiercely debated issues of the day.

5. John Davidson's 'Ane Dialogue or Mutual Talking
betwix a Clerk and Courteour'.

It would be appropriate to conclude this chapter by referring to a work which clearly belongs to a time after the Reformation was an established fact of Scottish life. The developments leading to the Scottish Reformation were complex and gradual - gradual in the sense that no clear-cut dividing lines can be drawn to mark off pre- and post-Reformation periods in any very useful way. The year 1560, while a convenient pointer, represents only a few developments in a long chain. The issues raised by Lindsay belong to an earlier stage of this process, when many problems which were later solved in practical terms were still very much in a state of flux. On the other hand, certain themes which we have seen to be of concern throughout our period were still provoking debate after the Reformation was established. Davidson's Dialogue will serve as an example. It was written because in 1573 the Regent Morton obtained an order in Privy Council authorising the union of several parishes under the sole charge and supervision of one clergyman - and Davidson decided to attack this order and what he considered to be its implications. The work was published anonymously in the same year by Lepreuik, who earned imprisonment and ruin for doing so.¹

One of the principal themes is the old contention

¹ Satirical Poems, I, 296-324; Davidson's biography is discussed on pp. xlv-lii and an account of Lepreuik's troubles is given on pp. lvii-lix.

between church and state - the clerk's initial hesitation, for instance is due to his reluctance 'with princes maters for to mell' but the courtier retorts that the new order

Wes nocht maid be the court allane;
The Kirkis Commissionars wes thair,
And did aggrie ...

(48-50)

As we have seen, distinctions between secular and spiritual authority were often, in practical matters, of name only. The courtier's point sets the dialogue off and the debate is developed at length and with a give-and-take that is frequently lively. A full consideration of the arguments raised would take us beyond the scope of the present study, but a few selected points may be mentioned.

One of the clerk's earlier assertions is that instead of putting four parishes under one preacher, each church would prefer to have four preachers (ll. 112-14). But the courtier patiently sets forth the arguments which favour the order, and his description of the neglected state of the rural and distant parishes is reminiscent of the complaint made against the church on this score in 'The Lamentatioun of Lady Scotland' (ll. 157-80). He claims that many parish kirks stand waste, that many 'richt greit' congregations never hear the Word, that some of them have not had Communion for seven years. Yet parishioners in places like Galloway pay their tiends as faithfully as those in Fife or Lothian, so why should they suffer? If there are fewer than two hundred preachers (l. 160), then the order shows the only way in which they can be shared

round to the greatest advantage: 'sa sall the Gospell be enlargit'.

The clerk refuses to accept the apparent justice of this argument: the answer as he sees it is to take practical steps to increase the number of preachers. Pay a proper stipend, he says, and not only will 'mony in this land' come forward to the ministry but also 'our countrie clerkis beyond the seysis' will return from

Quhair thay are scatterit in all airtis:
 Becaus at hame thay will not give
 Sufficient quharon thay may live. (342-44)

Again, rents could be supplied to students to allow them full-time study of theology, and misappropriation of such funds could be prevented.¹ He assumes, like the author of 'The Lamentation of Lady Scotland', that the principal function of a university is to supply clergymen: and as far back as 1496 such an assumption was implicitly questioned in the proposal to divert more teaching towards training in civil law.

For quhy the scuillis suld mother be,
 To mak our preichouris multiplie.
 And quhen the scuillis ar not provydit,
 How can the kirk be bot misgydit? (391-94)

With the question of money we reach the crux of the debate. The courtier abandons his reasonable manner and speaks 'with wordis wyde' -

¹ The particular example of corruption referred to concerns the 'Crusit Guse' (l. 378), taken to be John Rutherford, Provost of St. Salvator's: a public squabble ensued - see Satirical Poems, II, 197.

I heir nathing bot provyde,
 And get now that, and get now this;
 Your talk is all of expensis;
 Gif levingis heir, and found sum thair;
 Ye bit gay castellis in the air.
 Quhair is that geir for to be had,
 That sic provisioun may be maid? (396-402)

The clerk maintains that the tiends alone will do everything he has suggested - after all, what he has suggested is no more than the fundamental purpose of the tax. To the courtier's objection that if this money were left entirely to the church the vices of popery would reappear, the clerk retorts that when the maintenance has been provided for (with suitable controls against misuse) and when the poor have been assisted then the surplus can be made available to the secular authorities. But the courtier is now adamant:

The tiendis will not cum in thair nevis
 Sa lang as ony of us levis. (427-28)

So the debate continues, and the author clearly wants our sympathy for the clerk's point of view. This is evident, for instance, when the clerk returns to the subject of negligent preachers:

Bot they that hes ane conscience large,
 And thinkis they have na mair ado,
 Bot only preiching to luke to,
 And that bot perfunctorie
 Anis in four oulkis and able ma,
 Perchance thretone or they cum thair;
 God wait, sa weill that flock will fair! (510-16)

We have already come across references in both Dunbar and Lindsay to the roomy consciences of such clergymen in pre-reformation conditions.¹

¹ e.g. Dunbar, 'This waverand warldis wretchidnes', ll. 41-44; Lindsay, Testament, l. 1128.

Ilkane ten kirkis will tak in cure,
 Sa of their stipendis thay be sure:
 Bot gif thay folkis sall be weill fed,
 Or to gude pastoring be led,
 The world may judge ...

The argument from agriculture too is intended to carry conviction (ll. 718-44): if a man has ten steadings to look after but the means to look after only one, and if he nevertheless does try to manage all ten, the result would be that he would have no return from any of them. And in face of the clerk's final summary of his arguments against the order (ll. 905-24) the courtier abandons the attempt to argue. The clerk obviously wins the debate -

And, gif I had into your place
 Ane leirnit man that wald me face,
 I suld declair at greiter lenth,
 With arguments of greiter strenth,
 The devillische draucht of this devyse,
 And ground of all this interpryse. (951-56)

- though we may take this in part as a rhetorical exaggeration. The final words from the clerk read like a direct statement from Davidson to the reader:

Had gude John Knox not yit bene deid,
 It had not cum unto this heid;
 Had thay myntit till sic ane steir,
 He had maid hevin and eirth to heir. (967-70)

From a literary point of view the Dialogue has considerably less interest than the other works discussed in this chapter - its main purpose is polemical and in fulfilling that purpose it shows a fair degree of competence. Any comparison with Lindsay's treatment of similar themes in the Dreme, the Complaynt, the Testament and the Satyre is bound to be to Lindsay's advantage, yet as my brief

extracts have shown, it still merits inclusion when we discuss the manner in which the ecclesiastical debate was conducted by writers active during the decisive events of the Scottish Reformation.

* * * * *

The moral and religious framework of the literature of this period, as illustrated and analysed in Chapter One, conditioned in a very obvious manner the specific complaints against ecclesiastical shortcomings which have been the subject of this chapter. For reasons explained earlier the bulk of the literary references made in this chapter have been to Lindsay, but important references have also been made to earlier works (The Thre Prestis of Peblis, Henryson's The Sheep and the Dog and some of Dunbar's ecclesiastical satire), and to a later work (Davidson's Dialogue).

That moral and religious framework however conditioned now just specifically ecclesiastical criticism but criticism of the whole of society, and it is now time to examine criticism of more definitely secular matters as it appears in these writers. Again it should be stressed that such a distinction, however useful for purposes of discussion, is not a rigid one. Indeed, the more successful an individual literary work is, as literature, the more closely related are its separate themes, and the more difficult it becomes to discuss satisfactorily one separate theme in

isolation. In a work as highly integrated as Henryson's The Sheep and the Dog, for instance, the postulation of a moral and religious framework and its realisation in specifically interpreted events are inseparable; so too are the component themes of legal corruption and oppression of the poor. In Lindsay's case, where the treatment is often more discursive, the themes are more readily separable, while in a comparatively simple work like Davidson's Dialogue the only binding force is a conceptual one.

CHAPTER THREE

THE LOT OF THE COMMONS AND THE STATE OF THE LAW

There is no need to assume that in our period commoners lived lives of unrelieved misery: on the other hand one cannot read the literature of the time without soon realising that whatever security the poorer members of the commons enjoyed seems, in our eyes, vulnerable. Complaint on their behalf can be heard beyond the upper limit of our period, in, for instance, 'The lamentation of the Commounis of Scotland'¹. The particular causes of civil strife may have changed, but the oppressive effect on the 'small' people is only too familiar:

We coilyearis, cadgearis, and carteris, in ane rout,
 Be bludie wolfis ...
 Our hors is reft, our selfis ar doung, but dout;
 Quhair we did travell, we dar not now appeir
 Out of our ludge, we tak of thame sic feir,
 Thocht it wald us ten thousand crownis avance:
 With morning prayer we curse thame maid this weir ...
 (25-31)

We tinklaris, tailyeoris, we craftismen out of number,
 That be our craft had ay ane honest lyfe,
 We wait of nocht bot mekill cair and cummer:
 Our joy is turnit in we and mortall stryfe. (49-52)

I want to approach this topic by way of another one which has also been referred to on a number of occasions: corruption of the law. The state of the law and the state of the commons are two topics which are very closely related. In a situation where justice and order were reasonably established those most likely to experience the immediate

¹ Satirical Poems, I, 221-25.

benefit would be the poorer commoners: they would have a measure of protection against oppression by overlords, invading or traversing armies and marauding outlaws and brigands. In a situation where the strongest, simply by being the strongest, could establish the kind of justice that suited their own ends, those who lacked the wealth to influence the powerful or to sustain their own armies were obviously at a disadvantage. All the writers we are considering, but especially Henryson and Lindsay, draw attention to the misery caused to the poor commons by the mismanagement of justice.

The most important texts to be considered here are Henryson's fables The Sheep and the Dog and The Wolf and the Lamb, and portions of Lindsay's Satyre. Briefer references will also be made first to certain passages in the Liber Pluscardensis, Lancelot of the Laik and The Thre Prestis of Peblis; then, in time midway between Henryson and Lindsay, to some of Dunbar's legal satire; and finally to two poems from the very end of our period, Alexander Scott's Ane New Yeir Gift to the Quene Mary, and The Lamentatioun of Lady Scotland.

1. Some lines from the Liber Pluscardensis; from Lancelot of the Laik; and Archebald's tale in The Thre Prestis of Peblis.

The verses in the Liber Pluscardensis placed after an account of the reign of James II are of no particular

literary merit but what they say in general terms about the state of justice in the mid-fifteenth century is consistent with the complaints made in more sophisticated works. The following description of the advantages of justice may seem obvious enough:

Justice makis riche bath reum and citeis,
 Bath king and knaif, knycht, clergy and common,
 Haldis pepil in pece and gude prosperiteis,
 Salfis thai saulis, makis thair salvacion;
 Quhair lak of law bringis al this upsadon,
 And makis al pure, princis and potestatis;
 Than God and man and al this world thaim hat is.¹

The king's personal responsibility for the manner in which his judges uphold or fail to uphold the law is also stressed:

And gif the juge makis falt or forfature,
 Committand crime on to thi majeste
 In his office, of quhilk thou beris the cure,
 Punis that weil, as it efferis to be,
 And lat him nevir here office mare of the:
 Quhilk gif thou dois nocht, fra that tyme forthirwart
 Of his misdeid thou art and part.²

art
 baith

The law's delay, the frustrating and unjust operation of laws which are in fact intended to avoid such hardships are also referred to:

Quhat valis men thi richtwis judgement,
 With wryt and wax confermit as efferis,
 And syne the party nevir to be content,
 Bot drichtit and delayit our fra yeir to yeris?³

Some of the most effective writing left to us by Henryson and Dunbar is concerned with the points made here in a general and banal form.

It will be recalled that in Lancelot of the Laik Amytans upbraids Arthur for neglecting the proper adminis-

1 Liber Pluscardensis, ed. F.J.H. Skene (The Historians of Scotland, Vol. VII, Edinburgh, 1877), I, 396 (hereafter referred to as Pluscarden). For a discussion of authorship and date see pp. xviii-xxiii.

2 ibid., p. 398.

3 ibid., p. 399.

administration of justice and lays directly on the king the responsibility for the unhappy condition of the oppressed and poor who suffer most from the lack of justice.

In the default of law and of iustice
 Undir thi hond is sufferyt gret suppriss
 Of faderless, and modirless also,
 And wedwis ek sustenit mekill wo.
 With gret myschef oppressit ar the pure;
 And thow art causs of al this hol iniure,
 Wharof that god a raknyng sal craf
 At the ...

(1350-57)

Amytans stresses the crucial importance of the integrity of those to whom the administration of justice is delegated and this too is the king's responsibility:

Of ignorans shalt yow nocht be excusit,
 Bot in ther werkis sorly be accusit
 For thow schuld ever ches apone sich wyss
 The ministeris that rewll haith of iustice: (1608-11)

And punyss sor, for o thing shal yow know,
 The most trespas is to subvert the low ... (1640-41)

And the following passage not only echoes some of the sentiments expressed by parliament as advice to James III but also, in its teaching of a mutual dependence between monarch and people, is related to the basic idea assumed by Henryson in The Lion and the Mouse. It would have been clear to a contemporary reader that at this point, the Amytans/Arthur guise is quite transparent.

And pas yow shalt to every chef toune,
 Throw out the boundis of thi regioun
 Whar yow sail be, that iustice be elyk
 Without divisione baith to pur and ryk.
 And that thi puple have awdiens
 With thair complantis, and also thi presens;
 For quho his eris frome the puple stekith,
 And not his hond in ther support furth rekith,
 His dom sail be fule grewous and ful hard,
 When he sal cry and he sal nocht be hard. (1644-53)

Archebald's second tale in The Thre Prestis of Peblis provides another example of a fictitious king being given advice on his control of justice which can be seen in relation to the advice given to James III. Amytans delivers a sermon: more effectively, the author of The Thre Prestis provides for Fictus the context of an economically related moral tale.

It must be remembered that this tale follows the one in which the wounded man (representing the commons) up^braids the king for his failure to see that justice is maintained.

I have sic sturt,
 For baith with theif and rever I am hurt.
 And yit, suppois, I have all the pyne,
 The falt is yowris, sir king, and nathing myne;
 (539-42)

It is he who advises the king to heed the words of Fictus -

Your fule, sir king, hes mair wit than ye have;
 (556)

and Fictus, by explaining the meaning of the incident of the wounded man and the flies, affirms that the blame is the king's. The king's officers, says Fictus,

pluck the puir as thay war powand hadder,
 And taks buds fra men baith neir and far,
 And ay the last ar than the first far war.
 Justice, crounar, sariand and justice clark,
 Removes the auld and new men ay they mark.
 Thus fla thay all the puir men belly flaucht,
 And fra the puir taks many felloun fraucht
 And steirs them and wait the tyde wil gang.
 Syne efter that far hungrier cums than,
 And thusgait ay the puir folk ar at under. (622-31)

The vivid images of plucking heather and of skinning an animal by pulling the whole skin over the head add a vigour to this plea which is absent from the more staid moralisings

of the author of Lancelot. Line 629 as it stands needs emendation. As Robb points out (p. 78), if we had waits instead of wait the second half would mean 'they know their time will run out' and the first half could mean either 'they bestir themselves' or (surely less likely) 'they misguide them (the poor)'. Robb's suggested emendation makes better sense:

And steirs the tyme and with the tyde wil gang.

i.e. they make the most of their opportunities while they can, the point being that if the king's officers feel their positions are insecure then they are going to extort as much as possible as quickly as possible.

In the second of the three tales concerning Fictus the king's readiness to forgive the murderer is in keeping with his character; he pardons him thus -

Ane semely man of mak sa semit he:
To slay that man he thocht ane greit pitie,
And bad him passe quhair he lykit to ga,
And be gude man and efter slay na ma. (665-68)

The king too readily accepts people at face value. Fictus had little difficulty in being accepted on the terms of his pretence of being a fool. Now the king assesses the murderer in terms of his appearance - he seemed to be a seemly man. The king's moodiness too is apparent when the courtier, having accepted a bribe to obtain a second pardon, waits for a suitable occasion:

He lukit quhan the king was blyth and glad,
And nocht quhen he was heavie nor sad. (691-92)

Thus the king's justice is seen to operate not according to

reason but according to the whim of the moment. The courtier offers this argument:

Suppois he hes slane twa, better it is that ye,
Have twa men slane than thus for to sla thrie;
(705-6)

Although this may be a good argument against capital punishment the author quite clearly intends it to be seen as a specious argument in the present case, and again we see the king accepting this at face value. After the third murder and the third request for a pardon, Fictus makes this line of argument go the other way. The king has decided to refuse this third request but, says Fictus

Now and ye gar not heid nor hang
This man, for them that he slew, it war wrang.
The first man weil I grant he slew,
The uther twa in faith them slew yow.
Had thow him puneist quhan he slew the first,
The uther twa had bene levand I wist. (745-50)

Apposite to this tale is the proverb 'Hang ane theeff for the first fault and scourg him for the nixt'.¹

The implications of this short tale will be discussed more fully in Chapter Four, in relation to the part played by the king. The specific references to oppression, as indicated above, will there be seen to belong to a more complex pattern.

2. Henryson's The Sheep and the Dog.

In The Sheep and the Dog Henryson's target is the ecclesiastical courts in the narrative section and the

¹ Fergusson's Scottish Proverbs, ed. E. Beveridge (S.T.S., 1924), p. 49 (hereafter referred to as Fergusson's Proverbs).

civil courts in the Moralitas. Both Gregory-Smith and Wood quote Lord Hailes' remark to the effect that Henryson 'probably stood more in awe of the court spiritual than of the temporal'. I doubt if this is possible, because his attitude towards the church courts is made plain enough in the narrative and if he were afraid to criticise the church courts directly in the Moralitas he would also have been afraid to criticise them in a barely disguised fable. There is little indirectness in the fable since in the third line he establishes that the action takes place in a consistory. Doubtless he saw a way of killing both birds with one stone; and anyway, since much business which we would call civil was dealt with in the church courts, this is an obviously neat way of saying that throughout the realm, no less than in the church courts (from which we should expect a better example) the administration of justice is not what it ought to be.

This cursit court corruptit all for meid
 Agane gud fayth gud law and conscience
 For this fals dog pronuncit the sentence (96-98)

If the dog is poor the court could not expect much of a 'meid' unless it is so grasping that it will corrupt justice for the sake of even a poor man's bribe. The lines do seem to suggest that the dog is bribing the court to uphold his false claim. The implied arrangement could be that that dog will give the court a share of the spoils, though this is not stated: the price demanded is of course extortionate.

There is no doubt about the morals of the court itself;

the lawyers band against the sheep

to procure the sentens
Thocht it wer fals thay haif no conscience (34-35)

The judge is a wolf, the clerk is a fox and the advocates are a kite and a vulture. The court officer, the 'apparitour', is Sir Corby Raven,

Quhilk pyket hes full mony schepis ee.

And there is no doubt about the writer's sympathy; the sheep puts up a solitary and hopeless fight against his cunning oppressors. Presumably the sheep represents a man in orders otherwise he would not be subject to the church courts. Since the priest (the sheep) is, by his vows, poor, the church is thus seen to be unwilling to protect even its own humbler members. The original summons carries severe penalties for not complying: 'suspentioun', 'gret cursing' and 'interdictioun', which together would amount to utter exclusion from all services and benefits of the church.

The sheep's initial line of defence is to deny the competence of the court on three grounds, the judge, the time, the place. The wolf is a suspect judge because he has slain many of the sheep's kinsmen, and indeed this applies to all the members of the court. The time is wrong because it is late in the evening, an hour not associated with lawful business. Wood's line

The place is fer, the tyme is feriate (1199)
makes poorer sense than the Bannatyne

This place as for the tyme is feriat (54)

A similar use of dark-versus-light imagery can be found in several of the fables. In the setting of The Fox and the Wolf, for instance:

Than Lourence lukit up quhare he coud lye
And kest his hand upoun his ee on hicht
Mery and gled that cummyn was the nycht (12-14)

and in the third stanza of The Preaching of the Swallow:

In metaphisik Aristotle sayis
That man saule is lyke ane bakkis ee
Quhilk lurkis still as lang as lycht of day is
And in the gloming cumis furth to flee
Hir eine ar waik the sun scho may nocht see
So is oure saule with phantesye opprest
To know the thingis in nature manifest

The appearance of legality is maintained when the sheep's objections are put to arbitration. But the arbitrators, the bear and the badger, simply reach a foregone conclusion, for all their laborious weighing of pros and cons and scrutinising of decretals and glosses: the court is declared competent and the sheep, having submitted to arbitration, must accept the decision and stand as originally summoned. Henryson's comment is

On Clerkis I do it, gif this sentence was leill
(Wood, 1229)

i.e. those who know about such matters will be able to judge for themselves how just was this proceeding.

The sheep then has to find the money to pay for the bread - under pain of interdiction. In the context of a quasi-literal belief in heaven and hell such a threat could be awesome, but it came to be used frequently and for all manner of trivial ends, so that its efficacy as a deterrent

must have weakened.¹ The dog is wicked in bringing the claim, but the court is even more wicked in upholding it.

The wrongness of the sentence is explicitly stressed:

Off this sentence allaiss quhat sall we say
 Quhilk dampnit hes the silly innocent
 And institut to wranguss iugement. (103-5)

Dreading further persecution the sheep sells his fleece and returns to the field 'nakit and bare'. In the Isopet de Lyon version which Henryson almost certainly used² the sheep dies of cold,

muert de froit contre la bise

and Lydgate's sheep meets a similar end. Henryson's, perhaps truer to life, presumably has to plod on despite the misery.

As is already obvious the sheep signifies

pure commownis that daylie ar opprest
 Be tirrane men (114-15)

Lydgate's sheep represents poor people 'devoured alway' by the rich. In that age sympathy for the poor was frequently

- 1 See Major, H.M.B., pp. 172-73; G. Donaldson and C. Macrae, eds., St. Andrews Formulare (The Stair Society, Edinburgh, 1942-44), I, Nos. 185 and 229; II, Nos. 366 and 370; D. Laing, ed., The Works of John Knox (The Bannatyne Club, Edinburgh, 1846-95), I, 38-39; D.H. Fleming, The Reformation in Scotland (London, 1910), pp. 622-24 (hereafter referred to as Fleming); W. Croft Dickinson, G. Donaldson and I.A. Milne, A Source Book of Scottish History (Edinburgh, 1953), II, 100-3 (hereafter referred to as Source Book).
- 2 See Jamieson, pp. 98-108. The Isopet de Lyon version is given in Bastin, II, 91-92. Lydgate's version of Aesop is in H.N. MacCracken, ed., The Minor Poems of John Lydgate, Part II - Secular Poems (E.E.T.S., 1934), pp. 566-99. (Hereafter referred to as Lydgate, Minor Poems).

expressed¹ but often it was an abstract kind of pity quite unconnected with any idea of social reform. It was compatible with fervent arguments to show how the commons must be kept in their place and how dangerous a commoner in his Shyp of Folyes (1509) says

Ye great estatys and men of dignyte
To whom god in this lyfe hath sent ryches
Have ye compassion on paynfull povertye

yet he insists that the lower orders should stay where they are:

Promote a yeman, make hym a gentyll man
And make a baylyf of a butchers son
Make of a squyer knyght, yet wyll they, if they can
Coveyt in their myndes hyer promosyon.²

More, in Utopia (1516), sees more sharply, but as feudal gives way to mercantile society he observes a continuing injustice - what kind of justice is it, he asks, that allows a more or less idle banker to grow rich, yet keeps a labourer, on whose work the entire state depends, in a state of poverty and wretchedness worse than the lot of farm animals? In contemporary commonwealths, he declares, 'I can perceave nothing but a certein conspiracy of riche men procuringe theire owne commodities under the name and title of the common wealth.'³

-
- 1 See for example Labour's defence of humble workers in Lydgate, Pilgrimage, II, 11, 378 ff. Also Lydgate, Fall of Princes, p. liv and Chaucer, ed. Robinson, pp. 252-53. The Parson's Tale is an imaginary sermon but the theme recurred regularly in real-life sermons: see G.R. Owst, Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England (Cambridge, 1933), pp. 287-331. (Hereafter referred to as Owst.)
- 2 ed. T.H. Jamieson (Edinburgh and London, 1874), I, 102 and 186.
- 3 ed. G. Sampson and trans. R. Robynson (London, 1914), pp. 185-86.

* can be if he rises above his station. For example Barclay

Henryson's attitude to the peasantry is somewhat between these two. His concern for them is wholehearted, he identifies with them in their plight and speaks on their behalf. At the same time he does not show the theoretical interest in social structure that could lead to alternative arrangements being proposed. As I have indicated already, he accepted the existing order, presumably in the belief that it could be made to operate justly.

The lawyers in the fable are members of an ecclesiastical court, but in the Moralitas the animals are given significations which apply to the civil courts. Thus the wolf is likened to a sheriff who buys the right to collect royal fines then uses his legal powers to extort his profit from the poor, who apparently have no practicable redress, for

Suppoiss he be als trew as was sant Iohine
Slane sall thay be or with the iuge compone (125-26)

It will be recalled that the writer of The Thre Prestis of Peblis makes a similar complaint:

The leil man for to compone wil nocht consent;
Becaus he waits he is ane innocent.
Thus ar the husbands dytit al, but dout,
And heryit quyte away al round about. (289-92)

The raven is now a 'fals crowner' with his 'porteouss of the endytment', his black list of offenders to be prosecuted. This document was the responsibility of the coroner, who had to present it when the king's justices arrived. It was useful:

Bot luke gife he be of a trew intent
 To skraip out Johine and wryt in Will or Wate
 And so ane bud at bayth the pairties skat (131-33)

Gregory-Smith quotes a 1436 act which says: 'All jugeis sall gar the assysouris sweir ... that they nouthar have tane nor sall tak meid na buddis of ony partie'. The fact that bribery of this kind has to be mentioned in a parliamentary act proves that it must have been widespread. How successful such legislation was is a doubtful matter.

In suggesting that Henryson was unwilling to censure the church courts directly in the Moralitas Lord Hailes must have overlooked the first line of the sheep's lament, in which he bewails 'this cursit consistory' (l. 141). This lends weight to the suggestion that Henryson was aiming at both targets - civil and ecclesiastical. The other item in the sheep's lament is the familiar sleep-of-god device, and the scriptural allusion is particularly relevant here because in Psalm xlv (Vulgate, xliii) the writer recalls the nation's righteousness, yet 'aestimatus sum sicut oves occisionis. Exsurge; quare obdormis Domine? exsurge et ne repellas in finem'.

... o lord quhy slypis thow so lang
 Walk and descerne my cause groundit in richt
 Luk how I am be frawd maistry and slyt
 Pelit full bair and soⁱ smony one
 Now in this warld ryt wondir wo begone (150-54)

There is no reason for supposing that Henryson, in the part of narrator, intervenes in l. 153: this supposition has been made by all editors except Laing. The lament may repeat some conventional criticism¹ - the poor man is

¹ For example, an account of the world-upside-down as a recurring theme is given in Curtius, pp. 94-98. It will be recalled that the figures appeared in the Pluscarden verses (l. 152).

overthrown through lack of justice, corrupt lawyers unashamedly suppress right, the world is 'ourturnit', and Henryson gave these strong expression elsewhere, as in 'The Want of Wyse Men' with its complaint that 'law is bot wilfulness'.

Quhare is the balance of just and equitee?
 Nothir meryt is preisit, na punyst is trespas;
 All ledis lyvis lawles at libertee,
 Noucht reulit be reson, mare than ox or asse;
 Gude faith is flemyt, worthin fraellar than glas;
 Trew lufe is lorne, and lautee haldis no lynkis;
 Sik governance I call noucht worth a fasse,
 Sen want of wise men makis fulis sitt on binkis.

also

But ryme or reasone all is bot heble hable;
 Sic sturtfull stering in to godis neiss it stinkis;
 (Wood, p. 190)

But what distinguishes the Moralitas is the fervent identification with the poor and the oppressed:

We pure peple as now may do no moir
 Bot pray to the sen we are thus opprest
 In to this erd, grant us in hevin gud rest (173-75)

Such a turning towards religion is more than just a despairing wish for compensation. As we have already seen, Henryson's view of secular society is always qualified by reference to a wider context: the lesser scale of values must be seen in relation to the greater. Such an extension of the viewpoint can be seen throughout the fables: in this fable the particular example of oppression illustrates unmerited suffering in general, then asks why this should happen, and answers that men, through covetice, concentrate on worldly ends and reap their own reward.

Thow tholis this bot for our grit offens
 Thow sendis us truble and plaigis soir
 As hunger derth wer and pestilens
 Bot few amendis thair lyfe now thairfoir (169-72)

The criticism of corrupt lawyers is seen within the context of a view of fallen humanity. The sheep too belongs to fallen humanity.

3. Henryson's The Wolf and the Lamb.

In The Wolf and the Lamb we have oppression pure and simple - as a brute fact. In the previous fable the oppression was more devious, arising as it did through the perversion of legality. Here the absurdity of the wolf's claim is demonstrated immediately for he accuses the lamb of defiling the river for him when in fact the lamb is drinking downstream from him.

It wer almouss the for till draw and hing
 That suld presome with stinkand lippis will
 To hurt my drink and this fair watter spile (19-20)

The social relationship between the lamb and the wolf is also established at once, for the lamb dreads to contradict his oppressor.

The silly innocent lamb quakand for verry dreid
 On kneis fell and said Ser with your leif
 Suppoiss I dar not say theirot ye leid
 Bot be my saule I wait ye can not preife
 That I did ony thing quhilk suld yow greif (22-26)

Lydgate's lamb replies 'with humble reverence' and explains more fully to the wolf his awareness of his humble position:

I may nat chese: the choyse to yow ys fall.
 Hyt were but foly for me with yow to stryve.
 Ye shall for me have your desyres all:
 Of your ryght I wyll nat yow depryve. (281-84)

Henryson's lamb, however, after an initial hesitation, proceeds to defend himself in a very unlamblike manner. He first appeals to reason and presents his argument in the form of a syllogism:

- A rivers never flow uphill
- B I drank downstream from you
- C ergo, I could not have contaminated your drink.

Moreover since he is still a sucking lamb his lips cannot be 'contagius' (ll. 23-29). The wolf dismisses this as 'outragius' and claims that he wants to avenge the hatred which, he alleges, the lamb's father bore him.

The lamb now appeals to Scripture (ll. 48-55), recalling perhaps Ezekiel xviii, where verse 20 reads: 'The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him'. But again the wolf dismisses his plea and simply elaborates on his vow to wreck vengeance on the father's offspring to the ninth degree. By saying so he parodies part of the commandment given in Exodus ii 5 - 'I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me' - and thus the wolf negates Ezekiel's attempt to mitigate the harshness of this notion of inherited guilt.

The lamb's third appeal is to the law (ll. 63-77). He describes, concisely, the procedure open to litigants in such a matter and offers to submit to 'process of law

in audiens', where lawful defence and full consideration pro and con can be obtained. What he describes is the procedure we have seen operating at greater length in The Sheep and the Dog, in a manner which is formally correct but essentially corrupt. The wolf's reply to this is to invert the normal relations of right and wrong and in doing so he deliberately mimics the legal terminology:

Ha quod the wolf wald thow intruse ressoun
 Quhair wrang and reif suld dwell in properte
 That is a poynt of oppin fals tressoun
 For to gar rewth remane with crewelte (78-81)

The wolf's only real answer however is to kill and devour the lamb and this he does with an alacrity reminiscent of the promptness with which the court judged and sentenced the sheep in the previous fable.

Henryson here does everything he possibly can to weigh the scales against the wolf. The lamb's appeals to logic, scripture and law constitute an appeal to the three bases of medieval civilisation. The wolf cannot meet this on its own terms and the only alternative is brute force and anarchy. Such a reading implies a severe view on Henryson's part of aspects of the society of his day. The fable, suitably compact and direct for the expression of such a view, is almost entirely taken up by the debate, which is reduced to stark essentials.

The Moralitas then cannot function in the normal way because the meaning of the brief story has already been made amply clear. The tale has shown a general example and we are now given details, the feme of oppression being

amplified with reference to conditions in contemporary Scotland. Lydgate also aims his criticism at the local justices:

But shepe these dayes be spoylyd to the bon;
 For ther be wolfes many mo then oon,
 That clyp lamborn at sessions and at shyres
 Bare to the bone, and yet they have no sheres.
 (319-22)

though his treatment remains less specific:

The wolfe ys lykenyd to folkys ravenous,
 The sely lambe resembleth the porayle;
 The wolf ys gredy, fell, cruell, dyspitous,
 The lambe content with grasse for hys vytayle.
 (337-40)

Henryson, on the other hand, makes a point of including among his 'pure peple', 'Off quhome the lyfe is half a purgetory', the 'malemen' or small tenant-farmers, whose lot by all accounts was a difficult one. Further, he distinguishes between three categories of wolf.

The first kind are perverters of the law and we have already seen them at work in The Sheep and the Dog.

Smorand the ryt garrand the wrang proceid
 Off sic wolffis hell fyre salbe thair meid
 (Wolf and Lamb, 104-5)¹

Given Henryson's feelings on the matter it is clear that this curse is more than just a theological statement. The wolf in the present fable does not so much pervert the law as simply reverse it: he acts on a denial of the legal procedure described by the lamb.

The second kind of wolf are the rich powerful men who

¹ Jamieson suggests that ll. 120-26 are out of place and should follow l. 105: this would restore the pattern of description followed by apostrophe.

have plenty themselves yet are so greedy that they cannot leave the poor in peace with their own small possessions, even when the husbandmen have only

... cote and cruse upone a clout of land¹ (116)

Again Henryson's feelings are plain:

For godis aw how dar thow tak on hand
And thow in berne and byre so bene and big
To put him fra his tak and gar him thig (116-18)

The reference to begging is worth comment. Civil war, the insecure method of holding land, increasing enclosures to meet the prosperous wool trade with the Low Countries, all these resulted in the creation of a large vagrant population. Acts of 1425, 1449 and 1478 try to deal with the motley crowd. The 'offenders' belong to distinct categories, described respectively as idlers, bards, pretended fools, 'masterful beggars' and beggars with property (perhaps these were gypsies). Presumably in the application of these laws not all these types of person were treated alike. In some cases they are to be given time to find a master and a trade; in others they are to have their ears cut off; in others they are to be hanged. No doubt this riff-raff was a widespread public nuisance but it certainly contained people like dispossessed small farmers who had simply nowhere to go and were the comparatively innocent victims of grossly unjust circumstances.

Some of the causes of this insecurity are clarified in

¹ 'Cruse', either a utensil, or perhaps a misreading of 'crufe', a small hut or outbuilding: see Gregory-Smith's note.

the description of the third kind of wolf - men of heritage who misuse their power. Henryson emphasises that these men own their lands by 'godis lane', i.e. they have been born to wealth, as by God's loan, hence they have all the less reason to be arrogant since they will have to account to God for their use of his loan. These men, having granted to their cottars or tenants the right of pasture ('settis to the maillairis a willage') and having accepted the 'gersum', the fee payable on entering upon a holding, proceed to break their side of the bargain.¹

Syne vexis him or half the terme be gane
 With pykit querrellis for to mak him fane
 To flitt or pay the girsum new again (131-33)

John Major made some cogent observations on this abuse. His remarks in his Historia Majoris Britanniae (1521) are relatively well known so it may be of interest to quote from the less well known Quartus Sententiarum (1512): '... the land is not tilled to the best advantage; the houses tend to fall into ruin; there is poverty, injustice, and evils without number. That the land is tilled unprofitably is proved thus: the farmer does not know when he will be despoiled of his land, so he is reluctant to undertake heavy labour and expense; for he fears that the honey he has made will be gathered by someone else. For the same reason he

¹ See Gregory-Smith's note and the entries under GRASSUM in The Scottish National Dictionary and in A Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue. It is worth noting Jamieson's suggestion that l. 130 has been influenced during copying by l. 124: he offers an improvement:

And for ane tyme Gressome payit and tane

is reluctant to build houses suitable to the condition of the peasants and the country ... for this would make him seem wealthy and he would be evicted by the landlord or his kinsmen or servants'. Major advocates the adoption of the feu-farm system, though he is aware that this is not ideal in that it tends to favour the wealthy farmers at the expense of the poorer. There were in fact parliamentary attempts (1457-1503) to extend the feu-farm system.¹ Indeed parliament tried to deal, several times over, with the difficulties of tenants but apparently with little success. A hint of local disorder can be gathered from the words of a 1469 act which complained that festivals were disturbed by 'punding for malis and annualis incasting and owtcasting of tenandis quhilkis makkis gret discenswine and causes oft tymes gret/martynes'. Both in Lindsay's Satyre (ll. 2567-77) and in The Complaynt of Scotlande (p. 123) we find complaints of this kind of oppression and these will be quoted later in the chapter.

In addition to failure to observe agreements, Henryson mentioned the excessive services demanded by overlords from tenants, as a result of which the husbandmen have little time or strength to supply their own needs.

¹ See Major, H.M.B., pp. 30-31. My extract is from the Quartus Sententiarum (1512), Dist. xv, q.x, f. lxxxv D, and is given in Burns, p. 66. See also Source Book, II 220-5 and Dickinson, p. 274 (note). A result of the increasing adoption of feu-farming as it affected the distribution of landed wealth at the Reformation is noted later in the chapter.

gadderings and dissordis upon the solempnit days of witsunday and

For it cryis vengeance to the hevin so he
To gar a pure man wirk but meit or fe (146-47)

Wood mentions (p. 250) that it was in fact customary to provide food for tenants doing service for their overlords, yet since Henryson twice mentions the lack of it (ll. 137 and 147) he presumably had grounds for doing so.

Such oppression, he declares, is no better than murder, and he concludes with a significant appeal to the king:

And god as thow all rychtous prayer heiris
Mot saif our king and gif him hairt and hand
All sic wolffis to benneis of this land (159-61)

In connection with The Thre Prestis of Peblis we saw how James III was repeatedly urged to do just this. The problem of course was complicated and although not everything depended on the king, much did, and this theme will be resumed in Chapter Four.

4. Dunbar's legal satire.

Corrupt lawyers are castigated in passing in several of Dunbar's poems. For instance the poem 'Eftir geving I speik of taking'¹ concludes:

Grit men for taking and oppressioun
Ar sett full famous at the Sessioun,
And peur takaris ar hangit hie,
Schamit for evir and thair successioun. (46-49)

The point is aimed not so much at the 'great' men themselves as at the corrupt state of a form of justice which punishes a common thief and honours a so-called nobleman

¹ p. 35 ('Discretioun in Taking').

whose methods of self-aggrandisement are morally not much different from common thievery. It will also be recalled that in his dream, 'This hinder nycht, halff sleiping as I lay',¹ Dunbar makes Discretion exclaim to Reason:

To sett on dies with lordis at the cessioun,
Into this realme yow ar worth mony ane pound. (74-75)

The assessment of reason in financial terms is in keeping with the mores of the way of life being criticised: the evil effects of reason's absence from the courts of law are then elaborated in 'Ane murlandis man of uplandis mak'.²

The narrative opening skilfully creates an atmosphere of secrecy and suspicion. The fact that the account is put into the mouth of a countryman who has just returned from the city makes the distancing of the viewpoint more credible. Moreover all this is being told 'undir confessioun', which means that he was sworn not to tell what he has heard in court.

'Quhat tythingis hard ye thair, I pray yow?'
The tother answerit, 'I sall say yow,
Keip this all secreit, gentill brother;
Is na man thair that trestis ane uther:
Ane commoun doar of transgressioun
Of innocent folkis prevenis a futher:
Sic tydingis hard I at the Sessioun'. (8-14)

1 p. 127 ('The Dream'). Of 'Doverrit with dreame, devysing in my slummer', p. 151 ('A General Satyre'), though as mentioned earlier this may well not be by Dunbar:

Sa mekle tressone, sa mony partiall sawis,
Sa littill ressonne to help the common cawis,
That all the lawis ar not sett by ane bene ... (26-28)

Sa mony ane sentence retreitit, for to win
Geir and acquentance or kyndnes of thair kin,
They think no sin, quhair proffeit cumis betwene ...
(51-53)

2 p. 79 ('Tydingis fra the Sessioun').

i.e. a common malefactor can get his own way before any number of innocent people. Lines 15-40 give the impression of a swarming wheel of fortune, some men winning, some losing, some speeding their cases by bribery, others having to mortgage their land while they wait. The compressed nature of the verse, the cataloguing, give the picture a claustrophobic effect. The basic complaint however is directed against deceit and hypocrisy: in this world of the law courts things are liable to be the opposite of what they seem. The whole purpose of the law, after all, is to allow the community to function as a community, to encourage and as far as possible ensure the basic trust and co-operation between members without which no community could exist. Yet the first tidings from the Session is that there is 'na man thair that trestis ane uther'. The working of the law at the highest court of the land breeds distrust and suspicion.

Sum with his fallow rownis (whispers) him to pleis,
 That wald for invy byt of his neis;
 His fa sum by the oxstar leidis;
 Sum patteris with his mowth on beidis,
 That hes his mynd all on oppressioun;
 Sum beckis full law and schawis bair heidis,
 Wald luke full heich war not the Sessioun. (15-21)

Sun in ane lambskin is ane tod;
 Sum in his toung his kyndnes tursis; (37-38)

It is not a long step from corrupt lawyers to corrupt clergymen and towards the close of the poem the two kinds of corruption are brought together:

Religious men of divers placis
 Cumis thair to wow and se fair facis;
 Baith Carmeleitis and Cordilleris
 Cumis thair to genner and get ma freiris. (43-46)

This blatant discrepancy between appearance and reality not only reinforces the criticism already made but extends the range of the poem. Clerical corruption and legal corruption are linked. The church is supposed to be the spiritual mainstay of the community, just as the law is supposed to be its secular bond, yet the functionaries of both are using the outward trappings of their professions as a cover for their devotion to worldly greed. And the reference to the women who oblige these 'yung monkis of he complexioun', these virile ascetics, adds a final sting to the satire:

Thay (the monks) ar so humill of intercessioun,
 All mercyfull wemen thair eirandis grantis. (54-55)

The law, as operated by its corrupt practitioners, is 'merciful' in the same corrupt way.

5. Lindsay's Satyre.

In the two Henryson fables discussed in this chapter a close causal relationship was observed between abuse of the law and oppression of the poor commons. In Lindsay's Satyre this can again be observed if we examine those parts which deal with the plight of Johne the Common Weill: before doing this however a passage in the Dreme deserves mention. It occurs in 'The Complaynt of the Comoun Weill of Scotland' and among Lindsay's work it is one of the most

compact criticisms of the failure of justice. In view of the customarily accepted date for the Dreme - 1528 - the particular relevance of the complaint is to the period of Douglas domination which ended with the escape of the young James V. Comoun Weill laments that Justice is almost blind because 'plain wrong' holds sway against both loyalty and reason.

My Syster, Iustice, almaist haith tynt hir sycht,
That scho can nocht hald evinly the ballance.
Plane wrang is plane capitane of ordinance,
The quhilk debarris laute and reassoun,
And small remeid is found for oppin treassoun. (948-52)

Justice seeks refuge first in the borders, then in the highlands and lastly in the lowlands, but in all these divisions of the Scottish kingdom she is repulsed. The allegory is reminiscent of Chastity's search for an abode as described in the Testament (ll. 871-919) and as acted out in stage terms in the Satyre (ll. 1192-1263).

In to the south, allace, I was neir slane:
Over all the land I culd fynd no releiff;
Almost betwix the Mers and Lowmabane
I culde nocht knaw ane leill man be ane theif.
To schaw thare reif, thift, murthour, and mischeif,
And vecious workis, it wald infect the air:
And, als, langsum to me for tyll declair.

In to the hieland I could fynd no remeid,
Bot suddantlie I wes put to exile.
Tha sweir swyngeoris (stubborn scoundrels) thay tuke
of me non heid,
Nor amangs thame lat me remane ane quhyle.
Als, in the oute ylis, and in Argyle,
Unthrift, sweirnes, falset, povertie, and stryfe
Pat polacey in dainger of hir lyfe.

In the law land I come to seik refuge,
And purposit thare to mak my residence.
Bot singulare proffect gart me sounne disluge,
And did me gret iniuris and offence,
And said to me: Swyth, harlote, hy the hence;
And in this countre se thow tak no curis,
So lang as my auctoritie induris. (953-73)

Just as Chastity is refused hospitality in favour of Sensuality so here Singular Profit refuses to entertain Justice. Singular Profit is the arch-enemy of the Common Wealth. There is an interesting point in l. 965 where the enemies of policy (i.e. good government) are listed. Wastefulness, unco-operativeness, deceit and contention are obvious enough, but Lindsay also includes poverty. Poverty as a hindrance to good government and justice, poverty as a condition in which Singular Profit thrives (because in insecure circumstances those who can acquire wealth feel compelled to acquire as much as possible, as a kind of insurance) - such ideas, conceived in economic terms, were surely within the understanding of the writers of our period, but we seldom get more than a hint of such an understanding.

In the Satyre Lindsay gives some of his most pungent arguments and some of his most passionate language to Johne the Common Weill, the representative of the down-trodden labouring commons. The pleas of Johne amount to an appeal on behalf of the poor comparable in content and tone to the complaint of Labour in The Complaynt of Scotlande. e.g. -

Laubereris ... indure daly sic violence that it is nocht possibil that esperance of releif can be ymagynit ... my twa brethir nobillis and clergie ar in sic melancole, be cause that I complein and murmyris ther crualte, bot yit nane of them decistis fra the vice quhilk gifis me occasione to murmyr ... thai have na cause to gloir in them selvis, bot rather that suld gloir in me, and in al laubexris of the grond quhilkis war foundatouris of al there triumphand prosperite ... We praye for vengeance quhen we ly doune at evyn, and quhen we ryise in the mornynge; bot al the remanent of the daye quhen we happyn to

cum in ony straynege companye, we pray devoutly
witht ane fenyet hart to save his grace, and
to keip hym in lang lyve dais and in gude
prosperite.¹

As I shall point out later, however, the author of the
Complaynt shows a much harsher attitude towards the commons
than Lindsay does.

Lindsay's Common Weill is prompt to defend himself.

Rex: Quhat is the caus the common weil is crukit?
Johne: Becaus the common weil hes bene overlukit.
(2439-40)

He addresses the king with such vigour and authority that
he seems like a lower-class version of Divyne Correctioun
himself. The following passage, in which he castigates
his oppressors, is worth quoting in full.

As for our reverent fathers of Spiritualitie,
Thay ar led be Covetice and cairles Sensualitie.
And as ye se Temporalite hes neid of correctioun,
Quhilk hes lang tyme bene led be publick oppressioun:
Loe quhair the loun lyis lurkand at his back.
Get up I think to se thy craig gar ane raip crack.
Loe heir is Falset and Dissait weil I ken,
Leiders of the merchants and sillie crafts-men.
Quhat mervell thocht the thrie estaits backward gang,
Quhen sic an vyle cumpanie dwels them amang,
Quhilk hes reulit this rout monie deir days,
Quhilk gars Iohn the common-weil want his warme clais?
Sir call them befoir yow and put them in ordour,
Or els Iohn the common-weil man beg on the bordour.
Thou feinyeit Flattrie, the feind fart in thy face,
Quhen ye was guyder of the Court we gat litill grace.
Ryse up Falset and Dissait without ony sunye:
I pray God nor the devils dame dryte on thy grunye.
Behauld as the loun lukis evin lyke a thief:
Monie wicht warkman thou brocht to mischief.
My souveraine Lord Correctioun I mak yow supplication,
Put thir tryit truikers from Christis congregation.
(2445-66)

Less furious but no less telling is Gude Counsall's plea to
the lords on behalf of the poor commons, whose extreme poverty

¹ C.S., pp. 124, 126, 128, 133.

is largely due to the excessive mails, teinds and fermes they are forced to pay in respect of the land they occupy. Both clergy and nobility tax the land beyond its reasonable productivity and nothing is left for the consumption of the tenant labourer himself and his family. (It will be remembered that the third act recommends the setting in feu of all temporal lands).

Thir pure commouns daylie as ye may se,
 Declynis doun till extreme povertie:
 For sum ar hichtit sa into thair maill,
 Thair winning will nocht find them water kail.
 How prelat's heichts thair teinds it is well knawin,
 That husband-men may not weill half thair awin.
 And now begins ane plague amang them new,
 That gentill men thair steadings taks in few.
 Thus man thay pay great ferme or lay thair steid.
 And sum ar plainlie harlit out be the heid,
 And ar distroyit without God on them rew. (2567-77)

In The Complaynt of Scotlande Labourer complains in similar terms:

I am exilit fra my takkis and fra my stedyngis.
 The malis and fermis of the grond that I laubyr
 is hychtit to sic ane price, that it is fors to
 me and wyf and bayrns to drynk wattir. The
 teyndis of my cornis ar nocht alanerly hychtit
 abufe the fertilite that the grond maye bayr, bot
 as weill thai ar tane furtht of my handis be my
 tua tirran brethir.¹

Resort to feu-farming was mentioned earlier as a means of eradicating such abuses and providing a certain degree of security to tenant farmers. Throughout the later fifteenth and earlier sixteenth centuries this practice spread but there is one result of this which Lindsay may not have foreseen when he recommended the setting in feu of all temporal lands. The practice in fact was not confined

¹ C.S., p. 123.

to temporal lands, and the result I refer to was the effect on the ownership of church lands at the Reformation. Under pressure to bear progressively heavier burdens of taxation the church found it convenient to set lands in feu: this released useful cash but it also had a decisive effect on what happened to much ecclesiastical property after 1560. It meant that the new church was in many cases unable to take over the old church's property. W. Stanford Reid summarises the process thus:

Since the rents were fixed with prices rising, the feus decreased in value to those receiving the fers, or rents, but increased in value to those who held the land. At the same time, once the church's power was broken, it was comparatively easy for the feuars to assume complete ownership. On the other hand, it was correspondingly difficult for the crown or parliament to gain possession of the land, once it had passed into the hands of the feuars. Consequently church lands disbursed by the clergy to meet demands of taxation never again left the hands of those to whom they were granted.¹

Another of Johne's arguments is this: how can we possibly secure our country against attack from without when we cannot destroy our enemies within, those 'common trator theifis' who daily oppress the labourers? (ll. 2582-86).

¹ W. Stanford Reid, 'Clerical Taxation: the Scottish Alternative to Dissolution of the Monasteries, 1530-1560', The Catholic Historical Review, XXXV (July 1948), p. 152.

Again, there is a parallel in Labour's plea in The Complaynt of Scotlande: 'the weyr is cryit contrar Ingland, bot the actis of the weir is exsecutit contrar the lauberaris, and consumis ther miserabil lyif'.¹

Then when asked what other enemies he has Johne, embarks on a tirade against 'idill men', the parasites: strong beggars, fiddlers, pipers, pardoners, jugglers, jesters, alchemists, court-haunters etc. His list is a very mixed one but he does stress the greed and sloth of 'thir great fat Freiris' -

And all uthers that in cowls bene cled,
 Quhilk labours nocht and bene weil fed ...
 Lyand in dennis lyke idill doggis
 I them compair to weil fed hoggis. (2617-18,
 2621-22)

His bitter attack turns to the local administration of justice: far from putting wrongs to right, he claims, those responsible use the machinery of justice to promote injustice.

For the pure peopill cryis with cairis,
 The misusing of iustice airis,
 Exercit mair for covetice,
 Then for the punisching of vyce.
 Ane peggrell paltry theif that steillis ane kow,
 Is hangit ...
 Bot he that all the world hes wrangit,
 Ane cruell tyrane, ane strang transgressour,
 Ane common publick plaine oppressour,
 By buds may he obtaine favours
 Of tresurers and compositours:
 Thocht he serve greit punitioun,
 Gets easie compositioun.
 And throch laws consistoriall
 Prolixt, corrupt and perpetuall,
 The common peopill ar put sa under,
 Thocht thay be puir it is na wonder. (2649-54, 2658-68)

1 C.S., p. 124.

Divyne Correctioun encouraged Johne to voice his complaints and his next is about the ruthless extortion of corpse-presents:

The pure cottar being lyke to die,
 Haifand young infants twa or thrie,
 And hes twa ky but ony ma,
 The vickar most haif ane of thay,
 With the gray frugge that covers the bed,
 Howbeit the wyfe be purelie cled,
 And gif the wyfe die on the morne,
 Thocht all the bairns sould be forlorne,
 The uther k^ow he cleiks away,
 With the pure cot of raploch gray.
 Wald God this custome war put down,
 Quhilk never was foundit be ressoun ... (2725-36)

Oor persone heir he takis na uther pyne,
 Bot to ressave his teinds and spend them syne ...
 (2745-46)

Howbeit thay (the parishioners) suld want preiching
 sevintin yeir,
 Our persoun will not want ane scheif of beir.
 (2749-50)

It will be recalled that the eleventh act advocates the abolition of the practice altogether.¹

As well as direct complaints from Johne himself, there are various references to his plight in the course of other arguments. For instance, when Merchant is attacking the serious outflow of money to Rome, he says:

1 In 1536 James V urged the Provincial Council to give up mortuary dues but it was not till 1559 that the clergy agreed to modify the practice in respect of the very poor. In D. Calderwood, The History of the Kirk of Scotland, ed. T. Thomson (The Wodrow Society, 1842), I, 126 (hereafter referred to as Calderwood), in the course of an account of the trial of Forret, the vicar of Dollar, it is related how he was accused of not taking the cow and the upmost cloth from his parishioners, 'which thing (i.e. not taking them) is verie prejudiciall to the church men'.

For throw thir playis and thir promotioun,
 Mair for denners nor for devotioun,
 Sir Symonie hes maid with them ane band,
 The gould of weicht thay leid out of the land.
 The common-weil thairthroch being sair opprest.
 (2853-57)

Again when Temporalitie wants to make an act which will demarcate between the temporal and spiritual spheres and which will confine the clergy to the latter, Spiritualitie objects and Temporalitie responds thus:

Spiritualitie: That act my lords plainlie I will declair,
 It is againis our profeit singulair.
 Wee will nocht want our profeit be Sanct
 Geill.

Temporalitie: Your profeit is against the common-weil.
 (3089-92)

Such an arrogant and direct assertion of greed on the part of the clergy is in keeping with Lindsay's general characterisation of them. Later in the play Gude Counsall again stresses this unnatural relation of singular profit and common wealth -

Because the common-weill hes bene overluikit,
 That is the caus that common-weill is cruikit.
 With singular profeit he hes bene sa supprysit,
 That he is baith cauld, naikit and disgysit.
 (3765-68)

As a token of recompense and restoration, Divyne Correctioun agrees that Johne should be 'gorgeouslie' clothed and given a place in parliament.

Pauper fulfils a very similar function to Johne's. When he fools about the stage-set for example and Diligence tries to usher him away he replies:

I wil not gif for al your play worth an sowis fart,
 For thair is richt lytill play at my hungrie hart.
 (1956-57)

Diligence asks why he does not go to law in Edinburgh to find redress for his grievances.

Sir I socht law thair this monie deir day;
 Bot I culd get nane at Sessioun nor Seinye:
 Thairfoir the mekill dum devill droun all the meinye.
 (1966-68)

Pauper related his own story to demonstrate the rapacity of the clergy in demanding their 'rights' to the utmost, even from the poorest (ll. 1971-2000). He was living with his two aged parents, his wife and his children; they had a mare who carried salt and coal (and who supplied a foal every year) and three cows. Obviously he represents a very small type of farmer yet he says that by his labour he could at least sustain his household. However both his parents die and at once (a) his landlord seizes his horse as herild (or heriot, death-duty) and (b) his vicar seizes both his cows, one for the deceased father and one for the deceased mother. Soon his wife takes ill and dies too, whereupon the vicar returns and claims the third cow, as well as allowing his clerk to take the 'umest' cloth. Thus deprived of the means of his livelihood, Pauper and his children are reduced to beggary.¹ Such is the 'blak veritie' of his story. Wasn't the parson a good friend to him, though? asks Diligence -

The devil stick him, he curst me for my teind,
 And halds me yit under that same proces,
 That gart me want the sacrament at Pasche.(2002-4)

He is going to spend his last groat on the law, at which pathetic hope Diligence exclaims:

¹ Cf the similar story in Monarche, ll. 4709-38.

Thou art the daftest fuill that ever I saw.
 Trows thou, man, be the law to get remeid
 Of men of kirk? Na, nocht till thou be deid.
 (2008-10)

The only justification which the clergy try to give for their behaviour is 'consuetude' - i.e. they say they have a right to do these things because they have always done them.

Diligence: They have na law exceptand consuetude,
 Quhilk law to them is sufficient and gude.

Pauper: Ane consuetude against the common weill,
 Sould be na law I think be sweit Sanct Geill.
 (2013-16)

Pauper also attacks clerical extravagance and licence, and the methods of consistory courts. On the former he says:

Our bishops with thair lustie rokats quhyte,
 They flow in riches royallie and delyte:
 Lyke paradise bene thair palices and places,
 And wants na pleasour of the fairest faces.
 Als thir prelates hes great prerogatyves,
 For quhy they may depairt ay with thair wyves,
 Without ony correctioun or damage,
 Syne tak ane uther wantoner but mariage. (2751-58)

Pauper seems to envy the clergy's freedom to run 'lyke rams rudlie in thair rage' - the fundamental point however is that the clergy penalise the laity for breaking marriage vows but themselves use their chastity vow as a pretext for licence.

On the subject of consistory courts Pauper relates how he took to such a court a case involving a horse of his which a neighbour borrowed and drowned. Instead of just treatment all he received were demands for more and more money to pay for alleged legal processes whose names he did not even understand. Two years later he still had not

received the value of his horse - indeed he never did (ll. 3059-78).

In the play as a whole then some of Lindsay's most forceful and bitter attacks on corrupt authority are given to John the Common Weill and Pauper as protagonists of the oppressed labouring classes. Lindsay's plea on their behalf can again be compared with the eloquent complaint of the third son, the labourer, in The Complaint of Scotlande:

I may be comparit to the dul asse in sa far as I am compellit to bayr ane importabil byrdyng, for I am dung and broddit to gar me do and to thole the thing that is abuif my pouer. Allace, I am the merk of the but, contrar the quhilk evere man schutis arrous of tribulatione. Allace, quhou is iustice sa evil trettit quhilk is occasione that evere man usis al extreme extorsions contrar me as far as ther pouer can exsecut. Allace, I laubyr nycht and day witht my handis to neureis lasche and inutil idil men, and thai recompens me witht hungyr, and witht the sourd. I susteen ther lyif witht travel and witht the suet of my body, and thai parsecut my body witht outrage and hayrschip, quhil I am becum ane begger. Thai lyf throcht me, and I dee throcht them ...

The lauberaris ar ane notabil membyr of ane realme, witht out the quhilk nobilis and clergie can nocht sustene ther stait nor ther lyif, yit notheles thai ar baytht becum my mortal enemies, the quhilk wil be the final reversione of ther auen prosperite. Therfor I may compair them til ane man in ane frensy, quhilk bytis his auen membrs witht his tetht, through the quhilk his body becummis consumit.¹

Despite Lindsay's preference for the nobility's point of view, however, he refrains from castigating the labouring commons in the way Dame Scotia does. She reproves all three sons, and her answer to the labourer includes these

¹ C.S., pp. 123 and 124.

words:

Gyf thou ande thy sect hed as grite liberte
 as hes thy tua brethir, doutles ye wald be
 mair cruel, nor the wyld beystis of the
 desertis of Arabie ... None of you suld have
 liberte, bot rather ye suld be daly dantit
 and haldin in subiectioun, be cause that your
 hartis is ful of maleis, ignorance, variance
 and inconstance. (p. 139)

By having him gorgeously clothed and given a place in parliament, Lindsay indicates a stronger measure of support for the pleas put forward by Johne. Since this action happens on a stage, as part of a live performance, Lindsay could hardly have chosen a more effective gesture, in polemical terms, for the reinforcement of one of his main themes.

6. Alexander Scott's Ane New Yeir Gift to the Quene Mary; and The Lamentatioun of Lady Scotland.

To conclude this chapter it may be useful to refer briefly to two works which belong to the very end of our period, Alexander Scott's 'Ane New Yeir Gift to the Quene Mary, quhen scho come first Hame, 1562'¹ and 'The Lamentatioun of Lady Scotland',² the latter dating from 1572. With both of them we enter the Reformation period: a full discussion of their content would take us outside the bounds of this study but there are certain points which are worth selecting.

Scott's 'New Yeir Gift' is a sombre piece of counsel

1 J. Cranstoun, ed., The Poems of Alexander Scott (S.T.S., 1896) pp. 1-8. See also John MacQueen's introduction to Ballatis of Luve (Edinburgh, 1970).
 2 Satirical Poems, I, 226-39.

to the young queen as she arrives to assume her rule: as advice to the monarch then the poem takes its place in a well-worn tradition. If we survey the themes which recur throughout our period whenever a writer addresses his monarch on the kingly duties, we can find these same themes assembled here in Scott's poem. This does not mean he was merely performing an exercise. There is no doubt that the matters discussed are of practical and immediate concern.

The advice opens, however, as might be expected, on a theoretical note. Mary is reminded to 'begin at God', to hold the church in reverence, to nourish the four cardinal virtues, to administer justice equally, to accept the counsel of the wise, and to 'haif e and eir' on the 'common weill'. The reference to discord between secular and ecclesiastical interests is one that could have occurred at any point in the period, but after the first half dozen stanzas the references clearly pertain to a more localised point in time. The Reformation is recent enough, for example, to leave high feeling about stamping out the remnants of romanism. Scott refers to the 'vicious leving' of 'wickit pastouris'; he mentions their being 'sa proud in thair prerogatyvis' and their 'fylthy licherous lyvis'. We have already seen how in Lindsay's Satyre (e.g. ll. 253-58) it was alleged that the clergy used their vow of celibacy as a means of greater licence than they permitted to the laity, and Lindsay returns to the subject in the Monarche:

Sum personis (parsons) hes at thare command
 The wantoun wencheis of the land,
 Als, thay have gret prerogatyffis,
 That may depart, ay, with thare wyffis,
 Without divors or summondying,
 Syne tak ane uther but woddyng. (4695-700)

Scott mentions how the clergy marry their bastard children into noble families, thus again echoing a complaint we have noted in Lindsay's Satyre¹. He describes as 'pithles' the pardons which were acquired from the pope and were then used to delude 'fond folis' into believing that the pope has God's power over the remission of sins. Like Lindsay yet again, he rails against idols and relics:

Thai lute (let) thy liegis pray to stokkis and stanes
 And paintit paiparis, wattis nocht quhat thai meine;
 Thai bad thame bek and bynge (bend) at deid mennis banes,
 Offer on kneis to kis, syne saif thair kin. (81-84)

Idolatery may have been abolished,

Bot in sum hartis is gravit new agane
 Ane image, callit cuvatyce of geir, (117-18)

and he cites in particular those who outwardly profess a Christian life

And ar bot biblistis fairsing (stuffing) full thair
 bellie,
 Bakbytand nyctbouris, noyand thame in nuikis
 Ruging (tearing) and raifand up kirk rentis lyke
 ruikis.
 (123-25)

The greatest are the greediest, he claims, greedy to 'plant quhair preistis and personis (parsons) were possessouris'. We are reminded of the dishonesty over the will in Lindsay's Testament when Scott bewails that 'teindis ar uptane be testament transgressouris'. And inevitably the commons suffer:

¹ Satyre, ll. 3181-91; 3358-61; 3928-43.

Leill labouraris lamentis and tennentis trew,
 That thai ar hurt and hareit north and south.
 (139-40)¹

All these abuses are listed by Scott in practical terms: such, he is saying, are the wrongs which ought to be righted by the new queen. Although his sympathies are clearly reformist he does not use these complaints as a basis for a doctrinal discussion:

With mes nor matynes nowayis will I mell:
 to Juge thame justlie passis my ingyne. (97-98)

Indeed he asks Mary to 'dantoun' the open discussion of Holy Writ by every Tom, Dick and Harry: such deeper matters are the preserve of those learned enough to consider them properly. As it is, complains Scott,

... lymmer lawdis and litle lassis lo
 Will argun bayth with bischop, preist, and freir.
 (53-54)

His attitude on this point is in keeping with his acceptance of the view that every state in society has its own special vocation and that it is by adhering to these that harmony within the community will be maintained. He advises Mary to see to it that her subjects adhere to their proper places (ll. 169-76).

Finally we may refer to 'The Lamentatioun of Lady Scotland', written in March 1572: its literary interest is small but some of its themes are worth mentioning as they show, first, a continuity with similar themes whose expression had occupied most of the writers discussed and, second, particular points of difference which mark a new

^{Cf}
 I Satyre, ll. 2567-77; Monarche, ll. 5706-23.

age in Scottish life.

Familiar themes include the reference to a golden past, as when Lady Scotland recalls 'our faithfull dayis', when she and her husband 'deir gude Johne, the Common-weill' lived peacefully and happily with no knowledge of the 'beist' civil war (ll. 7-14). Another familiar idea is the head/body analogy to describe the condition of the nation: this is combined with the notion of an ideal past when Lady Scotland claims that in those days 'my heid wald not dis-
'dane my leggis and feit' (l.15). Allegorical clothing is devised to describe her former ideal state, e.g.

My hat was of justice and equitie;
My coller, of trew nichtbour lufe it was, (20-21)

so that her present plight, her spoliation, may be represented as the stripping away of these virtues, e.g.

My coller rent is be Dame Fremitas (83)

and

My leggs and feit now schod with povertie. (90)

Under a false cloak of authority come those whose only desire it is to

bruik offices
With power to cleik up the benefices. (97-98)

Once again particular wealth is set against common wealth - 'particular weill hes spulyeit policie' (82). The author refuses to draw distinctions in the midst of all this general greed:

Nane I excuse on ather syde; for quhy
Ilk ane his awin hous seikis to edify,
And nane dois cair for commoun-weill ane prene (pin).
(99-101)

A substantial part of the work is then taken up with listing the faults in turn of the church, the universities, the nobility, the burgesses and the commons.

The fact that we are now dealing with a new era is seen most clearly of course in the criticism of the church,

That purgit art of channoun, monk, and freir,
Of papist priest, papist, and papistrie. (150-51)

But the complaint is that while the church has freed herself of popery and superstition she has not been freed of hypocrisy, avarice, pride and ambition. The word of God may indeed be truly preached (i.e. according to Reformed doctrine) but as far as the commons at large are concerned they are even more poorly served than before.

For upaland thay have not dew service:
The rowmis appointit pepill to confidder (assemble)
To heir Gods word, quhair thay suld pray togidder,
Ar now convertit in schein coits and fauldis,
Or ells ar fallin, becaus nane thame uphauddis;
The parische kirkis, I mene, thay sa misgye
That nane for wynd and rane thairin may byde. (158-64)

'Ye do not your office', says the commons to the church.

Corrupt prelates have been abolished in name only. As has already been mentioned, well before 1560 much of the church's wealth was in lay control, and to this extent the Reformation itself simply recognised what was already a fact. Yet in allocating blame, the author here mentions not only 'lords and lairds' but also the commoners themselves, alleging that all members of the community have not given faithful enough support to the new church.

Criticism of the universities is rather generalised: we are merely told that their buildings are derelict (l. 192)

and that they are neglecting their duty of leading people to virtue. It is assumed that the universities share the purpose of the church, though as far back as 1496 such an assumption was implicitly questioned by the so-called education act of that year.

There is little new in the complaints against the nobility. They are arraigned

For raising fyre aganis my actis and law,
In halding towns and strenths your king aganis,
Putting the rest of your brether to panis. (236-38)

They are blinded by ambition, vain-glory and 'gredynes to rule'. Their oppression of their tenants is described in terms common throughout our period, from The Thre Prestis of Peblis (ll. 293-306) through Henryson's The Wolf and the Lamb (ll. 127-54) to Lindsay's Satyre (ll. 2551-77) and Monarche (ll. 5706-23). Present misery is again highlighted by reference to a happier past.

Quhair sic wer wont to have guse, cok, and hen,
Breid, drink, and bedding, to treit honest men,
Now drink thay mylk and swaits in steid of aill,
And glaid to get peis breid and watter cail:
Quhair sic wer wont to ride furth to the weir,
With jak and sword, gude hors, knapscull, and speir;
Quhair sic wer wont bravely to mak thame bowne,
With lord or laird to ryde to burrowis towne ...
Now mon thay wirk and labour, pech and pant,
to pay their maisters maillis exhorbitant ...
Thay ar sa waik thay dow not beir a jak,
And gets waik bairns, evill nureist in distress:
Sa be sic wayis my commouns dois dicres.
(259-66, 269-70,
272-74)

The remedy advised is of the most general kind: the nobility are simply told to follow Christ and chase away Satan.

The *brugesses*, craftsmen and merchants are criticised by way of an allegory, in which they give lodging to Pride, Envy, Falset and Deceit. These figures arrive as beggars and a lawyer's wife argues for their admission, with a touch of irony that is rare in this otherwise sober poem:

Quhair of dois serve our husbands gold and rent,
Bot to sustene the pure (poor) and indigent? (309-10)

The craftsmen are further admonished for their extraordinary drinking. And the commons at large are warned to dress more according to their degree: they are guilty of prodigality in their attempts to 'counterfait the worthyest'.

The conclusion appended for the sake of ending on a merry note after the 'sad' matters seeks to raise a laugh with a scurribus reference to an indulgent prelate of the old days 'quhen fornicatioun haldin was na cryme'. Such ridicule of the now rejected Roman Church was not uncommon among the early reformers.

* * * * *

Concern for the lot of the poorer commons and indignation against legal corruption are thus two themes which can be found throughout our period, in works ranging in quality from the most banal to the most accomplished. The most vigorous defence of the poor is made by Lindsay, if we consider simply the tactics of persuasion. In the Henryson fables discussed, however, we find this concern subsumed in an interpretation of the overall situation

which sees both a particular example of suffering and the place which such events have in their universal context. So, in The Sheep and the Dog we sympathise with the sheep both as a wronged individual and as a member of fallen humanity.

As between Chapters Two and Three there is a strong thematic link in that many writers saw the church failing in its duty to protect the poor - and now as between Chapters Three and Four there is an equally strong link in that many writers saw a complementary failure on the part of the king. Analysis of the king's function and assessment of the performance of individual kings are two of the most predominant themes in all the literature under discussion. If the king is regarded as the secular head of society, then any discussion of how he fulfils his duties in this respect allows the discussion of a large number of related topics. And if the king is regarded as primarily responsible to God, then any discussion of how he fulfils his duties in this respect entails a discussion of the moral and religious framework already treated in Chapter One. The king's duties can of course be regarded from both points of view, and once again we shall find that in the most accomplished literary works, more than one point of view is maintained.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE FUNCTIONS OF KINGSHIP

This is one of the major themes of the literature of our period so this final chapter of the thesis must consider a wide range of treatments. Once more our principal examples will be drawn from The Thre Prestis of Peblis, Henryson (The Trial of the Fox and The Lion and the Mouse), Dunbar (the court poems), and Lindsay. A brief reference will also be made to an aspect of Douglas' Eneados.

Before surveying the works which belong to the main part of the period however it would be useful to open the discussion by referring to certain passages in the following: Barbour's Bruce, Harry's Wallace, Golagros and Gawane, and Lancelot of the Laik. These are relevant, as points of departure, because they concern themes (such as the attributes of monarchy) which later writers developed in their own way and in the light of different historical circumstances. The kind of national leadership celebrated by Barbour and Harry is a pioneering or primal variety; a writer like Henryson, while accepting the same basic tenets, concentrates on more sophisticated aspects. The king depicted by means of fable in The Trial of the Fox, for instance, is not one who is fighting to establish and maintain his very kingdom; the possession of his kingdom is an accepted fact and matters now under discussion are (a) law and order within the realm and (b) relations between crown and church.

1. Barbour's Bruce; Harry's Wallace; Golagroas and Gawane; Lancelot of the Laik.

Barbour's intention is to write a 'suthfast' story that will last 'ay furth in memory' and perpetuate the fame of those

That in thar tyme war wucht and wyss,
And led thar lyff in gret travaill,
And oft in hard stour off bataill
Wan richt gret price off chevalry,
And war voydyt off cowardy. (1. 22-26)

These are the characteristics of the royal hero whom Barbour wishes to present and the purpose of this 'story' is thus to picture an ideal hero, a kind of model king. At crucial points in the narrative Barbour holds up Bruce's behaviour as an example for the encouragement and instruction of Scotland's contemporary rulers. In Book XIII for instance:

God grant that thai, that cumyne ar
Of his ofspring, maynteyme the land,
And hald the folk weill to warrand,
And maynteme richt and ek laute,
As weill as in his tyme did he! (XIII, 708-12)

And at the close of the work a very similar idea is expressed (XX, 612-20). This is meant to be more than a pious gesture: it is practical exhortation, backed by his account of an ideal leader whose admirable qualities he has described and exemplified at length.

The entire work is cogently organised to this end. The digressions from the main narrative, for example, all serve a clearly realised purpose: initially they reinforce some admirable characteristic in the king, but their wider

purpose is to relate these incidents in local Scottish history to the events of universal history. Allusions to the Machabees, Fierabas and Tydeus reinforce the idea of valiant struggle against superior forces, and an allusion like that to the story of Fabricius and Pirrhus stresses the value of absolute loyalty.¹ The kingly character that emerges is therefore seen to share admirable qualities with the accepted heroes of the past. A personal portrait is out of the question. Bruce may suffer difficulties and failures but Barbour incorporates these in order to demonstrate not the king's fallible humanity but his laudable patience in adversity. A.M. Kinghorn has described Barbour's picture of Bruce as 'a monolithic symbol constructed from epic stereotypes rather than from a collection of personal and traditional fragments transmitted orally'.² The royal virtues are conventional - wisdom, courtesy, bounty, loyalty:- the main stress is on the heroic virtues associated with war, and these are heightened by showing how Bruce's patience and determination succeed against apparently insuperable

1 John Barbour, The Bruce, ed. W.W. Skeat (S.T.S., 1894), I, 464-76; III, 435-66; VI, 179-284; XX, 521-68.

The references are to book and line numbers.

2 'Scottish Historiography in the 14th Century, a New Introduction to Barbour's Bruce', Studies in Scottish Literature, VI (1969), p. 140.

odds. This in turn is related to the fact that for the sake of representing him as a thoroughly anti-English hero, Barbour omits biographical facts which would make Bruce's national allegiance less clear-cut. The murder of Comyn in 1306 was decisive in Bruce's relations with the English monarchy, but before that he had sworn fealty to Edward I, he had fought for the English, he had as one of the four Scottish regents attended the English court and he had owned land south of the border. There are, too, occasional evasions on Barbour's part where he clearly felt that certain types of brutality were less fitting to his hero's stature than others were.¹ Omission and selection were by no means out of keeping with the historian's function and duties as evidently accepted by Barbour.²

He also points up contrasts between Bruce and other participants in the action and the inference is that Bruce is free of the faults diagnosed in others. One of the more obvious examples occurs in Book IV, when King Edward

1 G.W.S. Barrow, Robert Bruce and the Community of the Realm of Scotland (London, 1965), p. 432 (hereafter referred to as Barrow).

In the course of this historical account of Robert Bruce the importance of Barbour's contribution to our understanding of Bruce is fully acknowledged (pp. 431-32) while on certain key events, like the murder of Comyn (pp. 197-98) and the Battle of Bannockburn, (pp. 320-28) Barbour's detailed evidence is judged alongside the evidence supplied by other contemporary sources.

2 Gervase of Canterbury's distinction between 'history' and 'chronicle' was still valid in our period. See R.L. Browne, ed., British Latin Selections A.D. 510-1400 (Oxford, 1954), pp. 73-75; also R.L. Poole, Chronicles and Annals: a brief outline of their origin and growth (Oxford, 1926). In various parts of the present ^{thesis I} refer to such writers as Pitscottie and Leslie as 'chroniclers' and this is simply a term of convenience to distinguish them from modern historians. In the light of Gervase's distinction and in their own eyes they were 'historians'.

has the Scottish prisoners from Kildrummy brought to him, and despite the fact that he is on his deathbed he condemns them to be hung and drawn. Barbour's comment draws the predictable conclusions:

How mycht he traistly on hym cry,
That suthfastly demys all thing,
To haf mercy for his crying
Of him that, throu his felony,
Into sic poynt had no mercy? (IV, 327-31)

By including such an incident Barbour seeks first to imply that Bruce is a different kind of man altogether (e.g. he generously sets free Sir Ingram de Umfraville) and second, to stress the evil nature of the enemy against whom Bruce has pitted his unequal forces. The contrast between Robert and his brother Edward Bruce is shown less blatantly.

Edward Bruce's fatal weakness is his 'outrageous succudry', his overweening pride: had he been less wilful, Barbour declares, he could have conquered all Ireland (XVI, 321-30). In his last battle Edward's defiance of good advice shows that his hunger for honour is not tempered by the necessary humility (XVIII, 53-56) and Barbour makes it clear that he was lost through 'wilfulness' and 'succudry'. By implication, then, Robert has the virtues which his brother lacks: through a combination of military skill and personal character he wins honour, fame and his country.

The historical Bruce may well have achieved wide popularity with his commoners¹ and no doubt this would give Barbour's account a widespread and ready audience. This

¹ Barrow, pp. 370-71.

is not inconsistent with the fact that Bruce and his colleagues understand and observe codes of behaviour that are the preserve of the nobility. Thus Barbour not only commends acts of charity towards commoners but he also alleges that as a class they are basically untrustworthy. The laundress incident (XVI, 270-92), when Bruce halts his men to help a poor laundress who is in labour, is recounted as a remarkable event; it is seen as an act of great condescension on the king's part. Then in the death-bed speech which Barbour puts in the mouth of Bruce we find the king repenting that

throu me and my warraying
Of blud thar hass beyne gret spilling,
Quhar mony sakless man was slayne. (XX, 173-75)

Presumably these 'sakless' (innocent) men are largely commoners whose lives and property bore the brunt of war. On the other hand, the commoners are not represented wholly as an oppressed and innocent class. Barbour relates, for instance, how commoners slay defenceless men after the battle of Bannockburn; how commoners defect from Bruce's cause; how the people of Ross betray the queen and her company to the English¹. The reason for defection is not given as simple cowardice: Barbour refers rather to an understandable and practical concern, on the part of the commons, with a prospective leader's ability to provide security. Bruce himself, as he lives off the land, invades the security of the peasants: when he establishes

1. XIII, 341-45; II, 497-502; IV, 39-58.

himself on Rathlin, for example, the people of this small island are obliged (more or less at sword-point) not only to do him homage but also to supply daily enough food for his three hundred men (III, 728-52).

If Barbour chooses to ignore Bruce's earlier activities against the Scots, Harry chooses to give them particular stress¹. But the object is the same: to enhance the hero's patriotism, the hero now being Wallace. Wallace's efforts, Harry tells us, are entirely for the benefit of his country and its rightful king. If the rightful king comes to a realisation of his duty only slowly, then that is cause for regret - but by the time Wallace is betrayed Bruce has forsaken his English allegiance and has come to Scotland to carry on the fight so long pursued by Wallace.

Harry is insistent that Wallace has no desire to be a king (and he even admits to stretching a point here²), but clearly the kind of leadership held up for our admiration is identical with the royal virtues celebrated by Barbour. Wallace's person³ and physical strength⁴ are in keeping with the prowess we would expect of a vigorous military leader whose personal example would be a prime factor in maintaining his army's morale. Pease is 'uncordial' to him⁵. When caught between the rival claims of

1 Harry's Wallace, ed. M.P. MacDiarmid (S.T.S., 2 Vols., 1968-69), II, 353-59; VIII, 139-46; 240-44, 259-62, 394-97, 1341-45, 1533-38, 1611-14, X, 1178; XI, 206-16, 252-53, 323-24, 363-71, 442-547, 590-619, 1121-77; XII, 965-85, 1155-90. (Hereafter referred to as Wallace. References are to book and line numbers).

2 VIII, 639-44, 668-72; XII, 1438-48.

3 X, 1221-50.

4 IV, 238-41; VIII, 845-46.

5 IX, 557-58.

love and war he does not allow himself to be deflected from his over-all purpose¹. Towards the end he suffers a certain despondence and war-weariness² but Harry lets us see Wallace overcome such difficulties in order to enhance his hero's sterling character. For similar reasons Harry alleges that the English have a high regard for Wallace's military might³.

As with the image of Bruce presented by Barbour, so, with Harry's Wallace, the motive that determines all else is a whole-hearted resistance to the English. It is, for instance, 'no sin' to kill Englishmen⁴. Vengeance is invoked as justification⁵. The necessity of resisting the English is stressed repeatedly⁶. This applies primarily to the English invaders and occupiers of Scotland but it applies also to the English in France, where Wallace fights them bitterly and successfully.

The qualities of leadership required in such conditions are therefore stark and simple. The following is a typical everyday operation:

Thai band thaim (the defeated English) fast with
 wedeis sad and sar,
 On bowand treis hangyt thaim rycht thar.
 He sparyt nane that abill was to wer,
 Bot wemen and preystis he gart thaim ay forber.
 Quhen this was doyne to thar dyner thaim went
 Off stuff and wyne that god had to thaim sent.

(III, 215-20)

1 V, 579-716; VI, 33-40, 217-18.

2 XII, 577-86, 959-64.

3 V, 503-4; VIII, 83-85, 1481-90.

4 III, 270; VIII, 518-20.

5 III, 40-41; IV, 169-70; VI, 217-18.

6 I, 195-98; 266-68; II, 5-7, 177, 191, 234-42; IV, 297-98, 303-4; V, 397-401, 563-68; VI, 77-80, 381-94, 401-16; VIII, 440-52, 1326-72; IX, 559-805; XII, 1385-88.

Harry is frequently at pains to stress how Wallace, despite his fervour to slay as many English as possible, always spares women, children and priests.¹

The tactics of Wallace's leadership are explained quite fully. His ruthlessness towards the enemy is not entirely indiscriminate: he advises, for example, that 'to slay commounis it helpis us right nocht' but to eliminate the enemy leaders will have a more devastating^{at} military effect². His care for his men leads him at one point to choose further peril on land rather than risk crossing the Tay without boats (half of his company cannot swim)³. On the other hand he kills one of his own men, Fawdoun, in the course of a retreat because (a) Fawdoun is tiring and cannot keep up and (b) Wallace does not altogether trust him and suspects that if he is captured by the English he will change his allegiance. Harry's unease about the justice of this action finds expression in the story about Fawdoun's ghost⁴. Wallace's treatment of Fawdoun is not unlike his treatment of a tired horse in the following episode: he kills it, so that the English will get nothing of his⁵. Harry pointedly asserts Wallace's regard for his soldiers by making him lament:

I meyn fer mar the tynsell off my men
Na for my selff ... (V, 387-88)

And he stresses how Wallace is prepared to take great personal risks, despite his own vital position as Scottish

1 VIII, 1048-53.

2 IV, 643-46.

3 V, 55-57.

4 V, 103-24, 180-224.

5 V, 296-99.

leader. Wallace's spying exploit before the Battle of Biggar provokes criticism, but Harry supplies him with a decisive answer:

Schyr Jhon the Grayme displessit was sumdeill
 And said till him, 'Nocht chyftaynlik it was
 Throw wilfulnes in sic perell to pas.'
 Wallace answerd, 'Or we wyn Scotland fre
 Bath ye and I in mar perell mon be,
 And mony othir the quhilk full worthie is ...'
 (VI, 488-93)

And towards the end of the whole work Harry reminds us of the kind of portait of Wallace he has been at pains to draw: Wallace is a model of his kind -

Meroure he was off lauta and manheid,
 In wer the best that evir sail power leid.
 (XII, 1171-72)

As with Barbour, what most concerns Harry is not so much verifiable historical fact as the depiction of an ideal patriotic military leader. His manipulation of historical fact and the bearing this has on the current political situation in the late 1470s have been discussed elsewhere¹. His use of literary devices to further his aim is relatively spare but their import is obvious. Writing after the event, he can refer early in his account to a prophecy, which is duly fulfilled²; he alleges the assistance of divine aid, especially through the mediation of the Virgin Mary³; and he relates the miraculous story of the Monk of Bury, confirming Wallace's reception in heaven⁴. As in The Bruce, references to the heroes of the past enhance the stature of the hero being presented,

1 Wallace, pp. lx-lxxiv, lxxviii-lxxxvii; also xvi-xxvi.

2 II, 346-50.

3 VII, 68-154, 1252-54.

4 XII, 1238-1304.

but Harry's use of such references is much more sparing and digressions are minimal. Allusions are made to Alexander¹, Arthur², Caesar³, Hector⁴ and the heroes of Ronceval⁵. The highest concentration of such references occurs at the point of Wallace's greatest humiliation (his betrayal) and emphasises the covetice and treachery of those who give him to the enemy: comparisons are drawn with Hector, Alexander, Caesar, Arthur, Ganelon and Godfrey of Boulogne⁶.

Thus both Barbour and Harry celebrate leaders whose primary virtues are military and whose over-riding purpose in life is the very establishment of their country's independence. We can see a somewhat less harsh and embattled view of leadership if we turn to two Scottish works which draw upon Arthurian material - The Knightly Tale of Golagros and Gawane and Lancelot of the Laik. As in both The Bruce and The Wallace the influence of the English military and political threat is strongly felt but despite the physical menace which Golagros and Lancelot face, the central themes of those two works concern leadership of a less primitive kind. Golagros seeks a way out of the impasse seemingly created by strict observance of the code of honour. Lancelot is instructed

1 e.g. X, 1242; XI, 343; XII, 839.

2 e.g. VIII, 845-46, 967-68; XII, 841.

3 VIII, 965-66; XII, 840.

4 e.g. VIII, 477-84; X, 1244; XII, 837.

5 VIII, 1255-62.

6 XII, 834-48. MacDiarmid notes that Harry repeats Barbour's catalogue of precedents for the treachery of Comyn (Bruce, I, 521-27), adding the last two examples. It is not clear why Godfrey is included.

how to rule his kingdom by first learning to rule himself.

The Knightly Tale of Golagros and Gawane¹ is designed to explore the twin themes of freedom and honour, and in view of the unstated but clearly intended analogy between Arthur's demand for the allegiance of Golagros and the English crown's similar demands to the Scots, it is not difficult to see the contemporary relevance of the story. Its composition has been dated around 1470: but it was printed by Chepman and Mylar in 1508, i.e. among their earliest publications, so it must have been considered to be of importance and interest almost forty years after it was written.

On his way to the Holy Land Arthur passes the castle of Golagros and learns that neither Golagros nor his forbears have ever owed allegiance to anyone. Such extraordinary independence goads Arthur into swearing that he will subject Golagros:

Sall never my likame be laid unlaissit to sleip,
 Quhill I have gart yone berne bow,
 As I have maid myne avow,
 Or ellis mony wedou
 Ful wraithly sal weip. (294-98)

On his way home from Jerusalem Arthur returns to Golagros' castle and requests his allegiance: Golagros replies that while he will help and honour Arthur in any way within his power he will certainly not submit, either to Arthur or to

¹ Alliterative Poems pp. 1-46; for date see pp. xi-xii and for a summary of the story see pp. xiv-xviii. It is interesting to note that the issue of feudal right and form are developed by the Scottish writer as an addition to his French original.

anyone else. Again it is stressed that Golagros' independence is not simply his own personal freedom but is also his inheritance: his 'eldaris of ald' possessed the same freedom.

Bot nowthir for his senyeounry, nor for his summoun,
 Na for dreid of na dede, na for na distance,
 I will nocht bow me ane bak for berne that is borne;
 Quhill I may my wit wald,
 I think my fredome to hald,
 As my eldaris of ald
 Has done me beforne.

(447-53)

It would be legitimate here to refer to the similar sentiments embodied in the Declaration of Arbroath and in the passage in praise of freedom in Barbour's Bruce (I, 225-74). In the face of repeated English pressure appeals of this kind could reasonably expect a warm response. In the present case such an attitude only strengthens Arthur's determination (499-505) and he settles to wait. The issue is put to the test in a long series of combats but the overall result of these is too indecisive: at last Golagros himself emerges to fight Gawane. Eventually Gawane gains the upper hand but at this point Golagros decides he will no longer follow the rules of the game. He refuses either to ask for favour or to submit. Faced with this, Gawane is reluctant to do what is now expected of him and slay his defeated but unyielding foe. Golagros proposes to solve the dilemma by the following stratagem. They must resume the combat and Gawane must pretend to be overcome and to submit so that Golagros can lead him back to the castle in apparent triumph. This they do, and so the appearance of

honour is preserved. At the feast which ensues, Golagros reveals the truth and then offers his loyalty and submission to Arthur (1215-19, 1287-1327). But Arthur's determination to subject Golagros has been undermined and, having accepted his allegiance he frees him at once from obligation. Thus dishonour for both parties has been averted: Golagros has maintained his independence and Arthur has been able to undo his threat without loss of face.

The solution to the dilemma may seem curious to us, but it is reasonable to assume that to its readers the questions raised in the tale had a contemporary relevance. Feudal allegiance was still a fact of life; and in relations between the Scots and the English, threats and counter-threats, vengeance and counter-vengeance and the belief that honour once impaired must be restored all had damaging effects on the precarious peace.

The demand for homage is also a leading motif in the narrative of Lancelot of the Laik (1482)¹. As M. Gray suggests in the introduction to her edition, this is 'an evidence of how far the ever present fear of the English demands for homage had become an obsession in the Scottish

¹ M.M. Gray, ed. (S.T.S., 1912). See W.W. Skeat, 'The Author of "Lancelot of the Laik", The Scottish Historical Review, VIII (1911), 1-4; and B. Vogel, 'Secular Politics and the Date of Lancelot of the Laik', Studies in Philology, XL (1943), 1-13; also W. Schep, 'The Thematic Unity of Lancelot of the Laik', Studies in Scottish Literature, V (1968), 167-75.

national mind'. The tone of Arthur's reply to Galiot, for instance, is easily recognisable:

Schir knycht, your lorde wondir hie pretendis,
 When he to me sic salutatioune sendis;
 For I as yit, in tymys that ar gone,
 Held never lond excep of god alone,
 Nore never thinkith til erthly lord to gef
 Trybut nor rent, als long as I may lef. (558-63)

However it is the second book that is of particular interest here: in this section of the fragment Maister Amytans gives lengthy advice to Arthur on how to conduct himself as a king and while as poetry it cannot be ranked very high it is, on the conceptual level, well organised and wholly integrated with the narrative in which it is an interlude. In general terms it has an interest which Walter Schep described thus:

What has been overlooked in previous critical evaluations is the thematic relevance which this episode has to both the remainder of the poem and the Arthurian legend as a whole. The reconciliation of the two conceptions of Arthur (the dux bellorum and the medieval Christian king) is never complete in medieval romance, which generally emphasises one conception to the virtual exclusion of the other. That such a reconciliation should be attempted in Lancelot of the Laik is suggestive of the sophistication of its author; that the attempt is unsuccessful is less the fault of the author than of his material, for certain elements of the Arthurian legend simply cannot be reconciled to the teachings of the Medieval Church.¹

There is a more particular interest. Of the two major additions which were made to the source material², this substantial Amytans episode (ll. 1274-2143) is one,

1 op. cit., pp. 171-72.

2 Schep. (op. cit., p. 168) suggests that the version to which the Scottish Lancelot is closest is that contained in H.O. Somer, ed., The Vulgate Version of the Arthurian Romances (Washington, 1910).

and it is within this episode that we find allusions which have an undoubted bearing on the reign of James III. These allusions have a clear affinity with similar references in The Thre Prestis of Peblis and in Henryson's Fabillis.

First, as may be expected, Amytans stresses the fundamentally religious conception of monarchy. You are 'so far myswent / Of wykitness', he tells Arthur, that God's vengeance will soon strike: you have forgotten that it is to Him that you owe your high estate. And later, when advising Arthur how to put himself aright, he begins:

First, the begynning is of sapiens,
To dreid the lord and his magnificens;
And what thow haith in contrar hyme ofendit,
Whill yow haith mycht, of fre desir amend it; (1400-3)

He accuses Arthur of neglecting his high calling in favour of temporary satisfactions:

Yow haith non ey bot one thyne awn delyt,
Or quhat that plesing shall thyne appetyt. (1348-49)

He is very critical of Arthur's mismanagement of justice and of the resulting oppression of the poor:

And thow art causs of al this ^{hol} iniure,
Wharof that god a raknyng sal [^]craf
At the ... (1355-57)

He emphasises the king's responsibility both for the choice of those officers who will administer justice (ll. 1608-11) and for the punishment of those who subvert the law (ll. 1640-41). He recommends (as was recommended to James III) that Arthur should himself visit every chief town in his realm and let it be seen by his own person that

he is intent on establishing impartial justice (ll. 1644-53).

Amytan's advice at this point recalls the basic moral of

The Lion and the Mouse:

For quho his eris frome the puple stekith,
And not his hond in ther support furth rekith,
His dom sall be ful grevous and ful hard,
When he sal cry and he sal nocht be hard. (1650-53)

Arthur is further accused (as was James III) of losing the hearts of his people (l. 1383), of ignoring counsel (ll. 1393-94), of being pensive and proud (l. 1692) and of being mean:

For largess is the tresour of a king,
And not this other jowellis nor this gold
That is in to thi tresory witholde. (1764-66)

And the king's responsibility is recognised for putting right the wrongs committed in his name during his minority:

But kingis when thei ben of tender ag,
I wil not say I trast thei ben excusit,
Bot schortly thei sall be sar accusit,
When so thei tak not full contrisioune,
And punyss them that hath ther low mysgyit.
That this is trouth it may not be denyit; (1657-63)

The interest of the second part of the fragment is therefore clearly in the content: my few quotations show that the verse, while adequate for its limited pedagogic purposes, is somewhat pedestrian. There is more flexibility in the writing of the other two parts, particularly in battle-scenes where perspective is created by relating individual exploits to the overall movement of the action. As a whole the poem is not so 'colourless and characterless' as its own editor would have us believe.¹ Yet when we turn

to The Thre Prestis of Peblis we find similar issues being raised in the course of tales which are both narrated and organised with a superior literary skill.

2. John's tale and Archebald's tale in The Thre Prestis of Peblis.

We have already, in Chapter One, discussed the overall structure of The Thre Prestis of Peblis, and in particular the significance of the manner in which William's tale is related to the first two, those of John and Archebald respectively. In Chapter Two we referred briefly to the ecclesiastical criticism in John's tale; and in Chapter Three to the oppression of the poor in Archebald's tale. Of necessity these discussions were incomplete, but now it is possible to consider both of these tales in their entirety, because the central figure in both of them is the king.

John's tale is about a king who summons representatives of his three estates and presents each with a question which must be answered next morning. The questions are in fact criticisms of the estates, against which they must defend themselves, and they constitute a common device of political writing in the later Middle Ages: enumerating the defections of the estates in turn. This is the starting-point of nearly all the treatments of social and political problems of the period. Ruth Mohl identifies four traits of the genre: (a) enumerating the

estates, (b) lamenting the shortcomings of each, (c) stressing the divine origin of the estates and their interdependence, and the necessity of being content with one's station, (d) searching for remedies for the deficiencies.¹

The king's welcome to his burgesses clearly relates this tale to fifteenth century Scotland.

Quen that your ships holds hail and sound,
In riches, gudes and weilfair I abound;
Ye ar the caus of my lyfe and my cheir;
Out of far lands your merchandice cums heir. (87-90)

As was natural at the time, the commons is represented by its wealthier and more influential element. The burghers were rapidly becoming a highly important force in the development of society, increasingly distinguishing themselves, as a class who bought and sold, from the craftsmen, the class who manufactured but were discouraged from trading.² This reflects too the increasing use of money throughout the period as an alternative to the feudal currency of service or payment in kind - and personal wealth is the subject of the king's question to the burgesses:

Quhy burges bairns thryves not to the thrid air,
Bot casts away it that thair elders wan (94-95)

1 Ruth Mohl, The Three Estates in Medieval and Renaissance Literature (New York, 1933), pp. 6-7 (hereafter referred to as Mohl).

2 I.F. Grant, The Social and Economic Development of Scotland before 1603 (Edinburgh, 1930) pp. 382-87 (hereafter referred to as Grant); W. Croft Dickinson, Scotland from the Earliest Times to 1603 (Edinburgh, 1961, rev. ed. 1965), chap. XXV (hereafter referred to as Dickinson).

As Robb points out, this idea had the status of a commonplace in that it found expression in a number of proverbs. He refers to Skeat's Proverbs, where we find these examples:

For thys men se and say alday,
The threde eyre selleth alle away.

and

The grandsire buys, the faither bigs,
The son sells and the grandson thigs.¹

The idea is still valid in Earle's Microcosmography (1628), in which, the character of 'An Upstart Country Knight' concludes: 'In sum, he's but a dōd of his own earth; or his land is the dunghill, and he the cock that crows over it. And commonly his race is quickly run and his children's children, though they scape hanging, return to the place from whence they came.'²

The type of personal wealth referred to by the king is distinctly that of merchants: it is gained in the first place by personal effort, not inherited. While the power that was now coming into the merchants' hands was indeed important for the nation it will be noticed in the tale that the burgesses are not invited to comment on matters of polity. These are still reserved for their betters and the questions put to the lords and to the clergy allow for a wider treatment of questions of government; they allow too more scope for criticising the king.

1 Skeat, Proverbs, p. 41. The first is from Handlying Synne (l. 9478) and the second from A. Hislop, The Proverbs of Scotland (Edinburgh, n.d.).

2 Microcosmography, ed. H. Osborne (London, n.d.), p.44.

Relations between monarch and lords, it need hardly be said, were of crucial importance in the operating of feudal society: if a lord became powerful enough he could become a threat, actual or potential, to the very position of the king; if the lords spent their substance and energy in civil strife then the whole country suffered. It was not enough for kings that their office, as such, was venerated: they had to earn the respect and awe of their subjects. Only the most astute, by balancing faction against faction, or the strongest, by being simply tougher than any likely rivals, succeeded in establishing a viable royal authority. Many kings must have felt this:

My lustie lords, my lieges and my lyfe,
 I am in sturt quhen that ye are in stryfe;
 Quhen ye have peace and quhen ye have plesance,
 Than am I glade and derflie may I dance. (101-4)

In such a context recourse to the analogy between the human body and the body politic was almost inevitable:

Ane heid dow not on bodie stand allane
 For out members to be of micht and mane
 For to uphold the bodie and the heid,
 And sickerlie to gar it stand in steid; (105-8)

The figure was a commonplace, occurring regularly to anyone who thought or wrote about the structure of society. John Major for instance uses it to justify the usefulness of the 'baser organs' of society, and James VI, in an interesting variation of the idea, refers to the microcosm of his own body as a pattern for his kingly behaviour. It was useful because it illustrated how every part, even and especially the humblest, had an important function within the whole,

how disagreement between the parts could lead only to harm for the whole, how each part was best fitted to perform its own function and could not be expected to perform a different one. The figure is indeed applicable to any organised society but it was seen as particularly relevant to feudal society, in which the exact duties and rights of the different degrees were clearly understood.¹

*>

Quhairfoir and quhy and quhat is the cais
So worthie lords war in myne elders dayis,
Hardie in hart to stand in everie stour,
And now in yow I find the hail contrair? (117-21)

1 J. Burns, 'The Scotland of John Major', The Innes Review II (1951), p. 68 (hereafter referred to as Burns); Basilicon Doron pp. 202-3. The idea is a very old one and can be found in various forms in ancient myths but to the Middle Ages its origins were in Aristotle and St. Paul. See Otto Gierke, Political Theories of the Middle Age, trans. F.W. Maitland (Cambridge, 1938), pp. 22ff, and J. Bowle, Western Political Thought (London, 1947), p. 191. The figure was used frequently; examples in Lydgate for instance include The Pilgrimage of the Life of Man, ed. J. Furnivall (Roxburgh Club Publications, London, 1905), pp. 310ff (Hereafter referred to as Lydgate, Pilgrimage); and Fall of Princes, ed. H. Bergen (E.E.T.S., 1924-27), pp. 53, 165, 223-24, 261-62, 263-64, 315, 369-70 (Hereafter referred to as Lydgate, Fall of Princes). Scottish writers used it too; it occurs in Lindsay, for example, Dreme, ll. 878-82, 916-17; Satyre, ll. 1045-48, 1717-20, 2374; Monarche, ll. 4916-17, 5436-37. Also Leslie, II, 104; and Robert Lindsay of Pitscottie, The Historie and Chronicles of Scotland, ed. A.J.G. Mackay (S.T.S., 1899), I, 276 (hereafter referred to as Pitscottie).

* The king's question to his nobles may be seen as another commonplace, the assumption that the past was better than the present:

In fifteenth century Scotland 'myne elders dayis' could refer to, say, the times celebrated by Barbour, when feelings of national pride were aroused by the assertion of independence, feelings too which have been preserved in the words of The Declaration of Arbroath. Hector Boece, however, referring to the 'golden age' when Scotsmen 'grew mair strang and grete of bodijs than we ar in thir dayis' and were not 'sa ouresett with superflewite as now', imagines this as existing before the days of Malcolm Canmore.¹ In a similar vein the writer of The Complaynt of Scotlande (1549) laments the former times when the 'pepil lyvit al to gydthir in ane tranquil and lovabil communitie'.²

The king's criticism of his noblemen here is not so harsh as the reproof delivered in The Complaynt by Dame Scotia to her noble son. She refers to the conventional distinction between 'true' and merely formal nobility and accuses her son of having degenerated from the ideal:

... ane person may succed to heretage and to movabil gudis of his predecessours, bot no man can succed to gentreis nor to vertue; for vertu and gentreis most proceid fra the spreit of hym self, and nocht fra his predecessours
 ... ye professe you to be gentil men, bot your werkis testifeis that ye ar bot incivile vilainis
 ... ane man is nocht reput for ane gentil man in Scotland, bot gyf he mak mair expensis on his horse and his doggis nor he dois on his wyfe and bayrnis.

1 E.C. Batho and H.W. Husbands, eds., The Chronicles of Scotland, translated into Scots by John Bellenden (1531) (S.T.S., 1938-41), II, 172-73.

2 C.S., p. 144; see also pp. 71-72 (hereafter referred

The proper signs for a coat of arms, she declares, ought to be powder, ash and earth. Nevertheless she insists on the rightness of the social order in which the commons are duly subjected by their superiors of the noble classes: the failings of each estate are not taken as reasons for abolishing the distinctions between the estates.¹

There is also a reference to a better past in the king's question of his clergy. But first he hails them as his helmet, spear and shield. In his assumption that the devotions of his clergymen are efficacious in securing victory against his enemies he may seem to intend this figure in a more practical and worldly sense than that simply of St. Paul's Christian armour. On the other hand in view of the commonly accepted religious basis of monarchy it is logical for the king to refer to his clergy as the 'rule and rod' of his realm for they are the guardians of the tradition of which that conception of monarchy is a part.

For richt sa throu your mess and urisoun
 Myne enemyis suld put to confusioun.
 Ye ar the gaynest gait and gyde to God;
 Of all my realme ye ar the rewle and rod.
 (Asloan, 129-32)²

The king's question is addressed primarily to the
 bishops:

1 C.S., pp. 150, 155, 152.

2 These lines are from the Asloan MS and it is worth pointing out that the Charteris print line 131 (corresponding to Asloan line 129) gives an emended and less pointedly catholic reference in 'your devoit orisoun'.

quhairfoir and quhy
 In auld tymes and dayes of ancestry
 Sa monie bishops war and men of kirk
 Sa grit wie had ay gude warkes to wirk;
 And throw their prayers maid to God of micht,
 The dum men spak, the blind men gat their sicht,
 The deif men heiring, the crukit gat thair feit,
 Warme in bail, bot weill thay culd them beir;
 To seik folkes or into sairnes syne,
 Til al thay wald be mendis and medicyne;
 And quhairfoir now in your time ye warie?
 As thay did than quhairfoir sa mot ye? (151-62)

Just as the nobility once loved justice more so the clergy once loved virtue more. The basic institutions and purposes of the catholic clergy are not, of course, objected to, only the failure of individuals to live up to the ideals. James I supplies an example of a Scottish king making a severe criticism of his clergy. In his famous letter to prelates of Benedictine and Augustinian orders in 1425 he bewails the 'downhill condition' of religion and urges the prelates to rouse from their torpor and put their house in order. He implies a threat when he says that their idleness may cause kings to regret the munificence of their gifts to such establishments.¹

Later in the present tale the clergy reply to the king's somewhat general complaint with some particular complaints of their own against the king. Just as the phrase 'in myne elders dayis' in the question to the nobles may refer to the time of Bruce, so here 'auld tymes' may refer to the period before the Scottish kings began to turn high church appointments to their own advantage.

1 A.P.S., II, 25.

In the merchants' reply we do not have a simple black-and-white contrast between the stock characters of the hard-working father who saves and the idle son who squanders. There is a point worth noticing in the character of the father: after his laborious progress towards wealth he indulges in extravagant ostentation:

Riche was his gownis with uther garments gay:
 For Sunday silk, for ilk day grene and gray.
 His wyfe was cumlie cled in scarlet reid: (213-15)

Now in 1471 parliament ordained that 'nane suld weir silkis in dublett, gowne or cloak, except knichtis, minstrells and haraldis, without the wearer of the same may spend ane hundred poundis worth of land rent'. We are told in detail of the father's acquisitions, yet no mention is made of substantial purchasing of land, so possibly he is flouting the law and pretending in appearance to a higher social class. Robb suggests that the green cloth would be Lincoln or Kendal, i.e. English cloth which the Scots sometimes exchanged for fish. Yet a law of 1473, aiming to encourage the inflow of currency, prohibited such exchanges, so anyone dressed in such cloth could again be openly defying the law.¹ The father then is not just an honest worker whose fortune is frittered away by a spendthrift son. He has himself become ostentatious and pretentious, and his widow continues in a similar course, encouraging her son in his idle ways:

His mother not tholit the reik on him to blaw,
 And wil nocht heir, for verie shame and sin,
 That ever his father sald ane sheipskin. (232-34)

¹ A.P.S., II, 100, 105.

Trading in 'sheep' - skins was not only a humble occupation but sometimes also a suspect one. Inevitably the inheritance is whittled down 'to the pin' and the son discovers, too late, that it is so useless

He can not mak be craft to wine ane eg. (249)

Both father and mother then had begun to be corrupted by their gains before their son wasted them.

The author of The Complaynt of Scotlande refers to this tale but before quoting what he says it is worth giving an indication of the kind of arguments he puts forward for the continued subjugation of the lower orders in general; his remarks are relevant to the tale of the merchant's son. In her reply to Labourer's complaint, Dame Scotia says:

As sune as ye that ar comont pepil ar onbridilit and furtht of subjectione, your ignorance, inconstance, ande incivilite, pulcis you to perpetrat intollerabil exactions ... as sune as ony of them, be sic honest industreus ocupations, hes conquaist grit riches or heretagis, thai be cum mair ambicius ande arrogant nor ony gentil man sperutual or temporal, that ar descendit of the maist nobil barons of the cuntre ... There is nocht any mair odius thying in this world, as quhen the successour of any indigent ignorant mechanyk lauberar ascendis tyl ony dignite abufe his qualite, for incontinent eftir his promotione, he myskenis god ande man.

Given this attitude it is not surprising to find him declaring that in the above tale the matter has been treated too leniently: the truth is, the whole commons and not just the merchants are incapable of thriving to the third heir.

The preists of Peblis speris ane questione in ane beuk that he compilit, quhy that burges ayris thryvis nocht to the thrid ayr: bot he micht hef sperit as weil, quhy that the successours of the universal comont pepil baytht to burght and land, thryvis nocht to the thrid ayr. The solutione of this questione requiris nocht ane allegoric expositione nor yit ane glose, be rason that the text of this questione is nocht obscure, ane person that hed nevyr adversite and hes welth that procedit nevyr of his auen industrie, and syne hes liberte, and hes neveir knauen education, eruditione, nor civilitie, it is onpossibil that he can be vertuous, and he that heytis vertu, sal nevyr thryve.¹

Two assumptions are worth noting here. First, the practical effect of virtue: an unvirtuous man will not prosper. The merchant family, having acquired their riches, lose their virtue and lose their wealth too. Second, a nobleman who inherits his wealth does not gain it by 'his auen industrie', but if he is a true nobleman his innate civility will save him. By this view, education and civility will guard against the corrupting power of wealth.

The lords defend themselves by making three complaints to the king. Two of these are particularly noblemen's complaints: that both commons and lords are poor so the latter can neither behave liberally as befits their status nor supply the king's military needs; and that to remedy their poverty, noble families have to marry into rich commoner families. Their principal complaint however is of prime importance: the administration of justice is comupt.

1 C.S., p. 143.

Your justice ar sa ful of succuedry,
 Sa covetous and ful of avarice
 That thay your lords impaires of thair pryce.
 Thay dyte your lords and heryis up your men;
 The theif now fra the leill man quha can ken?
 (276-80)

Criminals who ought to be punished can buy themselves off; innocent men, sure of their innocence, see no reason why they should buy off a trumped-up charge; judges have only one interest - despoiling people of their goods to supply their own desires.

If we relate the lords' second complaint to contemporary circumstances three points emerge. First, inefficiency of justice may indeed have been a cause of poverty but the general lack of money referred to was aggravated by economic difficulties which affected most of Europe. Economic features of the age include a scarcity of bullion, frequent debasement of the coinage, inflation, official curbs on overseas spending, and attempts to encourage exports. Second, the complaint that when the men of the commons turn out for military service they cannot afford to bring a jerkin and bow or spear (as stipulated by parliament in 1456) has a real bearing on Scottish military weakness during this period. Although many burghs laid it down as a condition of membership the possession of adequate weapons and armour it became commoner as the century progressed for burghers to buy themselves out of military service.¹ James III used 'wageouris' and James IV continued and extended the practice.

¹ Dickinson, pp. 242-44; Major, H.M.B., p.47.

This was a common tendency throughout Europe and Scottish military weakness at this time can partly be accounted for by saying that Scotland did not adopt this practice extensively enough. Third, the ability of lords to call out a well-armed host to hold their 'right' (l. 306) was not always conducive to good order. It will be remembered that the king is in 'sturt' when his lords are in 'stryfe'. John Major, writing in 1521, complains how common quarrels are between neighbouring nobles and he claims that the wealthier farmers contribute to this strife: they hand over the cultivation of their land to their servants, equip themselves as warriors and are only too ready to take part in their lord's quarrel, 'be it just or unjust'.¹

Marriage into the family of a rich commoner was one way of renewing a noble family's declining wealth: the nobility was constantly being replenished by common blood. To an aspiring merchant the rise in social status was no doubt a gratifying seal of his success, but while many noble families found financial considerations more pressing than social ones the typical or theoretical attitude was that expressed by the 'agit lord' -

worship and honour of linage
Away it weirs thus for thair disparage. (311-12)

A churl, despite self-made wealth, could not be expected to know anything of

gentrice na honour,
Of fredome, worship, vassalage nor valour. (315-16)

¹ Major, H.M.B., pp. 47-48.

Noble virtues belonged to the noble estate. It is interesting to note that, between forty and fifty years later, in the Satyre Lindsay makes Diligence and Scribe proclaim as the last of their reforming acts that marriages between different estates should be prohibited.¹ Later, further parallels between The Thre Prestis and the Satyre will be noted.

The king promises to appoint a 'Doctour in the Law' who will see that justice is administered properly throughout the realm. In Archebald's tale a wise man does come to the king but he has to pretend to be a fool because that is the only way he can gain favour with the foolish king.

The clergy also accuse the king: they accuse him of interfering in the appointment of bishops, of setting aside the three canonical modes of election, per viam Spiritus Sancti, per viam compromissi and per viam scrutinii.

Literature, science, virtue, breeding no longer count: the bishops appointed to suit the king's purposes are no better than the wolf in sheep's clothing of the parable. There are parts of the clergy's reply which deserve attention and have already been discussed. At the moment no more is necessary than to note the basic complaint of the clergy: the church cannot fulfil its function if purely secular and political considerations are allowed to determine important

¹ Hamer, II, 355. On the other hand, Jean Bodin, in Six Livres de la republique (1577), Eng. ed. by Richard Knolles (1606), p. 578, recommends the marriage of younger children of noble houses to rich plebians as 'the surest way to maintaine the nobilitie in wealth, honour and dignitie'.

appointments. The solution offered by the king seems less than adequate in practical terms:

With kirk-gude sal I never have ado,
It to dispone to lytil or to large:
Kirk men to kirk sen thay have al the charge. (434-36)

The solution suggested for the combatting of injustice was of a similar simplicity. The writer's diagnosis of the ills of the estates is seen in practical terms; his conception of how the ills should be cured is not confined to practical remedies, as we have already seen in Chapter One.

The first and third of Archebald's tales may now be discussed here.

In each of Archebald's three short tales the pretended fool surprises the king with his wisdom. The king's faults are

Hee luifit over weil yong counsel

and

To al lichtnes ay was he redie boun.

So the learned and accomplished clerk manages to attract the king's attention and favour by adopting the dress and behaviour of a court fool:

Dieu gard, sir king. I bid nocht hald in hiddil
I am to yow als sib as seif is to ane riddil. (475-76)

On the surface this means simply 'we're both jolly fellows' but there is also an implied insult for just as a riddle is bigger than a sieve so the king is a greater fool than the

professed fool.¹

The very name 'Fictus', suggesting an invention or imaginary character, should warn us against hoping to find some contemporary model. Both Dr. Andrews and Dr. John Ireland were clerks from over the sea and were intimate with James III but neither could fit ~~the~~ part. The former was an astrologer and could be regarded, if one wished, as one of the malevolent favourites himself, and the latter was too often given responsible business for him to be regarded as any kind of fool.

Like the Shakespearian kind of fool Fictus represents the wisdom which the world dismisses as foolishness, but only up to a point. This point is best seen when we relate the last tale, William's, to those of John and Archibald. His true abilities appear to the king as a revelation:

For he as fule began guckit and gend
And ay the wysar man neirer the end (647-48)

and

I se weill I have lytil part of scule
That thus sould be informit with ane fule. (777-78)

The lean lunatic of Piers Plowman is worth citing:

Thanne loked up a lunatik a lene thing with-alle,
And knelyng to the kyng clergealy he seyde;
'Crist kepe the, sire kyng and thi kyngriche,
And leve the lede thi londe so leute the lovye,
And for thi rightful rewlyng be rewarded in heavene.'
(B. ProL., 123-27)

¹ See Fergusson's Proverbs, pp. 40-41: 'He is not the foole that the foole is, but he that with the foole deals'. The invocation of St. James in l. 483 may be an oblique reference to James III. Cf Dunbar's poem 'That never mair wald flow nor flicir', p. 73 ('The Testament of Mr. Andro Kennedy'), ll. 53-56.

Skeat's note on this passage describes three aspects of the fool-device: '(1) it conveys a touch of satire, as though it were a mad thing to hope for; (2) a lunatic is privileged to say strange things; and (3) he expressly declares, at the beginning of Passus XV (B-text) that people considered him a fool, and that he raved. This opinion he bitterly adopts. He makes the lunatic, however, speak clergealy, i.e. like a scholar.'¹ Fictus, the scholar, deliberately speaks like a fool.

The wounded man in the first of the three tales is a figure akin to Lindsay's John the Commonwealth. He is reduced to misery by the lack of justice, a lack which suffers him not only to be robbed by unchecked common thievery, but also plundered and exploited by those who are supposed to exercise a responsible authority. His words to the king are a forthright indictment:

I have sic sturt,
 For baith with theif and rever I am hurt.
 And yit, suppois, I have all the pyne,
 The falt is yowris, sir king, and nathing myne;
 For and with yow gude counsal war ay cheif,
 Than wald ye stanche weill baith rever and theif:
 Have thow with the that can weil dance and sing,
 Thow taks nocht thocht thi realme weip and wring.
 (539-46)

The king is stung into considering his shortcomings:

Sa wantonly in vane al thing he wrocht;
 And how the cuntrie throw him was misfarne
 Throw yong counsel, and wrocht ay as a barne.
 (566-68)

Pitscottie alleges that this very criticism was levelled

¹ P.Pl., II, 15.

at James III: he says that the lords counselled James
'to leif young consall'.¹

Ye ar sa licht and ful of vanitie,
And sa weil lufis al new things to persew
That ilk session ye get ane servant new. (608-10)

Just as the flies already on the wounded man are sated and if they are chased away a new set of hungry ones will replace them - so the officers of the realm should not be replaced too frequently.²

Who are the flies? In part no doubt the allusion is to James' favourites: they were much disliked by his nobles and the chroniclers show an equal hatred.³ I feel however that the flies signify a wider group than simply the court favourites. It is generally agreed that at this period the administration of justice was most likely to break down at local level - partly through a lack of

1 I, 170; see also Robb's note on line 456; and W.A. Craigie, Maitland Folio MS (S.T.S., 1919-27), Vol. I, Poem CXXVIII, l. 43. 'Young Counsale' features as one of the evil advisers in King Hart (e.g. l. 629).

2 See Fergusson's Proverbs, pp. 6-7: 'A hungrie louse bytes sair'. For differing versions of the tale see Aristotle's Rhetoric, tr. Jebb (Cambridge, 1909), pp. 111-12, and Gesta Romanorum, tr. Swan (London, 1877), p. 87.

3 Pitcottie, I, 165, 168-69, 170-71, 173, 176, 181, 184, 194; Leslie, II, 93, 97, 102, 104. Also James Balfour, The Annales of Scotland 1057-1603, Historical Works Vol. I (Edinburgh, 1824), 202, 203, 206, 212 (hereafter referred to as Balfour). George Buchanan, The History of Scotland, tr. and ed. J. Aikman (Glasgow, 1927), II, 202, 205-7, 208-9 (hereafter referred to as Buchanan). See also Wood, pp. 215-16 and Hamer, I, 69-70. Among more recent comments on James' favourites reference could be made to Mackie, James IV, p. 16, and Dickinson, pp. 226-28.

trained men, partly through lack of money to remunerate officers - so the flies here could well signify sheriffs. In John's tale the lords complain to the king about false justices:

Thay luke to nocht bot gif ane man have gude,
 And it I trow mon pay the justice fude.
 The theif ful weill he wil himself ouerby
 Quhen the leill man for to compone wil nocht consent,
 Because he waits he is ane innocent. (285-90)

Henryson brings a similar charge in the second stanza of the Moralitas to The Sheep and the Dog.

This wolf I likin unto a seref stout
 quhilk byis a forfalt at the kingis hand
 and hes with him a cursit assyiss about
 and dytis all the pure men up of land
 and fra the crowner lay on thame his wand
 suppoiss he be als trew as was sanct Iohine
 slane sall thay be or with the luge compone. (120-26)

Again the principal accused is the king - the oppressive sheriffs may be had enough but, it is at the king's hand that they acquire their dubious right to 'administer' justice in their area.

The general accusations brought against the king by Fictus in the first tale are consistent with the tenor of the accusations brought against James III by the chroniclers. Archebald's second tale, dealing with the king's over-readiness to grant pardons, has already been discussed in Chapter Three. but at the moment it ought to be pointed out that, on this special count, the parallel with the alleged short-comings of James III is particularly clear.

Archebald's first two tales deal with matters of

national importance and in each of them blame for discord is laid at the king's door. The third tale is about the king's private life, about the 'stit strangenes' between him and his queen, and although the contemporary relevance of such a tale may have been clear to the book's first readers, evidence for us is scantier. There is, however, one chronicler's reference which is worth quoting: Leslie, in listing the complaints brought by the dissenting nobles at Lauder, includes one which reads - 'and, quhilk of al was maist unworthie, to contemne his wyfe, as werthie a woman, and sett a hure in her place'. One manuscript describes this other woman as 'ane howir callit the Daesie'.¹ The stress on 'low degree' is in keeping with Fictus' question:

Quhy that ye have in yow sik fantasy
 To ly with wemen and of law degrie
 Aganis your quens wil and majestie,
 Consider and weil that sho is fair and gude? (910-13)

There are two points to note about the stratagem.

First, the ease with which the king is deceived. This seems to me of more importance than the mere fact of his 'lichtnes'. Second, the manner in which Fictus is rewarded.

The king promises:

Thow sal have gude, gold, lordships and land,
 Or cast fra the thy cote and be thow wyse,
 Ane bishoprik sal be thy benefyse. (946-48)

As we have seen earlier, in Chapter One, the implications of the part played by Fictus are fully seen only when we view the first two tales from the point of view of the third. Here, it is a worldly kind of wisdom he represents: to worldly problems he offers worldly solutions

¹ Leslie, II, 97.

and for this he receives worldly rewards. From the point of view of William's tale, this is not denied, but it is qualified by the postulation of a wider context.

3. Henryson's The Trial of the Fox and The Lion and the Mouse.

In Henryson's fables we find a similar combination of references which we can relate to James III's reign, and references which point to a scale of values over against the secular values of the mundane world. And again the affairs of the king and his government are judged in the terms of this further set of values. We have already examined, in Chapter One, the Moralitas of The Trial of the Fox and seen how that wider perspective is established: here, we must examine the story section of the fable because there the context is the secular one and the central figure in this context is the king. The king is also the central figure in The Lion and the Mouse, and this fable also will now be discussed.

As we saw earlier, The Preaching of the Swallow sets out a universal context in which all the fables have their place. The other four fables under discussion all refer, with varying degrees of explicitness, to that universal context, and with that in view, each of them focusses on a particular aspect of the corruptibility of worldly affairs. In terms of content, then, the secular criticism contained in these four fables may be summarised as follows.

In The Trial of the Fox abuses are described but principally to show how they ought to be dealt with. In The Sheep and the Dog and The Wolf and the Lamb we have examples of injustice as they are to be found in actual circumstances. In The Lion and the Mouse we have a working example of the king who recognises and interdependence between himself and his subjects and who rules with justice and mercy.

The first forty-two lines of The Trial of the Fox are devoted to a characterisation of the fox which contains elements one would not normally expect in a fox fable. This particular fox is the son of the fox who, in the preceding fable, fed off his 'new made salmond', the kid, and then met his end from an arrow while he was reclining under a bush. This son is called 'fader were', i.e. 'worse-than-one's-father', a name exemplified in l. 10:

Of evill cummys war, of war cummys warst of all.

Henryson stresses the facts that the fox is a bastard and that he rejoices in his father's sudden death, which leaves him free to enjoy his father's territory, despite the fact that it is impossible for a bastard to inherit his father's estate legally. He does not fear 'that samin lyife to lede', a life of 'stouth and reif' like his father's. As a minimal expression of his filial piety he dumps his father's body in a peat bog and commends his bones to the devil. The characterisation ends with a moralising stanza whose sentence may remind one of the burgesses' tale in The Thre Prestis of Peblis:

O fulich man ploungit in warldlynes
 To conquest wrangwiss guidis gold or rent
 To put thy saule in pane and hevynes
 To riche thyne air quhilk efter thow be went
 Have he thy gude he takis small entent
 To sing or say for thy salvatioun
 Fra thow be dede done is thy devotioun (36-42)¹

These elements do not seem to have much to do with the fable proper, apart from the fox's generally greedy nature and treacherousness and apart from the indirect contrast with the mutual trust postulated by the lion in his speech on kingship. Perhaps these elements are there for their urgent contemporary relevance, for the sake of which Henryson was prepared to sacrifice some of the artistic unity of his fable? Stearns claims that they refer to the troublesome Lords of the Isles but such a claim cannot be upheld.² In the absence of an acceptable clue, the implications of the passage have to be taken generally: just as in many of the fables Henryson is saying 'thievery is common', 'the peasantry are oppressed' or 'justice is often corrupt', so here he may simply be saying 'bastardy, greed for hierships and filial ingratitude are common'. And of such abuses the examples supplied by the north-west troubles may be supreme but by no means the only ones.

The fable proper opens when the fox hears the unicorn's announcement, the unicorn representing Unicorn Pursuivant of the Scottish Court: the lion is going to hold a

¹ Compare these last two lines with ll. 836-37 in Wood:
 To execute, to do, to satisfie
 Thy letter will, thy det, and legacie.

² M.W. Stearns, Robert Henryson (New York, 1949), pp. 19-20 (Hereafter referred to as Stearns); also Jamieson, pp. 222-23.

parliament here in this hill next day and all the beasts must attend, on pain of death. The enumeration of the beasts (ll. 92-126), a favourite device of medieval poets¹, with its mixture of natural and mythical creatures, provides several interesting problems of identification but in general its purpose is clear enough. It is first an animal version of the summoning of the three estates and just as all beasts are subject to the lion's rule so the human king's justice must reach all his subjects of whatever condition. Secondly, the catalogue is more than a collection of fanciful creatures. Because it contains beasts who are part animal and part human it reinforces Henryson's view of the semi-bestial condition of humanity, as originally stated in the prologue:

How mony men in operatioun
 Ar lyk to beistis in thair condition

 No mervell is a man be lyk a beist
 Quhilk leivis ay in carnall fowl delyte
 That schame can nocht derenye nor arreist
 Bot takis all thair lust and appetyt
 Quhilk throw the custome and the dayly ryte
 Syn in the mynd is sa fast radicat
 That he in brutall beist be transformat (48-56)

Henryson also stresses both the number and variety of the animals and the alacrity with which they obey the summons, e.g.

In haist haykit unto that hillis hycht
 And mony ane kynd of beist that I nocht know
 Befoir thair lord ilkane thai lowtit law (124-26)

The lion's opening speech is worth attention. The first lines allude to the Scottish royal motto, Parcere

¹ On the subject of monsters, see Robertson, Preface, pp. 151-56.

prostratis scit nobilis ira leonis.¹ The scriptural allusion to the coming of peace between beasts of prey and their victims (ll. 149-51) is evident but it also has a dramatic relevance to what happens later in the fable. Is it too fanciful to see in the reference to the lion's power to abase a camel to the unimportant size of a mouse, an ironic allusion to James III's alleged habit of doing just the opposite, promoting men of low degree to high estate? The reference to the mouse as the lowest of the low is surely not unrelated to the events in The Lion and the Mouse. I feel that, whatever conventions he was following and whatever hints he wished to drop, Henryson wishes to stress three points here. First, the utter subjection of the beasts in relation to the absolute power and grandeur of the lion. Second, the lion is king of the beasts, i.e. of fallen human nature: the beasts come hurrying 'for dreid of deid' (l. 122) and the lion is 'wild' (l. 83) and tyrannical, so their fear and respect are natural rather than rational. Third, the establishment of the king's peace: later, when the fox is condemned, his primary offence is not killing the lamb but breaking the king's peace.

I lat you wit my myt is merceabill
 And steris none that ar to me prostrat
 Angrye austerne and als unnameabill
 To all that standis aganis myne estait
 I rug I ryve all beistis that makis debait
 Aganis the myt of my magnefecence
 Se none pretend to pryde in my presence
 My celsitude and my hie maiestye
 With myt and mercye myngit salbe ay

¹ Cf Dunbar, 'Quhen Merche wes with variand windis past', ll. 113-19.

The lawest heir I may ryt sone up hie
 And mak him maister over you all I may
 The Dromadair gif he will mak deray
 Or the greit cameill thocht thai be never sa crouse
 I can thame law as litill as ane mowss
 Se neir be twenty mylis quhair I am
 The kid ga saflie be the wolf syde
 Se tod lowrye luke not upoun the lamb
 Na revand beistis nowther ryn nor ryde (134-51)

Given the precondition that human society is a fallen one (a precondition always present in the Fables) Henryson can be seen here stating an ideal. It is a secular ideal for a secular society and the wider context has already been discussed. In the meantime, the people for their part must accept the king as their leader while the king for his part must treat his subjects with justice and mercy.¹ Before dismissing such an ideal as naive one should remember the tortuous difficulties that faced any attempt to implement such an ideal in Henryson's day. The matter is dealt with more particularly in The Lion and the Mouse and I shall return to it.

The first business of the parliament is to determine if anyone has disobeyed the summons. The fox, aware that such gatherings are called 'to mar sic misdoaris as me', now behaves with a guilty deviousness. Wondering what falsehood he can devise for his defence he pulls his hood over his eyes and plays hide-and-seek behind the other animals, hoping to avoid recognition but only succeeding in drawing attention to himself. No mention is made of his particular misdeeds at this point and certainly nothing of

¹ The theory was not of course novel: see Theseus' account of it in Chaucer, ed. Robinson, p. 34, ll. 1773-81.

the inheritance described at the beginning of the fable: little more than general wickedness is suggested.¹ It is found that only a grey mare is absent and the fox and the wolf are sent to summon her. Thus the king's justice is entrusted to a scoundrel and a crooked (canon) lawyer.

Nonetheless they are both punished. The wolf, tricked by the mare and given a red cap, i.e. a bleeding head, is ridiculed by the laughter of the whole assembly. The fox earns capital punishment - while fetching water for the wolf he kills and eats a lamb and the lamb's mother arrives at the assembly to accuse him. His excuses are rejected, the case against him is proved and he is found guilty of murder, theft and 'party treson' - i.e. secondary treason, committed not directly against the king but against one of the king's subjects in defiance of what the king had decreed in ll. 148-51. He is led to the gallows; the wolf, 'that new maid doctor', kindly shrives him and an ape performs the execution.

The tale thus appears to leave some questions unanswered, e.g. why was the mare not punished for failing to obey the summons of the lion? And what significance did Henryson attach to the mare anyway? As we saw in Chapter One, these apparent difficulties are resolved in the Moralitas. In the fable proper we see that the lion is presented beyond any shadow of doubt as a figure of worldly power, and in the Moralitas the mare is now revealed as

1 The two moralising stanzas printed by Wood (ll. 971-84) are not in Bannatyne.

representing 'men of contemplioun' abstracted 'fra this warldis wretchidnes'. In other words it is through the mare that Henryson makes his reference to the superior set of values against which the activities of the worldly court are to be judged. That court has its own set of values but they are corruptible, as we see when the king's peace is perverted by the fox and the wolf. The mare stands aside, as a witness to incorruptible values.

Henryson's appeal to the king at the close of The Wolf and the Lamb (ll. 159-61) recognises the power of the king's influence, positive or negative, and leads logically to the treatment of the king's role in The Lion and the Mouse. It is surely not by accident that in the Bannatyne MS The Sheep and the Dog (about the corruption of justice) is followed by The Wolf and the Lamb (about the oppression of the innocent) and that the latter is in turn followed by The Lion and the Mouse.

Despite their individual touches the opening lines of The Lion and the Mouse are in the summer-morning convention and their purpose here is partly to prepare for the dream and partly to establish that the action of the fable takes place in a worldly or secular context. As in The Trial of the Fox the image of the forest is used thematically to signify the natural order, which is subject to Fortune. The forest is pleasant but such pleasure is only 'a poynt of paradyss', it is only like paradise: its variability is stressed later in the second stanza of the Moralitas. The facts that the fable and its Moralitas

are set within the terms of a dream-vision and that the social criticism is made indirectly through a separate character are described by Stearns as 'extravagant lengths' to which Henryson goes 'to keep himself in the background'. The Moralitas contains 'vigorous criticism which, if it had been asserted independently, might well have goaded a harassed monarch into hasty vengeance'. (p. 15). This is hardly possible for what Henryson is saying must have been plain enough and I imagine that a harassed monarch who was likely to take hasty vengeance would not be fooled by a thin literary disguise.

It is more profitable to regard the present prologue in relation to The Preaching of the Swallow: the verbal parallels, the similarities in situation and the thematic links strongly imply that The Lion and the Mouse could be a sequel to The Preaching of the Swallow. MacQueen's suggestion is that 'the latter offers a general treatment of wisdom and providence; the former applies those ideas specifically to the Scotland of James III, while at the same time retaining something of the universality of the Preaching of the Swallow'.¹

Aesop's autobiographical statements have been discussed elsewhere but there are two points worth noticing here. One is that, as Jamieson has shown (pp. 136-38), Henryson represents Aesop not only as a learned and eloquent man but also as a contemporary. Another is that

1. 53 of the Bannatyne MS reads

1 See MacQueen, Henryson, pp. 165-70.

And science studeit mony a day

but other versions differ, e.g. Wood prints

In Civile Law studyit full mony ane day (1373)

Wood's reading at this point is preferable because it establishes Aesop as a legal authority, as a man who is in a position to assess the state of Scotland knowledgeably. The specific reference to civil as distinct from canon law is worth noting. To the poet's deliberately naive request for a 'pretty fable' with a 'gud moralitie' Aesop sadly asks

For quhat is worth to tell a fenyet taill
Quhen haill preiching may no thing now availl. (69-70)

As well as being a reminder of The Preaching of the Swallow this is also an expression of exasperation.

Sua rowstit is the world with canker blak
That my taillis may littill succour mak. (76-77)

The prologue can be glossed thus: Aesop knows about the organisation of society, he thinks Scotland is in a sorry condition, therefore what he is going to say must be worth listening to. Apart from any camouflage the prologue is meant to provide - and I doubt if it is meant to provide any - its purpose is mainly emphatic: important matters are going to be dealt with.

The setting of the narrative is a worldly one and Henryson intends his readers to grasp this immediately. A brief reference to the setting of The Buke of the Howlat (c. 1450) will not only provide a comparison but will also indicate how the establishment of such connotations would have been recognised by readers. In other words Henryson

is following a familiar course. Nature, not only as a personification but also as a rich theme, is of great importance in the Howlat, and at the beginning the author establishes the fact of his presence in nature's domain.

Thus sat I in solace, sekerly and sure,
 Content of the fair firth,
 Mekle mair of the mirth,
 Als blyth of the birth
 That the ground bure ...
 Under the cirkill solar thir savoross seidis
 War nurist be dame Natur, that noble mastress.
 (22-25, 31-32)

But he cannot remain there, 'content of the fair firth', because his theme is a moral one and stands above nature:

And I have mekle matir in metir to gloss
 Of ane nothir sentence. (35-36)

Thus when we read in Henryson's fable about the lion who

Bekand his breist and belly at the son
 Undir a tre lay in the fair forrest (87-88)

we may well recall the incautious fox in The Fox and the Wolf:

Undir a busk quhair that the sone cowth beit
 To beke his breist and bellye he thocht best
 (Fox and Wolf,
 143-44)

The inactivity of the lion is stressed - 'he lay so still' that the mice were unafraid of him, and their captive leader pleads

Bot I misknew becauss ye lay so law (112)

and

Ye lay so still and law upone the erd
 That be my saule we wend ye had bene deid (124-25)

If the lion (i.e. the king) is thus neglecting his proper

functions the mice may appear comparatively blameless - they danced 'myrry and glaid' and their leader claims that they acted not through malice but through negligence. Yet while they may up to a point be excused the mice are not championed and as we shall see later they are not entirely blameless.

Two points in the lion's first reactions are worth noticing.

Thow catyve wreche and vyle unworthy thing
 Our malapert and our presumptuous
 Thow was to mak our me thyne tripping (107-9)

This expresses the conventional attitude to upstart commoners and perhaps these lines have an ironic application to James III because one of the chief complaints against him was that he did suffer presumptuous commoners to lead their dance around and over him and failed to rebuke them. Then, to the mouse's plea that they thought he was dead the lion retorts that even if he were dead and his skin had been stuffed with straw, the mice, on seeing his royal form, should have fallen on their knees with awe. This exaggeration of the formal power of the kingly office reminds us of the self-proclaimed power of the lion in The Trial of the Fox: it is another hint that the lion, albeit a royal beast, is fallible, and his pride is dangerous.

Like the arguments of the lamb in The Wolf and the Lamb the arguments put forward by the mouse in her defence are barely disguised by beast-fable conventions. It is plain that to an extent this is a plea to the king on

behalf of the commons. Stearns suggests: 'Her arguments ... although many are based on moral and a few on mouselike grounds, are frequently both practical and legal. The result is that it is difficult to escape from the impression that the poet intended the Mouse to be an educational vehicle whereby his audience could hear the arguments in favour of the peasantry'. (p. 119) Again, as we shall see later, Henryson is doing more than this: while pleading the cause of the poorer members of society he is at the same time aware that they are also members of fallen humanity. The mouse makes five points:

- (i) Without mercy justice is cruelty. These lines, 148-54, ought to be compared with the lion's declaration about royal power in The Trial of the Fox (ll. 134-51).
- (ii) A true victor defeats his enemy in fair battle, not after the victory has already been won.
- (iii) It would degrade the lion to eat a defenceless mouse.
- (iv) Anyway, a mouse's flesh would be 'contagius' to a lion's stomach, accustomed as it is to kingly fare like venison.
- (v) Although the mouse is small, there may come a time when the lion will be glad of her help. This is perhaps the most important of the five points, and I shall return to it.

Stearns conjectures that the mice could represent the Boyds, who rose rapidly to a position of power in the late 1460s but this is not consistent with the pattern of the fable as a whole. The mice are the commoners generally

and the fable is about their relations with the king. That the mice should fit the Boyd family, fits neither the facts nor the fable. The lion pardons the mice: the Boyds, after their sudden fall in 1469, were not pardoned but punished. The mice return to rescue the lion from bondage: it need hardly be pointed out that the Boyds did not return after Lauder to rescue James. Mary Rowlands has suggested that the capture of the lion represents the imprisonment of James III in Edinburgh Castle by Albany after the Lauder affair of 1482: but again I feel that this literal kind of interpretation imposes unnecessarily narrow limits on the fable as a whole¹.

The hunters are clearly the nobility: the Moralitas tells us so, but it is also suggested in the fable when they appear on the hunt with horns and hounds. They capture the lion because he

... slew baith tame and wyld as he was wunt
And in the cuntre maid a grit dirray (192-93)

To say that an animal who rampages throughout the country ought to be tied up is to read the allegory too literally. The reference is to the king's difficulties in living 'of his own' and to the regular acquisitions of crown property that displeased the hereditary nobility throughout the period. On another level the reference is to the lion's

¹ Stearns, p. 17; Mackie, James IV, pp. 95-96; Dickinson, pp. 224-25; See also Mary Rowlands, 'The Fables of Robert Henryson', Dalhousie Review, 39 (1960), 491-502.

nature. He is a beast (i.e. a fallen human), he is proud, he is cruel (l. 195), and his sleep in the forest indicates his thralldom to worldly values. This is not just James III but all rulers,

a prince or empriour
A potestat or yit a king with croun (254-55)

Being human, they are fallible.

The allusion to prison in the lion's lament (l. 221) clearly suggests the events following the Lauder episode in 1482. The way in which the mice rescue the lion, on the other hand, has a signification of another kind, not to a particular event but to the kind of relations Henryson believes should exist between ruler and subjects. In return for justice-with-mercy on their king's part, the mice behave towards the king with loyalty. This is the corollary of what the lion-king proclaimed and promised in The Trial of the Fox - in return for their loyalty he would deal justly and mercifully with his subjects. And it reminds us of part of Maister Amytans' advice to Arthur in Lancelot of the Laik:

For quho his eris frome the puple stekith,
And not his hond in ther support furth rekith,
His dom sall be ful grewous and ful hard,
When he sal cry and he sal nocht be hard. (1650-53)

The first three verses of the Moralitas briefly state what is already apparent. The mice are the commons. The

lion is a ruler, any ruler

quhilk suld be walkryfe gyd and govirnor
of his peple and takis no lawbour
to rewil nor steir the land nor justice keip
bot lyis still in lustis slewth and sleip (256-59)

As we saw earlier a similar opinion was held of James III.

The forest is the world:

Ryt as the rose with frost and wintir weit
Faidis so dois the warld and them dissavis
Quhilk in thair lust confidens havis (264-66)

Again this is reminiscent of The Trial of the Fox, where, in the Moralitas, the lion is likened to the world, whose power has this same variance. The second half of the present Moralitas particularly mentions the nobility, who are in fact directly addressed in ll. 274 ff -

Be this fable ye lordis of prudens
May conciddir the vertew of pete ...

There is significantly no mention of the commons in the important lines

Moir till expone as now I latt allane
Bot king and lord may weill wit quat I mene
Fegour heirof oftymis hes bene sene (292-94)

(This is hardly going to 'extravagant lengths' to be oblique.) Likewise, in Aesop's final prayer

That tressone of this cuntre be exyld
And iustice ring and lordis keip their fey
Unto thair soverane lord both nyt and day (297-99)

it is dissension between crown and nobility that is foremost in mind.

There is a feature of the characterisation of this fable I would like to stress because it goes some way towards qualifying a common view of Henryson - as expressed,

say, by Tillotson: 'To Henryson the world and its people are controlled by firm and uncomplicated moral machinery. Human life for him is thoroughly governable, both in theory and practice ... There is nothing in Henryson to confuse the moral issue.'¹

Why does the lion make a 'grit dirray'?

For he had not bot levit on his pray (191)

i.e. he was a despoiler but to an extent he was driven to it for lack of other sustenance. Why do the lords rebel and capture the king? They

Waitit alway amendis for till get
For hurte men wrytis in the marble stane (290-91)

i.e. they do behave disloyally but to an extent they are driven to it by their exasperation with a king who ignores their needs and their advice. Why do the commons behave so presumptuously? They are 'without correctioun' -

Thir lordis and princis quhen that thay se
Of justice makis non executioun
They dreid no thing to mak rebelloun (269-71)

i.e. they do lack respect and restraint but then they are set a bad example by their superiors and leaders.

Thus in each case we are given more than one point of view. We are not told that king, lords and commoners are misbehaving just because they are sinful², or just because they disregard the duties of their several stations. For

1 G. Tillotson, Essays in Criticism and Research (Cambridge, 1942), p. 3.

2 Yet we must always allow for the belief that worldly disasters are closely linked to religious shortcomings. e.g. C.S., p. 31: 'The special cause of the scourge that has affligit us, hes procedit of our disobediens contrar the command of god.' See also p. 75.

each type of failure a social or economic reason is suggested, and the implied solution is something approaching a contract between ruler and subject.

This kind of contract can be illustrated. It is basically a feudal one and there is reason to believe that, in Scotland at any rate, in Henryson's day, it was still regarded as a viable form of social order. In The Meroure of Wyssdome John Ireland describes the mutual obligations which ought to exist between king and subjects: '... for the pepil is oblist to honor and defend thar prince, the pepil and all the subdittis aw to the king and souverane lord fidelite and lawte ... And the king is oblist to the peple to kepe thame in justice and in that ordour ... And betwix the king and his pepil is double obligacioun of ethir syde'.¹ This is confirmed, or at least paralleled, in the Regiam Majestatem: 'The bond of fealty which is created by homage and lordship gives rise to reciprocal obligations, the duties owed by the vassal to the lord to whom he has done homage being commensurate with the duties owed to the vassal by the lord whose reverence to his lord and not the lord to his vassal.'²

Thirdly, I.F. Grant's account of the less tangible, but all important, aspect of this relationship is worth quoting.

1 Iohannes de Irlandia: Opera Theologica, in the National Library of Scotland, (MS, 18.2.8), f327 r. This is given by J. Burns in 'John Ireland and "The Meroure of Wyssdome"', The Innes Review (1955), pp. 77-98.
2 ed. T.M. Cooper (The Stair Society, Edinburgh, 1947), p. 176.

/ position entitled him to receive the homage. But the vassal owes

'The technical status of the land-workers probably did not feature so largely in the consciousness of contemporary folk as we are apt to imagine, when we approach the subject from the point of view of the twentieth century. The lord and his vassals were interdependent in many ways. The lesser folk were not merely his chattels and the appendages of his lands ... He and they were both links in the chain of mutual services that made up the feudal system ... In the relationship between a lord and his people, the economic, social, political, and judicial aspects are but different sides of a connection that was far deeper, vaguer, and more general. In actual daily life, especially in those rather hand-to-mouth days, the fact that there was this general connection, and the sentiments that it involved, were of far greater importance than the actual degree of servitude or liberty.¹

4. Dunbar's Court Poems.

In many of Dunbar's poems which have a specific court milieu, and especially in some of the poems directly addressed to James IV, the poet seems to claim that he not only desires the king's financial patronage but that he is also denied what he regards as his just share. Since it is difficult to distinguish elements of literary convention and of genuine practical pleading, it is useful to preface our discussion of Dunbar's court poems with some biographical details. These suggest that in his versified

¹ Grant, p. 80.

appeals to James IV the elements of play and performance were stronger than is usually assumed.

The fact is that Dunbar did get his reward and it seems to have been handsome. The pension given from August 1500 was worth £10 p.a. and was to be maintained for his lifetime or until he received a benefice worth £40 p.a. or more. In November 1507 the annual value of the pension was doubled, as was the minimum value of the benefice whose award would terminate the pension. Then in August 1510 the pension was increased to £80 p.a., and the value of the hypothetical benefice to £100. To illustrate how valuable these pensions were in relation to other royal pensions, Baxter mentions that the £10 pension was equivalent to that given to officials such as the clerk of accounts, the steward of the household, the king's steward, the king's butcher, tailor, furrier, head cook, barber and cutler; and that the £20 pension was equal to what was the highest salary in the royal household in 1499. For comparison with the £80 pension he points out that the pension given to Hector Boece as first Principal of King's College, Aberdeen, in 1527, was only £50 p.a. It is not clear to what extent Dunbar's pension was purely for his services as a poet and to what extent it represented remuneration for advisory, secretarial or ambassadorial services. Presumably any patronage granted by James IV came to an abrupt end in September 1513, and again it is not clear what happened to Dunbar thereafter. The possibilities open to him and the various speculations that have been made

are discussed fully by Baxter.¹

Since Baxter's work was published Denton Fox has offered further speculation. Assuming from the biographical data we possess that the years 1500-13 marked Dunbar's floruit, Fox argues that 'of the eighty-four poems in the canon, twenty-eight, or a third of them, can be put in the period 1500-13, and ... in all fifty-one, or over sixty per cent, can be given 1513 as their terminus ad quem, while on the other hand no poems can be shown to be earlier than 1500 or later than 1513'. 'Instead of following the tradition', he concludes, 'of putting from nine to fourteen of Dunbar's poems before 1500, and from ten to twenty-three after 1513, we should place them all in the period 1500-13, while admitting the possibility that a few of them may have been written before 1500'.² These suggestions are interesting in that they show the difficulty of coming to firm conclusions about the facts of Dunbar's life and work:

1 Baxter, pp. 173, 181-82, 189-92. Registrum secreti sigilli regum Scotorum, Vol. I, ed. M. Livingstone (Edinburgh, 1908), 80, 323, 565 (hereafter referred to as R.S.S.). References to Dunbar in C.T.S. include: II, 92, 95, 258, 335; III, 117, 121, 125, 154, 181, 327, 331, 361; IV, 69, 106, 127, 249, 250, 268, 442. For information about salaries in the royal household see Exchequer Rolls of Scotland, XI (1497-1501), ed. G. Burnett (Edinburgh, 1888), xxxvi-xxxviii. Dunbar makes several references to his length of service to the king: e.g. 'Complane I wald, wist I quhome till', ll. 69-71; 'Schir, yit remembir as of befoir', ll. 1-3; 'Now lufferis cummis with larges lowd', ll. 68-70; 'This waverand warldis wretchidnes', ll. 13-16; 'This hinder nycht, halff sleiping as I lay', ll. 53, 67. Lines 48-49 of 'Schir, yit remembir as of befoir' - 'Allace! I can bot ballattis breif, Sic barneheid leidis my brydill reynye do seem to suggest that at the time this poem was written (1507?) his services were solely literary.

2 Denton Fox, 'The Chronology of William Dunbar', Philological Quarterly, XXXIX (1960), 413-25.

the available data simply do not allow us to fix conclusive termini, and Fox admits that his conclusions are put forward cautiously. Even if 'Quhen the Governour Past in France' were the only poem that could have been written by Dunbar after 1513, the evidence assembled by Fox to deny its attribution to Dunbar is no more than reasonably probable. And as for the earlier limit of 1500, one must consider Douglas' reference in The Pallice of Honour to 'greit Kennedie and Dunbar yit undeid' (l. 923): if Dunbar can be referred to in this manner in 1501, it seems likely that his work had been known for more than a brief year.

Whatever the extent of Dunbar's personal interest in his criticism of the court, there is a substantial body of criticism which can be regarded independently of personal venom or grievance. The king, as head of this society, is judged and found wanting, not only in his alleged failure to remunerate Dunbar as he (Dunbar) thought fit, but more importantly in relation to the ideal of kingship. Even if James' reign and the manner of its ending gave ample evidence of the dangers of the monarchical system, and even if it had occurred to anyone to question the wisdom of giving such power to a man whose claim to it was not ability but birth, it is doubtful if such unease would have found practical expression. Recent history had too often suggested that the only alternative to efficient royal power was baronial strife and civil war.¹ The evolution

1 See G. Donaldson, Scotland, James V to James VII (Edinburgh, 1965), p.4. (hereafter referred to as Donaldson, Scotland). Monarchy was also thought necessary from a theoretical point of view; see Thomas Elyot, The Boke named The Governour, ed. H.H.S. Croft (London, 1880), II, 209-11.

of republican or communist modes of society was still a long way off. So whatever the failings of individual kings the monarchy was regarded as desirable and necessary.

In his wedding-poem for James and Margaret¹ Dunbar sets forth the ideal in three figures - the lion, the eagle and the thistle. The first two are traditional and the third provides a suitable contrast to the English rose. We have already encountered the moral attached to the lion, notably in The Trial of the Fox and The Lion and the Mouse, and again the setting is unmistakably a natural or worldly one. All creation comes to Dame Nature at her command,

To hir thair makar to mak obediens,
Full law inclynnand with all dew reverens. (76-77)

Creation submits utterly, full law inclynnand, and is entirely subject to Nature. The lion is called forth by Dame Nature and he too inclines (l.90) before her; he is described in terms which emphasise his physical grandeur and strength and his power to strike fear:

This awfull beist full terrible wes of cheir,
Persing of luke, and stout of countenance,
Rycht strong of corpis, of fassoun fair but feir,
Lusty of schaip, lycht of deliverance ... (92-96)

Notice the emphasis on his physical perfection combined with his ability, through his cheir, luke and countenance, to command awe: the stress is on the effect of his appearance. It will be remembered that in The Lion and the Mouse the lion-king claims that the mere appearance of his

1 'Quhen Marche wes with variand windis past', p. 107 ('The Thrissil and the Rois'). Lines 96-98 describe the blazoning of the royal arms of Scotland and l. 119 quotes the royal mottoe 'Parcere prostratis scit nobilis ira leonis'. Cf The Trial of the Fox, ll. 134-35.

stuffed skin should inspire his subjects with instant fear and obedience.

The lion is made king of the beasts and to him now 'all kynd of beistis' bow down 'with humilitie' (ll. 113-17). The aggressive powerful qualities of the eagle and the thistle are likewise stressed. Dame Nature crowns the eagle king of the birds

And as steill dertis scherpit scho his pennis (121)
and then she regards the 'awfull Thrisill'

And saw him kepit with a busche of speiris;
Concedring him so able for the weiris ... (130-31)

The advice given to the three 'kings' is again justice-with-mercy. To the lion:

Exerce justice with mercy and conscience,
And lat no small beist suffir slaith na skornis
Of greit beistis that bene of moir piscence;
Do law alyk to aipis and unicornis,
And lat no bowgle, with his busteous hornis,
The meik pluch oxppress, for all his pryde,
Bot in the yok go peciable him besyd. (106-12)

Similarly the eagle is commanded to be

als just to awppis and owlis,
As unto pacokkis, papingais, or crennis,
And mak a law for wucht fowlis and for wrennis:
And lat no fowll of ravyne do efferay,
Nor devoir birdis bot his awin pray. (122-26)

and the thistle is charged to 'fend the laif' and 'be discret' -

Herb without vertew thow hald nocht of sic pryce
As herb of vertew and of odor sweet;
And lat no nettill vyle, and full of vyce,
Hir fallow to the gudly flour delyce;
Nor latt no wyld weid, full of churlishness,
Compair hir till the lilleis nobilnes. (135-40)

The reference to the eagle restricting himself only to his own natural prey could be an allusion to the difficulties

experienced by the Scottish kings of the period as they tried to live 'of their own' (cf The Lion and the Mouse, ll. 192-93), but this is incidental to the general implication that oppression between the classes and estates within the community must be prevented by the just application of laws which take account of the needs and capabilities of those different estates. Similarly, the advice to the thistle to 'half non udir flour in sic denty As the Fresche Ros' could be a way of telling James that since he now has an official queen he ought to give up his various mistresses, but again this is incidental to the general implication that worthless men should not be promoted in the kingdom above their betters. It is also a warning against taking things at their face value.

The wedding poem then is not just a decorative celebration: it contains serious advice and is not without a strong hint of criticism. An ideal is implied. What Dunbar says about James and his court must be seen within the context of such an ideal.

With reference to the actual wedding this poem celebrates R.L. Mackie has indicated the lavish scale of the expenses¹ and it is worth recalling just what sort of marriage was being celebrated. It was, pure and simple, a political arrangement, long and tortuously debated. Margaret was a girl of fifteen. James was a man of thirty who had already had associations with several women whom he

¹ Mackie, James IV, pp. 102 ff. See also C.T.S., II, liii-lxxiii.

would have been unable to marry even if he wanted to. He had at least five illegitimate children by four different mothers; his affection for Margaret Drummond seems to have been more than passing, if we judge by the fact that for many years after her death he paid for masses for her soul¹. For a king such a predicament was no new one. At least the situation was a more complicated one than the vision of sheer depravity conjured up by writers with Hume Brown's moral sensibilities.

'Schir, ye have mony servitouris'² is one of the most interesting of the court poems. To the extent to which Dunbar is drawing a picture of court life it is not difficult to verify the accuracy of this picture. But of course he is doing much more than drawing a picture. The first twenty-four lines describe the wide variety of crafts

1 C.T.S., I, cxxxii, cxxxiii, 277, 280, 288, 293, 304, 307, 309, 319, 322-23, 327, 392; II, xxvi, xxvii, xxxiv, li, 152, 248, 358, 372, 376, 388, 410, 418, 436, 446; III, 56, 59, 346, 357, 367, 391; IV, 75, 83, 101, 115. Janet Kennedy is mentioned in C.T.S., II, xxi, xxiv, xxxiii, xlv, xlvi, l, 366; III, lxxxiii. Marion Boyd appears in C.T.S., I, clxiv, 366, 378. And in the summer of 1503, during the wedding preparations, there are payments to L.A. (II, 370) and M.L.A. (II, 380) and in Mackie's opinion (pp. 103-4) these discreet initials stand for a 'new mistress'. Politically of course James' marriage was of the first importance - see Major, H.M.B., pp. 41-42; Hume Brown, History of Scotland (Cambridge, 1900), I, 313-15 (hereafter referred to as Hume Brown); G. Donaldson, Scottish Kings (London, 1967), pp. 131-32 (hereafter referred to as Donaldson, Scottish Kings).

2 p. 36 ('Remonstrance to the King').

and talents encouraged by James and Dunbar seems to claim (ll. 61-64) that it is only reasonable that 'this nobill cunning sort' should be rewarded. Lines 35-60 describe the equally wide variety of charlatans and greedy hangers-on who are also patronised, and the blame for this favouring of the 'more miserabill' sort, the 'thrimlaris and thristaris', 'schulderaris and schowaris', is directed at James himself, who is apparently too credulous and ready to please.

Bot ye sa gracious ar and meik,
That on your heines followis eik
Ane uthir sort ... (35-37)

James' failure to regard Dunbar's work at his (Dunbar's) own estimate may be taken as an indication of the corruption of values at court in general, but in the famous lines describing the durability of his work there are other nuances. 'Unworthy' in l. 26 for instance can be read simply as ironic - but at the same time there is a sense in which the word means what it says: Dunbar is not worthy to be placed merely 'among the laif' because his work is of quite a different order and to align it with the activities listed in ll. 1-24 would be to demean or at least to misrepresent it.

And thocht that I, among the laif,
Unworthy be ane place to have,
Or in thair nummer to be tald,
Als lang in mynd my wark sall hald,
Als haill in everie circumstance,
In forme, in mater, and substance,
But wering, or consumptioun,
Roust, canker or corruptioun,
As ony of thair werkis all,
Suppois that my rewarde be small. (25-34)

Lines 67-80 are crucial. When the untalented riff-raff are rewarded

and nocht I,
 Than on this fals world I cry, Fy!
 My hart neir bristis than for teyne,
 Quhilk may nocht suffer nor sustene
 So grit abusoun for to se,
 Daylie in court befoir myn ee!
 And yit more pacence wald I have,
 Had I rewarde amang the laif,
 It wald me sumthing satisfie,
 And les of my malancolie,
 And gar me mony falt ouerse,
 That now is brayd befoir myn ee:
 My mind so fer is set to flyt,
 That of nocht ellis I can endyt;

Seemingly the advice given to the thistle is not being followed: the 'nettill vyle, and full of vyce' and the 'wild weid, full of churlishness' are being held at too high a price. But at another level we can ask: is he suggesting here that his sole motivation in making such attacks is his own personal grievance, that if he were to receive a reward he would condone or at least remain silent about these injustices, that as a court critic he can be bought off? Or is it just another reinforcement of his attack on James? You'll find me less of a nuisance, he could be saying, if you'd just treat me fairly. For the sake of this point of view, it would help if we knew the date of the poem. If the 'pryntouris' of l. 16 are in fact printers in our sense of the word then this would suggest 1508 or later, because James granted Chepman and Mylar their patent in September 1507. On the other hand if Mackenzie's suggestion that 'pryntouris' could mean just

'stampers or impressers of a design upon metal or fabric' were true then the poem could have been written before the autumn of 1507, when Dunbar's pension was doubled, and it could reflect a certain frustration arising from up to seven years with no sign of the expected improvement on his £10 pension. Yet, as we have seen, even this pension was not of the humblest.

Yet to seek an interpretation along such lines is to ignore the irony that pervades the entire poem. Lines 79-80 give an important indication: to an extent he is flyting. The distinction between those who apparently deserve James' patronage and get it (ll. 1-24) and those who apparently do not deserve it but still get it (ll. 35-60) is not so clear-cut as it may appear on a literal reading. The entire court, both the seemingly good and the seemingly bad, is viewed sardonically. The 'worthy' courtiers are not openly and directly abused as are the 'unworthy' courtiers, yet they are not outside the range of Dunbar's scorn - a shipbuilder may be a worthy useful fellow, but what if the king's patronage reaches him more readily than it reaches a poet (whose works can outlast any ship)? If ll. 73-80 have a level of meaning not to be accounted for in terms of irony and flyting, it is in terms like these: in an extreme situation of denial and frustration (and this on a scope wider than that of mere financial remuneration) the worldliness of worldly success is seen more starkly. Dunbar himself counted as one of their number

is a fallible human, and if he too were rewarded with the rest and

then he would to that extent become more tolerant of their worldly point of view: he would overlook many faults, i.e. he would suffer the spiritually blinding effect of worldly advancement as in keeping with the religious thought of his time.

There is a comparable ironic statement at the close of the shorter and simpler poem, 'Be divers wyis and operatiounes'¹. After listing the various ways in which men at court draw attention to themselves in order to gain promotion Dunbar concludes:

My sempillnes among the laiff
 Wait off na way, sa God me saiff!
 Bot, with ane humill cheir and face,
 Refferis me to the Kyngis grace:
 Methink his graciows countenance
 In ryches is my sufficiance.

(21-26)

Again he asserts his difference from 'the laiff', and in a sense his 'sempillnes' is worth more than whatever riches the king's countenance or purse can bestow.

'Complane I wald, wist I quhome till',² is, as the first line suggests, more directly a complaint against the predominance at court of the 'uthir sort'. Their description in ll. 15-27 owes even more to flyting manners than the corresponding passage of 'Schir, ye have mony servitouris'. The exact meaning of many of the terms (if they are indeed meant to have an exact meaning) is obscure, but their general intention, and the writer's scorn, are unmistakable. There is anger against overweening social pretensions:

1 p. 55 ('Aganis the Solistaris in Court').

2 p. 39 ('Complaint to the King').

And sum that gaittis ane personage,
 Thinkis it a present for a page,
 And on no wayis content is he,
 My lord quhill that he callit be. (35-38)

But there is a certain ambiguity in the main body of his complaint. Among the wrongfully despised and rejected he includes not only

men of vertew and cunning,
 Of wit, and wysdome in gydding, (11-12)

but also 'nobillis'; it is 'the lerit sone off erll or lord' who is offended by the sight of higher promotion being given to his social inferiors; and the upstart,

even moir as he dois rys,
 Nobles off bluid he dois dispys,
 And helpis for to hald thame downe,
 That they rys never to his renowne. (63-66)

Hierarchy is essential to the view of society held by Dunbar and by the other writers we are considering. It will be recalled that in The Thre Prestis of Peblis the king (i.e. James III) was criticised for preferring the advice of certain commoners in place of those members of the upper classes who felt it was their privilege to have the royal ear. It will also be recalled that the writers who criticised James III on this score themselves shared the aristocratic attitude towards the commoners, so that we must allow for this in evaluating their opinions.¹

Here Dunbar goes further than simply sharing that attitude:

Ane pykthank in a prelottis clais,
 With his wavill feit and wirrock tais,
 With hoppir hippis and hanches narrow,
 And bausy handis to beir a barrow,
 With lut schulderis and luttard bak,
 Quhilk natur maid to beir a pak ... (53-58)

¹ The Thre Prestis of Peblis, ll. 779-82; Pitscottie, I, 170, 181.

The scorn generated by the very sound of such verse suggests more than a simple complaint against sycophants who are promoted to positions they are not qualified to occupy: it suggests in addition a positive contempt for the labouring commoner, a contempt which equates physical with social and intellectual imperfection.

Lines 6-30 of 'Schir, yit remembir as of befoir'¹ repeats those basic complaints in bird terms: the falcons, for instance, are neglected while unworthy birds like the 'myttell' (hawk) are remembered: the goshawk starves while the 'gled' (kyte) feeds richly: there are silver cages for harsh-voiced birds, like the 'pyat' (magpie), who vainly try to imitate the nightingale. There is again here a contempt for lower social orders but despite this, and despite the purely personal grievance, the complaint against corruption is clear enough:

Jok, that wes wont to keip the stirkis,
Can now draw him ane cleik of kirkis,
With ane fals cairt in to his sleif ... (66-69)

Twa curis or thre hes uplandis Michell,
With dispensationis in ane knitchell,
Thocht he fra nolt had new tane leif
He plays with totum and I with nychell ... (71-74)

There is no reason to doubt the earnestness which underlies Dunbar's ironic claim:

I say not, sir, yow to repreiff,
Bot doutles I go rycht neir hand it... (78-79)

In fact the reproof is clear:

¹ p. 41 ('To the King'). There are notable differences between Small's version of this poem and Mackenzie's, e.g. ll. 11-13. Mackenzie's is more credible. Gregor (III, 180) has an interesting note on the game mentioned in l. 74.

O gentill egill! how may this be?
 Quhilk of all foulis dois heast fle,
 Your leggis (lieges) quhy do ye nocht releif,
 And chirreis thame eftir their degre? (26-29)

The contrast with the advice given to the eagle-king in 'Quhen Merche wes with variand windis past' (ll. 122-26) is obvious. A further jibe at James is in l. 21:

Ay fairest feddiris hes farrest foulis¹

i.e. James is too ready to patronise foreigners to the neglect of native talent, and if this was written later than September 1508 then there could be here a reference to Damian, who did in fact try to imitate the birds.

Alchemists are included in the list of unworthy hangers-on in 'Schir, ye have mony servitours' (l. 55) and the encouragement of this pseudo-science was one of James' predilections. It is difficult for us to know just how far or how seriously the aims of alchemy were taken at their face-value at this period: but in this instance to Dunbar as a moralist it appeared as a cloak for swindlers who played on the greed of wealthy patrons. Damian, the 'French leech' to whom James gave the abbacy of Tungland, was prominent among those to whom James supplied material for alchemical experiments. In 'As yung Awrora, with cristall haile'² there is only a brief mention of alchemy (ll. 57-58) and the previous thirty lines or so are devoted to Damian's allegedly murderous doctoring. Again, James was interested in medicine and anxious to help with money,

¹ Fergusson's Proverbs, pp. 32-33: 'Far fowles hes fair feathers'.

² p. 67 ('The Fenyet Freir of Tungland'). The commentary in Scott, pp.121-29 is worth attention and so are Baxter's remarks on pp.171-72. See also Leslie, II, 124-26.

and the disastrous consequences supposed to have followed Damian's medical practising are a further suggestion that James was indiscriminate in his favour. Dunbar's account of Damian's attempt to fly can be compared with Leslie's and there is no reason to doubt that some such event did take place. It will be noticed that Leslie says that Damian delighted the king with his 'mirrines and mowis' and thus gained his abbacy. While such a way of gaining a church appointment may have been put to pointed use by Dunbar, obviously such a characteristic as 'mirrines' would not suit the abusive purpose here. Indeed Dunbar's scorn may well reflect the popular reaction to Damian's disaster, for Leslie says that 'al war lyk to cleive of lauchter' and that it was 'a sport to lauch at in mirrines throuch al Scotland'. This was perhaps not wholly deserved. As C.S. Lewis has characteristically remarked, 'Since he risked (and almost lost) his life we may assume that he was sincere, and the mockery lavished upon his failure is perhaps unworthy; if he had succeeded in finding the pernicious secret he sought he would have received ample praise from the historians of progress'.¹

Despite the fact that mockery and insult is the principal motivation of this poem and apart from the possibility that for all we know Damian may have been a cheerful fool rather than an outright knave, or even a man

¹ English Literature in the Sixteenth Century (Oxford, 1954), p. 67. The importance of the magical/alchemical tradition in the history of science has perhaps been underestimated: see Hugh Kearney, Science and Change 1500-1700 (London, 1971).

with genuine scientific curiosity, the basis of Dunbar's anger is recognisably the same as that we have already encountered. It is an anger against the same fraudulent pretension he rails against in 'Schir, ye have mony servitouris' and 'Complane I wald, wist I quhome till'. In these poems we see quacks and scoundrels raised to positions of public honour to which they have no genuine right; in this poem we see such a man exposed to public shame and ridicule. It may be partly wish-fulfilment in Dunbar; more important, he is telling the court just how admirable he considers some of its accepted values to be. James and his court is the real target, rather than Damian, and the furious onslaught by the birds reinforces the idea of a corruption which is an offence to the natural order.

The 'fenyeit freir' had, according to Dunbar's decorated biography of him, slain a 'religious man' and stolen his habit, thus enabling himself to masquerade as the member of an order. Dunbar's dislike of friars was so pronounced that to attribute such connections to Damian was simply to add another insult. That Dunbar's attitude to the friars had a strong personal basis is clear from 'This nycht, befoir the dawing cler'.¹ There was nothing new by this time about criticising the friars but it is this personal involvement that makes this poem so pointed in its attack:

1 p. 3 ('How Dunbar wes Desyrd to be ane Freir'). See Baxter, pp. 26-40 and Scott, pp. 269-75. Compare ll. 41-45 with Lindsay's Satyre, ll. 745-60. On the possible autobiographical implications of Dunbar's poem, see A.G. Rigg, 'William Dunbar: "The Fenyeit Freir"', RES, ns (s2) XIV (1963), pp. 269-73. Buchanan's poem on the friars caused him some trouble: see J.A. Aitken, The Trial of George Buchanan (Edinburgh, 1939).

Als lang as I did beir the freiris style,
 In me, God wait, wes mony wrink and wyle;
 In me wes falset with every wicht to flatter,
 Quhilk mycht be flemit with na haly watter;
 I wes ay reddy all men to begyle. (41-45)

The dream ends not with St. Francis turning into a fiend but with the fiend who had adopted the appearance of St. Francis casting aside his disguise and revealing his true self - 'Ane fiend he wes in liknes of an freir'. Beneath the personal hatred can be seen a characteristic basis of Dunbar's criticism of society: worldliness adopting the trappings of religion to further its own worldly ends. The fiend in the guise of a tempter-saint is a grotesque variation of the theme.

A few references to the merchant classes and to the exploitation of the poor will show how Dunbar's satire in this direction moves on a set of assumptions similar to those we have already seen.

In 'Eftir geving I speik of taking',¹ for example, mention of the merchants could be expected:

This merchandis takis unlesum win,
 Quhilk makis thair pakkis oftymes full thin;
 Be thair successioun ye may see
 That ill won geir riches not the kin. (16-19)

The hopeful idea that ill-gotten short-term gains do not lead to enduring wealth is a commonplace: we have already seen the proverbial wastefulness of the rich merchant's son in The Thre Prestis of Peblis.

1 p. 35 ('Of Discretioun in Taking').

'Quhy will ye, merchantis of renoun'¹ is a fuller and more specific attack on the Edinburgh merchants. Their general mess, noise and disregard for civic amenity may be 'schame' enough but the essential shame is surely this:

Your burgh of beggeris is ane nest,
 To schout thai swentyouris will not rest;
 All honest folk they do molest,
 Sa piteuslie thai cry and rame:
 Think ye not schame,
 That for the poore hes nothing drest,
 In hurt and sclander of your name!

Your proffeit daylie dois increas,
 Your godlie workis les and les;
 Through streittis nane may mak progres
 For cry of cruikit, blind, and lame:
 Think ye not schame,
 That ye sic substance dois posses,
 And will nocht win ane bettir name! (43-56)

This points to a fundamental social ill, an imbalance and injustice in the fabric of the community. As we have already mentioned in connection with Henryson's The Wolf and the Lamb, the problems of beggary were very real and parliament had to make some efforts to deal with the matter. To us, the causes of this excessive vagrant population can be seen in clear economic terms, but it is doubtful if Dunbar was in a position to recognise either the general economic tendencies of the period or to recognise that the very existence of so many unemployed persons was a direct result of some of those tendencies.

¹ p. 81 ('To the Merchantis of Edinburgh'). Dunbar's accuracy in detail can easily be checked from official documents: e.g. his reference to overcharging in hostels (ll. 64-65) can be compared with acts as far apart as 1424 and 1503 (A.P.S., II, 6, 243); and his reference to beggary with the acts passed in 1424 and renewed in 1503 (A.P.S., II, 8, 242).

What Dunbar does see here is: injustice in a community which tolerates individuals to make as much profit as they can and also tolerates the existence of large numbers of unemployed beggars and neglected cripples.¹

In the list of examples of greed which makes up 'Eftir geving I speik of taking' we have a reference to this process of impoverishment-through-exploitation which was one of the root causes of social injustice at the time:

Barronis takis fra the tennentis peure
 All fruct that growis on the feure
 In mailis and gersomes rasit ouir hie,
 And garris thame beg fra dur to dure. (11-14)

On this poem Baxter comments: 'This radicalism is not frequent in Dunbar. In general, he is more circumspect in his social criticism'. (p. 128) He certainly lashed out at the shortcomings of all the estates of this society, particularly the higher degrees and in that sense he was not circumspect; but he was circumspect in the sense that like Henryson he evidently accepted the system he grew up in and apparently considered it could be made to operate fairly. I doubt if any of our senses of the word 'radical' would have occurred to him. Yet this hardly justifies Kurt Wittig's claim that 'except in so far as they coincide with his own frustration Dunbar is not interested in the sufferings of the common people'. (p. 53) While concern for the lot of the poor was by no means unusual

¹ Cf Basilicon Doron, pp. 88-89, where James VI reprimands the merchants for 'accounting it their lawfull gaine and trade, to enriche themselves upon the losse of all the rest of the people'.

among writers and while Dunbar's attitude to the lowest orders of society does not show the passionate sense of identification evident in Henryson, it can still be said that the two instances quoted show an earnest concern.¹ Yet while this suggests a genuine sympathy for the poor it has nothing to do with thoughts of revolution, or of wanting to change society to a more equable pattern; it does not arouse in Dunbar the rage which was set afire by the spectacle of unworthy men enjoying high favours; and it is not incompatible with description of the lower orders in terms which are to say the least abusive.

5. Douglas' Eneados.

From the point of view of our period as a whole the kind of kingship adumbrated by Barbour may appear primitive: there is great stress on basic military virtues like loyalty and perseverance. Golagros and Gawane deals with a problem of honour: how to avoid the brutality and humiliation apparently demanded by 'honourable' conduct while at the same time actually avoiding 'dishonour'. The solution suggested and the concern shown with questions of freedom

1 'Doverrit with dreme, devysing in my slummer' complains of
 Sa mony lordis, so mony naturall fulis,
 That better accordis to play thame at the trulis,
 Nor seis the dulis that commonis dois sustene ...
 (21-23)

and also of 'sic regratouris the peure men to prevene' (l. 43), i.e. the dishonest merchants whose sharp practice hits hardest at the poor. Although Mackenzie includes this poem in his edition (p. 151, 'A General Satyre') he accepts the probability that it was not written by Dunbar (See his note, pp. 224-25). Cf Baxter, pp. 207-9.

and allegiance not only relate this work to some of the central themes of the Bruce and the Wallace but also suggest that conceptions of honour were no longer felt to be an adequate definition of the qualities necessary for kingship. The treatment of kingship in The Thre Prestis of Peblis and in Henryson's fables combines questions of practical urgency with questions of theory in a way which gives these works a greater sophistication than their immediate and local predecessors. But there is little in either of them to suggest a new age, a new world-view: their basic assumptions imply a continued adherence to tradition. When we come to Lindsay we recognise at once that certain beliefs, while in content not new, are given much more emphatic expression than before. This is particularly true of two themes - the king is an officer, appointed to serve; and the commons have needs and rights which have been grossly neglected and ought now to be properly recognised.

Before moving on to Lindsay however we must pause to notice a clear indication of Renaissance influence in Douglas' Eneados: this indication can be seen first in his reasons for undertaking the project and second in the way his translation clarifies what he must have regarded as Vergil's over-riding theme.

His translation of Vergil's epic was no mere academic exercise but was highly relevant to currently developing theories about the role of a prince. Bruce Dearing is

emphatic:

Though Gavin Douglas is throughout his translation deliberately emphasizing the political lessons to be gleaned by a sixteenth-century prince from the pages of Vergil, and though topical political allegory lay ready to hand, it is noteworthy that he gains his emphasis not by perverting the original, but by making unmistakable the sentens that could be obscured by a merely literal rendering of the Latin. The result is not merely a textbook for schoolboys, nor a tale interesting only for its fable, nor a mere exercise in scholarship, as various scholars have styled it. It is instead a prototype of the Renaissance cultural and political epic.¹

And David Caldwell is equally emphatic in the following lines from his introduction to the Eneados:

The harvest that a Renaissance reader bared from Vergil was political, and it seems that Douglas manipulated the poem to demonstrate clearly its political implications. The focus of the poem is the person of the Prince ... Dissidents constitute a danger to the perfect order ... Even the human passions of the Prince may endanger the evolving perfection of the state ... The ideal monarch is a stoic despot, affecting an absolute power and royal prerogative with imperious self-assurance.²

Thus Douglas' attempt to render the Latin epic into

-
- 1 Bruce Dearing, 'Gavin Douglas' Eneados: a Reinterpretation', PMLA 67 (1952), p. 859. (Hereafter referred to as Dearing). See also L.B. Hall, 'An Aspect of the Renaissance in Gavin Douglas' Eneados, Studies in the Renaissance, VII (1960), pp. 184-92. Cf. E.M.W. Tillyard, The Miltonic Setting (London, 1961), pp. 151-52. Dearing illustrates how Douglas slightly expands his original in order to stress the political lessons he sees in the text: e.g. Aeneid VI, 618-20 and Eneados VI, ix, 186-92; Aeneid VI, 817-23 and Eneados VI, xiv, 28-42; Aeneid VI, 851-53 and Eneados VI, xv, 13-18.
- 2 Eneados, Vol. I, p. 37.

the Scots vernacular¹ can be seen as a corollary of his attempt to add a Scottish voice and point of view to the European debate. In this context too we can understand Douglas' rejection of the romanticised accounts of the Aeneid as given by Chaucer and Caxton². This rejection was inescapable once Douglas realised that Vergil meant his Aeneas to be an ideal Roman prince and that he too in his version would have to give a comparable importance to the same theme. Prologue IV, on the subject of love, clarifies Douglas' attitude to the Dido episode and its relation to the whole work.

Thare beyn twa luffis, perfyte and imperfyte,
That ane leful, the tother fowle delyte. (112-13)

The deceits of imperfect love are multifarious.

Quhat is your forss bot feblyng of the strenth? (15)

Your frute is bot onfructuus fantasy;
Your sary joys beyn bot janglyng and japys,
And your trew servandis sylly goddis apys. (19-21)

Many are the famous men who have been overcome, including Solomon, Samson, David, Aristotle and Vergil himself, i.e. representatives of wisdom, strength, prophesy, science and poetry.³

Fair weil, quhar that thy lusty dart assalis,
Wyt, strenth, ryches, na thying bot grace avalis.
(34-35)

1 See Eneados, Prol. I, 105-26, 283-314, 346-404, 478-500.

2 Eneados, Prol. I, 137-282 and 405-49; Dearing, pp. 850-54; see also H.B. Lathrop, Translations from the Classics into English from Caxton to Chapman, Univ. Wis. Stud. in Lang. and Lit., 35 (Madison, 1933).

3 Lists of the famous who were overcome by love were conventional: see Coldwell's note on this passage, Eneados, Vol. I, p. 174.

With the help of grace love can be 'rewlyt by measure'

(1. 125) -

Grund your amouris on charite al new;
 Found yow on resson - quhat nedis mair to preche?
 God grant you grace in luf, as I you tech. (205-7)

From this point of view Aeneas, in abandoning Dido, avoids becoming a victim of the 'lesser' love. Hence, too, Douglas' severe judgement of Dido:

Throw fulych lust wrocht thine awyn ondoing. (228)

The principal theme of the work, then, as Douglas first perceived it in the original and as he then sought to transmit it to his Scottish readers, is Aeneas as Ruler.

Vergil, he tells us,

wysly writis ...
 Twiching the proffyte of the common weill,
 Hys sawys beyn full of sentencis, every deill,
 Of morale doctryne ... (Prol. V, 39-42)

The Eneados was completed in July 1513. From 1513 to 1528 the difficulties of James V's minority gave an urgent and practical basis to the debate about the functions, rights and duties of princes. But the problems of those particular years can be seen as representing in an acute form the difficulties which occupied governors and their assistants throughout the entire period. It is not therefore surprising that the Eneados maintained its popularity¹, Bruce Dearing notes, for instance, how the marginal rubrics added by William Copland to his 1553 Black Letter edition stress, sometimes in an exaggerated form, the significance with which the Aeneid was regarded as a storehouse of pre-

¹ See J.A.W. Bennett, 'The Early Fame of Gavin Douglas's Eneados', Modern Language Notes LXI (1946), 83-88.

cepts for princes. Douglas himself in his own annotations had given a lead for this kind of comment: e.g. we find the following comment on I, iii, 69-70: 'Heir is a notabyll doctryn, that nan nobill man suld hastely reveng him eftyr his greif'. On the other hand the lessons Douglas perceived in Vergil's epic were not by any means exclusive to princes - e.g. the 'nobill man' just referred to is not necessarily a ruler, and the precept is of universal application.

6. Lindsay's Dreme, Complaynt and Testament.

When we considered the ecclesiastical criticism made by our writers the greatest bulk of references were to be found in Lindsay, and these were given their most sharply polemical expression in a form that could be publicly acted, i.e. in the Satyre. We find a similar degree of repetitiveness and polemical sharpness when we turn to Lindsay's treatment of the functions and duties of the king. Again, it is in the Satyre that we find the most pungent and readily communicable expressions, but of course this theme plays a very important part in the works of the late 1520s and these must be examined first. All three works have a court milieu and all three of them are addressed, in part or in whole, to James V himself.

The main social criticism of the Dreme comes in the last three hundred lines or so: we have the description of the realm of Scotland (ll. 799-917), the complaint of

the Comoun Weill of Scotland (ll. 918-1036) and the 'Exhortation to the Kyngis Grace' (ll. 1037-1126). The starting-point of the criticism made in the description of the realm is the contrast between the potential wealth offered by the country's resources and the actual poverty and misery of the people:

For I marvell gretlie, I yow assure,
 Consider and the peple and the ground,
 That ryches suld nocht in this realme redoud. (838-40)

According to Dame Remembrance the cause of the discrepancy is

Wanting of iustice, polycie, and peace, (860)

and in reply to this question from the narrator

Sen we have lawis into this countre,
 Quhy want we lawis exersitioun?
 Quho suld put iustice tyll exicutioun? (873-75)

she gives an answer which contains a number of themes we have already encountered. The head/body analogy is applied to society and the crucial role is attributed to the monarch:

I fynd the falt in to the heid;
 For thay in quhome dois ly our hole relief,
 I fynd thame rute and grund of all our greif.
 For, quhen the heddis ar nocht deligent,
 The membris man, on neid, be necligent. (878-82)

... the necligence
 Off our infatuate heidis insolent ... (904-5)

Bot rycht difficill is to mak remeid,
 Quhen that the falt is so in to the heid. (916-17)

We have the good/bad shepherd theme (ll. 890-903), originally from John, x, 13, but of common usage; and we have the contrast between singular profit and common wealth:

Havand small ee unto the comoun weill,
 Bot to thare singulare proffect everilk deill. (909-10)

The author of The Complaynt of Scotlande, we may note here, distinguishes between common wealth and singular profit in this way:

Quhen your particular weil is spulyeit or hurt
 be your enemies, it maye be remedit be your
 comont weil. Ande in opposit, gif your comont
 weil be distroyt, than it sal nevyr be remedit
 be your particular weil, for your particular
 weil is bot ane accessor of your comont weil,
 ande the accessor follouis the natur of the
 prencipal.¹

In contrast to the abstract nature of such a neat theory, the literary use of the personification Comoun Weill could be used to express the strongest feelings and to strengthen the heaviest polemical blows. In The Thre Prestis of Peblis the figure appears in Archebald's first tale and it is through him that some of the sharpest criticism in the book is delivered: it will be recalled that he is the wounded man whose injuries represent the injustices which disfigure the whole nation. From his position of weakness he utters a strong indictment directly to the king himself:

And yit, suppois, I have all the pyne,
 The falt is yowris, sir king, and nathing myne.
 (541-42)

And of course in Lindsay's Satyre Comoun Weill becomes a major protagonist, being given some of the most forceful passages in the play.²

Here, in the Dreme, Comoun Weill amplifies the complaints already made by Dame Remembrance. Justice has

1 C.S., p. 112.

2 e.g. Satyre, ll. 2417-2668, 2717-2846, 2952-3028. 'John Upland' is briefly mentioned in Complaynt, l. 407 and in Testament, l. 541.

almost lost her sight (l. 948); in both the south of the kingdom (ll. 953-59) and in the north (ll. 960-66) and in the lowlands (ll. 967-73) there is unrest and lawlessness. Singular profit thrives at the expense of common wealth:

Bot singulare proffect gart me soune disluge,
 And did me gret iniuris and offence,
 And said to me: swyith, harlote, hy the hence;
 And in this countre se thow tak no curis,
 So lang as my auctoritie induris. (969-73)

There is nocht ellis bot ilk man for hym self.(993)

Comoun Weill is similarly disdained by the clergy, who are dominated by simony, greed, pride, sensual pleasure and ambition.

For I have socht throw all the spirituall stait,
 Quhilkis tuke na compte for to heir me complene.
 (976-77)

Comoun Weill's plight and his treatment by the clergy are worked out dramatically in the Satyre, but again we find the same basic criticism in both works. The crucial personal influence of the king is also stressed by Comoun Weill:

thare sall na Scot have confortyng
 Off me, tyll that I see the countre gydit
 Be wysedome of ane gude auld prudent kyng,
 Quhilk sall delyte hym maist, abone all thyng,
 To put iustice tyll exicutioun,
 And on strang tratouris mak puneisioun. (1003-8)

I se, rycht weill, that proverbe is full trew,
 Wo to the realme that hes our young ane king.
 (1010-11)

The point of the proverb would have been felt only too acutely in 1528, after fifteen years without effective royal control; the implications of this are not confined

to 1528 for the troubles of minority rule in Scotland had been familiar for over a century, and pleas that justice should be put to firm execution were not limited to the minorities of the Stewart kings.

The direct exhortation to James V which closes the poem summarises a conception of monarchy we have already encountered: the lesson is repeated several times throughout Lindsay's works. (e.g. in the Papyngo, ll. 227-345 and in the Satyre, ll. 1875-1901). The religious basis of kingship for instance, the idea that God has given the king his right to govern and that the king must correspondingly respect the obligations of this situation, is central to the idea of monarchy as conceived in this period of Scottish history. The following contains ideas already met in each writer so far considered:

Schir, sen that God, of his preordinance,
Haith grantit the to have the governance
Off his peple, and create the one kyng,
Faill nocht to prent in thy remembrance,
That he wyll nocht excuse thyne ignorance,
Gave thow be rekles in thy governyng. (1037-42)

Compare this, for example, with the similar admonition contained in the first epistle of the Papyngo:

Consider, weill, thow bene bot officiare
And wassall to that kyng incomparabyll ...
So, in thyne office thou be deligent.
Bot, be thou found sleuthfull, or negligent,
Or iniuste in thyne exicutioun,
Thou sall nocht faill devine puneissioun ... (255-56,
279-82)

James is reminded of the benefits he has been given by Nature and by Fortune (ll. 1046-54): he is advised 'leif thyne insolence' (ll. 1064); he is told to pay heed to

Comoun Weill (l. 1068), to do equal justice to great and small (l. 1073)¹, to be liberal (ll. 1079-90) and to keep free of lechery until he acquires a 'lusty, plesand quene' (ll. 1091-99). The wisdom of paying due regard to the counsel of his 'prudent lordis trew' (ll. 1109-17) is commended to the young James V just as it was to his grandfather and his father.

And se thow nocht presumpteouslie pretend
Thy awin perticulare weill for tyll ensew. (ll. 1111-12)

It is in keeping with the reminder that he owes his position to a divine gift that the exhortation should conclude with the reminder that death awaits the king with the same certainty with which it awaits everyone else. (ll. 1118-26)

The personal burden of Lindsay's Complaynt² is that despite his long personal service to James (ll. 71-108) and despite the freedom James won for himself by overthrowing the Douglasses in 1528 (ll. 373 ff), Lindsay has still not been suitably rewarded for his loyalty and he grieves to see large rewards being given to those less worthy of them than he is (ll. 106-7; 255-82). As in Dunbar's case, such personal complaint is widened to include criticism of court life in general; e.g., the lines

Ane dum man yit wan never land,
And, in the court, men gettis na thyng
Withoute inopportune askyng. (53-57)

* these may remind one of Dunbar's 'Be divers wyis and

1 Cf Dunbar's 'Quhen Merche wes with variand windis past', ll. 106-12.

2 For the date of this poem see Hamer, III, 47-49.

operatiounes'¹; just as the lines

Thow hes maid baith lordis and lairdis,
And hes gevin mony ryche rewardis
To thame that was full far to seik,
Quhen I lay nychtlie be thy cheik. (77-80)

are reminiscent of Dunbar's 'To speik of gift or almous
deidis'² -

Sum givis to strangeris with face new,
That yisterday fra Flanderis flew,
And to awld servandis list not se,
War thay nevir of sa grit vertew:
In geving sowld discretioun be. (36-40)

But the particular reference is to court life under the
Douglases

For commoun weill makand no cair,
Bot for thare proffeit singulare, (129-30)³

to their treatment of the young king (ll. 131-54) and to
the opportunities which the situation offered for corrupt
dealings at the common expense (ll. 155-372).⁴

In ll. 373-410 Lindsay gives an idealised picture of
the country after James has established his personal rule:
all is in good order, 'except the spiritualitie' (l. 411).
And the responsibility for the good order of the spiritual
estate is laid firmly on the king himself (ll. 435-48).
The religious basis of the monarchy is thus stressed again:

For thow are bot ane instrument
To that gret kyng omnipotent. (499-500)

The Papyngo's epistle to James in the Testament⁵ also
incorporates these familiar doctrines on monarchy. It

1 p. 55 ('Aganis the Solistaris in Court').

2 p. 33 ('Of Discretioun in Geving').

3 Cf Pitscottie's account, I, 306.

4 Lines 186-214 show some close parallels with Sayre, ll.
984-1009: see Hamer, III, 55-56.

5 For the date see Hamer, III, 64-67.

emphasises (i) that the king is but God's officer (ll. 255-56), (ii) that God has given the king power over 'all thyng terrestriall' in his domain (ll. 269-79), and (iii) that the king is answerable to God for his management of that power (ll. 250-54, 280-82).

The justice-with-mercy formula, which we have encountered in both Henryson and Dunbar, is briefly referred to (l. 335). The advice on the choice of a council (ll. 296-303) is partly in terms which are familiar throughout the period, e.g.

Cheis thy counsale of the moste sapient, (302)

though when one reads the line which immediately follows -

Without regarde to blude, ryches, or rent (303)

- one meets something much less familiar. The references to riches (wealth in money) and to rent (wealth in land) may seem banal and in practice it may have been difficult for a king to ignore the advice of his wealthiest nobles. But the reference to blood (family) is surely unusual. It will be recalled how James III was criticised for allegedly paying more heed to the advice of upstart favourites than to the advice of his nobles: the nobles regarded it as among their rights to be eligible to counsel the monarch. Lindsay's own family position makes this reference to blood remarkable. For instance, his own class sympathies for the nobility are evident in this epistle. As Hamer points out in his note on l. 332, Lindsay ignores conflict between crown and nobility and refers only to inter-baronial strife: and his advice on the latter seems to be that the king should rely on those nobles who are 'true' to him and use

them to suppress those who are troublesome. In Hamer's words, 'he does not show much ingenuity, nor acknowledgement of the fact that few barons could be relied on implicitly'.

The Papyngo's second epistle, 'directit to hir brether of the courts', naturally emphasises the treachery of court life:

Traist weill, sum men wyll gyf you laud, as lordis,
 Quhilk wald be glaid to se you hang in cordis.
 (372-73)

And a brief catalogue of court rascals is reminiscent of the furious alliterations of Dunbar -

And quhou fonde fenyeit fulis and flatteraris
 For small servyce optenith gret rewardis;
 Pandaris, pykthankis, custronis, and clatteraris
 Loupis up frome laddis, sine lychtis amang lardis;
 Blasphematours, beggaris, and commoun bardis
 Sum tyme in court hes more auctoritie,
 Nor devote doctouris in divinitie: (388-94)

In the short history of disasters which overtook the Stewart kings (ll. 430-597) we can again see Lindsay's predilection for the aristocratic point of view. He sees James III, for instance, brought to 'confusioun' by the 'abusioun' of Cochrane and his company, who usurped privileges which were allegedly due to those born into noble families:

Thay grew, as did the weid abufe the corne,
 That prudent lordis counsall wes refusit. (453-54)

He seems to accept the rumour that Cochrane poisoned James's mind against his brothers Albany and Mar, so that James forced the one to flee and had the other murdered (ll. 458-64). The image of climbing too high, of presumptuously

over-reaching, is stressed (ll. 458, 466-68)¹.

He gives James IV due praise for his liberality (l. 492), his strengthening of justice throughout the realm (ll. 493-99) and the wide fame of his court (ll. 500-3). The only reason Lindsay mentions for James' attack on England in the autumn of 1513 is 'the ardent lufe he had to France' (l. 505) - a gross simplification - but on the outcome of the battle he squarely blames the king himself for not heeding the advice of his nobles.

Nocht be the vertew of Inglis ordinance,
 Bot be his awin wyfull mys-governance.
 Allace, that daye had he bene counsalabyll,
 He had obtenit laude, glore, and victorie. (512-15)²

The violent troubles of the years immediately after Flodden are pointed to as yet another token of worldly inconstance:

Now, brether, marke, in your remembrance,
 Ane myrroure of those mutabilities:
 So may ye knaw the courtis inconstance,
 Quhen prencis bene thus pullit frome thair seis.
 (521-24)

And in his account of these troubles (ll. 528-97) Lindsay again stresses the ideas of climbing too high, of ladders breaking, of falling (ll. 551, 583, 589, 596).

7. Lindsay's Satyre.

Lindsay's Satyre, as an act of social criticism, is motivated by the same concerns as are the Dreme, the Complaynt, and the Testament. It gives immediate public dramatic representation to the same ideas, and since many

1 Cf Pitscottie, I, 211-12.

2 Cf Pitscottie, I, 277-78.

of these ideas found vivid allegorical expression in the poems their suitability for stage performance is apparent (e.g. the rejection of Chastity by those to whom she appeals).

It may well be that much of the Satyre as we know it was written in the same period as the 1528-30 poems: the arguments on date offered by Hamer (IV, 136-43) require some modification. As John MacQueen has pointed out¹ there are various references within the play which suggest a much earlier date than is customarily accepted. There are several references to the king's youth (ll. 384-41, 176-77, 223-24, 233-34, 359-60, 461-63, 485-88, 587-89, 980-83, 994-1005, 1113-15) and interesting parallels exist in the Dreme (ll. 1003-11) and the Complaynt (ll. 237-42, 381-92, 401-11). There are also references in the Satyre to the king's forthcoming marriage and it ought to be remembered that James' marriage was 'forthcoming' throughout several years of diplomatic negotiation (ll. 243-45, 1745-49, 1761-68); again there is a parallel in the Dreme (ll. 1091-99). A connection can be suggested between the council held by Flattrie, Falset and Dissait (ll. 984-1009), the plea of Diligence (ll. 1795-1810) and Lindsay's relationship to the Douglasses: and they fell totally from power in 1528. Also worth attention are items like the reference to the College of Justice (ll. 3825-56) and to the English versions

¹ 'Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis', Studies in Scottish Literature.
III (1966), pp. 129-43.

of the New Testament (e.g. 1. 1092). MacQueen concludes:

These points seem to establish a performance of Ane Satyre probably at some time during the earlier fifteen-thirties. They do not, of course, affect the evidence for performances in 1552 and 1554, nor the possibility of revision for these performances, but they do suggest that the 1552 performance was a revival of a play, which was then some twenty years old. They also suggest that in 1540 only a truncated version of the original play was produced at Linlithgow.¹

Although the Satyre is interesting in relation to the history of Scottish drama², our main concern here is with its content. That content, as we have seen, is principally concerned with the ills of the church and the wider associated ills of society. Obviously I have again to summarise and select, but in the case of Lindsay this is not as difficult as it may at first seem: his basic doctrines are comparatively simple and comparatively few and throughout the considerable bulk of his surviving work they are repeated many times. As I have previously indicated, however, what is new about Lindsay's presentation of these doctrines is first his blunt treatment of kingship,

1 pp. 141-42. See also the two replies to MacQueen - A.J. Mill, 'The Original Version of Lindsay's Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis', Studies in Scottish Literature, VI (1968), pp. 67-75; and V. Harward, 'Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis again', Studies in Scottish Literature, VII (1970), pp. 139-46.

2 E.K. Chambers, The Medieval Stage (Oxford, 1903), II, 157. J.M. Smith, The French Background of Middle Scots Literature (Edinburgh, 1934), pp. 125-30. (Hereafter referred to as Smith). Spiers, pp. 81-86. A.J. Mill, 'The influence of the Continental Drama on Lyndsay's "Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis"' MLR XXV (1930), 425-42. J.A. Lester, 'Some Franco-Scottish Influences on the Early English Drama', in Haverford Essays (Haverford, Pa., 1909), p. 139.

and second and even more striking, his espousal of the cause of the commons as represented by John and Pauper. Here then it will be useful to point out what he says in the course of the Satyre about the functions and duties of kingship.

Lindsay reiterates the belief that a king is God's officer and has therefore special responsibilities: the neglect of these responsibilities and misuse of his position is a root cause of national disaster. Divyne Correctionoun defines a king in terms much stronger than in any work we have so far considered:

Quhat is ane king? Nocht bot ane officiar,
 To caus his leiges live in equitie:
 And under God to be ane punischer
 Of trespassours against his maiestie.
 Bot quhen the king dois live in tyrannie,
 Breakand justice for feare or affectioun,
 Then is his realme in weir and povertie,
 With shamefull slauchter but correctioun. (1605-12)

Princely pride is the great sin - Rex himself, who is consistently represented as young and somewhat inexperienced, is himself liable to be overweening. When Correctionoun upbraids him for the excessive attention he pays to Lady Sensual, he protests:

Be quhom have ye (as) greit authoritie?
 Qhua dois presume for til correct ane king?
 Knaw ye nocht me greit King Humanitie,
 That in my regioun royally dois ring? (1709-12)

Divyne Correctionoun reduces Humanitie's boast to its proper proportions by asserting the right of the original authority:

I have power greit princes to down thring,
 That lives contrair the maiestie divyne ... (1713-14)

With regard to l. 1713 Hamer quotes two verses from the Old Testament - Job, xii, 19: 'He leadeth princes away spoiled, and overthroweth the mighty', and Isaiah, xl, 23: 'It is he that bringeth the princes to nothing; he maketh the judges of the earth as vanity'. It is quite in order to suggest that when Lindsay gives such words to Divyne Correctionoun he is following a pattern of belief established by such scriptural references. The Fall of Princes theme, by which God could punish or depose a monarch for his failings, has a similar origin.

Towards the end of the play, in his speech about kingship, Folie echoes Correctionoun's warning:

The pryde of princes withoutin fail,
Gars all the world rin top evir taill. (4560-610)

The most compact summary of these points comes from Gude-Counsall, when Rex has decided to mend his ways and listen to wiser advice. Again we have an insistence on the divinely-grounded nature of the king's office, the subordinate nature of the king's function in relation to divine authority, the prime duty of the king to administer impartial justice, and to temper this justice with mercy, and the burden of care (as opposed to the pleasure of personal power) which is entailed by such responsibilities. Amytan's advice to Arthur is based on the same doctrine to which Gude-Counsall alludes (Psalm cxi, 10 (A.V.) ^ccx, 10 (Vulgate)), but here the treatment is a much more forceful one.

Initium sapientiae est timor domini.

Sir, gif your hienes yearnis lang to ring,
 First dread your God abuif all uther thing.
 For ye ar bot ane mortall instrument
 To that great God and King Omnipotent,
 Preordinat be his divine maiestie,
 To reull his peopill intill unitie.
 The principall point Sir of ane king's office,
 Is for to do to everilk man iustice,
 And for to mix his iustice with mercie,
 But rigour, favour or parcialitie.
 Forsuith it is na littill observance,
 Great regions to have in governance,
 Quha ever taks on him that kinglie cuir,
 To get ane of thir two he suld be suir:
 Great paine and labour, and that continuall,
 Or ellis to have defame perpetuall. (1875-91)

The special privileges of monarchy are in respect of such great pain and labour - but Lindsay includes among these privileges one which does not easily relate to one of the main points of his teaching. Time and again he attacks pluralism as a major abuse of church office, yet twice in the Satyre he excludes from this stricture those of the royal blood (ll. 2869-70, 3889-96). They are to be allowed to hold more than one benefice. Is the king unique then, above the law? This would not square readily with the injunction that the king is under a heavy obligation to administer justice with total impartiality. Or possibly it is a way of recognising the crown's difficulty in living 'of its own' - yet in view of the fact that James V liberally endowed his illegitimate/benefices in commendam Lindsay would appear to be stretching a major point in condoning this.

The king is God's officer; he is also related to his subjects as the head is to the other members of the body.

Lindsay too makes use of this commonplace analogy between the human body and the body politic. In the course of Veritie's speech delivered while Rex is lying down among the ladies (i.e. when he is still in thrall to Solace, Sensualitie and their company) the influence of the head over the members for good or ill is stressed thus:

Let not the fault be left into the head
 Then sall the members reulit be at richt.
 For quhy subjects do follow day and nicht
 Their governours in vertew and in vyce. (1045-48)

As was pointed out earlier, Lindsay uses the figure to similar effect in the Dreme:

For, quhen the heddis ar nocht delygent,
 The membris man, on neid, be necligent. (881-82)
 Bot rycht difficill is to mak remeid,
 Quhen that the falt is so in to the heid. (916-17)

It also occurs in the Monarche:

Allace, how suld we membris be weill usit,
 Quhen so our spirituall heidis bene abusit. (4916-17)
 Lawd/lay/peple followis, ay, thare heidis,
 And, speciallye, in to thare deidis. (5436-37)

Then when Rex has chosen to reform himself, Divyne Correctionun, having asserted a superior authority, continues:

I will begin at thee quhilk is the head,
 And mak on the first reformatioun:
 Thy leiges than will follow the but pleid. (1717-19)

The idea is again alluded to when Rex welcomes his lords at the convening of the three estates:

Ye ar my members suppois I be your head. (2374)

The members of the three estates have entered walking backwards, led by their vices: a simple dramatic gesture to indicate the previously unwise rule of Rex. Having

decided to reform himself, Rex is now in a position to direct his subjects. (The spiritual estate is significantly unwilling to change:

Soveraine we have gaine sa this mony a yeir.
Howbeit ye think we go undecently,
Wee think wee gang richt wonder pleasantly. (2384-86))

The king may be God's officer and the head of the body politic, yet he cannot rule without guidance and it is crucial for the welfare of advisers. It will be recalled that the Pluscarden verses, dating from the early 1460s, include the lines -

For sic men as thou deputis undir the,
Quethir thai be fulis, wekit men or wyss,
Al men wil traist that sic lyk man thou be
As thou committis to govern thine office.¹

And of course we have seen the point raised in several works throughout the period. It was a period which gave commentators good reason to be interested in the matter. Here, for instance, Rex is first subject to bad counsel, and his reformation (and consequently the reformation of his kingdom) is possible only after he has perceived the true nature of his false advisers and has turned his attention to the true ones². Early in the play *Gude Counsall laments*:

Wa is me for King Humanitie
Oversetwith Sensualitie,
In th'entrie of his ring,
Throw vicious counsell insolent.
Sa thay may get riches or rent,
To his weillfair thay tak na tent,
Nor quhat sal be th'ending. (587-93)

1 *Pluscarden*, I, 393.

2 This narrative outline belongs to the same tradition that is drawn upon by, say, *King Hart*, in which the corruption of the young king by evil followers continues until the arrival of good counsellors who drive out the bad ones.

For, wald this king be gydit yit with ressoun,
 And on misdoars mak punitioun,
 Howbeit that I haif lang tyme bene exyllit,
 I traist in God my name sall yit be styllit. (596-99)

The false counsellors of Rex are able to deceive him easily because he accepts them at face value. He thinks he is choosing wisely:

Now have I Sapience and Discretioun,
 How can I fail to rell this regioun?
 And Devotioun to be my confessour:
 Thir thrie came in ane happie hour
 Heir I mak the my secretar,
 And thou sal be my thesaurar:
 And thow salbe my counsallour,
 In spirituall things and confessour. (8701-77)

But in fact Sapience is Falset, Discretioun is Dissait and Devotioun is Flattrie. The foolishness of Rex is spelled out for the audience in the most obvious dramatic terms when Falset boasts of his understanding of 'the quintessence' and immediately demands forty crowns 'to mak multiplicatioun' (ll. 886-93) or when Flattrie claims skill in palmistry and foretells for the king the happy prospect of fifteen queens and three hundred concubines (ll. 904-17). The king's chosen counsellors try to prevent the approach of Gude-Counsall, who sees them as they really are and wants to bring Rex to a truer understanding of his situation. Says Gude-Counsall to Flattrie:

Brother I ken yow weill aneuch,
 Howbeit ye mak it never sa teuch:
 Flattrie, Dissait and Fals-report
 That will not suffer to resort
 Gude-Counsall to the kings presence. (970-74)

It is Divyne Correctioun who calls Rex to his senses, challenging his ability to make proper decisions unaided.

Thair may no prince do actis honorabil,
 Bot giff his counsall thairto will assist;
 How may he knaw the thing maist profitabil,
 To follow vertew and vycis to resist,
 Without he be instructit and solist?
 And quehn the king stands at his counsell sound,
 Then welth sall wax and plentie as he list
 And policie sall in his realme abound. (1581-88)

Rex's self-assertion against this reasoning -

Quha dois presume for til correct ane king? (1710)

allows Correction to claim the prior and higher authority
 already referred to:

I have power greit princes to doun thring,
 That lives contrair the ^{Majestie} Divyne,
 Against the treuth quhilk plainlie dois maling:
 Repent they nocht I put them to ruyne.
 I will begin at thee quhilk is the head,
 And mak on thee first reformatioun:
 Thy lieges than will follow thee but pleid. (1713-19)

In the simplest possible terms, then, and in a form
 (enactment on a stage) which could communicate immediately,
 Lindsay not only reveals the king's fallibility and blind-
 :ness as a human being, but also asserts an allegiance
 which includes and goes beyond the earthly obedience of
 subject to monarch. The king's subjects are included
 within this higher context as much as the king himself is:
 once he has made 'first reformatioun' they must follow,
 and the worldly allegiance becomes also a spiritual one.

CONCLUSION

It should be abundantly clear that any study of The Thre Prestis of Peblis, of the work of Henryson, Dunbar and Lindsay which narrows its focus to exclusively literary matters, to the continuation and development of mere literary tradition, is fated to ignore the most central interests and motivations of that work. These writers were all fervently committed to analysing and criticising the society in which they lived, and they did so in the most particular and practical terms. Henryson would have found quite incomprehensible the attitude of those of his critics who see his work purely in literary terms.

Yet, however important it may be to stress the social concerns of these writers, any view of their work which confines itself to this concern is also inadequate. Criticism restricted to mere social considerations has not been so common as criticism restricted to mere literary considerations, though we have seen attempts to read Henryson's fables as disguised commentaries on current political events. Such an approach is fated to ignore aspects of their work which to them and their readers were even more important than social criticism - that is, the religious basis upon which all their attitudes to human society depended. At the beginning of Chapter One I suggested the figure of two concentric circles as an analogy of the double scale of values which is present

throughout their work. The smaller inner circle represents secular human fallen society and contains both worldly good and worldly bad; the larger outer circle represents spiritual values, the wisdom that passes human understanding, freedom from the deceits and changeableness of nature and fortune. This religious basis is of course most apparent in the ecclesiastical satire, a brand of satire which was by no means new but which had a very pointed political relevance in Scottish life during the developments leading to the Scottish Reformation.

As we have seen, this moral and religious framework conditioned all aspects of social criticism in the writers considered, and the work of each one can be seen as a whole only from the point of view of the religious beliefs informing every aspect. The most common mode whereby this all-pervasive religious view is most clearly evident is a habit of pointing up the discrepancies between appearance and reality, a habit already illustrated from every writer considered. This desire to warn against the dangers of accepting the world at face value, of trusting the appearances offered by the senses in preference to the possibly quite different reality postulated behind such appearances, is but one aspect of the double view of the world which I tried to vindicate by the figure of the two concentric circles.

If we confine our view of these writers to their social criticism we allow their work no higher standing than that

of journalism or documentary: good journalism no doubt, but limited to historical interest. If we confine our view of them to their religious teaching we limit the value of their work in a similar way. Like any other period this one had its large quota of commentators, apologists, teachers etc., the substance of whose thoughts were often shared by the writers we have considered, but who lacked the imaginative and mental power to make art out of their thoughts and observations. The Thre Prestis of Peblis, the work of Henryson, Dunbar and Lindsay survive on a different level from chronicles and tracts because the imaginative and mental power of their authors can communicate with us through (not in spite of) their particular historical concerns and beliefs. Since they achieve the standing of art rather than documentary, it is difficult in discussing them to avoid paradox. For instance, in order to make their most telling and practical social criticism they resorted not to 'plain truth' but to the inherited storehouse of literary and historical tradition. Again, it is not simply the illustration of the universal in terms of the particular, or the illustration of the temporal in terms of the eternal, that gives their work its force: it is rather the tension, the emotional charge they can generate, by the subtle motion of their minds to-and-fro between particular-in-universal and universal-in-particular. In a word we seldom find them dealing with particular/universal contrasts simply in terms of a crude one-to-one correspondence.

The topicality of the works discussed has been illustrated in detail. As Murison said of Lindsay's social and ecclesiastical criticism, we could grant it little weight as historical evidence if we were dealing merely with assertions made by one lively writer: but in fact a large bulk of sober evidence from other sources (chronicles, letters, council resolutions, sermons, parliamentary acts, treasurers' accounts etc.) fully confirms the particular criticisms levelled by our writers. This is pre-eminently so in Lindsay's case, where we find his complaints against the church being paralleled by identical complaints not just from reformers outside the church but from reformers within the church as well. But throughout our period, and throughout the range of their social criticism, including the performance of the rulers (James III, IV and V) and the nobility, the lot of the commons, the condition of justice, and the state of the church - throughout the entire range we find that the criticism made by the most gifted imaginative writers of the age can easily be substantiated from other sources.

I have also discussed in detail the manner in which these writers develop a wider context for criticism which in itself could easily remain of limited and merely historical importance. There is no need to recapitulate any of this detail, but a brief summary of this discussion may serve to link together various threads which were taken up at different points throughout.

In The Thre Prestis of Peblis the kings in the first two tales, John's and Archebald's, are given characters with unmistakable resemblances to the character of James III as it emerges from many contemporary sources. At the same time the faults ascribed to their kings by both John and Archebald are clearly intended as signs of worldliness. We see this right away in John's tale when the king declares his delight in the success of his merchants (l. 89). Archebald's kings are even more blatantly enthralled: greed, idleness, 'lightness' leading to the toleration of suffering among the commoners (ll. 539-42) and to the neglect of justice (ll. 622-31). In the story of Fictus, Fictus has to pretend to be a fool before the king will even notice him.

The character of Fictus is developed through several processes, in each of which we are asked to reinterpret our previous view of him. In the first, in the immediate secular context, his pretended foolishness masks his practical sagacity - as the wounded man says, 'Your fule, sir king, hes mair wit than ye have'. (l. 556). In the second, when we see him being given a bishopric as a worldly reward for worldly services, we are asked to consider him from two points of view. On the one hand, a bishop, as an administrator, needs the qualities Fictus possesses and the king acts wisely in recognising this. On the other hand, while we are not asked to deny this, we are asked to view it in the wider context opened out by

William's tale, and now we accept a qualification on the alleged wisdom of the pretended fool: his 'wisdom' is limited to a worldly interpretation of the term.

The three priests themselves, especially John and Archebald, are also subject to this kind of qualification, though to a lesser degree, as we see from the description of their ease at the beginning, and from the references of the world and the kind of tales they tell: William has seen little of the world, far less than either John or Archebald, and while their tales are about very human fallible kings, William's is about the king of kings and establishes the wider universal context which gives the book as a whole its highly integrated structure.

Thus the significations given to the three friends in William's tale - respectively 'gude penny and pelfe', 'wyfe and barne and uther freinds', and 'almous deid and cheritie' - refer not exclusively to the single tale in which they appear but by implication to the complete set of tales, unifying the set and suggesting contrasts which allow the author to present his double scale of values, worldly/spiritual. Broadly, the first tale (John's) is about the values represented by the first friend, about the material gain which ensnares merchants, lawyers, bishops, nobles and king. Then the second tale (Archebald's) is about the values represented by the second friend, about relationships between people, public and private, and how they have been perverted, resulting for instance in the exploi-

station of the poor and the toleration of murder.

More particularly, within John's tale we see perverted forms of the three sets of values. The corrupting power of wealth (the first friend) is illustrated in the tale of the merchant; the strife between the lords is a destructive form of relationship (the second friend); and the misuse of benefices is a depraved form of 'charity' (the third friend). Then in Archebald's tale the fate of the wounded man is another indication of the corrupting power of greed (the first friend); the easy pardon of the murderer is a denial of just relationships (the second friend); and the self-deception of the king with regard to his queen is a clear parallel to the story of the third friend.

Hence the significance of Archebald's repeated declaration (ll. 38, 450) that the telling of tales will help to keep his foot out of the fire: metaphorically, their moral purpose will rouse him from immersion in worldly satisfaction. It is William's tale which provides the universal context within which we can see, in their proper perspective, the particular affairs described by John and Archebald.

In Henryson's fables one way of indicating how he moves to and fro between particular and universal is to point to the variety of ways in which he related fable and moralitas. The relation is never simple. Of the five fables discussed, The Preaching of the Swallow provides a

universal context valid for all the fables; The Trial of the Fox describes the treatment of abuses but within a qualified worldly context; The Sheep and the Dog and The Wolf and the Lamb give particular historical examples of injustice with very pointed contemporary applications; and The Lion and the Mouse offers a working example of a possible contract or form of interdependence between ruler and ruled, albeit still within a worldly context.

In each case the relationship between fable and moralitas is different. In The Preaching of the Swallow we have three closely linked sections - introduction, fable, moralitas - each carrying a wealth of scriptural, philosophical and literary allusion to reinforce the weight of this fable in the whole set. There are important connections with other fables: for instance we have already noted the close relationship between this fable and the prologue to The Lion and the Mouse. Again the contrast between the solitary swallow and the heedless crowd of other birds forms a close thematic parallel to the similar contrast between the solitary mare and the mass of the king's subjects in The Trial of the Fox. Yet again, the references to soil and seed in The Preaching of the Swallow relate directly to the prologue to the fables in general. Within The Preaching of the Swallow this reference carries through from the introduction to the moralitas, where it is utilised for the spiritual interpretation of the story; likewise the reference to blindness in the introduction is

put to similar use in the moralitas.

In The Trial of the Fox the relation between fable and moralitas is different. In the fable we have the summoning of the lion's subjects, i.e. the worldly parliament, and from this point of view the mare who refuses to attend may at first appear in default: but then the moralitas opens out another context and now we see the mare in a different light. The moralitas ought not to reverse our expectations, because the worldly nature of the parliament has already been quite clearly indicated, but it does widen the context. It is through the mare that Henryson makes his reference to the superior set of values against which the worldly court is judged.

In both The Sheep and the Dog and The Wolf and the Lamb we again see different ways of relating fable and moralitas. In the former the beasts are given significations, in the course of the fable proper, applicable to a consistory court; the moralitas then gives a second set of significations, now applicable to a civil court. Both ecclesiastical and civil justice is thus criticised through the one story; the fact that it is the former type which receives principal treatment in the fable proper implies a heavier censure. The universal context is not neglected either: the reference to this comes towards the end (e.g. ll. 169-74), and though relatively brief is unmistakable. A less devious and more simply brutish kind of oppression is exemplified in The Wolf and the Lamb.

Henryson does not simply enlist our sympathy for the lamb but by making the lamb appeal respectively to law, to logic and to scripture he makes us see the offence of the wolf as an offence against civilisation. What the fable proper offers here is a general example of oppression: the function of the moralitas in this case is to amplify this theme with particular details that refer to contemporary Scotland.

The lion-king in The Lion and the Mouse is, in his power and worldliness, a very similar figure to the lion-king in The Trial of the Fox; and in both cases specific allusions are made to the Scottish monarchy. Again, while Henryson puts considerable weight into the pleas made by the mouse, the universal context is never forgotten: the mice themselves are members of fallen humanity. Once more the moralitas develops the implications of this wider frame of reference.

If we turn to Dunbar, the apparent heterogeneity of his work and the small scale of many of his surviving poems, makes it less easy to see an integrated world-view of the kind Henryson explores in the fables. Yet it is there, as the many references to Dunbar's recurring themes have shown. In 'Quhen Merche wes with variand windis past', for instance, the lion-king figure shares much with the lion-kings in The Trial of the Fox and The Lion and the Mouse: his physical perfection, his ability to command awe, and the utter subjection of his subjects. His bowing to Dame Nature

further stresses his natural condition. (Again there are specific allusions to the Scottish crown.) The other two kingly models, the thistle and the eagle, also carry strong worldly and natural connotations. Thus the advice given to James IV by Dunbar in the wedding-poem carries within itself the reference to a universal scale of values.

This same reference is made with regard to the actual court of James IV through the irony underlying the pungent complaint 'Schir, ye have mony servitouris.' At one level, the poem lists worthy recipients of royal patronage (ll. 1-24) and unworthy recipients (ll. 35-60). But then Dunbar's suggestion that he is 'unworthy' to have a place 'amang the laif' opens another level of interpretation: that his work, more durable than that of any material craftsman, is of a different order even from the 'worthy' activities listed in lines 1-24. Then lines 67-80 make us realise that the distinction between the worthy and the unworthy courtiers is not as clear-cut as we may at first have assumed: both the seemingly good and the seemingly bad are viewed sardonically. And then the reference to the unworldly scale of values comes in Dunbar's admission that if he were rewarded materially he would become more tolerant of the court's worldly view, he would suffer a form of spiritual blinding. Incidental references to the 'nettill vyle' and the 'wild weid' can be set against the advice given to the thistle - just as in 'Schir, yit remembir as of befoir' the reproof to the eagle can also

be set against the advice given in the wedding-poem.

The qualification of worldly desires by reference to a higher scale of values receives more direct treatment in 'Rycht as the sterne of day begouth to schyne'. For all that the poem uses some of the trappings of the courtly love allegory the condemnation of earthly love is severe. So long as Reason carries the shield with 'constance' the 'scharp assayes' do no harm, but when 'presence' (i.e. appearance, the immediate influence of the senses) throws powder in Reason's eyes there is no further defence. The poet is 'affrayit' by the 'sory sight' of reason that has lost its power of reasoning, that has become no better than a fool. Blinded Reason is banished to the 'bewis grene', i.e. relapses into a natural or non-rational state. It is only then that Beauty seems more beautiful, and the emphasis on mere appearance points the contrast with the previously clear eye of Reason. The insubstantiality of the pageant of worldly love is illustrated when, at a blast from Eolus' bugle, it vanishes, and its true habitat (the wilderness, the changeful natural world) is revealed (ll. 232-36). In The Pallice of Honour Douglas uses a very similar device to expose the illusion of Venus' court (ll. 484-85, 660-63, 1051-52).

The theme of the deceitful contrasts between appearance and reality, developed elaborately in 'Rycht as the sterne of day begouth to schyne', recurs throughout Dunbar's work and is one of the commonest means of expressing his

world view. We have seen many examples in his explicitly devotional poetry. It also appears frequently in his satires, e.g. against lawyers (the legal perversions in 'Ane murlandis man of uplandis mak') or courtiers (the rule of 'Blind Affectioun' in 'This hinder nycht, halff sleiping as I lay'). And of course it is one of the principal themes of the Tretis, subtly developed both throughout the overall structure of the poem and in many of the smallest details, where looking and seeming and countless forms of dissimulance mask the actual basic natural motives of the characters.

Quantitatively it is only in a small proportion of his work that Lindsay uses the sophisticated literary modes we find in The Thre Prestis of Pablis, Henryson's Fabillis, and in the major poems of Dunbar. In both the Dreme and the Complaynt, for example, literary devices are used primarily as an aid to polemic and instruction. In the former, the journey through hell, purgatory, limbo and the heavens is handled in rather a perfunctory manner, but the discovery of the clergy in hell allows Dame Remembrance to list their faults (e.g. Dreme, ll. 185-88, 190-96, 199-200, 209-10, 230-31). Similarly, in the Complaynt an imaginary description of the happy state of the land after James V, has come into his personal rule serves as another device for criticising the clergy - because all is now in good order, 'except the spiritualitie', and so their failings can again be enumerated (e.g. Complaynt, ll. 399-423).

In the Testament however there is more of an effective fable structure. Not much happens, by way of narrative, but what does happen is very apt for the kind of interpretation Lindsay wants us to accept. The first main action illustrating the opening 'sentence' is the fall of the papyngo and this serves as an example of the dangers of pride, of climbing too high, and enables Lindsay to point to particular historical instances of this universal truth - e.g. in his account of the troubles following Flodden (ll. 528-97). Having fallen, the papyngo can speak with authority and this then informs her epistles to James (ll. 227-345) and to her brothers at court (ll. 346-646). She is thus able to stress the mutability and inconstancy of earthly life by pointing to a 'mirror' - i.e. to the actual recent history of the Scottish court (e.g. ll. 521-24). The obvious contrast to the earthly court is the heavenly one (ll. 612-18), and hence Lindsay widens the total context within which the purely social secular criticism of the poem is made. The other main action of the poem, the attack on the papyngo's remains by her clerical executors, not only allows Lindsay to castigate the clergy for their shady dealings in the handling of wills and inheritances but also underlines the bestial nature of the predators, thus again showing the double scale of values he shares with all our other writers.

The narrative events of the Satyre are of course designed for stage performance and much of the allegorical

action is highly suited to this medium - e.g. the rebuttal of Chastity (as previously described in the Testament), or the back-to-front procession of the clergy. The basic doctrines, for the sake of propagating which the narrative is devised as a vehicle, are comparatively few and comparatively simple, and throughout his work Lindsay returns to them again and again. Such themes as the head/body analogy of the king's relations with his subjects, the contrast between singular profit and common wealth, the deceitfulness of worldly appearance as against spiritual reality, the inhumane condition of the poorer commons, and the basic duty of a king as a servant who owes his position to divine favour - all these themes were previously treated by Lindsay in the earlier works, and he returned to them, at even greater length, in the later Monarchie. As we have seen, he shares these themes with all the other writers discussed, with the important alteration of stress in that he gives much greater weight to the necessity of more just treatment for the commoners, and to the necessity of the king's regarding his function as that of an 'officer'.

Lindsay clearly regarded his work as having a direct polemical role in the political and religious debates of his time: he had doctrines to propagate and he used considerable skill in propagating them. Hence the relative simplicity, in the bulk of his work, of the connections he suggests between the historical/particular and the eternal/universal: in a manner which we seldom find in Henryson,

he set up his examples and models of the worldly context and of the spiritual context in a pattern that can be described as a one-to-one correspondence. To this extent his work approaches the nature of journalism (albeit of a high order) in a manner that hardly applies to the author of The Thre Prestis of Peblis, to Henryson, and (at their best) to Dunbar and Douglas. In such works, as we have seen many times, we are never offered a simple interpretation: on the basis of literary structures to whose details of imagery and narrative and character we can in the first instance respond at an immediate level, we are offered multiple and simultaneous interpretations. The tensions between these then generate our deeper responses.

BOOKS AND ARTICLES CONSULTED

- The Acts of the Parliament of Scotland, ed. T. Thomson (London, 1814).
- AITKEN, J.A., The Trial of George Buchanan (Edinburgh, 1939).
- AMOURS, F.J., ed., Scottish Alliterative Poems (S.T.S., 1897).
- ANDERSON, J.M., 'The Beginnings of St. Andrews University, 1410-18', The Scottish Historical Review, VIII (1911), 225-48, 333-60.
- AUGUSTINE, On Christian Doctrine, trans. D.W. Robertson (New York, 1958).
- BALFOUR, JAMES, The Annales of Scotland 1057-1603, Historical Works Vol. I (Edinburgh, 1824).
- The Bannatyne Manuscript, ed. W.T. Ritchie (S.T.S., 1928-34).
- BARBOUR, JOHN, The Bruce, ed. W.W. Skeat (S.T.S., 1894).
- BARCLAY, Shyp of Folyis, ed. T.H. Jamieson (Edinburgh and London, 1874).
- BARROW, G.W.S., Robert Bruce and the Community of the Realm of Scotland (London, 1965).
- BASTIN, J., Récueil general des Isopets (Société des Anciens Textes Français, Paris, 1930).
- BAUM, P.F., 'The Mare and the Wolf', Modern Language Notes, XXXVII (1922), 350-53.
- BAWCUTT, P., 'Gavin Douglas and Chaucer', Review of English Studies, ns 21 (Nov. 1970), 401-21.
- BAXTER, J.H., St. Andrews University before the Reformation (St. Andrews, 1927).
- BAXTER, J.W., William Dunbar, A Biographical Study (Edinburgh, 1952).
- BEATTIE, WILLIAM, The Chepman and Myllar Prints (Edinburgh, 1950).
- BELLENDEN: The Chronicles of Scotland, translated into Scots by John Bellenden (1531), edited by E.C. Batho and H.W. Husbands (S.T.S., 1938-41).
- BENNETT, J.A.W., 'The Early Fame of Gavin Douglas's Eneados', Modern Language Notes, LXI (1946), 83-88.

- BERGENROTH, G.A., ed., Calendar of Letters, Despatches, and State Papers relating to the negotiations between England and Spain, Vol. I (1485-1509) (London, 1862).
- BEVERIDGE, E., ed., Fergusson's Scottish Proverbs (S.T.S., 1924).
- Bibliographica Aberdonensis, ed. J.F.K. Johnstone and A.W. Robertson, (The Third Spalding Club, Aberdeen, 1929-30).
- BODIN, JEAN, Six livres de la republique (1577), Eng. ed. Richard Knolles (1606).
- BOECE, HECTOR, Murthlacensium et Aberdonensium episcopum vitae, ed. J. Moir (Aberdeen, 1894).
- BONE, G., 'The Source of Henryson's "Fox, Wolf, and Cadger"', Review of English Studies, 10 (1934), 319-20.
- BOWLE, J., Western Political Thought (London, 1947).
- BOYD, W., The History of Western Education (London, 1964 ed.).
- BUCHANAN, GEORGE, The History of Scotland, trans. and ed. J. Aikman (Glasgow, 1927).
- BURNS, J., 'The Scotland of John Major', The Innes Review, 11 (1951), 65-76.
- " 'John Ireland and The Meroure of Wyssdome', The Innes Review, VI (1955), 77-98.
- CALDERWOOD, D., The History of the Kirk of Scotland, ed. T. Thomson (The Wodrow Society, 1842).
- CARLYLE, R.W. and A.J., A History of Medieval Political Theory in the West (Edinburgh, 1903-36).
- CHAMBERS, E.K., The Medieval Stage (Oxford, 1903).
- CHAUCER, Works, ed. F.N. Robinson (Oxford, 2nd ed., 1957).
- Compota Thesauriorum Regum Scotorum, ed. J.B. Paul (Edinburgh, 1877-1902).
- COULTON, G.G., Scottish Abbeys and Social Life (Cambridge, 1933).
- CRAIGIE, W.A., ed., A Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue (Chicago and Oxford, 1937 onwards).

- CRANSTOUN, J., ed., Satirical Poems of the Time of the Reformation (S.T.S., 1890-93).
- CROWNE, D.K., 'A Date for the Composition of Henryson's Fables', Journal of English and Germanic Philology (1962), 583-90.
- CURTIUS, E.R., European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages (London, 1953).
- DEARING, BRUCE, 'Gavin Douglas' Eneados: a Reinterpretation', Publications of the Modern Language Association 67(I) (1952), 845-62.
- DICKINSON, W. CROFT, DONALDSON, G., and MILNE, I.A., A Source Book of Scottish History (Edinburgh, 1953).
- " Scotland from the Earliest Times to 1603 (Edinburgh, rev. ed. 1965).
- DICKSON, R., Introduction of the Art of Printing into Scotland (Aberdeen, 1885).
- " and EDMOND, J.P., Annals of Scottish Printing (Cambridge, 1890).
- DONALDSON, G., The Scottish Reformation (Cambridge, 1960).
- " Scotland, James V to James VII (Edinburgh, 1965).
- " Scottish Kings (London, 1967).
- DOUGLAS: Virgil's Aeneid, translated into Scottish Verse by Gavin Douglas, ed. D.F.C. Coldwell (S.T.S., 1957-64).
- " The Shorter Poems of Gavin Douglas, ed. P.J. Bawcutt (S.T.S., 1967).
- DOWDEN, J., The Medieval Church in Scotland (Glasgow, 1910).
- " The Bishops of Scotland, ed. J.M. Thomson (Glasgow, 1912).
- DRUMMOND OF HAWTHORNDEN, The History of Scotland from the year 1423 until the year 1542 (London, 1655).
- DUNBAR, WILLIAM, Poems, ed. J. Small, with notes and glossary by W. Gregor (S.T.S., 1893).
- " Poems, ed. W. Mackay Mackenzie (London, 1932).

- DUNCAN, D., 'Henryson's Testament of Cresseid', Essays in Criticism, II (1961), 128-35.
- DUNLOP, A.I., 'Scottish Student Life in the Fifteenth Century', The Scottish Historical Review, XXVI (1947), 47-63.
- " The Life and Times of James Kennedy (Edinburgh, 1950).
- DURKAN, JOHN, William Turnbull (Glasgow, 1951). (First printed in The Innes Review, II (1951)).
- " 'The Beginnings of Humanism in Scotland', The Innes Review, IV (1953), 5-17.
- " Scottish Universities in the Middle Ages 1413-1560 (unpublished Ph.D. thesis in the library of the University of Edinburgh, 1959).
- EARLE, JOHN, Microcosmography, ed. H. Osborne (London, n.d.).
- EASSON, D.E., Gavin Dunbar (Edinburgh, 1947).
- ELYOT, THOMAS, The Boke named The Governour, ed., H.H.S. Croft (London, 1880).
- Exchequer Rolls of Scotland, XI (1497-1501), ed. G. Burnett (Edinburgh, 1888).
- Fasti Aberdonensis, ed. Cosmo Innes (Aberdeen, 1854).
- FLEMING, D.H., The Reformation in Scotland (London, 1910).
- FOX, DENTON, 'The Chronology of William Dunbar', Philological Quarterly XXXIX (1960), 413-15.
- " 'Henryson's Fables', ELH (1962), 337-56.
- GAIRDNER, J., ed., Letters and Papers Illustrative of the Reigns of Richard III and Henry VII (Record Series, London, 1861-63).
- GIERKE, OTTO, Political Theories of the Middle Age, trans. F.W. Maitland (Cambridge, 1938).
- Gilbert of the Haye's Prose Manuscript (1456), ed. J.H. Stevenson (S.T.S., 1914).
- GRANT, I.F., The Social and Economic Development of Scotland before 1603 (Edinburgh, 1930).
- " Angus Og of the Isles (Edinburgh, 1969).

- GREGORY, D., History of the Western Highlands and Isles of Scotland (London, 1881).
- HALL, L.B., 'An Aspect of the Renaissance in Gavin Douglas' Eneados', Studies in the Renaissance, VII (1960), pp. 184-92.
- HANNAY, R.K., 'On the Foundation of the College of Justice', The Scottish Historical Review, XV (1918), 30-46.
- " 'On the Antecedents of the College of Justice', The Book of the Old Edinburgh Club, XI (1922), 87-123.
- " The Scottish Crown and the Papacy, 1424-1560 (The Historical Association of Scotland, New Series: No. 6, March 1931).
- " The Letters of James V, ed. D. Hay (Edinburgh, H.M.S.O., 1954).
- HARTH, S., 'Henryson Reinterpreted', Essays in Criticism, II (1961), 471-80.
- HARWARD, V., 'Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis Again', Studies in Scottish Literature, VII (1970), pp. 139-46.
- HARY, The Wallace, ed. M.P. McDiarmid (S.T.S., 1968).
- HAY (Archbishop), Catechism, ed. T. G. Law (Oxford, 1884).
- HENRYSON, Poems and Fables, ed. D. Laing (London, 1865).
- " Poems, ed. G. Gregory-Smith (S.T.S., 1906, 1908, 1914).
- " Poems and Fables, ed. H. Harvey Wood (Edinburgh, 1933).
- " Poems, ed. C. Elliott (Oxford, 1963).
- " The Testament of Cresseid, ed. D. Fox (London, 1968).
- HERVIEUX, LEOPOLD, ed., Les Fabulistes Latins depuis le siècle d'Auguste jusqu'à la fin du moyen âge: Eudes de Cheriton et Ses Derives (Paris, 1896).
- HOPE, A.D., A Midsummer Eve's Dream, Variations on a Theme by William Dunbar (Edinburgh and London, 1971).
- HUIZINGA, J., The Waning of the Middle Ages (London, 1924).
- HUME BROWN, History of Scotland (Cambridge, 1900).

- HYDE, I., 'Primary Sources and Associations of Dunbar's Aureate Imagery', Modern Language Review 51 (1956), 481-92.
- " 'Poetic Imagery: a point of comparison between Henryson and Dunbar', Studies in Scottish Literature, 11 (1964-65), 183-97.
- INNES, COSMO, Sketches of Early Scotch History (Edinburgh, 1861).
- IRELAND, JOHN, The Meroure of Wyssdome, Vol. I, ed. C. Macpherson (S.T.S., 1926); Vol. II ed. F. Quinn (S.T.S., 1965).
- JAMES VI, The Basilicon Doron, ed. J. Craigie (S.T.S., 1944).
- JAMIESON, I.A.W., The Poetry of Robert Henryson: a Study in the Uses of Source Material (unpublished Ph.D. thesis in the library of the University of Edinburgh, 1965).
- " 'Henryson's Fabillis: an Essay towards a Revaluation', Words, Wai-te-Ata Studies in English (Wellington, N.Z.), II (1966), 20-31.
- " 'A Further Source for Henryson's "Fabillis"', Notes and Queries (November, 1967), 403-5.
- " 'Henryson's Taill of the Wolf and the Wedder', Studies in Scottish Literature, VI (1969), 248-57.
- JAMIESON, JOHN, An Etymological Dictionary of the Scottish Language (Edinburgh, 1808).
- KEARNEY, HUGH, Science and Change 1500-1700 (London, 1971).
- KENNEDY: Quintin Kennedy (1520-1564): Two Eucharistic Tracts, ed. C.H. Kuipers (Nijmegen, 1964).
- KINGHORN, A.M., 'Scottish Historiography in the 14th Century, A New Introduction to Barbour's Bruce', Studies in Scottish Literature, VI (1969), 131-45.
- KINSLEY, J., ed., Scottish Poetry, A Critical Survey (London, 1955).
- KNOX: The Works of John Knox, ed. D. Laing (The Bannatyne Club, Edinburgh, 1846-95).
- " John Knox's History of the Reformation in Scotland, ed. W. Croft Dickinson (London, 1949).

- LAING, D., ed., The Miscellany of the Wodrow Society (Edinburgh, 1846).
- Lancelot of the Laik, ed. M.M. Gray, (S.T.S., 1912).
- LANGLAND, WILLIAM, The Vision of William concerning Piers the Plowman, ed. W.W. Skeat (Oxford, 1886, new ed. 1961).
- LATHROP, H.B., Translations from the Classics into English from Caxton to Chapman, Univ. Wis. Stud. in Lang. and Lit. (Madison, 1933).
- LESLIE, JOHN, The Historie of Scotland, trans. J. Dalrymple, ed. E.G. Cody and W. Murison (S.T.S., 1888-95).
- LESTER, J.A., 'Some Franco-Scottish Influences on the Early English Drama', in Haverford Essays (Haverford, Pa., 1909).
- LEWIS, C.S., English Literature in the Sixteenth Century (Oxford, 1954).
- " The Allegory of Love (Oxford, 1963 ed.).
- " The Discarded Image (Cambridge, 1964).
- Liber Pluscardensis, ed. F.J.H. Skene (The Historians of Scotland, Vol. VII, Edinburgh 1877).
- LINDSAY, SIR DAVID, Works, ed. D. Hamer (S.T.S., 1931, 1934, 1936).
- LIVINGSTONE, M., ed., Registrum secreti sigilli regum Scotorum (Edinburgh, 1908).
- LYDGATE, JOHN, The Pilgrimage of the Life of Man, ed. J. Furnivall (Roxburgh Club Publications, London, 1905).
- " Fall of Princes, ed. H. Bergen (E.E.T.S., 1924-27).
- " The Minor Poems, Part II - Secular Poems, ed. H.N. MacCracken (E.E.T.S., 1934).
- MACDONALD, D., 'Narrative Art in Henryson's Fables, Studies in Scottish Literature, III (1965), 101-13.
- " 'Chaucer's Influence on Henryson's Fables: the use of proverbs and sententiae', Medium Aevum, 39 (I), 21-27.
- MACKENZIE, A.M., An Historical Survey of Scottish Literature to 1714 (London, 1933).

- MACKIE, R.L., Scotland (London, 1916).
- " King James IV of Scotland (Edinburgh, 1958).
- MACQUEEN, JOHN, 'Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis', Studies in Scottish Literature, III (1966), 129-43.
- " Robert Henryson, A Study of the Major Narrative Poems (Oxford, 1967).
- " 'Some Aspects of the Early Renaissance in Scotland', Forum for Modern Language Studies, III (1967), 201-22.
- " 'Alexander Scott and Scottish Court Poetry of the middle sixteenth century', Proceedings of the British Academy 54, 1968, 93-116.
- " Ballatis of Luve (Edinburgh, 1970).
- MICROBERTS, D., ed., Essays on the Scottish Reformation, 1513-1625 (Glasgow, 1962).
- Maitland Folio Manuscript, ed. W.A. Craigie (S.T.S., 1919, 1927).
- MAJOR, JOHN, Historia Majoris Britanniae, trans. A. Constable (Scottish History Society, 1892).
- Makculloch and the Gray MSS, Pieces from the, ed. G. Stevenson (S.T.S., 1918).
- MARX, KARL, Capital, ed. F. Engels, trans. S. Moore and E. Aveling (London, 1961).
- MILL, A.J., 'The Influence of the Continental Drama on Lindsay's Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis', Modern Language Review XXV (1930), 425-42.
- " 'Representations of Lyndsay's Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis', Publications of the Modern Language Association, 47 (1932), 641-45.
- " 'The Original Version of Lindsay's Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis', Studies in Scottish Literature, VI (1968), 67-75.
- MOHL, RUTH, The Three Estates in Medieval and Renaissance Literature (New York, 1933).
- MORE, THOMAS, Utopia, ed. G. Sampson, trans. R. Robyson (London, 1914).
- MORRIS, R. ed., Old English Homilies (E.E.T.S., 1867).

- MUIR, EDWIN, Essays on Literature and Society (London, 1949).
- Munimenta Universitatis Glasguensis, ed. Cosmo Innes (Maitland Club, 1854).
- MURISON, W., Sir David Lindsay (Cambridge, 1938).
- MURRAY, A.L., The Exchequer and Crown Revenue of Scotland, 1437-1542 (unpublished thesis in the library of the University of Edinburgh, 1961).
- MURRAY, J.A.H., ed., The Complaynt of Scotlande (E.E.T.S., 1872).
- NEILSON, W.A., 'The Original of The Complaynt of Scotlande', Journal of English and Germanic Philology, I (1897), 411-30.
- NICHOLS, P.H., 'William Dunbar as a Scottish Lydgatian', Publications of the Modern Language Association, 46 (1931), 214-24.
- " 'Lydgate's Influence on the Aureate Terms of the Scottish Chaucerians', Publications of the Modern Language Association, 47 (1932), 516-22.
- OWST, G.R., Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England (Cambridge, 1933).
- Papal Negotiations with Mary Queen of Scots, ed. J.H. Pollen (Scottish History Society, 1901).
- PETER, J., Complaint and Satire in Early English Literature (Oxford, 1956).
- PINKERTON, JOHN, The History of Scotland from the Accession of the House of Stewart to that of Mary (London, 1797).
- PITSCOTTIE, ROBERT LINDESAY OF, The Historie and Chronicles of Scotland, ed. A.J.G. Mackay (S.T.S., 1899).
- POOLE, R.L., Chronicles and Annals: a brief outline of their origin and growth (Oxford, 1926).
- RAE, THOMAS, Andrew Myllar (Greenock, 1958).
- RAE, THOMAS I., The Administration of the Scottish Frontier, 1513-1603 (Edinburgh, 1966).
- RASHDALL, H., The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages, ed. F.M. Powicke/A.B. Emden (Oxford, 1936).
- and
Regiam Majestatem, ed. T.M. Cooper (The Stair Society, 1947).

- REID, W. STANFORD, 'Clerical Taxation: the Scottish Alternative to Dissolution of the Monasteries, 1530-1560', The Catholic Historical Review, XXXV (1948), 129-53.
- RICHARDINUS, ROBERTUS, Commentary on the rule of St. Augustine, ed. G.G. Coulton (Scottish History Society, 1935).
- RIGG, A.G., 'William Dunbar: "The Fenyeit Freir"', Review of English Studies ns (s2) XIV (1963), pp.269-73.
- ROBERTSON, D.W., A Preface to Chaucer (Princeton, 1962).
- ROWLANDS, MARY, 'The Fables of Robert Henryson', Dalhousie Review, 39 (1960), 491-502.
- " 'Robert Henryson and the Scottish Courts of Law', Aberdeen University Review, 39 (1961), 219-26.
- St. Andrews Formulare, ed. G. Donaldson and C. Macrae (The Stair Society, 1942-44).
- SCHEP, WALTER, 'The Thematic Unity of Lancelot of the Laik', Studies in Scottish Literature, V (1968), 167-75.
- SCHIRMER, W.F., John Lydgate (London, 1961).
- SCOTT, ALEXANDER, Poems, ed. J. Cranstoun (S.T.S., 1896).
- SCOTT, TOM, Dunbar, A Critical Exposition of the Poems, (Edinburgh, 1966).
- SKEAT, W.W., ed., Early English Proverbs (Oxford, 1910).
- " 'The Author of "Lancelot of the Laik"', The Scottish Historical Review, VIII (1911), 1-4.
- SMITH, J.M., The French Background of Middle Scots Literature (Edinburgh, 1934).
- SPEARING, A.C., Criticism and Medieval Poetry (London, 1964).
- SPIERS, JOHN, The Scots Literary Tradition (London, rev. ed. 1962).
- Statutes of the Scottish Church 1225-1559, ed. D. Patrick (Scottish History Society, 1907).
- STEARNS, M.W., Robert Henryson (New York, 1949).
- THEINER, A., Vetera Monumenta hibernorum et Scotorum historiam illustrantia (Rome, 1864).

- Thirds of Benefices, 1561-1572, ed. G. Donaldson (Scottish Historical Society, 1949).
- The Thre Prestis of Peblis, ed. T.D. Robb (S.T.S., 1920).
- TILLOTSON, G., Essays in Criticism and Research (Cambridge, 1942).
- TILLYARD, E.M.W., Five Poems, 1470-1870 (London, 1948).
- " The Miltonic Setting (London, 1961).
- TOLIVER, H.E., 'Robert Henryson: From Moralitas to Irony', English Studies, XLVI (1965), 300-9.
- VERGIL, POLYDORÉ, Anglia Historia, ed. D. Hay (Camden Series, LXXIV, 1950).
- VOGEL, B., 'Secular Politics and the Date of Lancelot of the Laik', Studies in Philology, XL (1943), 1-13.
- The Vulgate Version of the Arthurian Romances, ed. H.O. Sommer (Washington, 1910).
- WILLOCK, J.D., The Origins and Development of the Jury in Scotland (The Stair Society, 1966).
- WINYET, NINIAN, Certain Tractates, ed. J.K. Hewison (S.T.S., 1888-91).
- WITTIG, KURT, The Scottish Tradition in Literature (Edinburgh, 1958).