

1973

The visible and speaking shewes that bring vice into detestation : homiletic propaganda and Barnabe Barnes' The divils charter.

Bryan F. S. Rivers
University of Windsor

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"THE VISIBLE AND SPEAKING SHEWES THAT BRING VICE INTO
DETESTATION": HOMILETIC PROPAGANDA AND
BARNABE BARNES' THE DIVILS CHARTER

BY

BRYAN F.S. RIVERS

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies through the
Department of English in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts at the
University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario

1973

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines The Divils Charter in two ways. It discusses the play in the context of the evolution of sixteenth century English drama. It also attempts a close evaluation of Barnes' dramatic abilities and the general merits of the play.

Chapter I discusses the evolution of the History play from the earlier Miracle and Morality play traditions. It demonstrates that the History play was didactic in intention and, with the advent of the Reformation, came to be used as a vehicle for anti-Catholic propoganda. The Divils Charter is examined in the light of this evolution, and it is demonstrated that Barnes was writing in a well established tradition of anti-Catholic didactic drama.

Chapter II examines the source of the play, Geoffrey Fenton's Historie of Guicciardin. It examines the adverse impression of the Borgias given by this work and demonstrates that Barnes, not having to create original material, merely set about to re-interpret didactically a well known set of historical facts.

Chapter III examines the manner in which Barnes set about re-interpreting portions of the Historie, and

discusses the varying degrees of success with this endeavour

Chapters IV and V examine Barnes' own original contributions to the play. Chapter IV discusses the character of Lucretia Borgia which Barnes did not derive from the Historie. Chapter V discusses the accomplices Frescobaldi, Baglioni, Rotsi and Bernardo, and the general tradition of the villainous accomplice on the Elizabethan stage.

Chapter VI deals with the influence of Seneca and Machiavelli on The Devils Charter in particular, and on Elizabethan drama in general. It discusses Alexander VI as a descendant of the Senecan tyrant and the "Machiavellian" villain.

Chapter VII discusses the use of magic in the play. Magic is used for spectacularly visual effects; it is also used to emphasize the theme of damnation and the dangers of a pact with the Devil.

The basic premise of this thesis is that the play is not a dramatic whole but a series of individual scenes, each designed to impart its own moral lesson. Consequently, some scenes are successful, but others fail. This lack of unity within the play leads to a marked fluctuation in its quality, but the continual aim of the work is to attack the depravity of the Catholic Church in particular, and to demonstrate in general the punishment of sin.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am pleased to express my deep gratitude to the following persons who contributed toward the completion of this thesis: Dr. J.F.Sullivan, who offered me the Teaching Assistantship which enabled me to come to Canada and continue my studies; Dr. W.J.Temelini, who gave very helpful advice on the chapter concerning Machiavelli, and whose enthusiasm for the topic encouraged me to continue; Dr. S.S.Stollman, who kindly accepted the position of second reader on my committee at short notice; Mr.V. Zolobka and the staff of the Interlibrary Loan Service, without whose assistance and expertise I would never have been able to obtain much of the essential source material for my work.

I wish to thank especially Dr. Henry Janzen, my director, who, with the patience of Job, read all my rough drafts. His sound advice and powers of self-control were greatly appreciated.

Finally, I wish to thank Peter and Judy Sturgeon who took me into their home for the Summer, and provided me with food and encouragement. Without their many kindnesses this thesis could never have been completed.

INTRODUCTION

There exist only three editions of The Devils Charter. The first was produced in 1904, by R.B.McKerrow. It was published in the series Materialien zur Kunde des älteren Englischen Dramas.¹ This edition has good notes and an excellent introduction dealing with the sources of the play. The second edition was produced in 1913, by John S.Farmer. It is a facsimile reproduction of one particular copy of the play, and is devoid of notes or introduction.² The third, most recent edition, is by J.C.Pogue.³ This is by far the superior text, being a collation of eleven separate copies, with good notes and introduction. This edition is a doctoral dissertation for the University of Missouri, submitted in 1964. Since this edition is not published, and therefore unavailable to the general reader, I have used the better of the printed editions, that by R.B.McKerrow.

Only two studies of the author, Barnabe Barnes, have been written. The standard biographical essay is "Barnabe

1 Series I, Vol. VI (Louvain, 1904; rpt. Vaduz, 1963). Footnoted hereafter as "McKerrow."

2 The Tudor Facsimile Texts, No.121. (London, 1913; rpt. New York, 1970).

3 "The Devil's Charter: A Critical Edition," PhD diss., University of Missouri, 1964.

Barnes" by Mark Eccles.⁴ His essay is frequently cited in this thesis. The reader is also referred to a similarly titled essay by Madeleine Hope Dodds.⁵ This is an inferior study which adds nothing to the information supplied by Mark Eccles, and I have not made use of it.

Critical commentary on the play is virtually non-existent. Where appropriate I have cited certain references to The Divils Charter which appear in various general studies. That there has been no previous in-depth criticism of the play is not surprising. The editions of both Farmer and McKerrow were, before their reprinting, virtually unobtainable. In addition, Barnes is an obscure figure, and The Divils Charter is the only play attributed to him. The play does merit attention, however, for historical and literary reasons.

⁴ In Thomas Lodge and Other Elizabethans, ed. Charles J. Sisson (Cambridge, 1933; rpt. New York, 1966), pp. 167-241. Footnoted hereafter as "Eccles."

⁵ "Barnabe Barnes," in Archaeologia Aeliana, 4th. Series, XXIV (1946), pp. 1-59.

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CHAPTER I

THE DIVILS CHARTER: A QUESTION OF GENRE

Before initiating a critical discussion of The Divils Charter, it is necessary to establish criteria by which to judge the play. It is also essential to appreciate the motives underlying the writing of the work. Barnes was a Protestant, the son of a bishop. He wrote the play specifically for James I, a Protestant monarch. His source was Geoffrey Fenton's Historie of Guicciardin, an accurate historical account of the period during which the Borgias flourished. However, since the play was written from an anti-Catholic viewpoint, for a Protestant monarch, one is not surprised to find a biased re-interpretation of historical fact.

The Divils Charter is primarily a piece of anti-Catholic propaganda, depicting the depravity of the Borgia family. The play attacks the Catholic Church, but also didactically demonstrates the punishment of sin in general. This chapter discusses The Divils Charter as an example of didactic historical drama, a genre which evolved during the sixteenth

century.

The Divils Charter must be viewed as a series of individual scenes, each designed to illustrate a particular moral lesson. This episodic structure was derived from the medieval Miracle play, which Irving Ribner characterized as "virtually plotless in its simple presentation of incidents," with "little attempt to relate one incident to the next."¹ Ribner maintains that the Morality play was also a formative influence, and that

The history play in its highest form emerged from the moralityThe morality play structure was a perfect vehicle for executing the true historical function, for the morality was didactic and symbolic, designed to communicate idea rather than fact.²

In The Divils Charter, to apply Ribner's argument, both Miracle and Morality influences are present. The structure of the play stems from the Miracle, but the intention and overall effect derive from the Morality.

History plays naturally tended to present biased interpretations of events. The English playwright was bound to avoid material which adversely depicted England and its monarchy. With the advent of the Reformation the Morality

¹ The English History Play in the Age of Shakespeare (Princeton, 1957), p.30.

² Ibid., p.31.

play provided an ideal weapon with which to promulgate the Protestant cause. Jesse W. Harris, in his book John Bale, makes the point that

It is only natural that such an effective agency of propaganda, as the stage should be adapted to practical use by the party of the New Learning. Bale happened to be the man who led the way in the work of fitting the old drama to new ends. 3

Bale was writing in the first half of the sixteenth century. Harris points out that in the play, King John (1538), Bale "introduced historical subject matter and historical personages into the morality framework."4 Bale, a Protestant bishop, became the first known playwright of the Protestant cause, utilizing the old Morality play structure for politically didactic ends, and replacing the abstract Vice with figures emblematic of Catholic doctrine.

Barnes, as the son of a Protestant bishop, may be viewed as writing in an already established tradition of anti-Catholic drama. Certainly Barnes was familiar with the writings of John Bale;5 indeed, Barnes' attack on the Catholic Church is extremely reminiscent of the earlier Bale propaganda. In Bale's King John, the English monarch speaks:

3 (Urbana, 1940), p.99.

4 Ibid., p.130.

5 See Chapter IV.

Of bloody Babylon, the ground and mother of
whoredom--
The Romish Church I mean-- more vile than
ever was Sodom;
And, to say the truth, a meet spouse for the
fiend.⁶

Barnes' Prologue to The Divils Charter which bids the audience:

Behold the Strumpet of proud Babylon,
Her cup with fornication foaming full
Of Gods high wrath and vengeance for that euill,
Which was imposd vpon her by the Diuill.

(Prologue.7-10)

is strikingly similar in tone and sentiment.

Bale readily associated Catholicism with the vice of
sodomy. In his play, Three Laws, the Vice Sodomismus relates
his conquests in the world. He describes how:

In Rome to me they fall,
Both bishop and cardinal,
Monk, friar, priest, and all.⁷

This seems to have been a stock accusation against the
Catholic clergy, since in The Divils Charter, Alexander is
accused of sodomy. The charges in Barnes' play, if not derived
directly from Bale, at least stand in the tradition of anti-
Catholic drama which evolved during the sixteenth century.

Rainer Pineas, in his article "The English Morality

⁶ The Dramatic Writings of John Bale, ed. John S. Farmer
(London: Early English Drama Society, 1907; rpt. New York,
1966), p.190.

⁷ Ibid., p.23.

Play as a Weapon of Religious Controversy," demonstrates how readily the Morality play was adapted as a vehicle for Protestant propaganda. He points out that:

The evilness of the Vice was an established tradition; the audience was trained to mistrust and condemn anyone playing that role. And so there remained only one task: to demonstrate that the Vice was a Catholic and then to illustrate the evil nature of Catholicism by having its proponent, the Vice, play the evil part convention had already established for him in the old morality. ⁸

All that was required was a change of emphasis. As Pineas points out, "where the old play warned its audience against errors of conduct, the new play, for the most part, warned its audience against errors of theology--namely, Catholicism."⁹

This technique is admirably demonstrated by Barnes' depiction of Pope Alexander. As head of the Catholic Church the Pope is an abstraction of the faults of the Catholic religion. His vicious and dissipated life brings disrepute not only on himself, but also on the Catholic Church.

The Morality play slowly evolved into the fully developed Elizabethan tragedy. As part of this evolution the

⁸ Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900, II (Spring, 1962) p.169.

⁹ Ibid., p.165.

Vice developed gradually to become the villain-hero or tyrant of late sixteenth and early seventeenth century tragedy. David Boughner makes the interesting point that the Morality figure of Herod was part of this evolution. He states that "Herod...came down into the Renaissance a serious personage, arrogant, threatening, bloodthirsty, and violent--the native forerunner, not of the foolish boaster, but of the Senecan villain."¹⁰ Alexander, as a corrupt ruler set against the teachings of God, stems partly from the Herod of medieval drama.

In his work From 'Mankind' to Marlowe, David Bevington also discusses the evolution from Morality play to Elizabethan tragedy. He maintains that for the process to succeed, specifically identifiable characters had to emerge, and that as a result "the popular theater had to adjust its world of moral and social abstractions to include specific historical personalities and legendary heroes."¹¹

Bernard Spivack, in his book Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil, discusses this evolution of the Morality Vice. He points out that the Elizabethan dramatist often

¹⁰ The Braggart in Renaissance Comedy (Minneapolis, 1954), p.140.

¹¹ (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1962), p.169.

...adapted chronicle, biography, ready-made story, or pre-existing play to his own purpose, [and] the role of the Vice is sheathed within the career and character of a person already formulated by history, legend, or art.¹²

Spivack accurately pinpoints the weakness of this hybrid character. The resulting amalgamation wavers between abstract Vice and human villain without satisfactorily fulfilling either role. Spivack explains that the resulting characterization fails because,

From one moment to the next, and even from one word to the next, these two interwoven aspects of the single figure change him from an imitation of human life into an allegorical pageant, and back again.¹³

Madeleine Doran echoes this criticism. Speaking of the drama of the period 1560-70, she states that "story and allegory run along side by side, sometimes without essential connection" and that as a result "there is likely to be a hesitation of emphasis between story and moral."¹⁴

The criticisms of Spivack and Doran summarize one of the main flaws of The Divils Charter. The characterization of Alexander wavers between abstract Vice and convincing human villain. Such lines as:

12 (New York, 1958), p.338.

13 Ibid., p.358.

14 Endeavors of Art (Madison, 1964), pp.101-102.

Nay such prophane and monstrous Sodomie,
 Such obscure Incest and Adultery,
 Such odious Auarice and perfidie,
 Such vinolence and brutish gluttony,
 So barren of sincere integritie.

(I.ii.159-63)

tend to emphasize the Vice origins of Alexander as the personification of sin. However, his obvious concern for his sons, his passion for Astor Manfredi, and his anguished reaction to the deaths of Candia and Gismond Viselli give him a contrasting human quality. Practically all the other characters in the play can be subject to the same criticism. They are more representative of moral qualities than fully developed individuals. The tragic potential of the play is totally subjected to the dramatist's didactic intention.

Although the villain-hero was a relatively recent development on the stage, he was treated in the old medieval didactic manner. W.A. Armstrong admirably sums up the result:

The terrible fate of tyrants is a pre-eminent example of the computative justice which so many Protestant moralists of the Renaissance believed to operate in human affairs....To these moralists, poetic justice was not a matter of chance but the inevitable and consistent result of the operation of God's will upon the terrestrial stuff of existence.¹⁵

Armstrong also illustrates the manner in which the usurping

¹⁵ "The Elizabethan Conception of the Tyrant," Review of English Studies, XXII (July, 1946), 175-6.

tyrant became associated with the Devil:

Lucifer was the first great example of aspiring pride,...correspondingly, the Elizabethans' condemnation of the tyrant is coloured by the religious revulsion with which they contemplated the enormities of Anti-Christ.¹⁶

These two aspects of the stage tyrant are reflected in the depiction of Pope Alexander. He is a Vice figure reminiscent of Herod as the corrupt and irreligious ruler. He is also the usurping tyrant, having bribed his way to the Papacy. The association of Alexander with the Devil is an obvious aspect of his character. He is frequently referred to in the play as "Anti-Christ."

The episodic and didactic nature of homiletic drama presents structural problems when one attempts to view the play as a whole. Willard Farnham points out that

Even when there is some disposition to moralize the fall of ambition as a well-deserved retribution, there is nothing but the most rudimentary dramatic process of linking character and event.¹⁷

Nor does homiletic tragedy necessarily entail the triumph of virtue. Johannes Bastiaenen, while admitting the didactic function of Elizabethan tragedy, points out that this

...does not imply that virtue always meets with its due reward, and crime with its proper punishment.

¹⁶ Armstrong, p.180.

¹⁷ The Medieval Heritage of English Tragedy (Oxford, 1956), p.390.

There is, in tragedy, hardly any strict moral justice for the virtuous. Destiny ruthlessly plays its part and sweeps the good and the bad alike irresistibly before it. But there is, on the whole, fit retribution for the criminal.¹⁸

This is precisely the structure of The Devils Charter. The "good" characters are Gismond Viselli, the Manfredi brothers, and Candia Borgia, who are all killed. One must assume that their reward is in heaven. In the play they exist only to provide a contrast with the villains and to illustrate the virtuous manner of living.

D.J. Palmer admirably summarizes the moral intention of Elizabethan tragedies, which he claims attempt

...to illustrate several lessons at once, by incorporating within their actions a whole series of tragic catastrophes, each with its own significance. From this point of view, therefore, the most appropriate kind of tragic hero for the Elizabethan dramatist was the figure whose progress through the play would involve as many other characters as possible, so providing opportunities for emphasising a maximum number of moral lessons. The better playwrights, of course, managed to reconcile this taste for multiplicity with dramatic unity, but it did frequently produce inconsistent characterisation of the hero, and it certainly complicated the treatment of good and evil, since one man's crime was often another's just desert.¹⁹

¹⁸ The Moral Tone of Jacobean and Caroline Drama (1930, no place of publication given; rpt. New York, 1966), p.158.

¹⁹ "Elizabethan Tragic Heroes," in Elizabethan Theatre, ed. John Brown and Bernard Harris, Stratford-Upon-Avon Studies, IX (London, 1966), p.11.

The Divils Charter conforms exactly to this format. Alexander drags down the whole Borgia family by his pernicious example. It is a main characteristic of the play that one man's crime is often the unwitting punishment of another's villainy. Each death is designed to illustrate a moral. Alexander dies through ambition, Lucretia through lust and pride, the accomplices through avarice. Each death is in effect a moral exemplum on the reward of sin.

In his book The Villain as Hero in Elizabethan Tragedy, Clarence Boyer briefly mentions The Divils Charter. He states that:

Our emotions in recalling the play, or even when reading it, are singularly untragic; the absence of causal sequence between actions is fatal.... A sense of the inevitableness of the catastrophe, so essential to tragedy, is wanting.²⁰

Boyer is correct when he stresses the absence of unity between scenes. However, his consequent criticism of the play as lacking a sense of inevitability is based on inappropriate criteria. It was not Barnes' intention to write a dramatically unified tragedy. Guicciardine in his role as chorus for the play sums up the moral aims of The Divils Charter when, at the end of Act IV, Scene v, he describes the coming action as "the visible and speaking shewes, That bring vice into detestation" (1697-8). One must view

²⁰ (New York, 1964), p. 186.

The Divils Charter not as a dramatic whole, but as a series of individual scenes, each designed to illustrate a particular moral lesson.

That Barnes chose to use Guicciardine as the chorus of the play is in itself a good indication of his didactic intention. As Muriel Bradbrook points out in her book The Growth and Structure of Elizabethan Comedy:

When a popular drama is introduced by some ancient authority as Presenter--Gower in Pericles, Skelton in Munday's Downfall and Death of Robert Earl of Huntingdon and Higden in The Mayor of Queenborough - this indicates that history is being used as a series of examples for the present age.²¹

Barnes, as we have seen, was writing in a tradition of homiletic tragedy and anti-Catholic propaganda. He was not a great dramatist and The Divils Charter is not great tragedy. Whether it was a success is impossible to ascertain. Barnes did, however, have the overwhelming advantage of preaching to the converted. The play was performed before James I, and its anti-Catholic tone was evidently condoned, or the play would not have been produced.

One last point remains to be established regarding the play: the reason for its production. Obviously something had occurred to produce an anti-Catholic climate at court

21 (London, 1963), p. 124.

and The Divils Charter was written to pander to this climate. Alfred Harbage's Annals of English Drama lists another virulently anti-Catholic work, Dekker's Whore of Babylon, as having been produced in the preceding year, 1606.²²

Probably this was in response to the wave of anti-Catholic feeling following the discovery of the "Gunpowder Plot."

However, The Divils Charter comes some two years after this discovery. Perhaps the answer lies in the fact that the play was written for the entertainment of James I.

In his book The Political Works of James I, Charles McIlwain points out that:

Probably three-fourths of the systematic political writings of James I consist of a defense of the one administrative measure of his which really went beyond the methods and purposes of Elizabeth's ministers in dealing with this Catholic problem, the Oath of Allegiance. ²³

This thesis is not concerned with the political writings of James I. Suffice it to say that the Oath of Allegiance was dear to James' heart. It must therefore have come as a blow both to his pride and to his status at court, when, on September 22, 1606, Pope Paul V ordered English Catholics "under no circumstances to take the oath cum multa contineat,"

²² (London, 1964), p.90.

²³ (New York, 1965), p.xlix.

quae fidei, & saluti aperte adversantur."²⁴

The Divils Charter was produced some five months later. There are no known details of its composition, but if the play were commissioned as a result of anti-Catholic feeling at court, following this Catholic stratagem, five months would not be an unreasonable period for its writing, rehearsal, and production.

However, this is speculation. The play exists in its own right and merits attention as such. It stands in the mainstream of several English dramatic traditions. What must be borne in mind at all times is that the play is a series of moral exempla rather than a dramatic whole. It was written by a man who was well educated and whose family held high Protestant ecclesiastic offices. It is not a great play, but in many ways it is typical of the drama and thought of its age.

²⁴ McIlwain, p.lix.

CHAPTER II

GEOFFREY FENTON'S HISTORIE OF GUICCIARDIN: THE TENOR OF THE
SOURCE FOR THE DIVILS CHARTER

When Barnes came to write The Divils Charter he took as his main source Geoffrey Fenton's Historie of Guicciardin. This chapter discusses the manner in which Guicciardine's work came to be translated into English, and the impression of the Borgia family derived from that translation.

The first sixteen books of Guicciardine's work, La Historia di Italia, were published in Florence in 1561, twenty-one years after his death. An additional four books were subsequently published at Venice in 1564. Using one of these Italian editions, Jerome Chomedy translated the work into French in 1568, with the title Historie des guerres d'Italie. This work was reprinted in 1568. Geoffrey Fenton, using one of these French translations, rendered the work into English in 1579. His translation, The Historie of Guicciardin, was the first vernacular text of Guicciardine's work available in England. Fenton's translation was reprinted with additions in 1599 and 1618.

There is ample evidence that Barnes used Fenton's translation. In his introduction to the play, R.B. McKerrow states that the use of Guicciardine as a chorus is a good indication of the source. He maintains that "It is natural to suppose that Barnes would make use of the English translation rather than the Italian original, and this seems to have been the case."¹ He substantiates this assertion by pointing to Barnes' use of place names which occur only in Fenton's translation, and not in the Italian original.

In addition, there is ample evidence within The Divils Charter of Barnes' use of Fenton's work. The whole of Act II, Scene i, is taken more or less verbatim from the Historie, both in the depiction of the scene and in the terms of the agreement reached between Alexander VI and King Charles of France. Other scenes, as will be discussed later, are dramatic re-interpretations of events described in the Historie.

It is not the intention of this thesis to investigate the accuracy of Fenton's translation. It is useful, however, to examine the description of the Borgias and Alexander given in the Historie.

Guicciardine's work covers a period of forty years of

¹ McKerrow, p.vi.

Italian politics. The Borgias appear, enact their parts, and disappear, as participants in the general ebb and flow of family and political factions. Alexander and his family are enveloped by an aura of evil. This, however, is derived more from the moral commentaries on their actions, than from any particularly biased narration of historical fact. As Irving Ribner points out in his book The English History Play in the Age of Shakespeare, the Elizabethans inherited the medieval attitude to history which "treated history as above all the illustration of the working out of God's judgement on human affairs."² This outlook saw in history "an intelligible and rational pattern which was inevitably good and which always affirmed the justice of God."³ The actions of the Borgias are the subject of many adverse moral comments in the Historie, which is much concerned with the disparity between the theoretically ideal moral example required of a Pope and the actual immoral and dissipated life of Alexander VI. As Rudolf Gottfried points out, "The skeptical intelligence of Guicciardini describes the avarice of the Roman clergy; it is Fenton, the moralist, who compares.

² Ribner, p.22.

³ Ibid.

their avarice to the ideal it violates."⁴

The Historie is much concerned with the nature of ambition. It is characterized as a corrupting force which "abuseth thimaginationes of men, that it makes them seeme able to hold those things which they can not gripe, & raiseth their mynds to concieue matters aboue their power or possibilitie."⁵ The fall of princes is seen as the just reward for unbridled avarice. After an accurate historical narration of events there is often a moral commentary interpreting them as the just punishment of earlier evil deeds.

The first mention of Alexander comes near the beginning of the Historie. It is a good example of the blend of factual historical narrative, discussion of motive, and moral commentary, typical of the work. The subject is the election of Alexander to the Papacy. It is stated that he:

...bought by the consent & knowledge of euery-
one, partly for money, and partly with promises
of offices and great dignities, many voyces of
the Cardinals, who reiecting thinstruction of the
Gospell, were not ashamed to passe to him by
sale, an authoritie and power to make marchandize
of the holy treasures, & that with the name of

⁴ Geoffrey Fenton's 'Historie of Guicciardin,' Indiana University Publications, Humanities Series III (Urbana, 1940), p.21.

⁵ Geoffrey Fenton, Historie of Guicciardin (London, 1579), p.304. All subsequent quotations are from this edition.

the celestiall authority.⁶

Alexander himself is described as having

...a sotteltie, sharpenes, and expedition of witte most singular, a counsell excellent, a wonderfull efficacie in perswasion, and in all great affayres a iudgement and care incredible. But these vertues were maruelously defaced by his vices, for, touching his manners and customes, they were very dishonest, in his administrations he expressed litle sinceritie, in his countenance no shame, in his wordes small trueth, in his hart litle faith, and in his opinion lesse religion. Of the contrary, all his actions were defiled with an insatiable couetousnes, an immoderate ambicion, a barbarous crueltie, and a burning desire to rayse and make greate (by what meanes so euer) his children...and amongst others, one, [Cesare Borgia] no lesse detestable then the father, to whose cursed counsell he became a wicked instrument. ⁷

Important here is the balanced treatment of Alexander's abilities. He is described as a man of great ability, led astray by his vices. Although Alexander gained the Papacy by bribery, this action is treated more as an indication of the overall corruption of the college of Cardinals than as an instance of transcending corruption on the part of Alexander. The manner of his election is as much a judgement on the Papacy in general as on Alexander in particular.

The passage does, however, move like a sermon to a climactic declamation against the vices of Alexander and

⁶ Fenton, p.4.

⁷ Ibid., p.5.

Cesare Borgia. It is impossible to ignore the cumulative effect of such adjectives as "insatiable," "immoderate," "barbarous," "detestable," "cursed," and "wicked." The calumny heaped upon Alexander in his first appearance in the Historie cannot but prejudice the reader against him. The description of father and son as "cursed counsels" and "wicked instrument" exemplifies the depiction of their relationship throughout the work. It is evident that to anyone who had read the Historie, Barnes' portrayal of the Borgias would not appear unusual or biased. Indeed, the duplicity of the Borgias was so generally acknowledged that it was "a prouerbe ordinarie in Rome, that the Pope neuer did that which he saide, and the Duke seldome spake that which hee ment."⁸

The most damning description of the Borgias is given in the narration of the events surrounding the death of the Duke of Candia, Alexander's eldest son. It is stated that Alexander:

...was nothing troubled with those thinges that offended his honor, so that his profits or pleasures were nothinge hindered: yet he could not auoyde the secret iustice of God, expressed in domesticall miseries, troubling his house with examples tragicall, and a whordom and crueltie horrible aboue all the barbarous regions:

⁸ Fenton, p.305.

for where he had determined from the beginning of his election pontificall, to appropriat all tēporall greatnes to the Duke of Candia his eldest sonne: the Cardinall of Valence (who altogether estraunged from priesthood, aspired to the exercise of armes) hauing no patience to suffer that place to be vsurped by his brother, & enuying withall that he had better part then he in the loue of Madonne Lucrecia their common sister: inflamed with lust, and with ambicion (mighty ministers to all mischiefs) caused him to be killed one night as he rode alone in the streetes of Rome, casting his bodye secretly in the riuer of Tyber: The brute was (if such an enormitie be worthy to be beleued) that in the loue of Mad. Lucrecia were concurrant, not onely the two brethren, but also the father, who when he was chosen Pope, taking her from her husband being inferior to her degree, he married her to Iohn Sforce, Lorde of Pesere: And afterwards, not able to suffer her husband to be his corriual, he made dissolution of the mariage already consomated, hauing made prooffe, before Iudges & delegats of his owne creacion, by witnesses subborned & afterwards confirmed by apostolicall sentence, that her husband was imperfect in the operacion of nature, and vnable to cohabitacion: The death of the Duke of Candia, afflicted not a litle the Pope burning aboue all other Popes in a vehement loue to his children. 9

The Borgia family is depicted as indulging in the most abominable self-gratification which inevitably leads to disaster. Cesare Borgia is guilty of fratricide and incest. The Pope dissolves his daughter's first marriage for financial gain, and the second because it is an obstacle to his own incestuous relationship with her. He uses his influence to intimidate an already biased jury into

annulling his daughter's marriage, and then confirms their decision with his own Papal authority. No attempt is made to insinuate that Lucretia is in any way opposed to the incestuous relationships. The behaviour of the family is motivated not so much by grand financial or political aspirations, as by base sensual self-gratification and unbridled jealousy. The overall impression is one of corporate depravity.

Candia's death provides ample opportunity for moralizing. It is considered just punishment for Alexander's wickedness and a manifestation of the "secret justice of God." Alexander's wicked example corrupts his children. As a result, Alexander loses his elder son. Candia is killed by his own brother, Cesare Borgia, who, with ruthless logic, applies the very ideas he has learnt from his father. Alexander reaps the fruits of his own pernicious philosophy.

Alexander's own death is treated in the same moralistic vein. He dies accidentally, having drunk some poisoned wine prepared by Cesare for some Cardinals he had invited to a banquet. The Historie contains the following comment on the incident:

Such is the suffrance of God, who in the execution of his iudgementes, raiseth one murderer to kill an other, & breaketh the brandes of the

fyre vpon the head of him that first kindled it.¹⁰
 The poetic justice of Alexander's death is inescapable.
 He suffers the same fate he has so often reserved for
 others. The moral comment on Alexander's death is quickly
 followed by a stream of invective which describes him as

...a Serpent, who with his immoderate ambition
 and poisoned infidelitie, together with all the
 horrible examples of crueltie, luxurie, and mon-
 struous couetousnes, selling without distinction
 both holie thinges and prophane thinges, had
 infected the whole world.¹¹

As a family, the Borgias are depicted as cold-blooded
 avaricious murderers from whom no one is safe. Poison is
 their main weapon, used indiscriminately against friend
 and foe alike, for the basest of motives. The Historie
 asserts that Alexander and Cesare were accustomed

...to vse poison, not only to be reuenged of
 their enemies, or to bee assured of suspitions,
 but also vpon a wicked couetousnes to dispoile
 rich men of their goods, whether they were Card-
 inalles or Courtiers, although they had neuer
 done them wrong....This maner of rage they would
 vse also agaynst their greatest friendes and
 familiars, and suche as had bene their most
 faithfull seruants....A recompense vnwoorthie
 the merits of good men, and not disagreeable to
 the disposition of such a father and sonne. ¹²

¹⁰ Fenton, p.308.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

The Borgias emerge from the Historie as a family completely given over to sin. Nowhere is there a redeeming episode to mitigate the adverse impression of their behaviour.

While it is impossible to quantify the breadth of audience that the Historie reached, it must have been fairly extensive. Barnes would not have used the figure of Guicciardine as chorus if he were an obscure character. The very fact that Fenton dedicated the Historie to Elizabeth I indicates a conviction that the work would be favourably received. In the Dedication of the Historie, Fenton claims that Guicciardine, by his "studie and iudgement" has "traced & made easie to the reader, the vway to all those svvete and plentifull frutes vvhich vvith paynfulnes are sought for in Histories of this nature."¹³

The "svvete and plentifull frutes" of history are the innumerable warnings to man not to fall into the sinful errors of his predecessors. The Elizabethans saw historical events as manifestations of a higher divine order which dispensed good fortune or downfall according to moral worthiness. This didactic view of history was well expressed by Thomas Blundeville in his treatise The true order and Methode of wryting and reading Hystories (1574). He saw

¹³ Fenton, sig. v^v.

three reasons for the study of history:

First that we may learne thereby to acknowledge the prouidence of God, whereby all things are governed and directed. Secondly, that by the examples of the wise, we maye learne wisdomes wysely to behaue our selues in all our actions, as well priuate as publique, both in time of peace and warre.

Thirdly, that we maye be stirred by example of the good to followe the good, and by the example of euill to flee the euill.¹⁴

Thomas Blundeville's view of history exemplifies the didactic attitude which underlies the depiction of events in The Divils Charter.

Those who had read Fenton's Historie, or were indirectly acquainted with its content, must have sat down to watch The Divils Charter with obvious preconceptions as to the character of Alexander and the Borgia family. Barnes was, therefore, not faced with the task of presenting an imaginative dramatic interpretation of events. He had the advantage of working with materials that were to some extent common knowledge among his audience. Barnes merely set out didactically to interpret events with which the audience was readily acquainted. The following chapter examines the method in which Barnes chose to re-interpret Fenton's Historie.

¹⁴ Ed. Hugh Dick, The Huntington Library Quarterly, III (January, 1940), 165.

CHAPTER III

BARNES' ALTERATION OF EVENTS DESCRIBED IN THE HISTORIE OF
GUICCIARDIN FOR THE ACHIEVEMENT OF DRAMATIC, DIDACTIC, AND
 PROPAGANDISTIC EFFECT

That Barnes chose to re-interpret his source material is not unusual. As Irving Ribner points out, for the Elizabethans

The purpose of a history...was not to present truth about the past for its own sake; it was to use the past for didactic purposes, and writers of history, both non-dramatic and dramatic, altered their material freely in order better to achieve their didactic aims.¹

This chapter examines some incidents in The Devils Charter which Barnes derived from the Historie, and discusses the manner in which he re-interpreted them to obtain a didactic and anti-Catholic effect.

Act II, Scene ii: Alexander VI and King Charles of France.

This scene is taken more or less verbatim from the Historie but is altered to heighten the element of confrontation. Charles of France is depicted as a saviour Christian

¹ The English History Play in the Age of Shakespeare, p.10.

King delivering Rome from the hands of the Antichrist Alexander. The virtuous cardinals in the French faction, Saint Peter ad vincula and Ascanio, press for the eviction of the corrupt Alexander from the Papacy. They are not fully developed characters, and are used merely as mouth-pieces for the introduction of anti-Catholic propaganda on the stage. The mutual accusations of the opposing factions are designed by Barnes to illustrate the moral integrity of the French faction, and the hypocrisy and duplicity of the Borgias.

Fenton describes how the cardinals in the French party began to

...solicite the king with vehement instance, that taking from the sea a Pope full of vices, and abominable to all the world, he would create and set up an other: they told him it would be no less vertuous in him to deliuer the church of God from the tyrannie of a wicked Pope, then it was great glorie to Pepin & Charlemain his predecessors, to take the Popes of holy life out of the percecutions of those that did vniustly oppresse them:²

Alexander is described as "naturally full of fraude, insatiable in ambition, shameles in all his doings, and... extremely hating of the french."³

² Fenton, p.63.

³ Ibid.

Barnes reproduces this passage almost exactly. Cardinal Ascanio advises Charles to

...pull downe this Antichrist;
 Advuance some worthy father in his place.
 Your fame shall liue with all posterities
 VWho from a wicked Bishops tiranny
 Infranchised the Church of God misguided;
 Euen as (in this worlds worthy memories)
 The names of Pepin and King Charlemaine
 Your predecessors, were eternized
 For helping good Popes, Saints of Holy life,
 Out of vngodly persecutions.

(II.i.1028-37)

Lodwick Sforza adds his own opinion of Alexander as

A Pope by nature full of fraud, and pride;
 Ambitious, auaritious, shameles, diuillish,
 And that and which your experience testifies)
 One that with mortall malice hates the French:
 By whome this reconciliation made
 Was more in feare, and by hard necessity
 Then faithfull inclination, or good will.

(II.i.1038-45)

In the Historie Charles is described as engaging in a war of nerves with Alexander. On his orders:

...thartilleries were drawne twise from the pallaice of S.Marke where the king was lodged, to be planted before the castell: But the King bearing no inclinacion to offend the Pope...they fell to accord.⁴

The Historie specifically makes the point that Charles was anxious not to offer physical violence to the Pope. Barnes turns the confrontation into an actual siege. The stage

⁴ Fenton, p.63.

directions call for "ordinance goeing of (after a little skirmish within)" (1002). Obviously the dramatic potential of a siege was too good to pass over merely for the sake of historical accuracy.

It is an effective re-interpretation by Barnes. A political confrontation in the Historie assumes the appearance of a small crusade in The Divils Charter. The audience obviously had no sympathy for Alexander. Barnes was therefore in no danger of offering offence by having the sacrosanct personage of the Pope bombarded by Charles' cannon. The incident combines good spectacular effect on stage with the effective propagandistic depiction of an attack on the Papacy.

Barnes introduces a completely original piece of action toward the end of the scene. At the end of the bombardment Alexander re-enters upon the battlements. He rebukes the French cardinals, saying, "Come take Saint Peters Chaire proud heretiks;/ Here take this triple Crowne" (1067-8). He then throws down the papal keys, symbol of his authority. There is no mention of this incident in the Historie. It was obviously good propaganda to have the Pope humbled on stage in this manner. The virtuous Charles is seen to triumph over the wicked Alexander. The magnanimous Charles

returns the keys to Alexander and the stage is cleared.

Barnes basically re-interpreted the incident in two ways. By having Charles open fire on Alexander, Barnes was obviously pandering to the anti-Catholic prejudice of the audience. By having Alexander surrender the keys, Barnes was undermining Papal authority in the eyes of the English audience. It cannot be denied that the scene adds little to the overall unity of the play. Barnes was sticking too closely to the Historie, and the whole scene could be omitted without detrimental effect. The nature of the scene illustrates the episodic structure of the play, where one scene is not necessarily tailored to complement another.

Act IV, Scene iv: The Siege of Katherina Sforza

This scene is derived from a short description in the Historie where Katherina is described as possessing "a vallour aboue the propertie of that sex, and a resolucion more resembling a man then a woman."⁵ It is mentioned that Cesare Borgia "after he had assaied in vaine to dispose her to yelde, began to batter the wall of the Citadell with a great furie of artillerie."⁶ The Historie goes on to

⁵ Fenton, p. 237.

⁶ Ibid.

recount the siege and capture of Katherina. The episode is in no way distinctive in the Historie and is chronicled merely as another instance of the Borgia's campaign for temporal aggrandisement.

Barnes, however, changes the whole tenor of the episode. Thematically, he uses the scene to depict virtue tempering the excess of vice by good example. Katherina supplies a contrast with Lucretia Borgia. They represent the antithetical qualities of good and evil. The episode is also a thematic contrast with the siege of the Pope. Whereas the Borgias meet the threat of siege with equivocation and duplicity, Katherina speaks out with the voice of honest virtue, defying the evil aspirations of Cesare. Barnes imbues her with virtue in addition to valour.

Barnes introduces original material by having her sons captured by Cesare. Katherina remains unmoved when Cesare produces her sons as his master stroke, and threatens their lives. Instead, she points out the correct moral code of behaviour, rebuking Cesare with the reply:

Traytour to God and man had'st thou beene Caesar,
 Insisting on high tearmes of worth and honor
 Thou woul'st consider that their blood is Noble,
 Thou wouldst consider that they be but children,
 Thou wouldst consider that thou art a warriour
 And that such noble blood spilt with dishonor
 And train'd in with insidious trechery,
 By God nor man in heauen nor earth below
 Can be forgotten or abolished.

(2281-89)

Having asserted the immorality of Cesare's behaviour, she then instructs her sons in the proper manner by which to combine virtue with valour. She exhorts them to:

Know what it is die with liberty,
 And live with ignominious servitude.
 If you your lives buy with the losse of states
 It were of all extremities the vilest
 But in extremitie to die resolu'd
 Preserving state and reputation.

(2308-13)

Cesare responds to this turgid advice with the exclamation, "Oh bravely spoken warlike Amazon" (2326). Her moralizing has the desired effect as one son exhorts the other, "Come brother let vs bravely dye together" (2347). Frustrated in his attempt to persuade Katherineina to surrender peacefully, Cesare gives orders for the execution of her sons, and they are taken off stage.

There then follows the action of the siege which, judging by the length and detail of the stage directions, is meant to be a stage spectacular. Katherineina is captured but remains defiant. Refusing to surrender, she asks to be killed, but Cesare replies:

Come hither Katherine wonder of thy sex,
 The grace of all Italian woman-hood:
Caesar shall neuer proove dishonourable,
 Behold thy children living in my Tent.

(2381-84)

He then pulls back a curtain to reveal her children safe

and well. In view of his order for their execution, one fully expects her sons to have been murdered. Katherina's good example and sound moral advice have, for the moment, tempered Cesare's villainy. Unfortunately, this uncharacteristically philanthropic gesture by Cesare is completely at odds with his behaviour throughout the play. He also returns her treasure and waives the customary ransom. In his notes to the play, R.B. McKerrow admits that he could not:

suggest any reason for the introduction of this incident, of which there is no hint in Guicciardine, and in which the character of Caesar is curiously at variance with that which he exhibits in the rest of the play. Indeed the whole scene is somewhat of an excrescence upon the plot.⁷

Dr. McKerrow is quite right. Barnes wished to demonstrate the moral lesson that the example of virtue could overcome vice. To achieve this, however, he had to make Cesare behave in an inconsistent manner. This demonstrates the limitations of a dramatic technique which relies more on the impact of individual scenes than on the cumulative effect of consistent characterization.

Katherina is hardly an attractive figure. She seems to be an emotionally ascetic woman, callously sacrificing the natural affections of a mother to voice moral abstractions

⁷ McKerrow, p.130.

which themselves seem more orientated toward material considerations. Her main desire is the retention of her husband's realm, even at the expense of the lives of her children. She is more a symbol of cold moral rectitude than a woman with whom one can sympathize.

Although Barnes introduces original material in the form of the capture of Katherina's children, and although he handles the confrontation well, the scene is still a failure. It stands out as an incongruous episode in a series of events designed to illustrate the villainy of the Borgia family. Barnes goes too far in depicting the efficacy of good example, and Cesare is made to appear almost too generous and even gallant in his behaviour.

Act III, Scenes i & ii, and Act IV, Scene v : The Murder of Astor and Philippo Manfredi.

This incident is the most striking example of Barnes' alteration of the Historie. In Fenton's work it is only mentioned in passing that

...Astor a young man of xviiij yeares & of an excellent beuty, his age & innocencie yelding to the disloialtie & crueltie of the victors, was reteined by the Duke with very honorable demonstracions, vnder cooler that he shold remein in his Court: But within few dayes after being sent to Rome, after (so went the bruite) some had satisfified their vile vnnatural lust on him, he was secretly put to death

together with his bastard brother.⁸

Barnes makes Astor Manfredi one of the main characters of the play, devoting three scenes to his seduction and murder by Alexander. As usual, the scenes are intended to illustrate both the depravity of Alexander and the triumph of virtue.

The Manfredi brothers first appear in Act III, Scene i. It is a short appearance of only forty-four lines, designed to inform the audience of the boys' predicament. Astor voices sentiments similar to those of the besieged Katherina, preferring death to dishonour. Philippo, his brother concurs, stating:

I rather choose within the riuer Tiber
 To drowne my selfe, or from the Tarpeyan hill,
 My vexed body to precipitate,
 Then to subiect my body to the shame
 Of such vild brutish and unkindely lust.

(1163-67)

Barnes wishes to make two points in this scene: the vile nature of the sin of sodomy, and the unwillingness of the boys to be participants in Alexander's depravity.

The action runs straight into the next scene (III.ii) where Alexander appears at a "casement" to woo Astor. This is probably the most evocative scene of the play, the language achieving a poetic quality rarely found in the rest

⁸ Fenton, p.253.

of the work. Their dialogue is a series of verbal contrasts. Alexander attempts to evoke a tantalizing vision of the joys of love, but his efforts are punctuated by Astor's revolted commentary on the real nature of Alexander's homosexual lust. Alexander commences his persuasive advances saying:

Astor? what Astor? my delight my ioy,
 My starre, my triumph, my sweete phantasie,
 My more then sonne, my loue, my Concubine,
 Let me behold those bright Stars my ioyes treasure,
 Those glorious well attempred tender cheekes;
 That specious for-head like a lane of Lillies:
 That seemly Nose loues chariot triumphant,
 Breathing Panchaian Odors to my sences,
 That gracious mouth, betwixt whose crimosin pillou
Venus and Cupid sleeping kisse together.

.
Astor Manfredi turne thee to my loue.

(III.ii.1204-16)

In an aside to the audience Astor replies: "Betraid? a slaue to sinne? what shall I say?" (1218). Alexander's language is so persuasive that Philippo asks: "Is it possible that the Diuill can be so sweet a dissembler?" (1258). This question emphasizes the evil intention of the Pope, and plays on the traditional attribute of the Devil as a disguised tempter of the innocent.

Although the scene is short, it is one of the most effective in the play. It has a tight structure and the language is impressive. The contrast between evocative

imagery and vituperative reply gives a dramatic strength to the dialogue. The conflict is between appearance and reality, between the Pope as a seducer subjecting Astor to temptation, and the role he is expected to play as the personification of God on earth. The stylized language of love applied to a homosexual lust underlines both the cankered nature of Alexander's moral standards and the chastity of Astor in refusing his advances.

There is no mention in the Historie of the manner of Astor's death and it is interesting to see how Barnes chose to depict this incident. The brothers are murdered in Act IV, Scene v. Fatigued by a game of tennis, they are given drugged wine as refreshment and fall asleep on stage. Bernardo, the Pope's accomplice, goes to inform Alexander, who enters "in his cassock and nightcap with a box under each arme" (2506). The whole scene is a black parody of the earlier scene of attempted seduction. The boys are asleep on a couch and Alexander is dressed for bed. He looks down at the boys and exclaims:

Poore harmeles boyes strangers to sinne and euill,
 Oh were my soule as innocent as yours!
 This office is of highest consequence,
 In friendship for I consider it,
 I sent you from a million of sorrows,
 Into the flowry fields of Paradice.
 Their to goe habit in the groues of mirtle,
 To feed on Manna and to drink pure Nectar,

A cup of euerlasting happines.
 Where such sweet musick vn-con-ceiueable,
 Shall entertaine your senses in sweet comfort,
 As the delight thereof shall neuer die

(2514-25)

The last seven lines of the above speech recall Alexander's fine poetic evocation of the joys of love. It is ironic that now he uses the same rich language to describe the delights of heaven, a heaven he fully realizes he will not himself attain. Barnes emphasizes the point that for all Alexander's worldly success, he will never gain spiritual salvation or happiness.

The brothers, by contrast, dream of the delights of heaven that await them. In his sleep Astor calls out:

Faire gracious Angell of eternall light,
 Which reachest out that hand of happines.
 Hayling my spirit to that triumphant throne,
 Of endles comfort I adore thy grace.

(2532-35)

Philipppo has a similar dream and calls out in his sleep:

Oh goulden light of neuer setting Sunne,
 Harke brother Astor harke my soule is rapt,
 Into the ioyes of heauen with harmony.

(2536-38)

The audience is reassured of the triumph of virtue, even in death. The imagery of death is couched in terms of sleep and rest. The brothers are murdered in their sleep and die in a state of bliss, dreaming of the coming joys of heaven. It is noticeable that all the other victims

suffer contrastingly violent deaths.

Alexander takes a snake from each box, and forces them to bite the sleeping brothers, saying:

Take your repast vpon these Princely paps.
 Now Ptolamies wife is highly magnified,
 Ensigning these faire princely twins their death,
 And you my louely boyes competitors,
 With Cleopatra share in death and fate.

(2552-56)

The perverted sexual imagery in this speech is grotesquely appropriate. The comparison of the boys with Cleopatra strikingly emphasizes their sexual attraction for Alexander.

The use of the snakes is an interesting interpolation by Barnes. It serves the double purpose of perpetuating the reputation of the Borgias for exotic poisons, and also makes use of the traditional association of the snake with the Devil.

The story of Astor and Philipppo Manfredi is an interesting example of Barnes' adaptation of his source material. Their deaths underline two basic themes of the play: the depravity and ruthlessness of the Borgias, and the ultimate triumph of virtue. The fate of the brothers is indeed tragic. Trapped in a web of lust and intrigue, they are powerless to resist events and are sacrificed to the political ambitions of the Borgias. They are the only virtuous characters to be fully developed by Barnes, and

the only ones with whom one can feel any sympathy.

In the above adaptations Barnes manages to combine good theatrical spectacle with moral instruction. He also manages to insert a good deal of anti-Catholic propaganda. He successfully re-interprets his source material to achieve these effects. However, he does not take care to ensure consistent characterization from scene to scene and this tends to mar the overall impression. Barnes, as is discussed in the two following chapters, was more effective as a dramatist when introducing his own original material.

CHAPTER IV

"THE VERTUE VANISHT, AND THE LUSTER LOST": THE RISE AND FALL OF LUCRETIA BORGIA

The previous chapter discussed Barnes' achievement of an homiletic effect by the adaptation of his source. In addition to these adaptations Barnes also contributed some original material. His creative abilities are best illustrated by an examination of these contributions. These are basically the episodes depicting Lucretia Borgia, and those involving the accomplices, Prescobaldi, Baglioni, Rotsi, and Bernardo. This chapter examines the manner in which the character of Lucretia is depicted by Barnes, and discusses its dramatic effectiveness.

As Dr. McKerrow points out in his notes to the play, Lucretia's murder of her husband and her subsequent death are not mentioned by Fenton, and are historically inaccurate.¹ In reality, Lucretia outlived her father by sixteen years. In the writing of The Divils Charter Barnes normally stuck so closely to the Historie, even though re-interpreting some

¹ McKerrow, pp. 108 and 127.

events, that he clearly had a definite purpose in diverging from Fenton's work. His depiction of Lucretia Borgia most clearly demonstrates the underlying intention of the play. She appears three times throughout the play, although her second appearance is negligible.

In Act I, Scene v, she murders Gismond Viselli. A brief appearance in Act III, Scene ii (she only delivers eleven of the thirty lines spoken while she is on stage) further illustrates her duplicity. This is followed by the high point of Lucretia's role, her downfall in Act IV, Scene iii. Here she is poisoned, repents her misdeeds, asks God for forgiveness, exhorts her maid to reform, and dies.

Lucretia's stage appearances are intended to depict the rise and fall of the sinner, demonstrating her repentance and the justice of her death. Such a tight structuring of her scenes illustrates Barnes' basic intention of depicting the reward of sin and the downfall of its practitioners.

Even before Lucretia's first stage appearance, Barnes depicts her in an adverse light. In Act I, Scene iii, her husband, Gismond Viselli, and Barbarossa discover libels against the Borgias. Among the libels are references to Lucretia. Barbarossa reads:

Lucrece is turned Thayis of the stewes:
In whome her father Alexander saw,

His onely daughter, wife, and daughter in law,
 Shall I read on my Lord? here is much more.
 (I.iii.268-71)

To which Viselli resignedly replies, "Nay read out all, it is but of a whore" (272).

These accusations are drawn from John Bale's A Pageant of Popes, a violently anti-Catholic work. Bale describes Alexander as "a very royotous tyraunt & in league with the deuil."² Bale published in this work verses allegedly written at the time of Lucretia's death. He asserts that:

What her honestye, religion, and modestye was in
 the Courte of Rome duringe her fathers estate,
 it maye be gathered sufficientlye by these two
 Verses made upon her death....

Here lyes Lucretia chast by name, but Thais lewd by lyfe,
 Who was to Alexander Pope both doughter and his wyfe.³

How far the audience was acquainted with this work is a matter of conjecture. However, it is sufficiently clear that there was English material blackening the name of Lucretia long before Barnes came to write his play. Barnes was drawing on the English anti-Catholic tradition rather than creating an original character of his own.

The libels in The Divils Charter get progressively worse, culminating in the charge:

² (London, 1574), sig. Y2.

³ Ibid., sig. Y4^v.

For neuer was the shamelesse Fuluia,
 Nor Lais noted for so many wooers,
 Nor that vnchast profuse Sempronia.
 A common dealer with so many dooers,
 So proud, so faithlesse, and so voyd of shame,
 As is new brodell bride Lucretia.
 Take to thee Gismond both the skorne and shame,

 For now thy mortall miseries begin.

(I.iii.297-306)

The phrase "mortall miseries" is thematically ironic, since Lucretia's infidelity eventually costs Gismond his life.

Barnes has thus effectively prejudiced the audience against Lucretia before her first stage appearance in Act I, Scene v, where, in her opening speech, she styles herself as engaged in the tradition of wickedness associated with the Borgias. With perverted pride she exhorts herself:

Let none of Borgias race in policies
 Exceed thee Lucrece: now proue Caesars Sister,
 So deepe in bloody stratagemms as hee.

(I.v.554-56)

It should be remembered that in the preceding scene (I.iv) Alexander and Cesare have been discussing Machiavellian doctrines. The self-exhortations of Lucretia serve to emphasize the wickedness of the whole family. The actions of Alexander, Cesare, and Lucretia are thus seen against a background of familial evil which heightens the malignity of their individual crimes.

In her opening monologue (550-577) Lucretia lists

classical precedents for her planned murder. They are all chosen by Barnes to emphasize the theme of murder and adultery. Barnes makes an effective transition from classical allusion to stage reality in Lucretia's revelation of the trap she has set for Viselli, which is

...such a curious snare,
As iealous Vulcan neuer yet deuis'd,
To graspe his armes vnable to resist,
Deaths instruments inclosed in these hands.

(I.v.568-71)

The reference to Vulcan continues the stream of classical imagery, but the site of the chair, designed to ensnare the unsuspecting Viselli, is a concrete symbol of Borgia cunning. This "curious snare" is but one example of the series of devices, including poisoned wine, ambush, and the use of deadly snakes, employed by the Borgias to eliminate their victims.

On Viselli's entry the dialogue takes the form of a debate in which Viselli attempts to justify the constraints placed upon Lucretia's movements. He justifies his jealousy, saying:

Blam'st thou my iealousie? nay blame thy beauty,
And loue imprison'd in those amorous lookes:
I feare the Sunnes reflections on thy face,
Least he more wondring at thy precious eyes,
Then any Nimphe which he most honored,
Should beare thee to some other Paradice,
And rob me, silly man, of this worlds ioy.

(I.v.603-9)

Viselli's speeches are all uninspiring. His language never achieves the intensity of Lucretia's, the vindictiveness of Cesare's, nor the wit of Frescobaldi's. Both he and Lucretia are more caricatures of values than fully delineated persons. The above speech seems almost a parody of the conventional love conceit. Lucretia's reply, "Scoffst thou mee Gismond with continuall taunts?" (I.v.615), would seem well merited if Barnes had not taken such pains to depict him as a figure of virtue.

In response to Lucretia's accusation:

When I bestowed on thee this diamond
 A Jewell once held precious as my life;
 And with it cast away my selfe on thee
 Didst thou not promise to maintaine mine honour,
 Neither in word nor deed to giue suspect
 Of thy dislike

(I.v.627-32)

he replies:

When first thou didst bestow this Diamond,
 It had a precious lustre in mine eye:
 And was possess of vertue, when I vow'd
 To maintaine that, which was impossible:
 But since that time this stone hath had a flaw,
 Broken within the ring, his foile growne dimme,
 The vertue vanisht, and the luster lost.

(I.v.637-43)

His phrase, "I vow'd/ To maintaine that, which was impossible" is doubly significant. His order for her confinement is a physical attempt to "maintaine" her fidelity. He is also acknowledging the futility of attempting to "maintaine" in

public her reputation, when her depravity, as evidenced by the libels, has become common knowledge. Barnes' imagery is quite effective in this speech. "Precious" and "vertue", apart from their reference to the diamond, have spiritual connotations. The last line of his vindication contains an effective pun on "luster." Viselli is saying that Lucretia has lost her virtue in the spiritual sense, and that, as one who lusts physically, she is lost to all forms of Christian exhortation.

Enraged at this direct allusion to her behaviour, Lucretia springs the mechanism on the chair and traps Viselli. She then forces him to sign a document, stating, "tis not to make thy will;/ For if thou wilt subscribe, I will hot kill" (I.v.654). Viselli is tricked into signing the document in the hope of saving his life. However, by validating what is in reality a suicide note, he puts himself at Lucretia's mercy. There is an interesting parallel here between Viselli and Alexander. Viselli is tricked into signing a document that brings about his physical death. Alexander, by the ambiguous draft of the Devil's contract, is persuaded to endorse an agreement which ensures his spiritual death and damnation.

Describing herself as coming with "mortall vengeance on

thy soule" (I.v.663), Lucretia stabs Viselli. Each dagger thrust is delivered with the cry "take this", the rising tide of her fury being punctuated by the violence of her physical action, culminating in the horrible climax of her invective:

For locking vp of me, calling me whore,
 Setting espialls tending at my taile;
 Take this, and this & this to make amends.
 And put thee from thy paines.

(I.v.669-72)

The phrase "to put thee from thy paines" summarizes the complete destruction of Viselli. He is released from the physical pains of death, the psychological pains of enduring his wife's behaviour, and, in the sense of labour, the pain of attempting to constrain his wife's depravity.

Arranging his body to achieve an appearance of suicide, Lucretia triumphs, characterizing his death not only as a personal victory, but as an act that will be condoned by the Borgias as a family, glorying in the fact that,

Now will my father Alexander say
 That I did take the best and safest way,
 And Caesar will approue it with his heart,
 That Lucrece hath perform'd a cunning parte.

(I.v.676-79)

She then leaves the stage.

The rest of the scene is something of an anti-climax. The tension which Barnes has successfully sustained to this

point is dissipated by poor dialogue, which tends to detract from the dramatic impact of the scene. A minor figure, Barbarossa, discovers the body. He is used by Barnes as a mouthpiece for moral commentary on Viselli's death. Admittedly, this is an essential requirement of the didactic purpose of the scene, but it tends to detract from the impact of the murder. He laments over Viselli's body:

Was it not wrought by bloody Borgiaes race?
 I doubt in this the diuills hypochrisie,
 Iustice of Heauens firme and inscrutable
 Reueale it, oh reueale it in thy mercy.

(I.v.709-12).

Again, Barnes is underscoring the evil of the entire family. Also, the speech prepares the audience for the subsequent revelation of Lucretia's guilt. She re-enters, seemingly ignorant of Viselli's death. Here Barnes' dialogue fails badly. Such melodramatic lines as

Tarry Lady.
 Approach not neere this ruthfull spectacle;
 Approach not neere this spectacle of bloud,
 This ruthfull spectacle of bloud and death,
 Least suddaine horror of these bleeding wounds
 Wound thy distracted spirits to pale death.

(I.v.715-20)

do little to enhance the poetic quality of the scene or to drive home the moral. Barbarossa reads Viselli's note, which ends with the Italian couplet, "Il veleuo d'amore/ A me trafisse il cuore" (I.v.758-9). This means "the poison of love

has pierced my heart." It is an ironic commentary on Viselli's death. The "poison" referred to is jealousy. In the play, poison is also easily associated with the Borgias. The pierced heart refers to mental anguish, but also, of course, to Viselli's stab wounds. Thus Barnes achieves a dual effect, commenting both on the emotional effect of jealousy and, by alluding to Viselli's murder, on its physical results.

Saving Lucretia from a feigned suicide attempt, Barbarossa delivers the unknowingly ironic caution: "Tempt not God iustice Lady, fall to praier" (I.v.773). She has, by murdering her husband, already tempted God's justice; the verdict is demonstrated by her death. The only time Lucretia prays in the play is when, at the point of death, she repents her sins.

At the end of the scene the stage is cleared, and Guicchiardine as chorus enters to utter the moral of the scene:

Thus foule suspition, feare and iealousie
 Of shame, dishonor, and his wiues hot lust,
 Hath seaz'd vpon Viselli; whose reuenge,
 Was to restraine Lucrece from Company.
 But swelling pride, and lust, both limitles,
 Answer'd his louing feare and shame with death.
 (I.v.783-88)

Barnes wishes to emphasize the virtuous character of

Viselli, and the unmerited nature of his death at the hands of a proud and shameless wife. However, it is difficult to view the fall of Viselli with much compassion. His death is more the subjection of desirable moral values than the tragedy of a convincing human being. The scene depicts the triumph of evil over good, rather than the fall of a virtuous man.

Neither Lucretia nor Viselli is convincingly depicted. Yet, of the two, Lucretia is by far the stronger influence in the scene. Gismond is too easily duped, and one is tempted more to admire the strength of Lucretia's ambition than to condone Viselli's facile attempts to constrain her.

This is certainly not the effect that Barnes desired to achieve. The sentiments expressed by Guicciardine illustrate well the manner in which the audience was expected to view Viselli's downfall. He is the first of the virtuous characters to fall victim to the ambition of the Borgias. He is followed by Candia, then Astor and Filippo Manfredi. In a wider context, the ambition of the family is seen as self-destructive, as Lucretia kills her husband, Cesare his brother, and Alexander his daughter.

Lucretia appears briefly in Act III, Scene iii,

delivering only eleven lines. The context is a discussion with her brother Candia, who suspects her of Viselli's murder. Nothing is revealed, and short of viewing the incident as further illustration of Lucretia's deceit and an attempt to maintain audience interest in her character, nothing can be said for the episode.

Lucretia's last appearance is in Act IV, Scene iii. Barnes' depiction of her downfall provides perhaps the clearest insight into his didactic purpose. Whereas Alexander is preoccupied with wealth and Cesare with power, Lucretia's concern is with beauty.

The scene opens with her praise of the poisoned cosmetics, which she mistakenly believes to have been sent by her lover. She states:

Kinde Lodowike hadst thou presented me,
 With Persian clothes of gold or Tinsilry,
 With rich Arabian Odors, pretious stones,
 Or what braue women hold in highest price,
 Could not haue beene so gracious as this tincture,
 Which I more valew then my richest iewels,

(IV.iii.2007-12)

Lucretia's subsequent monologue, which runs for forty-four lines, is a catalogue of her past lovers, their compliments on her beauty, and her own pride in her appearance. Her language is not particularly striking. Such lines as:

My nose the gracious forte of conquering loue,
 Breathing attractiue odors to those louers
 That languish and are vanquisht with desire,
Gonzaga calleth it the siluer pearch,
 Where Venus turtles mutuall pleasure search.

(IV.iii.2049-53)

are conventional without being convincing. On occasion the imagery is even incongruous, as when she describes her

Sweet mouth the Ruby port to Paradice
 Of my worlds pleasure from whence issue forth,
 Many false brags, bold sallies, sweet supplies.

(IV.iii.2054-56)

"False brags" seems out of place in an evocative list of supposedly alluring attributes.

The scene is structured to heighten the impact of Lucretia's poisoning. Not only is Lucretia's death a punishment for her murder of Viselli, it is illustrative of the moral commonplace that "pride comes before a fall." Just as Alexander and Cesare are poisoned at a banquet to celebrate their triumph, so Lucretia is poisoned and her beauty destroyed by the corrosive effects of the cosmetics at the point where she is relating with pride the allurements of her body.

The effect of the poison is both swift and violent. The initial imagery of the scene, when referring to Lucretia's beauty, is couched in terms of light and sweetness: "pure snow," "beaming," "bright luster," "sunne beames," "attractiue

odors," and "sweet mouth." The effects of the poison are contrastingly described in terms of corruption: "foule stincke," "rancke poyson," "strang leoprosie" and "foule vnsauorie loathsome stinke." The change in imagery effectively underscores the sense of horror at the rapid transition of Lucretia's fortunes.

Lucretia is not allowed to die without the appropriate moral commentary. Barnes depicts her as suffering a remorseful realization of her past guilt. In her mind she sees Viselli's ghost and calls out:

Deliuier me from that murdered man,
 He comes to stab my soule I wounded him,
 Oh Gismond Gismond hide those bleeding wounds,
 My soule bleeds drops of sorrow for thy sake;
 Looke not so wrathfull I am penitent.

(IV.iii.2109-13)

She admits not only her guilt, but also the error of her ways. The allusion to the soul bleeding drops of sorrow thematically links the physical act of Viselli's murder with the spiritual act of her repentance. She continues:

From the pure burning coles of true contrition.
 Me thinks I see the liuely counterfet,
 Of catiue Cressed in her misery,
 Ingenderd out of hir disloyalty.

(IV.iii.2122-25)

Barnes' reference to "Cressed" is particularly appropriate.

In Robert Henryson's Testament of Cresseid, in addition to

being the traditional figure of female infidelity, she is also struck with leprosy as a punishment for her lewd behaviour.⁴ This work was usually bound with the works of Chaucer and was consequently well known. The audience would undoubtedly have recognized in the allusion the inference that Lucretia's "strang leoprosie" is a punishment for her lust.

The dying Lucretia, asking her maid's forgiveness, warns her to profit by her example and repent. This has the desired effect on Moticilla, who cries out:

Oh God forgiue me for my sinnes are great,
And if his goodnesse lend my life some space,
I will with pennance call on him for grace,
And spend the remnant of my life in prayer.

(IV.iii.2129-32)

In her dying speech Lucretia demonstrates Christian repentance:

Open thy bosome father Abraham,
Mercyfull father let thy mercy passe
Extend thy mercy where no mercy was.
Mercyfull father for thy sonnes deere meritt
Pardon my sinnfull soule recieue my spirrit. Expirat Lucrece.

(IV.iii.2134-38)

In the play Lucretia enacts a cycle of pride, murder,

⁴ Ed. Denton Fox (London, 1968), p. 72, ll. 309-322. There were a number of English and Scottish editions of this work. Perhaps the most germane is Stow's 1602 edition of Chaucer, which contains Henryson's work.

punishment and repentance. Barnes effectively uses her as an example not only of the punishment of sin, but also the possibility of repentance. Because she appears effectively in only two scenes, her role is compact, and therefore memorable.

It must be admitted, however, that the story of Viselli and Lucretia is not great tragedy. Neither Lucretia nor Viselli is sufficiently delineated to elicit much pity by their deaths. One is forced to attend to the moral significance of the story, rather than to its tragic potential. This was, of course, what Barnes intended, but it is regrettable that he lacked the dramatic ability to combine the two.

Barnes places the Lucretia episode well. Viselli is murdered in the scene immediately following the discussion of Machiavellian doctrines. His death is thus seen as the outcome of these ideas. Lucretia's death immediately precedes the siege of Katherina Sforza, the only other woman with a prominent role in the play. Katherina is the antithesis of Lucretia. In Lucretia's death one sees the fall of the sinful woman. Katherina, although defeated by Cesare, overcomes his brutish nature by her virtuous example. The two women represent the extremes of moral behaviour.

As a whole Lucretia's part is not great drama, but it is sufficient for Barnes' purpose. She represents the female branch of the Borgia family, giving it a broader aura of wickedness. More important, however, her fall illustrates the positive aspect of sin, its potential to engender not only punishment, but repentance.

CHAPTER V

THE THEMATIC FUNCTION OF THE ACCOMPLICES IN THE DIVILS CHARTER

In the previous chapter Barnes' creation of the character of Lucretia Borgia was examined, in an attempt to gain insight into Barnes' creative abilities and dramatic intentions. The accomplices in The Divils Charter offer a similar opportunity. Frescobaldi, Henrico Baglioni, Brandino Rotsi and Bernardo are original creations. They are not mentioned in Fenton's Historie. An examination of the manner in which they are integrated with the action of the play gives further insight into Barnes' moral outlook, implicit in his dramatization of events.

The structure of The Divils Charter is threefold. The main action centres around the intrigues of Alexander and Cesare. A secondary line of action is provided by the scenes depicting Lucretia Borgia. Thirdly, there are the episodes involving the accomplices. Speaking of plays structured in this manner, Richard Levin describes them as including

in addition to the standard main plot and subplot a third distinct set of characters, usually

of the clownish sort, who sometimes figure in one of these two major plots but are also elaborated independently to produce a kind of effect that is quite different from either. This elaboration, however, typically occurs in more or less isolated episodes, rather than in a sequential line of action, and so might be conceived of more meaningfully not as another plot, or fractional equivalent, but as another level of emotional tone or sensibility.¹

His later book, The Multiple Plot in English Renaissance Drama, states that the third set of characters is usually found in a "series of loosely connected episodes rather than true plots."² Both these statements are applicable to the use of the accomplices in The Devils Charter.

Frescobaldi, Baglioni, Bernardo, and Rotsi are servants of the Borgias. They are even more cynical and ruthless than their masters. Each is fully aware of the heinous nature of the crimes that he commits on behalf of Alexander and Cesare. By comparison, the Borgias at least retain a degree of nobility in their aspirations. Lucretia kills for love, Alexander and Cesare for power. Frescobaldi and the others are motivated by pure greed for money, manifesting a more debased and gross form of avarice. Their crimes are lacking in any lofty motivation, and their deaths are suitably squalid.

1 "The Elizabethan 'Three-Level' Play," Renaissance Drama, New Series II (Evanston, 1969), 23.

2 (Chicago, 1971), p.110.

In his essay, "The Comic Accomplice in Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy," Douglas Cole points out that

Kyd and Marlowe make some attempts to link the careers of their accomplice figures with the ironic fate of their archvillains: the self-aggrandizing spirit who will play all tricks to prosper is caught short in the end.³

Barnes treats the accomplices of The Devils Charter in the same manner. They all die, fatally outwitted by those they have cynically attempted to exploit.

Of the four accomplices, Frescobaldi and Baglioni are ex-soldiers. In view of their wild boasts and gross exaggeration, it is tempting to view them as derived from the miles gloriosus of Plautan comedy. Richard Hosley points out that:

... of secondary Roman-comedy characters who appear frequently in Renaissance comedy, the miles gloriosus is by all odds the most important. He becomes the capitano millantatore of Italian comedy, the Soldier or Braggart of Elizabethan. The type was elaborately developed both in Italy and in England but remains essentially the same in Renaissance comedy as in Roman: that is, the capitano or Soldier is (1) a braggart, (2) a coward, and usually (3) a fatuous would-be lover. An Italian-comedy development is the bravo, or thug ... This type appears rarely in Elizabethan comedy ... but may have an affinity with the Murderer of Elizabethan tragedy.⁴

³ Renaissance Drama, IX (Evanston, 1969), 138.

⁴ "The Formal Influence of Plautus and Terence," in Elizabethan Theatre, ed. John Brown & Bernard Harris, Stratford-upon-Avon Studies, IX (London, 1966), p.141.

Certainly the influence of Plautus is discernible in the depiction of the two rogues. They are reminiscent of the low-life characters in Ralph Roister Doister, and the Falstaff group in Henry IV, Part I. However, it should be emphasized that the boasts of Frescobaldi and Baglioni are not without substance. Although they brag excessively, they carry out their threats. Muriel Bradbrook, speaking of the development of Elizabethan comedy, makes the point that

... as separate characters became deeper, a single character takes into itself a variety of traditional parts. Falstaff, besides much else, combines in his nature at least four such roles - the braggart soldier, the parasite, the Vice, and the court jester.⁵

Frescobaldi and Baglioni are similarly composite characters. They combine the attractive braggart qualities of Falstaff with the malevolence of a hired assassin, such as Lightborne in Marlowe's Edward II.

It is useful, however, to bear in mind, Frederick Boas' caution that

A distinction should be drawn between the "prest" and the discharged soldiers in Elizabethan drama, who had their prototypes in actual contemporary figures, and the extensive group of military braggarts who had their origin in the miles gloriosus of Roman comedy.⁶

⁵ The Growth and Structure of Elizabethan Comedy (London, 1963), p.89.

⁶ "The Soldier in Elizabethan and Later English Drama," Essays by Divers Hands, ed. R.W.Chapman, New Series, XIX (London, 1942), 131.

The figure of the destitute soldier was not new to the Elizabethan stage. In the anonymous Marriage of Wit and Wisdom, performed in 1579, two deserters from the army turn highway robbers. They appear on stage to sing:

That soldiers suffer both hunger and cold;
 And this sing we, and this sing we,
 We live by spoil, by spoil, we moil and toil;
 Thus Snatch and Catch doth keep a coil:
 And thus live we, and thus live we.⁷

As Boas points out,

A very difficult problem was presented by the soldiers disbanded after a campaign abroad who sought relief from public or private sources often by fraudulent methods. On November 5th, 1591, when the Earl of Essex as Lord General was commanding the forces in Normandy...a Proclamation was issued by the government against vagrant soldiers.⁸

Frescobaldi and Baglioni would have been viewed by Barnes' audience not as an Italianate feature, but as an expression of a contemporary Elizabethan social problem. Since Barnes was a member of Essex's forces, his portrayal of the two ex-soldiers is probably drawn from first-hand experience. They are certainly convincingly drawn, possessing a degree

⁷ Five Anonymous Plays, 1570-1579, ed. John S. Farmer (London: Early English Drama Society, 1908; rpt. London, 1966), p. 190.

⁸ Boas, p.126. For a resumé of Government Proclamations against vagrant soldiers issued during the reign of Elizabeth I, see Frank Aydelotte, Elizabethan Rogues and Vagabonds (New York, 1967), pp. 71-72.

of realism lacking in the other characters of the play.

The most obvious feature of the dramatic function of Frescobaldi and Baglioni is the manner in which their behaviour parodies the action of the main plot. The thematic effectiveness of this parody is difficult to quantify since it depends largely on the response of the individual reader.

Speaking of The Atheist's Tragedy and 'Tis Pity She's a Whore, Levin makes the point that in both plays

... the sub-plot is also technically a "tragedy", insofar as it terminates in the death of the protagonist; but in all important respects --the quality of the action, the characters themselves, the moral issues, and the emotional effect --it seems to be deliberately and consistently deflated in order to establish a contrast to, and therefore enhance, the tragic significance of the main plot.⁹

The same interpretation can be applied to The Devils Charter. The parody works in two ways. The burlesque technique heightens the folly and stupidity of the minor characters. More significantly, it robs Alexander's magic and the political intrigues of the Borgias (of any potential attraction. In an earlier essay, Levin maintains that "clown material can establish a contrast with the elevated main action and so heighten its seriousness, or it can function as parody to pull that action down to its own level."¹⁰

⁹ "'Three-Level' Play," p. 27.

¹⁰ "Elizabethan 'Clown' Subplots," Essays in Criticism, XVI (1966), 84.

This ambiguous effect is present in The Divils Charter. The base motivations of the accomplices serve to imbue the Borgias with a contrasting grandeur of aspiration. However, by parody of the resulting magic and intrigue, Barnes provides a thematic commentary on the folly of those aspirations.

The first detailed depiction of an accomplice is that of Frescobaldi in Act III, Scene ii. He is in the company of Cesare Borgia, who is still dressed as a Cardinal. Their opening dialogue is full of ironic statements:

Caes. Wilt thou performe it faithfully?

Fre. What I? will I liue to eate, to drinke, to sleepe?

Caes. Wilt thou performe it valiantly?

(III.ii.1296-98)

It must be remembered that the terms "faithfully" and "valiantly" are used in reference to a murder to be committed at night. Frescobaldi's reply, "will I liue to eate, to drinke, to sleepe?" is ironic since he is murdered with Candia and consequently is denied these pleasurable activities.

Frescobaldi presents his martial credentials in a series of bombastic exaggerations, culminating in his description of blowing up the Turks at Malta, having

... sent them capring vp to Capricornus.
Which when the wise Astronomers of Greece,
Prodigiously discovered from a farre.
They thought those Turcaes fiery meteors.
Which with their Pikes were pushing in the clouds,
The learned Booke-men writte strange Almanacks,
Of signes, and apparitions in the ayre.

(III.ii.1326-32)

The true extent of his heroic achievements is revealed later in the scene. Alone on stage, he informs the audience that:

I haue in the Burdelliaes and in other such/
houses of naturall recreation and agility, re-
ceiued three or/ foure score broken pates in my
time: and some bastinadoes for/ crossing court-
ing spicy-spirited inamoratoes in their humors./
Besides I was the first that from the Swisse quar-
ter, in the raigne/ of king Ferdinand brought vp
in his army the fashions of bow-/ sing and tow-
sing Greeke and Spanish wines by the flagon, with/
that old stinkard Henrico Baqlioni ...
(III.ii.1381-88)

His true qualities are revealed in a manner which deflates his original boasting and provides some comic entertainment. It is also an ironic comment on the supposed political expertise of Cesare who has been duped by such a scoundrel.

In the dialogue between Cesare and Frescobaldi, Barnes introduces satirical references to conjuring. Asked where he may be reached, Frescobaldi replies,

Faith for the most parte my mansion is in Ciui-
tauechia/... at signe of the glister pipe,/ where
if you chance to faile of mee. Within three houses
more at signe/ of the frying-panne you may com-
mande mee, at all houres in/ the fore-noone,

to which Cesare responds:

Well gramercie Frescobaldi I wil take the note
of those houses in my tables.

(III.ii.1337-44)

"Mansion," "signe," "commande," and "tables" are necroman-
tic terms referring to parts of the zodiac and the tables
of demons and star movements necessary to "commande" the

appearance of the Devil. These allusions continue the vein of imagery used in Frescobaldi's description of the mining of the Turks. The effect is twofold. It burlesques the later conjuring of Alexander; it also imbues the relationship between Frescobaldi and Cesare with a demonic quality, emphasizing their evil intent.

Barnes produces a similar dual effect by having Frescobaldi ape Cesare's style of speech. Cesare states: "My businessse and affaires are very great" (III.ii.1353). Six lines later Frescobaldi states:

My businessse and affaires are very great my
gratious Lord, one word more with your grace
my good Lord, and so I/ kisse your foote.

He whispereth with Caesar.
(III.ii.1359-61)

It transpires that this "one word" is a request for money. This aping emphasizes the empty pretensions and greedy disposition of Frescobaldi. It also tends to debase Cesare's assertion of the greatness of his own affairs. By using the same phrase to refer both to the murder of Candia and to the payment of gold to the assassin, Barnes thematically links the two activities. Both men are motivated essentially by greed.

Barnes also depicts the cynicism of each man towards his partner in crime. In an aside to the audience before he leaves the stage, Cesare states:

But that I keepe my secret to my selfe;
 I would not vse this slaue for any gold:
 Yet when I trust him he shall not deceiue me.

(III.ii.1372-74)

In addition to his open statement, Cesare's punning on "trust" (trussed) emphasizes the fate he has ultimately planned for Frescobaldi.

His prospective dupe, however, has equally cynical views. He acts only in a mercenary spirit and in his last speech of the scene informs the audience:

... I will second my Lord in any slaughter for
 his wages, / and if any man will giue me better
 hiers (when I haue seru'd the / Cardinalls turne)
 I will present my pistoll vpon his sacred per- /
 son afterward for charities sake.

(III.ii.1395-98)

In view of these sentiments, Frescobaldi's death at the hands of Cesare has an element of poetic justice. Once he has "seru'd the Cardinalls turne" he is of no further use, and is murdered by the very man he sought to exploit.

Frescobaldi's next, and last, appearance is in Act III, Scene v. He enters alone, delivering a melodramatic monologue which opens:

This is the black night, this the fatall hand:
 These are the bloody weapons which must be
 Witnesse and actors of this Tragedy.

(III.v.1468-70)

However, this sinister tone soon descends to farce. He practises fencing moves against a water conduit, at which

point his friend Henrico Baglioni enters unseen. Viewing his friend seemingly fencing the air, he mockingly addresses him: "what Pantaconger or Pantagruell/ Art thou that fightest with thy fathers soule" (III.v.1498-99). The reference to "thy fathers soule" appears to be a satiric allusion to the ghost convention of the Senecan tragedy popular on the Elizabethan stage. Hamlet comes to mind.

Their subsequent dialogue, which is sustained for one hundred lines, is a parody of magic and conjuring delivered in a mock heroic vein. Frescobaldi jokingly portrays himself as a fiend:

Come not within 9. furlongs of this place.
My name is Rubosongal the grimme ghost
Of Bembocamber king of Calicute.
And here for this night I keepe centrenell
For Muscopateron great king of flyes.
(III.v.1505-09)

Entering into the spirit, Baglioni attempts to conjure him with references to drink. Frescobaldi replies with bawdy military allusions, calling Baglioni a "Grand Capitaine" of "Marching fowle Amazonian trulls" who

... with their Targets neuer make retire,
From any breach till their foomen fire.
Rebating the stiffe pointes of their keene blades
Till all their champions masculiue proue Iades.
(III.v.1544-47)

Finally, delighted at having met each other, they "Embrace fantastically" (III.v.1554).

Although completely corrupt, the pair of rogues display an endearing camaraderie. They provide a thematic contrast (with Philippo and Astor Manfredi, who display deep love for one another, and Cesare and Candia who are "striving for priority" (I.iv.367)). Barnes provides three contrasting relationships. Frescobaldi and Baglioni are not as virtuous as the Manfredis, but their affection for one another is certainly more admirable than the cold antipathy existing between the Borgia brothers. Furthermore, by linking conjuring with drinking and whoring, Barnes produces an implicit criticism of the Pope's depraved behaviour. At the same time he achieves a comic effect, which, coming immediately before the murder of Candia, serves to heighten the tragic quality of his death.

Having arranged for them to meet the following day, Baglioni leaves the stage. Frescobaldi hides on stage and, at the appropriate moment, helps Cesare to ambush Candia. Throwing the body from the bridge, Frescobaldi makes the grim jest: "He wash him doubt you not of a new fashion" (III.v.1665), at which point, Cesare pushes him over the parapet with the cynical comment: "I thinke thou neuer hadst thy Christendome" (1666), a doubly cynical remark since Cesare is still, at this point of the play, a Cardinal.

Frescobaldi's part is relatively brief. Only three

hundred and seventy five lines separate his first and last entrances. In this short space of time Barnes has managed to create perhaps the liveliest character of the play. Although one cannot admire Frescobaldi, he does have an attraction. His bravado and lust for life make him a memorable figure. He does, of course, suffer the consequences of his actions. In his attempt to exploit Cesare, he is himself outwitted and killed. He reaps the fruit of his own petty avarice. His death illustrates a central theme of the play, that murder is punished in kind.

Following the death of Frescobaldi, Barnes depicts the rise and fall of the three remaining villains in just under three hundred lines. Their deaths, although violent and sudden, have an ironic appropriateness.

Having disposed of Frescobaldi, Cesare hires Baglioni. In Act V, Scene i, Cesare outlines the plan that Baglioni is to execute on his behalf. This involves the murder of Rotsi the physician, who it is implied, has furnished the poisons required by the Borgias. No motivation is given for this killing, the only inference being that Cesare wishes to eliminate a potentially dangerous witness. Baglioni willingly accepts the assignment, giving the following reason:

I had as good a spaniell for the water,
 As euer hunted ducke: and this true villaine
 Because my dog did eate vp a pannado
 Within his house; what did that Spanish roague?
 What did he thinke you my Lord?
 Marry very faire and instantly
 Poyson d my Spaniell with Rosa-solis,

(V.i.2696-2702)

The seemingly trivial offence which caused Rotsi to poison the dog, and the consequently insignificant motivation for Baglioni's revenge, parallels the murders perpetrated by the Borgias. They kill for more important ends, such as power and love, but their justification is still, in the moral sense, indefensible. Rotsi's action was both callous and vindictive; by analogy, the killings by the Borgias are even more so. Although Baglioni's phrase "that Spanish roague" refers to Rotsi, the audience would also recognize an allusion to Alexander and Cesare, both of whom were Spanish by birth.

In the dialogue between Cesare and Baglioni, Barnes once more depicts the cynical opportunism of master and servant. In an aside to the audience Cesare states:

Thus must I diue deepe in a villaines nature,
 And thus must saue a villaine from the gallows
 To play my partes in others purposes.
 The man whome I to benefit would choose,
 I must in matters of more moment vse:
 Or els I will not benefit a man,
 And cut him of in sequell if I can.

(V.i.2716-22)

This statement is followed by a dramatically ironic statement from Baglioni, who boasts:

If old Henrilico shrink in this service
 Casseir him, call him whip-stock, let him perish,
 For want of Spanish wines, and maluasie.

(V.i.2724-26)

Baglioni perishes, not from a deficit of wine, but by drinking the poisoned flagon, specially baited for him.

In an effective closing speech before he leaves the stage, Baglioni sums up the plight of ex-soldiers in his condition:

I like this trading better then the warres
 For there I serue for two ducates a month,
 And not a duck egge richer when I march
 And in continuall hazard of my life
 For which percase my peece kills twenty persons:
 Now shall I march in purse with many ducates,
 For one houres service but to kill one man,
 Free from all danger of mine enemy,

(V.i.2735-42)

Apart from the obvious moral condemnation of these sentiments, one cannot fault his logic. He is caught in a dilemma for which Cesare offers a tempting solution. Barnes curiously gives the minor figure of Baglioni perhaps the best behavioural motivation of the play. His soldiers are well depicted and it is tempting to assume that Barnes may have heard similar sentiments expressed during his service in Essex's campaign. Certainly Barnes seems to be at his best when able to draw on the type of situation of which he

probably had practical experience.

Baglioni leaves the stage, and Bernardo enters. He is alone on stage and, in an address to the audience, he cynically observes that:

When any deed of murther must be done,
 To serue his Holinesse, call for Bernardo.
 He must be principall or accessary
 To serue all purposes; for gold or pardone,
 The Pope giues both; and I can take them both.
 (V.i.2752-56)

His cynicism is in keeping with the attitude of the rest of the accomplices. Fully aware of the nature of his actions, he pursues them regardless. His linking of conscience and gold underlines the moral bankruptcy of the Pope. Alexander dispenses both pardons and bribes as the situation demands.

Rotsi makes his first and last appearance in this scene. He joins Bernardo on stage, and relates in grim detail the efficacy of his poison:

I tried them on three men condemn'd to death:
 For rapine and vile murther: but the first
 Within lesse then one quarter of an houre,
 Puft vp, grew leprous and his heart strings broake;
 Then did I giue allay the second time,
 Enter Baglioni with his peece.
 The second prizoner died within three houres.
 I did the third time mittigate a little,
 And saw when it was minister'd the third man,
 Who did within eight houres swell, rage and die.
 (V.i.2767-76)

The poisoning of the prisoners recalls his earlier poisoning

of Baglioni's dog. Neither action had any justification, and one feels that Rotsi's death is well deserved. Rotsi seems to be a purely functional character, introduced merely to illustrate by his death Cesare's Machiavellian acumen. He certainly has no effect on the action of the play, only appearing on stage to be murdered. Rotsi is instructed by Cesare to allow Baglioni to drink the baited flagon of wine. Baglioni in turn has been paid by Cesare to shoot Rotsi. Thus, both die on stage as a result of their avaricious haste to aid Cesare in his murderous designs. The scene is tailored for two ends. Firstly, by showing the deaths of the two villains on stage, Barnes demonstrates the reward of crime. Secondly, their deaths act as a prologue to the poisoning of Alexander and Cesare, whose downfall is thus seen as the culmination of a series of similarly well merited deaths, demonstrating the omnipotence and inevitability of God's justice.

While Rotsi is recounting his experiments, Baglioni enters and sets up his musket. In an ironic twist, Barnes has Baglioni drink the baited wine in a toast to his absent friend Frescobaldi. Unaware of the fact that he has been poisoned, Baglioni shoots Rotsi. He stands in triumph over the body and brags:

...where is your sublimatum/now sir? where is
 your Ratsbanatum now? now where are your/
 poysoned pullets in stued-broth? where bee they?
 you neuer/ dremp of a poysoned bullet, did you,
 goe too?

(V.i.2839-42)

In the midst of this triumphing Baglioni suddenly feels
 the poison taking effect. His tone changes from one of
 elation to one of despair. He cries out:

...alasse alasse what firie commotions I feele
 in/ my bodie gryping fretting and fuming, a
 plague on your/ bottle ale with a vengeance, I
 am peppered there is no reme-/ die...Deh veleno
dell Diabolo, fare-/ well farewell my old Sharc-
ordillio Frescobldi: farewell Madam/ Sempronia,
 for in conscience I am guilty of mine owne death
 oh/ the pangs of hell and purgatory.

(V.i.2852-59)

In this speech Barnes draws together several themes.
 Baglioni's poisoning at the very moment of his triumph
 parallels the next scene where Alexander and Cesare are
 poisoned at the high point of their achievements, the
 Pope offering the unknowingly ironic toast, "good successe
 and victory" (V.iv.2944). Baglioni's taunting question,
 "where is your sublimatum/ now sir?" is a thematic commen-
 tary on the downfall of the Pope. Alexander's poisons and
 plottings are of no avail when the time for him to die is
 at hand. Baglioni's likening of the effects of the poison
 to "the pangs of hell and purgatory" reinforces the conn-
 ection between Alexander's poisonings and his ultimate

damnation. Baglioni's comment that he is guilty of his own death is doubly significant. Physically he has brought about his own death by the drinking of the poisoned wine. He is also guilty spiritually in murdering Rotsi, and has thereby called down the wrath of God in the form of his own death.

Despite Baglioni's faults, however, his death does have a quality of pathos. His farewell to Frescobaldi and Madam Sempronia and his admission of guilt give a human quality to his fall which is lacking in the deaths of the other characters.

In the next scene (V.iv) the last accomplice, Bernardo, is murdered. Cesare and Alexander are poisoned, and Cesare, thinking that Bernardo is responsible, stabs him to death. In view of Bernardo's cynical comment that he could accept either gold or absolution, it is ironic that he is killed for a deed of which he is innocent.

Barnes makes effective dramatic use of the accomplices. Frescobaldi and Baglioni are especially well depicted. They possess a fulness of character delineation, whereas all the other characters, Alexander and Cesare included, tend often to be mere caricatures. All the accomplices are convincingly motivated in their actions. Their deaths serve to

underline the basic moral lesson of the play, that sin is always punished. At the same time, however, Barnes uses them for good comic entertainment. On the whole Barnes seems to succeed with these creations.

All the accomplices, despite their cynical attempts to exploit Cesare, are outwitted. Their downfall is the result of his successful intriguing. In view of the fact that Machiavelli mentions both Cesare Borgia and Alexander in his book Il Principe, and since in the play both these characters paraphrase the doctrines of Machiavelli, the next chapter traces the influence of Il Principe on The Devils Charter.

CHAPTER VI

MACHIAVELLIAN AND SENECA INFLUENCES IN THE DIVILS CHARTER

i) Machiavelli's Il Principe and the Elizabethan Response

The influence of Machiavelli on English Renaissance drama has been convincingly established.¹ Critics have differed only as to the source and extent of this influence. The Elizabethans allegedly manifested two quite differing responses to Machiavelli. The first was an informed, enlightened, but minority view, shared by those who had read Il Principe in an uncorrupted text. The other can best be termed the "popular" view. This was supposedly derived from the reading of Innocent Gentillet's Contre-Machiavel, published in French in 1576.

Gentillet's work was written from an anti-Catholic viewpoint, and depicted Machiavelli as a form of devil incarnate. It was translated into English in 1577, by Simon Patericke, but the translation was not published

¹ The standard work on this subject is still Edward Meyer's Machiavelli and the Elizabethan Drama (place of publication unknown, 1897; rpt. New York, n.d.). Since his work dates from the nineteenth century however, it should be noted that subsequent scholarship has modified some of his conclusions.

in England until 1602. It was usually assumed, since the first English printed translation of Il Principe was not published in England until 1640, that the Elizabethan reader only had access to the doctrines of Il Principe through the heavily biased Contre-Machiavel.

This view was first propounded by Edward Meyer. He stated that "it was from this 'Contre-Machiavel', published in 1576 (2nd ed. 1579),...that the Elizabethan dramatists drew, far more than from Machiavelli himself."² Speaking of Patericke's translation, he considered it of "paramount importance" that Patericke "expressly states, Machiavelli was not known in England up to 1577."³

This view was reiterated by Clarence V. Boyer who stated that

Until the appearance of Gentillet and Patericke, references in English literature to Machiavelli were comparatively few, and showed no disposition on the part of the authors to misinterpret his principles. But from that time on, scarcely a year was allowed to pass without references, either to the statesman or to his "policy", which showed a growing inclination to treat him as the fiend represented by Gentillet.⁴

This attitude is echoed by Wyndham Lewis in his book

² Meyer, p.9..

³ Ibid., p.21.

⁴ The Villain as Hero in Elizabethan Tragedy (New York, 1964), p.36.

The Lion and the Fox. He states that "it was in France that the Machiavelli 'scare' seems first to have started, and it was through the Contre-Machiavel of Gentillet that he first reached England."⁵

The first move towards questioning the supposedly overwhelming influence of Gentillet was made by Mario Praz in his lecture "Machiavelli and the Elizabethans." Here he pointed to several disparaging allusions to Machiavelli derived from Scottish sources dated as early as 1568.⁶ This was followed by Napoleone Orsini's substantial implicit criticism of the extent of Gentillet's influence. In his article "Elizabethan Manuscript Translations of Machiavelli's Prince," Orsini describes, for the first time, five extant Elizabethan manuscript translations.⁷ He does not mention Gentillet, but the demonstration that Il Principe was known in English before 1640 undermines the contention that the Elizabethans had read only the Contre-Machiavel.⁸ Orsini

5 (London, 1927), p.71.

6 Proceedings of the British Academy, Vol. XIII (London, 1928), p.4.

7 Journal of the Warburg Institute, I (1937-38), 166-9.

8 It should be noted that in the introduction to his critical edition of The Devils Charter Pogue makes the "highly misleading statement that "there were no translations of the Prince prior to 1640" (p.56).

dates one of the manuscripts as written in approximately 1584. As a result of this discovery Hardin Craig published an edition of one of these manuscripts in 1944.⁹

Irving Ribner, in his article "The Significance of Gentillet's Contre-Machiavel" attempts to qualify the extent of the influence of Gentillet's work. Ribner describes it as "merely one of the many church attacks upon Machiavelli which helped foster an already existent misconception."¹⁰

Apart from the Contre-Machiavel and the English manuscript translations, Il Principe was also available in England in an Italian text. John Wolfe, a London printer, successfully circumvented the ban on the printing of Il Principe by printing the work in Italian.¹¹ His edition of 1584, which had a false title page, purported to be printed in Palermo. That Machiavelli should have been read in Italian is not surprising. In her article "Italian Teachers in Elizabethan England," Francis Yates points out that there

⁹ Hardin Craig, ed. Machiavelli's 'The Prince', An Elizabethan Translation (Chapel Hill, 1944). All subsequent quotations are from this edition.

¹⁰ Modern Language Quarterly, X (1949), 157.

¹¹ For a good discussion of the type of Italian works being printed in Elizabethan London, and the presses involved, see John L. Lievsay, The Englishman's Italian Books, 1550-1700 (Philadelphia, 1969).

were "numbers of French and Italian Protestants in London, exiles from their countries on account of their religion, and many of these earned their living by teaching."¹² She maintains that "Italian was very vigorously taught and learnt in Elizabethan England" and that "the teachers were mainly (though not entirely) Italian natives of refugee origin, and that their lessons were an important channel by which the Italian influence reached England."¹³

Fortunately, the task of establishing that Barnes knew Il Principe is easy. Eccles points out that there is a copy of this work in the library of York Minster, with Barnes' signature on the fly leaf.¹⁴ How Barnes became acquainted with Il Principe is a matter of conjecture. He was a good friend of John Florio, the Italian teacher and translator, who probably taught him Italian. He also knew Gabriel Harvey who was well acquainted with Machiavelli's writings. Speaking of the vogue for Machiavelli's works at Cambridge, Harvey wrote to Edmund Spenser:

...I warrant you sum good fellowes amongst us
begin nowe to be prettely well acqwayntid with

¹² Journal of the Warburg Institute, I (1937-38), 104.

¹³ Ibid., pp. 115-116.

¹⁴ Eccles, p.236.

a certayne parlous byoke callid, as I remember me, Il Principe di Niccolo Macchiavelli, and I can peradventure name you an odd crewe or tooe that are as cuninge in his Discorsi sopra la prima Deca di Livio, in his Historia Fiorentina, and in his Dialogues della Arte della Guerra tooe....¹⁵

Thus it is known that, far from having to rely on Gentillet's biased paraphrasing of Machiavelli, the educated Elizabethan could have read the Italian text of Il Principe with facility. Barnes' university education would have brought the work well within his intellectual capabilities.

Speaking of the supposed influence of Gentillet, Felix Raab argues that

... as a piece of historical reasoning it has a number of flaws. In the first place, although Simon Patericke translated the Contre-Machiavel in 1577, only a year after it was written, the translation was not printed until 1602, by which time the Machiavellian villain had been a stock figure for some time. To argue that Patericke's translation exerted this tremendous influence in manuscript is clearly ridiculous in view of the proliferation of Machiavelli's works in England, nor is there any evidence that the French edition of Gentillet was being more widely read than Machiavelli in Italian, Latin, French, and English before 1602 or, for that matter, afterwards.¹⁶

The Devils Charter was written for performance before James I and a presumably well educated audience. It is a

¹⁵ The Works of Gabriel Harvey, ed. Alexander Grosart (London, 1884; rpt. New York, 1966), I, 138.

¹⁶ The English Face of Machiavelli (London, 1964), p.56.

fair assumption that they would have been acquainted with Il Principe through either the Italian, French, or Latin versions. This is not to deny, however, that their response to the play may not have been conditioned by the attitude of mind engendered by Gentillet's Contre-Machiavel.

ii) Il Principe and The Divils Charter

In The Divils Charter one is faced with both Elizabethan reactions to Machiavelli. There is the fairly accurate paraphrasing of Il Principe, introduced in the speeches of Alexander and Cesare. The reaction to Alexander, however, is conditioned by the "popular" view of him as a form of Devil incarnate and "Machiavellian" villain.¹⁷ The question is one of emphasis. The Gentillet engendered response to Italian vice in The Divils Charter stems basically from the vigorously anti-Catholic nature of the play, and not solely from the introduction of Machiavelli's political philosophy. Barnes increases the "popular" reaction to Alexander. By having him utter the actual maxims of Machiavelli, Barnes makes Alexander's villainy seem more realistic and convincing.

¹⁷ I use the term "Machiavellian" in its popular sense as a generally pejorative synonym for evil scheming, rather than an indication of a knowledge of Machiavelli's ideas.

The doctrines of Il Principe are expounded by Alexander and Cesare in Act I Scene iv, in the guise of advice to Alexander's elder son, Candia. Just before his two sons make their appearance, Alexander addresses the audience. He states that

...all my misty machinations
 And Counsels held with black Tartarian fiends
 Were for the glorious sunne-shine of my sonnes;
 That they might mounte in equall p̄raalel
 With golden maiesty like Saturnes sonne
 To darte downe fire and thunder on their foes.
 That, that was it, which I much desir'd
 To see my sonnes through all the world admir'd.
 (I.iv.340-47)

Thus, even before his sons appear on stage, their destined political intrigues are thematically linked with Alexander's demonic pact. Alexander's exhortation to his sons to "loue one another/ So either shal be strengthened by his brother" (400-01), is consequently doomed to failure. The stage directions for their entry require them to be "striving for priority," an action prophetic of the animosity which results from political ambition. This animosity eventually leads to Candia's murder.

The scene is very short and adds nothing to the development of the play. It is a tableau setting designed to illustrate the lack of moral principles within the family. The advice which is given to Candia is taken

directly from Il Principe.

Cesare criticizes Candia with the reproach, "Your heart is too much spic'd with honesty" (413). Alexander agrees, and offers the following advice:

You must not be so ceremonious
Of oathes and honesty, Princes of this world
Are not prickt in the bookes of conscience,
You may not breake your promise for a world:
Learne this one lesson looke yee marke it well,
It is not alwaies needfull to keepe promise,
For Princes (forc'd by meere necessity
To passe their faithfull promisses) againe
Forc'd by the same necessity to breake promise.
(I.iv.416-24)

It is interesting to compare this attitude with the doctrine expressed in chapter eighteen of Hardin Craig's edition of the Elizabethan manuscript of Il Principe. The chapter is entitled "Howe princes owght to keepe their faythe and promises." Here the reader is advised that

...a wise and prudent prince shoulde sticke noe longer to his promise then maye stande well with his proffitt, nor thincke himself noe longer bownde, to keape his othe then the cause remaynes that moved him to sweare. 18

Cesare next advises Candia:

If any Cedar, in your forrest spread,
And ouer-peere your branches with his top,
Provide an axe to cut him at the roote,
Suborne informers or by snares intrap
That King of Flies within the Spiders Webbe;
Or els insnare him in the Lions toyles.

18 Craig, p.75.

What though the multitude applaude his fame:
 Because the vulgar have wide open eares
 Mutter amongst them and possesse their hearts.
 That his designments wrought against the state
 By which yea wound him with a publicke hate.

(I.iv.428-36)

This is a summary of the sentiments found in chapter nineteen of Il Principe, the manuscript translation of which is entitled "Howe a prince owght to beware that he runn neither into contempte nor hatred of his Subiectes." Speaking of the relationship between the prince and his subjects, it points out "howe necessarie a thinge it is for the saftie of his estate to avoyde the hatred and contempte of his people and subiectes."¹⁹ The prince must take care not to offend his subjects since "yf they be offended he hath iust cause to feare. Yf they hate his person, he may catch harme by their practises."²⁰ The thematic irony of Cesare's advice is that he is the "axe" which literally cuts down his own brother. Candia is giving ear to the very attitudes which will condone his murder.

Alexander's next advice concerns a very specific topic, how to decide which faction of a conflict to support. He gives the following example:

¹⁹ Craig, p.78.

²⁰ Ibid., p.81.

Suppose two factious Princes, both thy friends
 Ambitious both, and both competitors,
 Advance in hostile armes against each other
 Ioyne with the strongest to confound the weake
 But let your wars foundation touch his Crowne,
 Your nearest Charity concerns your selfe;
 Els let him perish; yet seeme charitable.

(I.iv.446-52)

McKerrow in his notes to the play seems to have found this passage rather obscure.²¹ It is derived, however, from chapter twenty-one of Il Principe. Entitled "Howe a prince oughte to behaue himselfe to winne reputacion," the manuscript translation has this to say on the choice of factions:

Itt is also verie commendable in a prince to shewe himself either a professed frende, or an open enemy, that is to saye to be resollute to take parte with one syde, which is a muche saffer waye, then to shewe him selfe a newter. Ffor yf twoe mighty men that are borderers vppon his kingdom fall att variaunce and goe together by the eares, eyther he hath cause to feare him that shalbe Conquerour or he neede not care, in both cases it is his saffest waye, to enter into Armes and to professe himselfe a frende to one partie: in the firste yf he doth not he shalbe a praye for the conquerour and never pytied of him that is overcom. Neither hathe he anie righte or reason to alleage for himself why he shulde either be defended or releved of either parte; for the Conquerour will contemne such suspected frendes as refused to ayde him in tyme of neede and he that is overcom hath noe reason to succour him that did leave him succourlesse in his greatest extremity. 22

21 McKerrow, p.107.

22 Craig, p.100.

Thematically, the most interesting piece of advice comes from Alexander when he states:

Beleeue me Candy things are as they seeme,
 Not what they be themselues; all is opinion:
 And all this world is but opinion.
 Looke what large distance is twixt Heauen and Earth,
 So many leagues twixt wealth and honesty:
 And they that liue puling vpon the fruits
 Of honest consciences; starue on the Common.

(I.iv.456-62)

These sentiments accord well with the description of Alexander given in Il Principe. In chapter eighteen of the manuscript edition Machiavelli speaks of

...the late example of Pope Alexander the vj
 whoe bendinge his mynde to mischeeffe employed
 all his witt to wilines, and accomptinge it well
 gotten that he had compassed by crafte never
 made bones to deceve any man that beleued him,
 of whom he mett a greate manie in his tyme.
 There was never anie man woulde affirme a thinge
 with more substantiall reasons, or sweare it
 with more solempne religion, or perfoorme it
 with soe sleight regarde...for he was his craftes
 maister.....23

It is possible that Barnes inserted these paraphrases of Il Principe knowing that his audience would recognise their source, thereby imparting a degree of realism to his portrayal of the Borgia family. However, it should be emphasized that Machiavelli's ideas are well integrated with the moral scheme of the play.

The precepts of Il Principe are introduced to emphasize the ruthless nature of the Borgias. The one conspicuous opponent of these doctrines is, of course, Candia. Barnes uses him as a foil to state the orthodox and desirable moral viewpoint, by his emphasis on conscience as the arbiter of conduct. In response to Alexander's opinion that "things are as they seeme," Candia replies:

Vnder correction of your Holinesse,
 Those warres which vertue leuies against vice,
 Are onely knowne to some particulers
 Which haue them wrytten in their consciences.
 Those are the same they seeme....

(I.iv.467-71)

Barnes here maintains that conscience is not a matter of mere opinion, but an absolute standard for moral behaviour.

Alexander's opinion that "all is opinion" has disastrous results for himself. In the last scene of the play he discovers that he has misinterpreted the wording of the contract with the Devil. He is tricked by a piece of legalistic deceit and falls into the snare prepared by the Devil. By the deliberately ambiguous draft of the contract the Devil himself assumes the character of a "Machiavellian" villain, using treachery and deceit to overcome his victim.

As Mario Praz points out:

So much did the terms Machiavelli and Satan
 become interchangeable that, whereas at first

the tricks attributed to Machiavelli were called devilish, later on the Devil's own tricks were styled 'Machiavellian'By an inversion of the process which had resulted in describing Machiavelli as a devil, the Devil himself became tinged with Machiavellism. 24

This development of the Devil as a stage figure is well illustrated in the play. In another piece of treachery the Devil swaps the poisoned wine bottles, in Act V Scene iv, to bring about the death of Alexander. The Devil secures his damnation, catching him unawares, in a state of sin and unable to repent.

Demonstrating a singular inability to appreciate the basic technique of the play, Clarence Boyer criticizes this aspect of The Devils Charter. He complains that the Devil

...descends to the level of the Vice in the Moralities by stealing into the buttry and changing the position of a bottle of poisoned wine...finally the catastrophe on its realistic side does not spring from any previous act of the Pope's. He is not poisoned because he has poisoned others, but because the Devil is a practical joker. Moreover, the necessity of his dying by poison at all is entirely superfluous if his time to die has come by the terms of the compact. It is suggested, indeed, that the Devil has seen fit to end Alexander's life on the appointed day by the same means which the Pope has employed to advance his worldly prosperity, but there is a conflict here between the supernatural motive and the rational....25

24 Praz, p.35.

25 Boyer, p.186.

The only confusion is on the part of Boyer in failing to appreciate Barnes' intention. The Devil appears reminiscent of the "Vice in the Moralities" simply because the whole play is written in a Morality vein. It is one of the ironies of the play that the arch poisoners are themselves poisoned. Fenton's statement that God "breaketh the brands of the fyre upon the head of him that first kindled it"²⁶ sums up the moral outlook implicit in Barnes' treatment of the Borgias. Alexander is poisoned not because the Devil is a "practical joker," but because the moral scheme of the play requires a just retribution for misdeeds. Boyer misses the point that practically all the deaths in the play demonstrate a poetic justice related to the past crimes of the victim.

At the end of Act I Scene iv in which Machiavelli's doctrines are expounded, Cesare Borgia is left alone on stage. In the closing speech he informs the audience:

By this time is my faire Lucretia,
 Befitted for a businesse of bloud,
 Neerely concerning her estate and mine.

(543-45)

This leads into Scene v where Lucretia murders her husband.

The thematic inference here is that murder is the natural

²⁶ Fenton, p.235.

outcome of the doctrines espoused by Alexander and Cesare. Act I Scene iv is not only a dramatization of the basic philosophy of the Borgias. Thematically it immediately precedes the train of murders that lead to the downfall of the entire family. Their subsequent calamities may be viewed as the necessary outcome of adopting "Machiavellian" attitudes. Moral decline brings in its wake physical disaster.

iii) The Influence of Seneca

In his lecture cited earlier, Mario Praz makes the interesting observation that

Though the legend of Machiavelli had been very popular in general, it had enjoyed the greatest vogue with the dramatists, first of all because it had fitted very well the stock character of the villain of Senecan extraction.²⁷

Praz argues that the "Machiavellian" villain replaced the Senecan villain because he presented contemporary political ideas rather than merely echoing the Senecan tragedies. The Elizabethans found the "Machiavellian" villain more relevant to their own period.

Although the Senecan-Machiavellian villain developed as a stage figure, his vices still continued to be treated

²⁷ Praz, p.46.

in the old moralistic vein. W.A. Armstrong in his essay "The Influence of Seneca and Machiavelli on the Elizabethan Tyrant" points out that "Seneca's hostile treatment of the tyrant in his tragedies was as congenial to Elizabethans as Machiavelli's amoral portrait of Il Principe was repulsive to them."²⁸ Senecan and Machiavellian material provided ideal targets for the Elizabethan moralist. Armstrong points out that "like overweening Satan, the usurping tyrant is inevitably punished, for the Elizabethan treatment of his career follows a strict pattern of elaborate poetic justice."²⁹

Although McKerrow does not cite any specific borrowing from Seneca, The Devils Charter is obviously subject to Senecan influence. In his excellent study The Influence of Seneca on Elizabethan Tragedy, John Cunliffe states that "the most important inheritance of English tragedy in this respect was the Ghost."³⁰ He also points out the "important part played in Seneca's tragedies by supernatural agencies of all kinds."³¹

28 Review of English Studies , XXIV (January, 1948), 20.

29 Ibid., p.19.

30 (London, 1893; rpt. Connecticut, 1965), p.44.

31 Ibid.

The function of the Senecan ghost is to call for revenge, usually of an unpunished murder. This most obvious influence occurs in The Devils Charter in Act IV Scene i. Here the ghost of Candia appears on stage "gastly haunted by Caesar persuing and stabbing it" (1803-4). This apparition is followed by the ghost of Gismond Viselli "his wounds gaping and after him Lucrece vndrest, holding a dagger fix't in his bleeding bosome" (1811-13). Barnes has here integrated the Senecan ghost with the Sorcerer play tradition of raising demonic spirits. The sight of Gismond Viselli's ghost moves Alexander to avenge his death by the murder of Lucretiá.

Armstrong also points out another Senecan convention which was imitated by the Elizabethan dramatists, namely:

...the characteristic device of introducing a discussion of rule and obedience between a tyrant and a subordinate characterWith an epigrammatic terseness, Senecan tyrants praise forms of government which the Elizabethan moralists abhorred as the worst abuses of kingship.³²

The discussion of Machiavelli's doctrines as expounded by Alexander and Cesare, and the antithetical moral viewpoint propounded by Candia, can be seen as stemming from this tradition. As Henry Wells points out:

³² Armstrong, p.21.

Both directly and indirectly Seneca deeply influenced Elizabethan political moralists. Among his maxims dramatically stated are cynical propositions often identical with maxims regarded by the Elizabethans as newly sanctioned by Machiavelli. The first fifty lines of Act Two of Thyestes, of all Seneca's plays the most popular among Elizabethans, contain, for example, some of the best known "Machiavellian" commonplaces..... 33

Another Senecan characteristic mentioned by Armstrong is:

The villain-hero who is imbued with a vicious passion and who is a member of a family which is disintegrating beneath a curse brought upon it by ancestral sin.³⁴

In The Devils Charter the "vicious passion" is Alexander's ambition. The "ancestral sin" is his pact with the Devil. This sin taints the whole family and eventually leads to its annihilation.

Perhaps the most substantial manifestation of Senecan influence on The Devils Charter is the didactic manner in which the play is written. Seneca was viewed by his Elizabethan translators as essentially a moralist. Thomas Newton, in the dedication to his 1581 translation of Hercules Furens, says of Seneca:

33 "Senecan Influence on Elizabethan Tragedy: A Re-estimation," The Shakespeare Association Bulletin, XIX (1944), 78.

34 Armstrong, p.22.

I doubt whether there bee any amonge all the Catalogue of Heathen wryters, that with more grauity of Philosopically sentences, more waigh-tynes of sappy words, or greater authority of sound matter beateth downe sinne, loose lyfe, dissolute dealinge, and unbrydled sensuality: or that more sensibly, pithily, and bytingly layeth downe the guedon of filthy lust, cloaked dissimulation and odious treachery: which is the dryft, whereunto he leueleth the whole yssue of ech one of his Tragedies. 35

The Divils Charter shares this moral intention in its demonstration of the outcome of vicious living. Speaking of the calamities about to befall the family, Guicciardine as chorus points out that

These be the visible and speaking shewes,
That bring vice into detestation,
Vnnaturall murthers, cursed poysonings,
Horrible exorcisme, and Inuocation,
In them examine the rewarde of sinne.

(III.v.1697-1701)

As with most plays of the period, The Divils Charter is an amalgam of many different influences. The character and treatment of Alexander is well summarized by Armstrong's assertion that "in his composite wickedness, the usurping king of Elizabethan tyrant-tragedy is therefore a characteristic Renaissance synthesis of Roman, Christian, and Machiavellian ideas."³⁶

³⁵ Lucius Annaeus Seneca, Seneca His Tenne Tragedies translated into English, ed. Thomas Newton (London, 1581; rpt. Bloomington, 1964), p.5.

³⁶ Armstrong, p.35.

Although the villain was derived from many disparate origins, the treatment of his villainy was essentially one of Christian moralizing on the rewards of sin. Barnes' didactic intention was facilitated by the already established moralistic vein of the Senecan tragedies which focused on the figure of the tyrant. Barnes, by the choice of his subject matter, gave a more up to date setting for an already well established dramatic tradition.

CHAPTER VII

MAGIC AND THE DIVILS CHARTER

i) The Source of the Magic

The derivation of Barnes' knowledge of magic is unknown. Dr. McKerrow points out that the legend of a pact between Alexander and the Devil appears in a number of continental sources.¹ However, the magic in the play itself is taken from Petrus de Abano's work, Heptameron, seu Elementa Magica.² Dr. McKerrow states that there was no English translation of this work prior to 1655.³ However, Lynn Thorndyke, in his work A History of Magic and Experimental Science, states that it was "printed together with the Occult Philosophy of Henry Cornelius Agrippa in Latin at Paris, 1565, and in 1600 and 1655 in English translation."⁴

It appears, therefore, that Barnes could either have read the Latin version bound with Agrippa's work, or the 1600

1 McKerrow, pp. viii-ix.

2 Ibid., p.xi.

3 Ibid., p.xi-xii.

4 (New York, 1958) II, 925.

English translation. That Abano was known in England before 1600 is evidenced by Christopher Marlowe's play, Doctor Faustus, in which Valdes, a scholar, advises Faustus to "haste thee to some solitary grove, And bear wise Bacon and Albanus' works" (I.i.152-3).⁵ Just before this Faustus has declared it his intention to be "as cunning as Agrippa was" (I.i.115). Abano's work was considered to be an occult manual which gave detailed instructions for the raising of demons.

Barnes appears to have been on the fringe of a group of men who had plenty of opportunity to become acquainted with occult practices. He was a good friend of Gabriel Harvey, whom he supported in his feud with Nashe.⁶ Harvey possessed several manuscripts on the occult.⁷ Barnes was also on very good terms with two close friends of the Hermeticist and Cabalistic magician, Giordano Bruno. He was a good friend of John Florio, who was one of Bruno's closest associates in England.⁸ Barnes also knew Dr. Tobie Matthew, who was an old

⁵ Ed. Roma Gill, The New Mermaids Series (London, 1969). All subsequent quotations are taken from this edition.

⁶ Eccles, p.173.

⁷ See Virginia Stern, "The BIBLIOTHECA of Gabriel Harvey," Renaissance Quarterly, XXV, Number 1 (Spring, 1972), 50-51.

⁸ See Francis Yates, John Florio (Cambridge, 1934), p.138.

friend of the Barnes family.⁹ Bruno specifically mentioned Dr. Matthew as one of the few men to offer him hospitality and friendship during his stay at Oxford.¹⁰

Bruno himself was well acquainted with Agrippa's works. Francis Yates states that Bruno derived his knowledge of Cabala "direct from his bible, that is to say from the occult philosophy of Cornelius Agrippa."¹¹ It is therefore more than likely that Bruno was well acquainted with Abano's work, which was similar in intention to Agrippa's De occulta philosophia and often bound with it in the early printed editions.

Whether Barnes discovered Abano's work through his own reading, or via mutual friends of Bruno, is pure conjecture. What is certain is that Barnes was well acquainted with men who had an interest in the occult, and who had known Giordano Bruno during his stay in England (1583-5). Bruno was at that time one of the leading exponents of Cabalistic magic in Europe.

⁹ Eccles, p.174.

¹⁰ See Dorpthea Singer, Giordano Bruno, His Life and Thought (New York, 1950), p.39.

¹¹ Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition (New York, 1969), p.258.

ii) Magic as Dramatic Spectacle

Apart from the theological interest of magic, that is, the inherent thematic potential of a pact between a conjurer and the Devil and the attendant danger of damnation, magic also provides ideal opportunities for dramatically spectacular effects. Barnes made good use of these opportunities but at the same time used these visual effects to complement the basic themes of the play.

The Devils Charter opens, after the speeches of the Prologue and Guicciardine, with an elaborate dumb show. Guicciardine informs the audience that the purpose of the dumb show is to "present vnto your eyes...by what vngodly meanes and Art,/ Hee [Alexander] did attaine the Triple-Diadem" (22-25). The instructions for the dumb show are detailed. They require that

At one doore betwixt two other Cardinals, Roderigo in his purple habit close in conference with them, one of which hee guideth to a Tent, where a Table is furnished with diuers bagges of money, which that Cardinall beareth away: and to another Tent the other Cardinall, where hee deliuereth him a great quantity of rich Plate, imbraces, with ioyning of hands. Exeunt Card. Manet Roderigo. To whome from an other place a Moncke with a magical booke and rod, in priuate whispering with Roderick, whome the Monke draweth to a chaire on midst of the Stage which hee circleth, and before it an other Circle, into which (after semblance of reading with exorcismes) appeare exhalations of lightning and sulphurous smoke

in midst whereof a diuill in most vgly shape:
from which Roderigo turneth his face, hee beeing
coniured downe after more thunder and fire, as-
cends another diuill like a Sargeant with a mace
vnder his girdle: Roderigo disliketh. Hee disc-
endeth: after more thunder and fearefull fire,
ascend in robes pontificall with a triple Crowne
on his head, and Crosse keyes in his hand;...
and from him disroabed is put the rich Cap the
Tunicle, and the triple Crowne set vpon Alexan-
der's head, the Crosse-keyes deliuered into his
hands; and withall a magicall booke: this donne
with thunder and lightning the diuills descend:

(29-57)

There are several important symbolic actions in this sequence. Alexander is dressed in the same style as the two Cardinals. Thus the opening action tends to illustrate the corporate corruption of the Catholic Church. The two cardinals are willingly bribed. Barnes is visually interpreting Fenton's assertion that Alexander "bought by the consent and knowledge of everyone, partly for money and partly with promises of offices...many voices of the Cardinals."¹² The bribery of the cardinals commences the dumb show in which Alexander sells his soul. Thus Barnes portrays the demonic pact as the product of Alexander's overwhelming ambition. The pact with the Devil is part of Alexander's overall bid to acquire the Papacy. The whole dumb show can be seen as a visual depiction of the dangers of ambition. Lesser sins may lead the sinner into worse actions

¹² Fenton, p.3.

which secure his damnation.

By having a "Moncke" raise the Devil Barnes enhances the anti-Catholic nature of the play, depicting demonic magic being practised by the Catholic clergy. It is possible that Barnes had in mind Faustus' advice to the Devil to "Go and return an old Franciscan Friar, / That holy shape becomes a devil best" (Doctor Faustus, I.iii,26-27).

The forms in which the Devil appears are symbolically important. He first appears as a "Sargeant with a mace under his girdle." The Oxford English Dictionary defines "sargeant" as "An officer whose duty is to enforce the judgements of a tribunal or the commands of a person in authority; one who is charged with the arrest of offenders or the summons of persons to appear before the court." A "sargeant" is indicative of authority, but the symbol is thematically ambiguous. It implies that the Devil is Alexander's servant. However, it also implies the arrest of Alexander's soul, and anticipates the ending of the play where he is carried to Hell by devils.

Alexander finds this form displeasing and the Devil reappears dressed in the Papal robes of office. This image visually associates the Papacy with the Devil. It is a propagandistic statement on the moral worth of the

Catholic Church. The passing of the Papal robes from Devil to Pope underlines their close relationship, and brings the office of the Pope into disrepute.

Another instance of the association of magic and the Devil, which is used for visual effect, occurs in Act V Scene v. This scene prefigures Alexander's damnation. The devils meet in triumph to recite the pains of Hell awaiting the Pope. They list its torments:

Bel. ...I with poysned toads will stop his mouth,
Whose heart was neuer satisfied with lust.

Asta. And I with snakes and stinging Scorpions
Will scourge him for his pride and insolence.

Var. And I with force of fiends will hall his limmes,
And pull them till he stretch an acre length.

Bel. And for His auarice I will fill his paunch,
With store of moulten gold and boyling leade.

Asto. Then let vs for his sake a horne-pipe treade.

They dance an antick.

(V.v.3005-14)

The torments of Hell have a grim appropriateness. The arch poisoner is to be punished with poisoned toads and scorpions; molten gold will be the reward of his overwhelming avarice. The Hell described is thoroughly medieval in its emphasis on physical suffering. Having catalogued his faults, the devils dance the "antick," which is, in effect, a dance of the triumph of Death. The delight of the devils in the snaring of Alexander's soul is obviously expressed in the manner of the dance, which provides lively stage entertainment. Although the scene is short, and adds little to the development

of the play, it was obviously intended as a form of diversion before the serious final scene. It seems that Barnes wished to fix in the mind of the audience the inevitability of Alexander's damnation. Forewarned of the outcome, the audience is primed to view the final discussion between Alexander and the Devil not as a possible means of escape, but as a dialogue designed to illustrate the folly of Alexander's pact.

The last scene of the play contains an effective visual "discovery" of the Devil on stage. Although poisoned, Alexander feels secure. His misreading of the contract has led him to believe that he has many more years to live. However, he wishes to be reassured, and states:

...though in security
Once more I will with powrefull exorcismes,
Inuoke those Angells of eternall darkenesse
To shew me now the manner of death.

Alexander draweth the Curtaine of his studie where hee discouereth the diuill sitting in his pontific-als, Alexander crosseth himselfe starting at the sight.

(V.Vltima. 3064-70)

The violent juxtaposition between Alexander's desire to be reassured and the sudden revelation of the Devil wearing the Papal vestments is visually and thematically effective. Thematically, it symbolizes the Devil claiming his victim. It recalls the opening dumb show of the play, when Alexander

received his Papal vestments from the Devil. Visually, the implication is that the Devil is repossessing the powers which he gave. It must be remembered that in the whole of the subsequent discussion, the Devil is dressed in the Papal robes, whilst Alexander is himself "unbraced." Alexander presents the inferior figure, which emphasizes his moral bankruptcy and subjection to the Devil.

In Alexander's last appearance on stage he is surrounded by devils who "enter with a noise incompassing him" (3269-70). The stage directions call for "Thunder and lightning with fearefull noise the diuells thrust him downe and goe Triumphiq" (3277-78). This is, of course, reminiscent of their earlier dance of triumph at the thought of his damnation.

Barnes not only used magic for spectacular effect, he made the visual spectacles reminiscent of one another to produce a thematic unity. In his book The Elizabethan Dumb Show, Dieter Mehl, talking of the origins of the form, links this device to earlier pageant and popular spectacles. He maintains that the dumb show is

...an outcome of a characteristic trend of the time, the desire to make abstract spiritual experiences and conflicts visible as concrete scenes and to impress a moral idea on the

spectators, by appealing directly to the senses.¹³
 This is precisely the effect of Barnes' visual devices.
 The abstract idea of Alexander's alliance with evil is ably depicted by the dumb show in which the Devil gives him the Papal robes. The abstract idea of the corruption of the Catholic Church is portrayed by the bribery of the two cardinals. The triumph of evil is depicted in the dance of death. Barnes was sufficiently adept to employ magic not only as an excuse for visual effects, but also as a complementary commentary on the moral themes of the play.

iii) Magic, Damnation, and Justice

The Prologue links magic, damnation and justice. It advises the audience to

Behold the Strumpet of proud Babylon,
Her Cup with fornication foaming full
Of Gods high wrath and vengeance for that euill,
Which was imposd vpon her by the Diuill.

(7-10)

The theme of justice is further developed by Guicciardine's punning reference to himself as sent from the "bright Starre-Chamber of eternall soules" (13). In so far as the Court of Star Chamber was set up to enforce ecclesiastical matters, the allusion is particularly appropriate.

¹³ (London, 1965), p.17.

Since the play was performed before James I, it is interesting to note his opinion of the relationship between conjuror and Devil. In his Daemonologie, the narrator, asked how it is that devils can be controlled by human beings, replies:

Yea, they may be: but it is onelie secundum quid: For it is not by anie power that they can haue over him, but ex pacto allanerlie: whereby he oblices himself in some trifles to them, that he may on the other part obtaine the fruition of their body & soule, which is the onlie thing he huntēs for.¹⁴

Similar sentiments are voiced by Cesare in The Divils Charter. Accused by his father of the murder of Candia, he replies, "A plague vpon your diuills you deale with them,/ That watch more narrowly to catch your soule" (IV.ii.1893-4).

Alexander's opening speech comes rather late in the play, in Act I Scene iv. To this point Barnes has been depicting Alexander as the personification of evil. However, when Alexander makes his debut he is depicted as a human figure afflicted with doubts as to the wisdom of his pact with the Devil. He says:

With what expence of money plate and jewels
This Miter is attayn'd my Coffers wnesse:
But Astaroth my couenant with thee
Made for this soule more pretious then all treasure,

¹⁴ (Edinburgh, 1597), p.9; ed. G.B.Harrison (New York, 1966).

Afflicts my conscience,....

(327-31)

Although conscious of the worth of his soul and undergoing fleeting second thoughts, his ambition for his sons overcomes his spiritual apprehensions. Alexander exchanges the salvation of Heaven for the delights of temporal power on Earth. The irony of his bargain is that, unlike Faustus or Friar Bacon, Alexander is never allowed the first fruits of a seemingly beneficial alliance with the Devil. For him, conjuring only leads inexorably to more sin and suffering.

The only scene in which Alexander actually raises the Devil is Act IV Scene i. The ceremony is quite detailed. Just before Alexander appears on stage, Guicciardine in his role as chorus has informed the audience that in the following action of the play they may "examine the reward of sinne" (1701). The subsequent scene of conjuring must be viewed in this light. Not only is it an unwitting exposé by Alexander of Cesare's guilt, it is also the cause of his decision to commit murder.

When the scene opens, Alexander is "beholding a Magicall glasse" in which he sees the murder of his son, Candia. He cannot identify the assassin, and decides to call up the Devil to obtain this information. Alexander declares it his intention to raise "All the great diuills to shew the

murderer" (1736). The audience knows that Cesare is the culprit and is thus in a position to appreciate the irony of Alexander's remark. Cesare is one of the "great diuills" to be raised.

The scene contains much visual spectacle, but it is its thematic importance which should be stressed. It marks the beginning of Alexander's decline. The Devil is raised as a "King, with a red face crowned imperially riding vpon a Lyon" (1764-65). This emblem appears to refer to the Bible, for in the First Epistle of Peter, chapter five, verse eight, the reader is advised to "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." This emblem would emphasize for the audience the spiritual dangers confronting Alexander. The Pope's political treachery is depicted as the result of his league with the Devil. The fiend informs Alexander that his conjurations have called him from:

...strong busines of high state,
From sure subuersions and high mutations
Of mighty Monarches, Emperors, and Kings,
From plotting bloody feilds and massacres,
Triumphant treasons and assassinated.

(IV.i.1773-77)

The implication is that a league with the Devil is sure to lead to political duplicity and disaster.

At Alexander's request the Devil proceeds to show

Candia's murderer on stage. This is a dramatically effective moment. The audience, forewarned of the identity of the assassin, is prepared to savour the shock of Alexander's discovery. The Devil proceeds to show the ghost of Candia being stabbed by Cesare. Horrified at the sight, Alexander cries, "Hold, hold, hold, hold; per todos santos now no more, Caesar hath kill'd a brother and a father" (1805-6).

Alexander's ambition for the advancement of his sons has led one to kill the other. Cesare has become the unwitting instrument of God's punishment of Alexander's sinful ambition.

His anguish is further increased by a following vision of his daughter Lucretia murdering her husband, Gismond Viselli. Alexander cries out, "no more no more, my soule disolues" (1814). The irony of his situation is that the services of the Devil, which were his reward for selling his soul, far from being of benefit, have resulted in the anguish of these discoveries. Alexander has to face the fact that his children are even more corrupt and depraved than himself. The behaviour of his children, far from moving him to repentance, however, merely spurs Alexander on to new heights of wickedness. He dispatches his servant Bernardo to Lucretia's house to deliver the poison which is

destined to kill her. He also resolves to murder Astor Manfredi to obtain his lands. The father who has corrupted his children is in turn further corrupted by their own pernicious example.

Alexander voices the moral of the scene. Ambition has corrupted the entire family to the point where even the ties of kinship are no safeguard against assassination. To succeed, ambition must be ruthlessly pursued. As he points out,

Sonnes, Nephewes, Daughters, Concubines, shall die.
 My conscience is turn'd mercies enemy,
 He that would rise to riches and renowne
 Must not regard though he pull millions downe.
 (1843-46)

Magic has served a twofold purpose in the scene. It has caused Alexander to suffer the realization of his children's guilt. By bringing the murder of Gismond Viselli to light, it has also caused Lucretia to be punished by her father's planned revenge. Instead of resolving matters, it has pushed Alexander further along the path of damnation by having him countenance the murder of Lucretia and Astor Manfredi. The implication is that no good will ever come of conjuring, and that events are only revealed by the Devil as a device to further ensnare Alexander in a web of evil.

The final scene of the play most obviously links the themes of magic, justice and damnation, when Alexander is carried to Hell for his crimes. The ending has an obvious similarity to Doctor Faustus. However, the differences in technique and intention between the two plays need to be stressed.

The ending of Doctor Faustus is the anguished soliloquy of an isolated tragic figure, doomed to Hell. Faustus is a tragic hero. Although the audience cannot condone his actions, it can sympathize with his human predicament. The high point of Faustus' tragedy is his final hour of torment before his death. His despair is his tragedy; he dies devoid of all hope of salvation.

To look for the same type of dramatic ending in The Devils Charter is to miss the point of Barnes' intention. The play is, despite its moments of bloody melodrama, basically homiletic in tone. The tragic loss of the soul which is implicit in the fall of Faustus, has to be overtly demonstrated in The Devils Charter.

The different approaches of the two plays is well illustrated by the depiction of the main characters. In the final scene, Faustus is alone on stage, an isolated figure. Alexander, however, is on stage with the Devil.

They engage in a didactic debate on the qualities of the soul which are recited, not to add any tragic element to the play, but merely for the spiritual instruction of the audience. Although it is a dry, theological debate, Barnes manages to achieve a thematic irony by making Alexander the unwitting commentator on his own folly. His final argument against his damnation is that

...my soule is Gods
 Whose habitacle is prepar'd in heauen.
 First it doth know God being figured
 According to that Image of himselfe,
 And then the world whose liuely shape it beares,
 (V.Vltima.3170-74)

to which the Devil replies:

These things should haue beene thought vpon before,
 The summum bonum which liues in the soule,
 Is an eternall pleasure to behold,
 And haue fruition of the mightie power,
 Which thou didst neuer see nor canst enjoy.
 (V.Vltima. 3182-86)

It is an effective piece of irony that the Devil knows more of the value of the soul than does Alexander. The Pope, by cataloguing the virtues of his soul, only succeeds in emphasizing his stupidity in making the pact with the Devil.

In his desire to learn the fate of his son Cesare, Alexander makes one last request, to see the future. In response to this request, the Devil "bringeth from the doore Lucreciaes Ghost, and after her the ghost of Candie stabbed"

(3225-26). The Devil interprets this vision for the benefit of Alexander and the audience:

By that which represents Lucretia,
 Leprous and poisoned is thy death declar'd,
 By poyson which struggleth with thy spirits,
 And by that other which sets out to thee,
 The murder of thy sonne the Duke of Candy,
 Prefigur'd is the death of thy sonne Caesar,
 Thou for the poysoning of thy daughter poysoned t
 He for the murthering of his brother murdered.
 (3228-35)

The justice of God is the justice of the Old Testament, an eye for an eye. Murder is punished by murder. In his penultimate speech of the play, Alexander drives home the moral of his own fall:

Learne miserable wretched mortall men,
 By this example of a sinfull soule,
 What are the fruites of pride and Auarice,
 Of cruell Empire and impietie,
 Of prophanation and Apostacie,
 Of brutish lust, falsehood, and perfidie,
 Of deepe dissembling and hypocrisie,
 Learne wicked worldlings, learne, learne, learne by me
 To saue your soules, though I condemned be.
 (3239-47)

This overtly stated moral sums up the whole intention of the play. It is in essence a series of moral examples. The audience is exhorted not to follow the follies of those on stage.

Barnes effectively managed to integrate magic with the wider moral purpose of the play. Alexander dies as the result of God's omnipotent vigilance which will, in the last

analysis, always inflict the requisite punishment. Alexander is betrayed by the Devil, to whom he has sold his soul.

The Devil is the instrument of God's justice; it is the ultimate irony of the play that evil should be defeated by the Devil.

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VITA AUCTORIS

- 1960-1967 Sir Joseph Williamson's Mathematical School,
Rochester, Kent.
- 1967-1970 Student at University College Swansea, University
of Wales. Graduated in 1970 with Bachelor of
Arts Degree.
- 1970-72 Worked in the Estate Duty Office in London and
studied Law at The City of London College, Univer-
sity of London.
- 1972-73 Master of Arts Degree, University of Windsor.