***“The spirits tell me they can dry the sea,***

***And fetch the treasures of all foreign wrecks.”***

Edward The Second ~ Christopher Marlowe.

…..CRITICAL EVALUATION:

~ **RITUPARNA RAY CHAUDHURI...**

***“I can no longer keep me from my lord.”***

According to the historical sources King Edward was Prince of Wales under whose inefficient reign, the kingdom, which was consolidated by his predecessors, collapsed. His reign was one of the most ruinous in English history. The main causes of his fall were his love for pleasure and attachment to favourites, especially his passion for his friend Gaveston.

Marlowe like Shakespeare does not follow the classical conception that destiny shapes the characters. On the contrary, we find that character himself is responsible for his actions in the drama. Marlowe was of the opinion that the inner nature of a person makes or mar his destiny. This fact is evident in the play Edward the Second.

Edward II is different from all other heroes of Marlowe, who are embodiments of the sublimity of super-human invincibility of will and indomitable urge. On the urge for maintaining the highest laurels of dignity, he fails to have faith in his will and determination. He is not endowed with unfailing courage and indomitable fortitude like Dr. Faustus or Tamburlaine.

From the very beginning of the play the impression that the playwright gives us about the king is that he is an incapable person to rule. It is clear from his invitation to Gaveston, who was banished by his King father. He says, “My father is deceased. Come Gaveston, and share the kingdom with thy dearest friend.” Thus, he immediately after his enthronement loses the goodwill and affection of his nobles. The nobles openly flout his orders and take up the banner of rebellion against him and do not seem to have any respect for the King. We, therefore, form an unattractive impression about him and are correct in our opinion to some extent that he cannot be a successful ruler and is destined to meet a tragic end.

**“From the jigging veins of rhyming mother-wits,**

**And such conceits as clownage keeps in pay,**

**We’ll lead you to the stately tent of War,**

**Where you shall hear the Scythian Tamburlaine**

**Threatening the world with high astounding terms.”**

An Indian critic N.P. Gupta has observed that Edward’s thoughtlessness adds fuel to fire. He learns no lesson even by the execution of Gaveston. He makes more flatterers and favourites. He orders for a mass execution of the barons. He is defeated and captured and ultimately done to death. Thus, the King dies of his own making.

**“I’ll not resign, not whilst I live,**

**Traitors begone!! And join you with Mortimer!**

**Elect conspire install do what you will:-**

**Their blood and yours shall seal these treacheries.”**

All the events in the play that take place are based on the King’s friendship with Gaveston. For the sake of his friendship he sacrifices the claims of his highest responsibilities. On the other hand, his love for Gaveston is true and Edward has the power of inspiring undying affection in the men who come within the circle of intimacy. The King has obsession for Gaveston’s friendship and he becomes indifferent to his wife and goes to the extent of suspecting her as the main cause for Gaveston’s banishment once again and he calls her a “French strumpet”. He also insults her by accusing her of having illicit relations with the Younger Mortimer. In his passion for Gaveston’s friendship he explicitly exhibits his inability as an able administrator. He is wanting in diplomacy and determination and practical wisdom. Therefore, there is an upsurge in the kingdom against the King and nobles had made up their mind to destroy his favourite. In his love for friendship he earns ignominy and displeasure from his subjects.

**“My heart is an anvil unto sorrow,**

**Which beats upon it like the Cyclops’ hammers,**

**And with the noise turns up my giddy brain,**

**And makes me frantic for my Gaveston.**

**Ah! Had some bloodless Fury rose from hell,**

**And with my kingly scepter struck me dead,**

**When I was forced to leave my Gaveston!”**

Edward is indeed, an utterly weak and inactive character. He has no courage to face his opponents boldly. He is a master of flickering mind and cannot keep his words. Earlier, he declares that no power on earth can separate him from his favourite; he is prepared to put his kingdom at stake rather than to accede to the demand that Gaveston should be banished. But of, finally, all his so-called steel and crafted determination melts into thin air and he stoops to the ultimatum given by his barons. He has no capacity to understand the barons and earls. He does not try to win their favour which is essential for a king to succeed in life. In fact, Edward knows nothing of the nature of that power which makes kings feared and is alternatively infuriated an dismayed to find that he does not produce the effect he should. King Edward’s fatal flaws are responsible for his loss of kingship and death.

According to the historical sources, Isabella was the daughter of Philip the Fair, the King of France. She was married to King Edward. Edward The Second had to fight in the arena with other rivals to win the hand of Isabella.

**“Music and poetry is his delight;**

**Therefore I’ll have Italian masks by night,**

**Sweet speeches, comedies, and pleasing shows;**

**And in the day, when he shall walk abroad,**

**Like sylvan nymps my pages shall be clad;**

**My men, like satyrs grazing on the lawns,**

**Shall with their goat-feet dance the antic hay.”**

Edward is obsessed by his own position. He continually reminds himself that a king should be princely, stern, implacable when his privileges are invaded, and tries to give impression of strength by fits of blustering rage. He oscillates under the fake picture of a king that he has taken for his role-model.

**“Why should a King be subject to a priest?**

**Proud Rome that hatched such imperial grooms.**

**For these thy superstitious taper lights.**

**Where with thy antichristian churches blaze,**

**I’ll fire thy crazed building, and enforce.**

**The papal towers to kiss the lowly ground**

**With slaughtered priests make Tiber Channel Swell**

**And banks raised higher with their sepulchers!”**

Though King Edward does not attract us in the beginning because of his frivolous character and his inadequacy to rule the country but his pathetically tragic end itself speaks of his greatest glory. All his violence, cruelty, distemper, odd behavior, is submerged and our condemnation and dislike for him sink into oblivion when we have a look on his agonies and suffering. King Edward himself is responsible for his catastrophe. Love for favourites, if not kept within bounds is sure to bring about tragic effect. The King allowed his personal friends to over-ride his private life that was tactual error of tragic consequences.

**“Ay, ay, these words of his move me as much**

**As if a goose would play the porcupine,**

**And dart her plumes, thinking to pierce my breast.**

**But yet it is no pain to speak men fair;”**

We find Queen Isabella a deeply devoted and loving wife when she is first introduced to us in the play. She is always prepared to sacrifice everything even her life and happiness for the sake of her husband. She is terribly grieved, rather shaken and broken into pieces when she finds the upstart, Gaveston. She wants to leave the court and be-weep her saddened and neglected lot, remote from the dins and bustle of society. Though she is ill-treated by her husband and leading a life depraved of her husband’s love, yet she is caring and is worried about her husband’s safety. King is too intimate with Gaveston that he does not allow his Queen to touch him. At this Queen expresses her jealousy for Gaveston saying: “Villain! ’tis you that rob me of my lord.”

**“No, tis for Mortimer, not Edward’s head**

**For he is a lamb, encompassed by Wolves,**

**Which in a moment will abridge his life.**

**But if proud Mortimer do wear this crown.**

**Heaven turn it to a blaze of quenchless fire!”**

Split personality is a mental condition in which a person behaves sometimes with one set of emotions and at another with other set.

**“If for these dignities thou be envied,**

**I’ll give thee more…**

**….**

**What so they mind effects or fancy likes.”**

From the very beginning, Queen Isabella’s character anticipates a split personality. Though she does not live up to the accusation of being ‘subtle’, she is the first real woman character of Marlowe. “She is more alive, at any rate, than the corpse of Zenocrate or the wrath of Helen.” In the beginning Isabella is a devoted wife when the king accuses her of illicit relations with Younger Mortimer she replies: “heavens can witness, I love none but you”. But of, in her reflections she appears to be an adulteress. The King accuses her that she is responsible for his best friend’s banishment. Hearing this she meets Mortimer secretly and tells him about the King’s suspicion and makes a resolve to recall Gaveston. But of, as the King is completely bewitched by Gaveston, he deserts the Queen once again and she thinks of Younger Mortimer, as is expressed by her in one of her soliloquies. The Queen never thought of the Younger Mortimer, but he is always around to sympathise with her, whenever she needed the support of her husband. She undergoes an unexpected change and becomes hostile to King Edward, and is bent upon destroying him.

**“Tell Isabel, the queen, I looked not thus.**

**When for her sake I ran at tilt in France,**

**And there unhorsed the Duke of Cleremont.”**

Edward’s playful and non-serious nature stood in the way of his efficient performance of kingly duties. Gaveston proved an evil genius in his life and for the matter of fact, in the lives of his people as well. We condemn Isabella for having developed illicit love for Younger Mortimer, but, that was because of King’s excessive fondness for his minions and his indifference towards the Queen was to some extent at least responsible for her infidelity. Moreover, as a king he was wanting in far-sightedness he could not anticipate things correctly. This was the reason that he did not pay much heed to the circumstances into which his friendship was leading him. He has no control over his passions and thus becomes the cause of tragedy in the play.

The king showers all his love and cares on his dearest friend ignoring his wife and deserting his kingly duties. He accuses Isabella of having her hand in the banishment of Gaveston and calls her “French Strumpet”. As she longs to win back her husband for she loves him profoundly, she agrees for the repeal of banishment order of Gaveston. She agrees because she thinks that she might be able to please her lord. She requests the barons not to revolt against the King and give their consent to recall Gaveston, so that she can lead a happy life with her husband. Her request is answered positively by the barons. Then, Queen gives the news to the King, hearing the news he praises the queen of having persuasive manner of speaking and adorns her neck. Queen is still not satisfied, for she has not completely succeeded in winning her husband back and expresses her contempt in the words that the King would do anything “For Gaveston, but not for Isabel.” We can say that she tried to offer her heart completely to Edward with all her womanly zeal, but she is thwarted. This cause is in working to bring forth the aspect of his character.

She vividly keeps out her heart in her soliloquy and confesses her love for Younger Mortimer. Even then, she tries to win her husband by her entreaties, and decides that if she would not succeed in her endeavours she would look to it that Gaveston is killed. And thus, the Queen assumes the role of the Machiavel and displays her marked characteristic of dissembling. She seems to be perfect in the art of dissembling and knows how to avail herself of the given opportunities. It is clear from the soliloquy of the Earl of Kent.

We can see the change coming over the Young Mortimer when the King refuse to pay the ransom amount to the Scots in order to free his uncle from their captivity. Now, he raises his voice against him pointing out his extravagances at the discontentment of the common people that is cropping up against the King and thus starts all his planning and scheming against the King. After his imprisonment and escape from the Tower, he turns into a villain. Moreover, he is the leader of the dissatisfied barons. Whatever he proposes is unhesitatingly accepted by his associates. He takes the initiative and everybody follows him blindly. He joins hands with Sir John of Hainault, who helps him to wage aware against the King Edward. The King is taken into custody and Mortimer advises the Queen to coronate her son and makes him his protector that explicitly shows that Mortimer is ambitious and wants to rise to the highest position.

Thus her hypocrisy is revealed. She wants to kill two birds with one stone. She pleads with the Barons to recall Gaveston to see that he is put to death; while she hopes to win her husband. To cite an example, when luckily, the King sends her with the Prince to France to parley with the French King, she holds the opportunity and with the help of Mortimer and others invades England. King Edward is defeated and taken prisoner. She asks Mortimer to make her son, the King of England and get rid of all the opposing forces.

An evil breed evil is falsified here. Queen thought that she would lead a happy life after her son becomes the King. On contrary, her own son becomes her rival and when the plot of the King’s murder is exposed to her son; she warns Mortimer of their approaching death and adds that she knew that murder could not be hidden. The new King is beside himself with anger and he orders for Mortimer’s execution. The Queen pleads with him again and again to spare his life. As the new King knows that she was also an accomplice in his father’s murder, he thus, sends her also to the prison and orders further inquiry into the case.

When the Queen is introduced to us, she seems to be pusillanimous, who has been forsaken by her husband and is leading a miserable and deserted life. But of, as the layers of mystery are removed all the aspects of her character become clear. To some extent she reveals herself through her soliloquies. We would agree that she is also a victim of circumstances. Her mind and actions lead to the events taking place in the plot of the play. There is a great upsurge against the King Edward The Second to banish Gaveston, who was getting all the favours of the King. When the charge of his banishment falls on the Queen, she dexterously wins the consent of the nobles to quit and recall Gaveston. When the Queen comes to know that she can never win back her husband, she is bent upon to remove him from the throne of England and she succeeds in dethroning him but later she has to face the consequences, for fate becomes hostile in the form of her son. In the end, she is dealt with strongly by her son. As a result of her conspiracy, she burns her own hands and is insulted by her own son. We evaluate her as an unnatural wife, a bundle of pretension, a greedy, a self-seeking woman. She plays a pivotal role in the progress of the plot and decides the destiny of the play.

Mortimer, the younger was Roger Mortimer of Wingmore, a powerful baron of the Welsh march, with his uncle, he yielded to the king and was imprisoned. But of, he managed to escape from the Tower. He joined Queen Isabella against the King, and with her, planned and carried out the invasion which overthrew the dispensers. This was his historical account.

In the beginning of the play we find that Young Mortimer is overwhelmed with the love for his country and we are made to feel that he would do anything for the sake of his country’s dignity and solidarity. It is visible when he says to the King regarding Gaveston’s banishment that they would not allow Gaveston to enter the boundaries of their country because, “Mine uncle here, this earl, and I myself, /Were sworn to your father into the realm. /And know, my lord, ere I will break my oath,…./For Mortimer will hang his armour up.” As the King is caught in the devilish clutches of Gaveston’s friendship and is neglecting all his duties, the Mortimer is prepared to rebel against the King, depose him and elect another king. He is also prepared to part the King from the evil influence of Gaveston.

Queen Isabella has great love for her son and she wants to make him king as is clear from her conversation with the Mortimer, to make her son, the King of England. But her son expresses the danger under the Mortimer’s protection, at this she assures him that she would protect him from his foes. This shows that to protect her son she would even get rid of the person who has helped her throughout. It is ironical that the Queen once again is caught in adversities as her love for her son does not bear any fruit, for he suspects the hand of the Younger Mortimer and her mother in the imprisonment and murder of his king father Edward II and he says: “Mother, persuade me not to wear the Crown:/Let him be king-I am too young to reign.”

Mortimer feels for his country so much that he tells the King how Gaveston is bringing about his ruin as well as the country’s ruin. And he says that, “I’ll see him presently despatched away. In his conversation with his uncle Elder Mortimer, he says that he hates Gaveston because of his low-birth and pride he is having; just because of the favours he is getting from the King. His uncle tells him that the King has changed, then Young Mortimer replies that his uncle may also regard the King as a changed man but he would not let an upstart to dominate him. After Gaveston returns from banishment and barons are taking part in the tournament Younger Mortimer says to Gaveston, calling him villain, that he is ready to kill him, “unless I miss mine aim.” His hatred for Gaveston is deep rooted.

Gaveston’s friendship has a very stronghold over King Edward II, which has proved to be a bane on the King and his kingdom. Thus, it is not only Mortimer but all sensible lords hate Gaveston. Younger Mortimer breeds the notion that Gaveston is the greatest enemy of England. Therefore, he is bent upon removing him staking all his interest and energy. He instigates all the barons to rise in revolt against the King to banish Gaveston. He asks Archbishop of Canterbury. “Then will you join with us, that be his peers. /To banish or behead that Gaveston?”

**“O would I might! But heavens and earth conspire**

**To make me miserable! Here receive my crown.**

**Receive it? No these innocent hands of mine**

**………………………**

**Here, here!”**

He is full of hatred and enmity towards Gaveston because the King has been completely blinded by his chief minion and has become a mere puppet in his hands. When Gaveston advising the King says that he should carry out the threat instead of threatening the barons, at this the Young Mortimer interrupts him saying- “Thou villain, wherefore talk’st thou of a king./ That hardly art a gentleman by birth?

Younger Mortimer serves as a counterfoil to the King. If the King is timid, docile and submissive, Mortimer is quite the reverse of it. He is ambitious and powerful. On one hand where the King is unreasonable and irresolute, he is exceptionally frank, blunt, downright and hearty, bold and brave. Mortimer’s misfortune is that he is not a King but a mere Earl. But of, he is very ambitious and knows how to work his way up to the zenith of power. He possesses all the qualities of a brave soldier and a shrewd diplomat.

In the beginning we see that he is grieved at Queen’s distress as she is neglected by the King and he is aware of the fact that Queen weeps on account of the King’s love for Gaveston. He also tells her “Cry quittance, madam, then; and love not him.” He also agrees to the Queen’s request in recalling Gaveston. At this Younger Mortimer proves that recalling Gaveston will be in the interest of the country as well as the peers and achieves Baron’s consent for recalling Gaveston. After his effective persuasion of the peers Gaveston is called to England. Earl of Kent is one of his soliloquies reveal their illicit relationship saying: “Dissemble, or thou diest; for Mortimer/ And Isabel do kiss, while they conspire; / And yet she bears a face of love forsooth.” Truly evaluating the character of both Isabella and Mortimer we can say that there is no love at all between Isabella and Mortimer, seeing the change that overcomes both of them. The Queen knows that she is a neglected wife and she can nowhere find any remedy for the wrong done to her by Gaveston. That is why she opportunely seeks shelter under the protecting wings of Mortimer. On the other hand, Mortimer is perfectly conscious that he cannot organize an armed revolt against Edward. Therefore, the attraction between the two is not love. The whole Mortimer-Isabella episode in the play gives us a clear indication that the Queen takes the initiative in love while Mortimer avails himself of opportunity, like a never-failing man of the world.

**“Ah, that bewrays their baseness, Lancaster!**

**Were all the earls and barons of my mind,**

**We’d hale him from the bosom of the King,**

**And at the court-gate hang the peasant up,**

**Who, swoln with venom of ambitious pride,**

**Will be the ruin of the realm and us.”**

Young Mortimer has to face the nemesis in the end, for Prince Edward does not spare him. Though he very cleverly plans the King’s murder and destroys all the hurdles on his way to achieve highest power. But at, he is caught in between, for hatching the conspiracy of King’s murder and is sentenced to death by King Edward III. He realizes in the end the eternal philosophy of life. He phlegmatically says “why should I grieve at my declining fall?”

**“Our lady’s first love is not wavering;**

**My life for thine, she will have Gaveston.”**

Gaveston is a minor character in the sense that he is murdered in the middle of the play, but he plays a pivotal role. It is Gaveston who sows the seed of the plot; he is the one who creates displeasure and disloyalty of the powerful barons against the King. Had there been no Gaveston there would not have been the cause of revolt against the King. Thus, it is worthwhile to say that despite being a minor character, technically, Gaveston is one of the main architects of the plot.

Michel Poirer has summed up the play’s content very adroitly, “It is the story of a feudal monarch who attempts to govern an absolute monarch and fails.” Irving Ribner puts that we have in Edward The Second, perhaps for the first time in Elizabethan drama, a tragedy of character in which a potentially good man comes to destruction because of inherent weaknesses which make him incapable of coping with a crisis which he himself has helped to create. And in his downfall he carries with him the sympathies of the audience. Marlowe depicts tragedy arising from the reversal of the fate based on the Aristotelian concept of tragedy.

Charles and Waller have observed that Marlowe characteristically finds in Edward The Second a study of will but will without power such as Tamburlaine’s without magic as Faustus’, willfulness consequently rather than will, blind determination to have his own without the measures of securing it. Marlowe succeeds in presenting the picture of an unreal King by betraying his frailties. He indulges in all sorts of sensuality and neglects the Queen. Thus, disregards the responsibilities. Indeed, there lies the mockery of Kingship which is presented perfectly by the dramatist.

After receiving invitation from a friend who is also a King, Gaveston forgets the multitude, for they become poor for him. Later on, this is evident in his attitude towards the three poor men which brings forth his harshness and haughtiness. King on the other hand, showers all his care, love upon him and bestows on him several kingly priviledges. His friendship has strong-hold over the King, but their friendship is the cause of the conflict between the King and the barons, as it was weighing upon them and the administration was weakening. This was the reason why Edward II’s father had banished Gaveston earlier and afterwards he was banished by the barons.

Nature has bestowed Gaveston with an outward polish and suavity of manners which attract the people towards him at first sight. He has an oily tongue that helps him to keep Edward in good cheer. He has a Frenchman’s inborn dislike for London and its citizens and an equally deep rooted contempt for the English nobles whom he infuriates with his foreign fashions and airs. Mortimer describes him in the words: “I have not seen a deeper Jack so brisk; / He wears a short Italian hooded cloak, / Loaded with pearl and in this Tuscan cap, / A jewel of more value than the crown/ While others walk below, the King and he/ From out a window laugh at such as we, / And flout our train and jest our attire.” He lavishly spends King’s money, for he has captivated the King owing to his hypocritical nature, in other words, with his fascinating personality.

As the King Edward is weak and wants to gain sympathy of his favourites and lacks the faculty of decision-making and far sightedness, he is easily befooled by flattery. Gaveston is a great flatterer and he is a schemer, a cunning and crafty person who wants to dominate the King by casting his spell on him. Gaveston had taught Edward certain evil habits which had become his second nature. He satisfies all his sensual pleasures, by craftily and judiciously providing him with congenial entertainment. So successful are his devices that he proves to be an evil genius in Edward’s life, and is responsible for destroying his happiness and even life. Edward for his sake, proves false to his duties as a ruler and a husband.

Gaveston basks rather foolishly in the sunshine of the King. He was foolish because he did not have power to envisage the evil effect of the rather unnatural intimacy between the King and an ordinary Lord’s son might have on the barons and the common people. He takes undue advantage of King’s favours and keeps on growing ambitious. He was tactless, except his pleasing personality and polished manners he was not gifted with a brain. The nobles looked upon him as a mean-minded upstart taking the King away from his duties, both political and private. Therefore, in the interest of the country, they demand his banishment. Gaveston does not take a warning from all these circumstances but plunges headlong into the reckless ways of living and himself is responsible for his execution.

The end of Mortimer’s life is so philosophical that some critics have called him one of the greatest philosophical characters in the entire range of English dramatic art. He became the target of our scorn but at the end he gets emancipated of several charges. But in, some of the critics opine that his philosophical utterances are hollow without any substance.

Gaveston’s attitude is full of extreme selfishness. He fully exploits the King’s weaknesses. His most important desire is to make the King sleep with music, dance and operas so that he himself should be the de facto sovereign. In the guise of his friendship he, through his craftiness, tries to win King’s favour and hence become the strength of the ultimate authority, the King, who believes him blindly. He slowly and gradually alienates the King from the kingly duties and widens the rift between the King and the Queen. He makes the King irresponsible and draws the treasury dry. He helps the King in multiplying his enemies. He is not at all worried about the kingdom but wants to have wanton pleasures. He never advices the King-friend to tread on the right path of glory, just he wants his purpose to be served.

According to I.A. Richards, “Irony in the sense consists in the bringing in of the opposites, the complementary impulses.” In Edward The Second, Verbal irony is used by Marlowe. Verbal irony is a statement in which the implicit meaning intended by the speaker differs from that which he ostensibly asserts. This is true in the case of King Edward II. He always encounters the adverse situation; while earlier he would have made totally different assertion regarding the situation. His multifarious weaknesses are responsible for his ironic demise.

According to Holinshed “Gaveston is a light hearted and irresponsible knight leading the King into voluptuous pleasure and riotous excess.” We hold Gaveston responsible for ill-fate of the King Edward The Second. If he had been a good friend of the King he would have saved the boat of King’s life from drowning. On the contrary, he was neither a friend of the King nor himself as he himself blows off the candle of his life owing to his evil ambition.

But of, in Pope’s presence he cannot gather enough courage to detriment him. Thus, in his consciousness he can soar high and make resolutions, but in reality they come to nothing. That is why he faces the rebellion. He is weak at heart, overwhelmed by the emotions and carried away by other’s flattery loosing the sense of right from wrong. In the words of Ellis Fermor, “There is a hectic uneasiness about this defiance. Edward knows nothing of the nature of that power that makes kings feared and is alternately infuriated and dismayed to find that he does not produce the effect he should. His understanding is incapable of grappling with the problem. To cite another incident, the King declares that no power on earth can separate him from his favorite, even he is prepared to see that Gaveston should be banished. But in, ultimately all his so called steel crafted determination melts into him thin air and he stoops to the ultimatum given by his barons.

As described in the definition of verbal irony that the assertions made at a certain point of time proves to be different in the future. Edward II is a toy in the hands of fortune, for what he says, the wheel brings forth the opposite of it. He threatens and resolve in his soliloquy that “I’ will fire thy crazed buildings and enforce/The papal towers to kiss the lowly ground /With slaughtered priests make Tiber’s channel Swell /And banks raised higher with their sepulchers.”

Edward admits with disarming candour that he has no sense of responsibility and regards to the power and wealth of Kingship as an accidental personal advantage to be used to embellish his private life. Directly it is suggested that his position as a King must encroach upon or limit that private life, his fury is loosed and with confusing irrelevance, he urges his kingly right of freedom. It is an irresponsible, underdeveloped mind incapable of grasping the seriousness of any issue. He indulges in philosophy and forgets that he is a King.

Edward is a King and a King is the savior of his subjects who leads them smoothly, protecting from the ruinous circumstances. On the contrary, Edward is the King who is narcissist or self-centered. While blowing the trumpet of his kingship he asks sympathetically, ‘was ever King over-ruled as I?” He can be contrasted with Tamburlaine who cries out in exultation, “It is brave to be a King?” According to him a god is not so glorious as a King is. Edward The Second meant that a King could also be overpowered by his subordinates. An eminent critic Ellis Fermor, opines that Edward’s position is an obsession with him and he endeavours as far as he understands it to imitate the carriage of a King. He reminds himself continually that a King should be princely, stern, and implacable when his priviledges are invaded, and he tries to give the impression of strength by fits of blustering rage. He oscillates under the unreal picture of a King that he has taken for his model. He being a King assumes that everybody would bow before him and will act in servile manner, not uttering a single word if exploited or deprived of their rights. But of, the King is living under the wrong notion and faces the music in the form of a revolt of the barons. And here lies the tragedy of the King. He does not maintain the equilibrium between his duties that a King ought to carry out and pleasures he indulges in. thus, he collapses to the nadir. Above all, he is not appreciated as a King due to his lack of diplomacy and determination.

In Marlowe’s Edward The Second the question of the theme arises. Some of the critics of Edward The Second like Bradbrook complain that “there is no central feeling or theme” or that Marlowe as Maxwell puts it “has not found a single unifying theme or a single appropriate tone” in the play.

Instead of being rewarded he is insulted. Similarly, his Queen tries all tricks to persuade him and win back his love, but in vain. Thus, she turns inimical towards him and with the help of other barons invades him and with the help of other barons invades him and dethrones him. Therefore, it would be worthwhile to say that the irony of kingship is wrought upon himself by King Edward II’s own misappropriate actions. In this way he faces irony from all sides in the sense that, his over-estimation of his kingly power has reduced him to a prisoner, the force, he uses in making several declaration having no significance in reality, pushes him into dark dungeon of infamy, where he is tortured at the hands of mere ruffians. Thus, love for his friend earns him nothingness and solitude and at last barbarous murder. Thus, tragic flaws like hollow notions and assertion of his power, his invincibility and contrast between his appearance and reality and his hypothesis contradicting fact lead him to his catastrophe.

Gaveston is the first character who is introduced to us in the Edward The Second. The impression we form about him from his soliloquy is that he is very happy on receiving the letter from his king friend and is keen to meet him overcoming all the hurdles that will come in his way. In order to satisfy his friendship he expresses his indifference towards the world.

The chief flaws responsible for his misfortune were his love of pleasures and his attachment to favourites and all other important and necessary matters of life had no value for him. And there is no doubt about the fact that his playful and non-serious nature stoops in the way of his efficient performance of kingly duties. Undue and inordinate fondness for favourites is a tragic trait in a King’s character and if it is not kept within bounds, it is sure to bring about tragic effect. King Edward allowed his personal friends to over-ride his private life which was a tactical error of tragic consequence. Based on this the wheel of his misfortune rotates and in the rotation all his associates get apart leaving him alone in the centre and all become hostile bent upon ending his rule. Barons openly float his orders and take up the banner of rebellion against him; they murder his best friend Gaveston leaving him alone to fight different conflicts alone. His wife Queen Isabella is also alienated from him. His brother Edmund, Earl of Kent also joins the rebellions. All of them try their best to make the King check his manners and save himself from falling into the pit of ignominy.

Any work of art is viewed or interpreted distinctly by variant readers. As initially the playwright is attracted to a story because he sees it as representing in a particularly striking way, a recurrent and significant pattern in human life. Therefore, readers compare and contrast the story with their own lives depending upon their attitude. Anyhow, among the diverse critical approaches to Marlowe’s play, the theme of Edward The Second is power and suffering. This theme to a very large extent is visible in the play. The root cause in the working of this theme that can be deciphered is the common flaw of self assertion or the exercise of power by the characters responsible for the inevitable tragedy of the play. In other words, it is their inborn urge to confiscate power by fair or fowl means that results in their tragic end. Power when misused shows its ill-impact on the person who misuses it and undergoes numerous sufferings.

History has witnessed that a majestic kingdom falls owing to the weaknesses of its ruler. If the reign of the horse is let loose by the rider he tumbles down and sometimes beaten up by the horse to death. Similarly, if a King is incapable and has loose administration he would be over-powered by opposing forces that by increasing their pressure would strangle him to death. In the play, the playwright delineates a historical character of Edward II who reckons the misconception that he can indulge in anything and everything after having power in his hands. His father King Edward I had banished his friend Gaveston owing to the fact that he was exercising ill-effect over him and could foresee the evil-future of his son. But of, as soon as is coronated he recalls his friend though he faces opposition from his subordinates. He insults even the Bishop of Conventry who advises him in his favour, and the king even allows his friend Gaveston to insult the Bishop by removing his puritanical attire and pushing him into the gutter. He after seizing his belongings sends him to prison. He becomes partial and confers all the highest titles on Gaveston. As a result, all the Barons and nobles start detesting Gaveston and stand in rebellion against the King. His brother Edmund, the Earl of Kent also advises him that he is facing all the trouble just because of Gaveston and asks him to get rid of such an evil presence. On contrary, Edward II insults his brother. The King is determined to have Gaveston next to him, no matter, if anyone is annoyed. He calls Younger Mortimer a traitor and orders his attendants to seize him and says about Gaveston.

Till his imprisonment he keeps on boasting and never pays heed to the fact that a King cannot continue to be in power until he cares for the advise of his subordinates and that a tyrant faces defeat at the hands of his own subjects, where all his pride of power is nullified. Thus, the fate that King Edward confronts is inevitable.

Gaveston gloats because of the favours that the King confers on him. He is banished twice, once by the former King Edward I, and later by the rebellion of the Barons, but both the times he is recalled and is encouraged to practice his will, by the support of Edward II. Gaveston enjoys the riches idly bestowed on him owing to which he mocks all those of more ancient lineage. He along with the King lays his hands on the Bishop of Coventry. He spends extravagantly. Earlier, when he meets the three poor men he treats them cruelly. Then, in a soliloquy he thinks of how he may ‘draw the pliant King which way I please; and the devices he imagines show how he thinks to exploit Edward’s homosexual leanings. He thinks of arranging for musical plays in which King is lost and his mind is diverted from his kingly duties. He is an opportunist and wants his King to meet the fate of Aceton, that is, his transformed figure of deer torn into pieces by hounds. We know Gaveston for a rogue, for all the patriots are taken to be traitors by him. He thinks of Mortimer as a traitor and wishes death may overtake him and feels happy when Edward gives good account of himself by asserting his authority in his favour. He in his intoxication of power asserts, “What should a priest do with so fair a house? /A Prison may best beseem him holiness.”

There are several examples of his proud exultation of power, where he seems to be an evil genius for King Edward II. It is even visible when he is banished by the barons as he laments before the king-“Is all my hope turned to this hell of grief?” He keeps on blackmailing the King emotionally. As is vividly expressed in- “For every look, my lord, drops down a tear/ Seeing I must go, do not renew my sorrow.”

When he is recalled after he was banished as a result of Barons’ rebellion, he degrades the Barons and drills in king’s mind the ill-feelings against his wife. But of, at last he is captured by them and the wheel of his suffering starts rotating at a greater pace showing explicitly his inevitable end to him. And, Gaveston asks “Shall I not see the King?” Warwick replies “The King of heaven perhaps, no other King.” Thus, Gaveston meets his miserable end pertaining to his own proud.

In the beginning we witness Mortimer as a true patriot who is bent upon to lay down his life for the cause of his country and his King and Queen, but when the character is fathomed it is revealed that his patriotism was a mere show-off. He cleverly wins the favours of the Queen and keeps on instigating her and drilling into her brain that King has deserted her for the love of his friend Gaveston. He boasts of his power owing to the favour won by him from the Queen. When Queen feels deserted he says, “Cry quittance, madam, then; and love not him.”

He also boasts that they can dethrone the King and appoint the other. He also persuades the barons to recall Gaveston, only on the request of the Queen, without realizing the implication of his return. This is how after winning the favour of the Queen he rises against Edward II. Mortimer is perfectly conscious that he cannot organize an armed revolt against Edward, therefore, he seeks the help of Isabella. On contrary, he shows that he is helping her. When the King is taken prisoner, he inflicts untellable torture upon him by his hired hands Matrevis and Gurney. He becomes blind in the exercise of power and sees to it that the King is murdered in the most barbaric manner. As in the case of others who made false assertion of their power and ultimately were handed over to the ruthless suffering, similarly, Mortimer falls in the hungry jaws of suffering. The just and sane ruler comes to the throne in the shape of Prince Edward, who is not yet touched by any evil prevailing in that unfortunate kingdom. When the mystery of his father’s absence is revealed to him, he exercises his power in the true sense of the word and orders the execution of Younger Mortimer and the Mortimer confronts the evil consequence of his evil doings.

To conclude, it is worthwhile to say that power is followed by suffering. Everyone here in the play that attains power starts flying with waxen wings higher and higher is forgetting the limitations and face the fall like Icarus. Therefore, boundless power is ought to end in suffering. ‘Marlowe could enter fully into the mind of a man whose power was slipping away from him. In the play, he shows us a King bereft of his crown, due to his vainglorious attitude. The crown, the symbol of power lost, that was some kind of protection. As soon as it is gone, Edward is told of a change in his jailor and his place of imprisonment. Further changes are to come, and each for the worse. From the Earl of Leicester he is given to Sir Thomas Berkeley, and then to Gurney and Matrevis, and finally to Marlowe’s fictitious executioner, Lightborn.’

Queen Isabella is presented as an idol of desertion and neglect in the beginning, cares for the love of her homosexual husband. She is ready to do anything to win his love. But at, later in the play we witness a drastic change overtaking her. The Queen assumes the role of the Machiavel and displays her marked characteristics of dissembling. She along with Mortimer is bent upon destroying her King husband. The King sends her with prince to France to parley with French King, but she holds the opportunity and with the help of Young Mortimer and invades England. The King is defeated and sentenced to imprisonment. The Queen becomes the authority and cherishes the hope to make his son the King. Her son expresses his fear of Mortimer, but she assures him to protect him from his foes. But of, before that she agrees to the orders of the maltreatment of her husband and his murder and also to the execution of the Earl of Kent. But of, in realization soon draws upon her and she is ready for her suffering and also warns Mortimer, “Now, Mortimer, begins our tragedy.” Truly, she is dealt with strictly when the cause of King’s death is disclosed before the King Edward III by Gurney. She is sent to the Tower of London as a prisoner with further inquiry in the case.

The Earl warns the King that if he will support the low-born Gaveston, his crown would be in danger. He expresses his determination- “I’ll have his blood, or die in seeking it.” This shows that he is energetic at the old age. He is old that is communicated to us by Earl of Kent when he says that the warning regarding the safety of the crown that Warwick is giving to the King does not suit his old age. But of, he is constant in his hatred for Gaveston and longs to see him dead. When Gaveston is captured by the barons and others are accusing him for disturbing the peace of the nation, he says- “Lancaster, why talk’st thou to the slave? / Go, Soldiers, take him hence, for, by my sword,/His head shall off: Gaveston, short warning/ shall serve thy turn: it is our country’s cause, /That here severely we will execute/ Upon thy person. Hang him at a bough.” And when he is being led to the gallows Warwick insulting says to Gaveston that because he is a favourite of the King so, in order to show him some respect they will have him executed, instead of hanging him.

King Edward is too desperate for the power and lust of friendship that he cannot foresee the future consequences. He even deserts his wife and deprives her of his love. Here, starts cropping up the seeds of infidelity in her heart and she too along with Young Mortimer is determined to dethrone the King. Here, the King gives vent to his sufferings, fanning the fire of hostility. He is robbed off his friendship, for Barons murder Gaveston. His wife deserts him and invades him along with her supporters and the King is imprisoned, facing the defeat at the hands of his, once honest, subordinates. He is made to undergo all sorts of tortures like a mean prisoner is inflicted with. He is tortured by the hired ruffians of the Young Mortimer. Before this when he is taken into custody by Liecester he says, “O day, the last of all my bliss on earth! / Centre of all misfortune! O my stars, /Why do you lour unkindly on a King?/Comes Leicester, then in Isabella’s name/To take my life, my company from me?/ Here, man, rip up this panting breast of mine,/And take my heart in rescue of my friends!”

When a question of theme arises in any literary work, then everyone tries to give his own theme depending upon his interpretation. In Marlowe’s Edward The Second also, critics have complained that “there is no central feeling or theme.” (Bradbook). Some of the critics opine that the real theme of Edward The Second is the conflict between the King and the barons.

Lancaster warns him of foreign invasion and infiltration taking place due to his loose administration and the rebellion that will be faced by him from the common people. In addition to this, Younger Mortimer compels the King to contemplate that how; many people are there, those who love him, besides his flatterers. They again and again make him aware of the atrocities that are being inflicted on commoners at the hands of foreign invaders. Earl of Kent also advises him that his love for Gaveston would be the cause behind his ruin. He tells him that wrathful nobles are ready to wage a war against him; therefore, he should check his passion for friendship of Gaveston and come back to senses realizing his responsibilities. The words pregnant with brother’s love fall on deaf ears. Thus, he too joins the rebellion group. And barons’ wage a war against the King, in which King’s forces are defeated and Gaveston is captured and murdered by the Earl of Warwick. The King is grieved and wishes to avenge his friend’s murder.

In the opening scene of the play we are introduced to Gaveston, the instrument of King’s undoing. The first Act also energetically opens the conflict between the King and the barons and the cause of his bitterness is Gaveston. Gaveston had been banished by King Edward’s father and Younger Mortimer and Elder Mortimer had taken an oath that they would not allow Gaveston to re-enter the territory of their kingdom. In this matter they would show their loyalty to the deceased King Edward I. Earl of Warwick and Earl of Lancaster also despise King’s action of welcoming Gaveston. They frown at the King and the King’s challenges them that he would make them regret the words they have used for his best friend. He is determined to oppose barons and keep Gaveston with him. He also warns them to save their heads, which would be cut, in case, they rose in opposition against King’s decision of keeping Gaveston with him. And in the words of Young Mortimer we can see sense the rebellion: “I must speak-/ Cousin, our hands I hope shall fence our heads, /And strike off his that makes you threat us. / Come Uncle, let us leave the brain-sick King, /And henceforth parley with our naked swords.”

The Bishop Coventry is insulted at the hands of King Edward II and Gaveston, when Bishop warns Gaveston to mend his ways or he would instigate the Parliament to take action against hm. At this King Edward allows his friend to insult the Bishop by tearing off his clothes and sending him to prison and make him an Earl. When all the Barons meet and Earl of Warwick gives the information about it all of them express their discontentment. The Earl of Lancaster calls the King “Wicked King” and is ready to kill them or die himself while fighting. He says, he “shall be their timeless sepulcher or mine.”Younger Mortimer expressing his wrath explodes, “Well. Let that peevish Frenchman guard him sure; / Unless his breast be sword-proof he shall die.” Warwick throws light on all the titles that have been hurled at Gaveston besides the title of an Earl. “Ay, and besides Lord Chamberlain of the realm, / And secretary too, and Lord of Man.” They are exasperated because court has started flattering the flatterer, Gaveston. It is because only when they can win the favour of the King and escape the atrocities that would be inflicted by uttering a word against Gaveston. Baron calls Gaveston a man of low birth, a peasant.

Barons in the play are Elder Mortimer, Younger Mortimer, Earl of Warwick, Earl of Lancaster and Earl of Pembroke. They are introduced to us by the playwright one after the other, having variant characters, yet having affinity in the sense that they want to save their kingdom from the evil designs of Gaveston, who has made the King blind of his due responsibilities by engaging him in lascivious activities. They are united in their cause, though at times someone or the other has different opinion regarding a resolution. As is clear, from Earl of Warwick’s discontentment with the decision, which is to allow Gaveston to meet Edward II for the last time. When Gaveston is under the security of Pembroke’s men, Warwick attacks them and murders Gaveston. There are several other examples that show that each baron has his own individuality and expresses himself independently for their rights and in favour of their nation. The leader of the barons the Younger Mortimer in the end proves to be treacherous, owing to his lust for power, who may be held responsible for the tragic end of the play.

Mortimer is moved by the pathetic condition of the Queen. He tells the Queen that her miserable condition of the Queen. He tells the Queen that her miserable condition is a result of King’s affections to Gaveston. To console her, in excitement he asserts that they would dethrone the King and appoint another King, which proves to be true in climax of the play. But at, this also shows that Mortimer is self-assertive of his power. Again, when Gaveston is banished and King holds the Queen responsible for his banishment, she goes to Younger Mortimer and pleads to cancel the order of banishment. Younger Mortimer showing his power of persuasion gains the consent of the fellow barons. Later, when Earl of Kent is disillusioned with Mortimer, he reveals that Younger Mortimer and the Queen have illicit-love-affair, which is confirmed by Isabella’s soliloquies where she confesses her likeness for Mortimer calling him “Sweet Mortimer.”

Archbishop is very much disappointed at the ignominy the King and his friend has hurled upon the Bishop of Coventry. When asked whether he is in favour of Barons, he replies “What need I? God himself is up in arms, / When violence is offered to the church.” He then suggests that to overcome the crisis without using violence, “We and the rest, that are his (King’s) counselors, will meet, and with a general consent confirms his (Gaveston’s) banishment with our hands and seals.”And it is resolved that if King tries to nullify their decision, “Then may we lawfully revolt against him.” Archbishop is the first to sign the order of the banishment when it is put before the King for his signature. All of them the Earl of Lancaster, the Earl of Warwick, the Earl of Pembroke, the Elder Mortimer, the Younger Mortimer are longing to see Gaveston banished from their country. Of all the barons Younger Mortimer has strongest hatred for Gaveston. He expresses, “The name of Mortimer shall fright the King, /Unless he be declined from that base peasant.” Archbishop of Canterbury tells the King that if he fails to comply with the decision of barons, then Archbishop would release the barons from the oath of allegiance to the King. Thus, the King is compelled to sign the order of banishment of Gaveston and confer various titles on barons. But at soon after, this tense situation becomes even tenser, when Queen Isabella informs them that she is being held responsible for the banishment of Gaveston. All the barons agree to recall Gaveston under the strong persuasion of Younger Mortimer.

The cause of the conflict between the King and the barons is stable. Each one of them is inwardly hurt at the extravagant ways of Gaveston and everyone of them on their level try to advise the King to get rid of the parasite or he would suck the vital juices of his kingdom. Soon, the King gives barons another chance to rise against him, when he refuses to pay ransom for the release of Elder Mortimer. And when Younger Mortimer goes to the King in the company of other barons to seek King’s help in order to rescue his uncle, the King not only refuses but insults him saying that he would give him his seal and authorize him to collect alms from the realm, so that he can raise the amount enough to be paid as ransom. Younger Mortimer reminds the King that, “The idle triumphs, masks, lascivious shows,/And prodigal gifts bestowed on Gaveston,/ Have drawn thy treasury dry, and made thee weak;/The murmuring commons, overstretched, break.”

On Queen’s request and Younger Mortimer’s persuasion Gaveston is called back and the King compels the barons to greet him but they insult him and talk in sarcastic manner and Gaveston complains to the King at which the King says, “Return it to their throats, I’ll be thy warrant.” At the encouragement of the King he hurls the insult on the barons, that is unbearable for them and Lancaster draws his sword to attack him while Younger Mortimer stabs him and when the King orders him to get out of his sight and not to come near the court he refuses to obey saying “I’ll not be barred the court for Gaveston.”Lancaster giving vent to his indignation says, “We’ll hate him by the ears unto the block.” When they are expressing their anger for Gaveston they come to know from a messenger that Elder Mortimer has been taken prisoner by the Scots. Thus, follows another conflict between the King and the barons.

Younger Mortimer, escapes from the prison and along with Earl of Kent flee to France to help the Queen. The French Lords refuse to help them. Then, Sir John of Hainault offers his support and they invade England, the King is defeated and flee to Ireland with his favourites. Rice ApHowel is appointed by the Younger Mortimer to trace the whereabouts of the King and his favourites. Rice Ap Howel succeeds in tracing them and executes King’s favourites and takes him into custody. The Younger Mortimer avenge the death of his fellow barons by making a plan against the King that is torturing him to the utmost and making him realize what blunder he has committed by misusing his power. The Younger Mortimer hires Matrevis and Gurney for this purpose, who act on his instructions and he sees to it that the King is brutally tortured. He is not alone, but is supported by the Queen and both of them are bent upon dethroning the King. The King is dethroned and after inflicting various atrocities on him he is murdered in the end by Lightborn on the direction of Younger Mortimer. This is how the King faces his catastrophe.

After the death of Gaveston, Young Spenser becomes King’s favourite who keeps on instigating the King to avenge his friend’s murder from barons. Cajoled King swears upon heaven to take revenge. Now the King showers his favours on Young Spenser and confers the titles of the Earl of Gloucester and the Lord Chamberlain upon him. And when King disregards barons plea of not harbouring favourites like Young Spenser, which he must agree to, in order to avoid civil war and bloodshed, the King’s adamant attitude entails a battle between the King’s forces and Baron’s forces. The battle’s resultant is unfortunate and obnoxious for barons as they loose and many of them are executed. As a result of this battle, of all the barons Younger Mortimer is left behind who is also imprisoned but somehow manages to escape and is left alone to persue the conflict.

**“Were he a peasant, being my minion**

**I’ll make the proudest of you stoop to him.”**

Earl of Warwick is not in the favour that Gaveston should meet the King. He tells Arundel, the messenger, “No, it needeth not.” but of, when Pembroke take the responsibility and Barons allows the last meeting between the King and Gaveston under Pembroke’s security. Warwick expresses “Pembroke, what will thou do? / Cause yet more bloodshed? Is it enough/ That we have taken him, but must we now/Leave him on “had I wist,” and let him go?’’

When the hot discussion between the Younger Mortimer and King Edward II is progressing and the King tells him that he would make him regret his words at which Lancaster frowns saying- “My Lord, why do you thus incense your peers,/That naturally would love and honour you/ But for that base and obscure Gaveston?” When King warns them to take care of their heads, he fearlessly says that he has much influence in North and if he works his influence, Gaveston would have to face hostility of several people. He tells the King to either change his mind or save his throne where he would like to “sit or float in blood and with your floating head, the head of your minion would be thrown.

**“I thank you all, my lords; then I perceive,**

**That heading is one, and hanging is the other,**

**And death is all.”**

The character of Younger Mortimer undergoes immense change after he escapes from his imprisonment. He along with Earl of Kent flee to France to help the Queen in her manoeuvre. But at, in his help to the Queen he starts cherishing his own desires of raising to high post and when King is defeated and taken prisoner, the mask, of his patriotism is removed and his Machiavellian face is revealed in his actions of hiring ruffians in order to torture the King. Thus, he is responsible for the barbaric end of the King. He is ambitious and advises the Queen to coronate her son as a King and sees himself as his protector. But of, fate has destined something else for him. He is taken over by nemesis in the form of Prince Edward or King Edward III who orders his execution after the truth of his father’s murder is revealed to him. Thus, he meets his end. The flaw in the character of Mortimer is that he takes pride in being more feared than loved. In his qualities he serves as a counterfoil to the King. If the King is timid, docile and submissive, Mortimer is quite the reverse of it. He is exceptionally frank, blunt, downright and hearty, ambitious and powerful. He is diplomatic and knows how to work his way up to the zenith of power.

When King has gone to receive Gaveston on his return from his banishment, where barons welcome Gaveston sarcastically and in turn he hurls insult on barons. Lancaster is one who draws out his sword to attack him but lacks courage and does not take initiative; while Mortimer displaying his bravery stabs Gaveston and disagrees to obey the orders of the King. Lancaster on the other hand expresses his hatred for Gaveston in the words- “We’ll hale him by the ears unto the block.” One of the other aspects of Lancaster’s character, that is, helpful and supporting comes out when he accompanies Mortimer to meet the King regarding the ransom for the Elder Mortimer.

The Younger Mortimer is the Chief Baron under whose instructions other barons follow maintaining their individual identity. When King has allowed Gaveston back in England after Edward I’s death, Younger Mortimer showing his patriotism says that he and his uncle have taken oath not to let Gaveston enter the realm of their Kingdom. He daringly states that if Gaveston is allowed in their kingdom he would see to it that he is killed. He hates Gaveston and cannot stand in his presence in the court holding various titles conferred upon him by the King. He confidently asserts himself in front of the King, saying I’ll not be barred the court for Gaveston.” He once again portrays his self-confidence when he goes to the King to take the sum of the ransom for his uncle and when King refuses he reminds him of his extravagant way of living that “Have drawn thy treasury dry, and made thee weak;” and wage war against the King along with his fellow barons and take King’s favorite into captivity, who then is murdered by Earl of Warwick. Chapter of his hatred ends with Gaveston.

The Earl of Lancaster is daring that he faces the King with self-confidence and has no fear in truly expressing himself. On the occasion when barons are defeated by King’s forces and Warwick and Lancaster are to be executed, Lancaster wishes his dignity and enunciates “The worst is death, and better die to live/ Than live in infamy under such a King.” It is efficacious saying that he possessed powerful and strong personality and had all the qualities of a leader.

Earl of Pembroke, like other barons is a patriot and opposes the King for the same reason, that is, King’s love for his favourite that undermine all the other aspects of him as a King. He is a silent follower of other barons and lacks initiative. When everybody takes the oath of killing the evil, he too follows-“The like oath Pembroke takes”.

**“What, Gaveston! Welcome!-Kiss not my hand-**

**Embrace me, Gaveston, as I do thee.**

**Why should’st thou kneel? Know’st thou not who I am**

**Thy friend, thyself, another Gaveston!**

**Not Hylas was more mourned of Hercules,**

**Than thou hast been of me since thy exile.”**

When the King expresses his desire to meet Gaveston for the last time and other barons express their faithfulness in the King. They suspect the King and his intentions. Pembroke addressing the other barons, sympathizing with the King says- “My lords, each one, / To gratify the King’s request therein, / Touching the sending of this Gaveston, / Because his majesty so earnestly/ Desires to see the man before his death, /I will upon mine honour undertake/To carry him, and bring him back again.

Pembroke is not a flatterer, neither to the King nor to the barons, does he express what in his opinion is correct. When Warwick asks him whether he wants to repent later by helping the King he says that he is not a flatterer and does not want to influence them with his oily words-“But if you dare trust Pembroke with the prisoner, upon my oath, I will return him back.” About Pembroke Arundel says, when he suggest him to go to his house and take care of his wife as on his way he has come near to his house, “ ’Tis very kindly spoke, my lord of Pembroke;/ Your honour hath an adamant of power/ To draw a prince.” But Warwick has no faith in him and kills Gaveston before he can meet the King. After this no substantial role of Pembroke is found in the play. We assume that he must have been killed in the war against the King.

When Lancaster comes to know that Bishop of Coventry has been imprisoned, he is surprised at the King who has exercised his tyranny over church and expresses his patriotism saying that their kingdom which has been made impure with the impious steps of the King and Gaveston there he “shall be their timeless sepulcher or mine.”

Marlowe has succeeded in delineating the characters of all barons who have their own entity and stand out separately one from the other. When a hot discussion is going on between the King and the Younger Mortimer and King warns the barons to take care of their heads and Mortimer is expressing his wrath. Warwick pacifies him and tells him that on his entreatment the people of his earldom of Warwickshire would stand against the King and deal with him severely. This shows that his word is more valued than the King’s.

Unlike Shakespeare, Marlowe’s characters are not the types but individuals. Marlowe has succeeded in differentiating the individualities of the barons, though their cause to rise in rebellion against the King is same. Barring Younger Mortimer all are truly patriotic. Young Mortimer though a patriot in the beginning turns out to be a Machiavellian in the end. All the Barons do not give the picture of flatterers, standing with their bowed heads and showing their consent in the King’s will. On the contrary, they boldly oppose the King for his wrong moves. All are assertive and possess powerful personalities.

Despite the unanimous decision of the barons Warwick is determined not to allow Gaveston to meet the King. He speaks to himself-“Yet not perhaps, if Warwick’s wit and policy prevail.” And when Gaveston is under the security of Pembroke’s men he tells them “Strive you no longer- I will have Gaveston.” He takes Gaveston and when Gaveston asks him that would he not allow him to meet the King, Warwick sternly replies: “The King of heaven perhaps, no other King.”

In dramatic structure Edward The Second marks a new departure in that for the first time in an English history play, all the elements are completely integrated. Every incident furthers the total effect of the play, which is concentrated in the downfall of Edward. To accomplish this Marlowe had to abandon the episodic survey treatment mostly found in earlier history plays. There is none of the awareness of error and consequent regeneration which is so much a part of the morality tradition; Edward never really learns the cause of his downfall, and although he undergoes a kind of regeneration through suffering, he is not penitent at the end. There is a little influence of the morality in Edward The Second. The morality play, which appears to have influenced Marlowe strongly in Doctor Faustus had little effect upon Edward The Second. Edward The Second is better constructed. It is the structural triumph of Marlowe. From the point of view of form it is his greatest play. Tamburlaine and Dr. Faustus present merely a succession of scenes. According to Aristotelian definition of the construction of plot also Edward The Second, has a beginning, middle and an end.

The play opens with a note of silence. Gaveston’s soliloquy, but in its quietness hides various explosions that create noise and din as the plot of the play proceeds with the conflict between the King and the barons and others join barons to fulfill their evil desires. King was responsible for his downfall, because he wanted to tread on only the road of friendship and neglect other responsibilities. The King who seemed to be most cruel in the opening, is led to the most wretched condition and the Queen and Mortimer who seemed to be fighting for the cause of the country prove to be Machiavellian characters as their characters undergo diabolic changes. But they too meet their inevitable end when their conspiracy against the King is revealed to King Edward II who is justice loving. Thus, our scorn for the King ends and he wins our sympathy. On the other hand Queen and Younger Mortimer are despised. Thus, the real theme of the play is the conflict between the King and the barons that results in the ultimate tragic end of the play.

Till now this aspect of his character is clear to us. This is shown to us repeatedly by Warwick. When in the battle against the King they are captured and the King is making them (the barons) realize their mistake, Warwick bravely puts- “Tyrant, I scorn thy threats and menaces; /It is but temporal that thou canst inflict.” And faces the execution with dignity and does not let anyone violate his self-respect. It is true to say that he is overwhelmed with the sacred feeling of patriotism. He does not care for his fellows, when in his opinion a particular action may stake country’s prestige and security. He is capable of taking his own decisions. He is a powerful character.

Edward’s greatest weakness for his favourites interferes grievously with the proper administration and defence of his kingdom. But of, apart from this vital flaw, he has many other defects in character, e.g. his love of flattery, reckless extravagance, and undue docility before the strong, his lukewarm interests in the welfare of his subjects, his sovereign indifference to certain grave concerns which were neglected and led to the grave consequences. This we witness from the very beginning in the conflict between Edward II and the barons. Barons who are patriotic advise the King to protect himself and his kingdom from obnoxious presence of Gaveston. But at, all the advises including the advice of his brother fall on deaf ears. The King has not the requisite strength of character to enforce his will on others. In the battle of wills, he is overpowered by his nobles. It is only once that the King executes his purpose with determination. He defeats the barons at the battle and avenges the death of Gaveston by executing them to death.

The King seems to lack brains. The barons are against him and their power is great. He knows that he cannot get an upper hand over them. Still he makes more enemies. His own wife and brother are expelled by him from the court. He loves the company of his flatterers. As a result, the brother and his wife join the rebellious group of Barons and start their man- oeuvre against the King and are bent upon to dethrone him and snatch the power of which the King is boastful.

It is a miracle that King Edward arouses our pity at the end the characters with whom we felt sympathetic in the beginning become target of our contempt. This miracle has been performed by Marlowe’s skill of writing. The protagonists as in many tragedies before and since are evil men intent on evil deeds. They appeal to our sympathy only in misfortune and disaster, in more fortunate circumstances they run counter to moral laws and excite a mixture of admiration, horror and even contempt. Similarly, Edward The Second, as handled by Marlowe, offers the difficult dramatic problem of a protagonist who is sometimes contemptible and must sometimes be heroic and pitiful. In the words of Ellis- Fermor, Edward The Second wins our sympathy not by any sudden kingly vigour but by the fitful charm of a slight band helpless character falling a prey to forces at once more robust and uglier than itself. He says, that Marlowe has created a poem full of inevitable pathos which, if not tragic, at least approaches that realm of art in which we realize afresh that ‘‘mentem mortalia tangnut.” Marlowe gives him some of his most beautiful lines after suffering defeat: “But what are kings, when regiment is gone, /But perfect shadows in a sunshine day?”

The protagonist of the play chosen by Marlowe is a weakling. The eager struggle for power which is the chief characteristic of his other works is handed over to the sycophantic favourites and the rough, ambitious barons who struggle against them, as a mere secondary part of the story.

Edward II considers himself to be an absolute ruler. He regards his kingdom as personal property which is free to give to his parasitic Gaveston. He is obstinate and vindictive. When he defeats the barons and they fall into his hands, he orders for a mass execution of them all, only Young Mortimer escapes and sails away to France with Kent, the King’s brother. As a result, the King invites his own death. His self-assertion of power can be cited in various incidents, like when he insults the Bishop of Coventry and sentences him to imprisonment. He becomes partial to his friend who also starts asserting his power and becomes a cancer slowly and gradually hollowing the consolidated foundations of the treasury and kingdom. All this is due to the tragic flaw or Hamartia in King’s character. Hamartia the case of Edward The Second arises as a result of error committed voluntarily, which happens in an act of anger and passion. He is angry at baron’s opposition and has passion for his friend Gaveston who satisfies his lascivious needs.

**“If this content you not,**

**Make several kingdoms of this monarchy,**

**And share it equally amongst you all,**

**So I may have some nook or corner left,**

**To frolic with my dearest Gaveston.”**

The tragedy of Edward The Second is that he is born into a position where he must be such a superman in order to survive, and since he is not, he is doomed to destruction.

In Edward The Second there is an effort at introducing more complexity of resolution and of irresolution, and in some of the dialogues it reaches a pitch of tragic excellence finer than any of the preceding plays, Edward’s speech in prison is an example of the height of the pet’s imagination. There is a sub-plot within a complex plot that is of the love-affair between the Queen and Mortimer, it runs along with the main plot that shows Marlowe’s both creative imagination and constructive skill not found in any one of his contemporaries except Shakespeare. The effect of sub-plot results in the fall of the King in the climax.

Marlowe has worked his skill to the fullest in delineating the character of Lightborn and though he shows pity for the suffering King but is a villain and laughs aside any such suggestion, like that of Mortimer when he warns Lightborn that when he sees the condition of the old King he will begin to pity him, he says- “‘Tis not the first time I have killed a man:/ I learn’d in Naples how to poison flowers, / … Or open his mouth and pour quick silver down. / But yet I have a braver way than these.”

A hero suffers nobly and fights bravely his misfortunes and adversity and this attitude of the hero wins our sympathy. Marlowe introduced the hero having several weaknesses. He is voluptuous and pleasure seeker. King Edward has no nobility of temperament. His troubles are many but he makes least effort to solve them or put up a bold face against them. Gaveston in his soliloquy makes clear the kinds of pleasures which King loves- “Music and poetry is his delight; Therefore I’ll have Italian masques by night, Sweet speeches, comedies, and pleasing shows;”

The fear of the King, send shivers of fears in us, at the idea that death is so horrifying when it comes in the form of murder. He faces nemesis from his foil Younger Mortimer, whose initial concern of England soon becomes a concern only for his own aggrandizement, and there is no baseness to which he will not resort for his own advancement. He is an embodiment of Machiavellian self-sufficiency, strength and aspiring will, but he degenerates and is destroyed and it is because of his lack of private virtue that he does so. It can be said that just as a lack of public virtue destroys Edward, a lack of private virtue destroys Mortimer.

According to Aristotle, selection of complex plot best suits in depicting a tragedy. As he puts that a complex plot involves a change of direction. The fortune rise to a certain height and at that point there is a change. This is the turning point, the climax at which some sort of discovery leads directly to the change in fortune. Testifying Edward The Second on these points it can be proved that it depicts Marlowe’s plot construction as a masterpiece.

According to Aristotle, the action represented in a plot should be a ‘whole’, that is, it must consist of a beginning, the middle and an end. In Edward The Second, Marlowe depicting a sudden change in their character succeeds in the justification of her inclination towards Mortimer on account of King’s abandonment of her.

According to Aristotle, beginning is self-explanatory and in the middle the conflict reaches the height and naturally leads to the end, or the catastrophe. The King undergoes several experiences, some due to his own actions or through others inflicted upon him leading to his tragic end. Marlowe also has attained unity of plot by unifying his material that attains a plot. The story of Edward and Gaveston comes to an end before the story of Edward and Spenser begins, in order to maintain the flow and continuity of the story. Marlowe introduces Mortimers in Act I and makes them more prominent with their swearing natures, while historically the oath taking truly belonged to Pembroke and Warwick. All these changes make for unification, the real plotting and for naturalness of conduct. Though Holinshed’s chronicle also provides the real tragedy of the King but it lacks sentimentality, but these alternations give the play an emotional response. He introduces the Queen and the Mortimer early in the play and then the hero faces a turning point in the climax. In Edward The Second, King Edward’s, wheel of fortune revolves adversely and he falls headlong on the ground from his throne. The Machiavellian rises as a result of the King’s fall. But of, the hideous death of the King is followed immediately by a scene of swift general retribution. Mortimer is executed and Queen Isabella taken prisoner by King Edward III, because she had been an accomplice with Mortimer in the cold-blooded murder of the King. And, thus, Marlowe brings the poetic justice by not sparing the wrong-doers.

In contrast to the confusion of style evident in the two other parts of Henry VI, the second part is consistent of Henry VI, the second part is consistent in tone, and this tone is one we associate with Marlowe-cold clarity of intellect and a corresponding lack of human feeling. Richard Plantagenet is not only a Machiavel, he has the special brand of grim humour of Marlowe’s heroes. But of, Henry VI trilogy shows in spite of crudities a graver, more responsible spirit and a greater sense of historical destiny than appears in any work of Marlowe. Already these early plays of Shakespeare gives evidence of a constructive power beyond that of any of his contemporaries, and their unity of purpose and design becomes increasingly apparent the more they are studied.

Discovery in the case of the King occurs when he realizes that he is being tormented owing to the orders of his own-wife that results in arousing our sympathy for the King. Secondly, King Edward III discovers that his mother is responsible for his father’s murder, that is heart-rending and results in retribution of the Queen and the Mortimer. Thus, in the end Marlowe unites all the knots of the complex plot and leaves no space for any further anxiety, satisfying the audience and the readers.

Although plot construction in Edward The Second is a masterpiece, yet it has several defects. According to a critic, it is the product of an immature period of the drama and of crude theatrical conditions. It points out how Marlowe was developing tragic movement out of the confused narratives of chronicles. The major fault in the plot construction is in the middle of the play when our sympathies are shifted from the Queen and Mortimer to the king, through a sudden change in their characters that comes out as a shock, but Marlowe has succeeded in his objective in arousing pity and fear. Soliloquies are often used to explain action and character. Characterization is largely an affair of the protagonist. Minor figures were with him mere sketches but in Edward The Second, the antagonist receives much attention and the character of the hero does not lapse into caricature and absurdity. Marlowe attains to the full stature and noble harmony of a tragedy, though not on the highest level, but dignified and moving.

A list of accomplishments appalling in the slick, unemotional way they are retailed, and also in the faultless clarity of the verse. It is like looking down into depths of evil which one had expected to be murky, only to be more horrified when they turn out to be crystalline. The scene of actual murder is responsible for the catharsis of the feelings of pity and fear. Marlowe spares us no grim horror in this tragedy, does nothing to mitigate but everything to exacerbate the terror. He goes outside in the speaking details of indignity to the King, the shaving off of his royal beard with puddle water by the roadside. Marlowe shows his mastery in the creation of atmosphere in foreboding the terror of King’s last night: “Something still buzzeth in mine ears/ And tell me if I sleep I never wake/ This fear is that which makes me tremble thus.”

Chronicle Plays were dramatic renderings of the historical materials in the English Chronicles by Raphael Holinshed and others. They leaped into high popularity late in the sixteenth century, when the patriotic fervor following the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588 brought a demand for plays dealing with events of English history. The early chronicle plays presented a loosely kin series of events during the reign of an English King and depended for effect mainly on a bustle of stage battles, pageantry, and spectacle. Marlowe, however, in his Edward The Second (1592) selected and rearranged materials from Holinshed’s Chronicles to compose a unified drama of character, and Shakespeare’s series of chronicle plays, encompassing the succession of English kings from Richard II to Henry VIII, includes such major achievements as Richard II, Henry IV, Parts 1 and 2, and Henry V.

Marlowe has shown his dramatic technique at its best in structure of the plot. He has given the five acts and the important subject is in proportion to the structure of the plot. It is Marlowe’s inventiveness that he has condensed and fused the tragic events in these five acts. It is not only under the direction of the central personality that Marlowe achieves dramatic organisation but also in inevitable catastrophe and clever handling of the counter-forces. The play begins with the recall of Gaveston with the fondness which brings about the King’s downfall. In Edward The Second Marlowe gives a highly instructive and illustrative exposition. In first Act the playwright sets the stage for the conflict between the King and the barons. As King is already spell-bound by Gaveston and he sees nothing else than Gaveston who is working his evil-genius over the King. Both the King and Gaveston are infatuated with each other. To them the world is well cost for love and pleasure. In between he gives instances of Queen and Mortimer’s affection. The King fights with the barons and earn their resentment. Secondly, we see how Gaveston is banished and then reunited with the King. King’s brutality comes out to the forefront when he wins against the Barons and orders their execution telling them how wrong they were in showing their dissent to the King. Gaveston is put to death cold-bloodedly by the Earl of Warwick in the beginning of the Act III and by the end of this act, all the Barons except Mortimer have paid for the murder with their heads. Mortimer escapes from the prison and join the Queen in France in Act IV and the King is defeated and faces exile but is captured and imprisoned and in At V the plight of the King is shown at the hands of hired ruffians and Machiavellian attribute of the Queen and the Mortimer is unveiled. Between Act IV and V comes a turning point. The counterforce is in the ascendant and the catastrophe is realised with a tremendous power.

As a King we are absolutely unattracted by him. He is infatuated beyond limits by the French up-start, Gaveston, who is the eyesore for the entire court including the barons and the church. His idiotic dolling up Gaveston infuriates and alienates not only the band of the powerful Barons and church, but also it damages his conjugal life, destroying the tie of love between himself and his wife Isabella. He is so much overwhelmed by the sentiments for the upstarts that he is prepared to sacrifice his throne as well as his domestic life so that he might enjoy the company of his favourite somewhere in some nook or corner, undisturbed and un-spied.

Marlowe follows in his Edward The Second fairly closely the actual details of history, he boldly transfers their order for greater dramatic effect making it a regular play. The real excellence of Marlowe’s dramatic genius in ‘Edward The Second’ lies in the way in which he has delineated the character of the hero. Marlowe treated the chronology and relationships of various characters independently and thus bringing out the tragic effect. Edward The Second does contain political reflection but can be confined to two themes. These are hinted at in the plays complete title- The Troublesome Reign and Lamentable Death of Edward The Second, King of England; with the tragical fall of proud Mortimer-and they are the status of the King and punishment of over weaning political ambition. The construction of the play includes an important middle section marked out from the rest by the fact that in it the King is for a short time strong, determined and victorious. This point of equilibrium holds the balance between the two main blocks, in both of which Edward, succumbing as his power is challenged, suffers loss and humiliation. The second block consists of the tragedies of Gaveston and Mortimer. Marlowe has very adroitly changed the historical facts applying his dramatic technique, in order to achieve the purpose of writing a tragedy and bringing out its main function, that is, catharsis depicting the downfall of the King Edward and by expressing his personal theme that of Edward’s obsession, his peculiar psychology, the humour and finally the great pathos of his situation. Thus, his delineation of King Edward’s character and perfect handling of plot shows us his structural excellence and genuine pathos.

Surely, no man would make all these changes unless he felt them needed. But of, why needed? Because they give him an emotional response which the sequence and emphasis in Holinshed could not give him on the stage.

It can be stated with a little confidence that by 1580 men began to write plays that had a main concern for the facts of history; their main feature was to instruct their audience in the matter of the prose chronicles. Shakespeare grew up along with an increasing trend to write plays of this kind. Holinshed seizes on the factual side of hall and ignores his philosophy, so most of the English chronicle plays ignores his philosophy, so most of the English chronicle plays ignore the steady moral bent, that was the trend of the plays before, like that of Gorboduc, and exploit the mere accident of successive events. The nature of the factual element would appear most plainly in an extreme example. Richard III published in 1594 contains ample chronicle matter but has informative prologue and epilogue. The main feature that was working in the writing of chronicle plays was the national self-satisfaction. The chronicle playwrights are mainly practical playwrights writing for a popular audience, with less inclination to philosophy. The portion of hierarchy that interests them is the social one, but that interest tales the form of preaching by example that a sensible man sticks to his position in society. It makes no suggestion that by so doing a man was taking his own part in the great cosmic harmony. The chief chronicle playwrights were John Stow, Robert Fabyan and Ralph Holinshed. The chief chronicle plays were, The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth; The Life and Death of Jack Straw; The Troublesome Reign of King John; Edward I; The Contention Betwixt the Two Famous Houses of York and Lancaster; and The True Tragedy of Richard III. A few of the chronicle plays stand out so clearly from the norm and are so much more thoughtful that call for a separate treatment. There are plays like Marlowe’s Edward The Second. Marlowe wrote Edward The Second in 1590. In other words, the earlier historical playwrights simply made the interpretation of history, leaving no room for artistic effect, or made it so rigidly literary that the very aroma of history evaporated. But of, in Edward The Second Marlowe has succeeded to maintain the harmony between historical fact and dramatic art.

The historical sources that Marlowe had looked for Edward The Second are the chronicles of John Stow. Fabyan and Holinshed and sundry poems dealing with the King’s life and death as lamented “fall of a prince.” Marlowe’s play covers a long and involved period of history, from the accession of Edward II in 1307 to the execution of Roger Mortimer in 1330. Most of his material is taken from Holinshed, Stow gave him the idea to include the episode of shaving of Edward in puddle water, and Fabyan became the source for the ‘jig’ that was quoted by Earl of Lancaster on England’s disgrace at Bannockburn. Borrowing various events from these sources and inventing characters like Lightborn and then polishing them with his dramatic art presents a tragedy that only Shakespeare could equal.

Marlowe as a dramatist was influenced by King Edward’s story and found source in various chronicles, chiefly in Holinshed’s. As evident from the above point, that he selected and moulded the material according to the needs of a tragic plot. Similarly, to make the tragedy more effective and horrifying he invented some characters. The character of Lightborn, who takes such a professional pride in his vocation as murderer, is Marlowe’s invention. He is so real that he surely must have been founded upon one of the poet’s secret service acquaintances. He is a very Italianate villain and adds horror to the murder scene. He seems to be a cold-blooded murderer when he proudly asserts: “You shall not need to give instructions, /’Tis not the first time I have killed a man:/I learn’d in Naples how t poison flowers,” and various other ways, which turn out to be more horrific, when they are executed. Working of his imagination can well be cited in the delineation of the character of Edmund, the Earl of Kent, who was a child when the King Edward II ruled and could not have taken part in countries politics, while Marlowe introduced him in King’s favour and as a patriot who always thought for the cause of the nation whether it was his defending the King on various occasions or opposing him and helping the Queen and Mortimer in France. He is only the true character throughout the play though inconstant for a time being. He plays an important role in the play. Marlowe has shown himself best in his art of dramatization. Though he has deviated from history in presenting Earl of Kent and Lightborn and at various other instances; depending upon his mood and the requirement of the situation.

Marlowe approached his sources with a sure awareness of his purposes and perhaps a keener dramatic skill than had ever before been exercised in the dramatizing of English history. He carefully selected from the Holinshed’s material only what he needed for a well integrated tragedy. He omitted most of Edward’s long and involved relations with the barons, his wars in France and Scotland, with the disastrous defeat at Bannockburn. He condensed the events of almost thirty years into what appears to be about one year, although the play gives us little real indication of the passage of time. At another place he has made apt selection in order to bring out feelings essential for a tragedy. In Holinshed, Marlowe’s chief source in the play, the story of Gaveston and Edward is finished some time before that of Edward and Spenser begins. Marlowe saw that to write first the story of one favourite and then the story of another, would mean a play lacking in variety, a shift of interest on part of the audience midway, and troublesome exposition part half-way through the play as to the origin of the second favourite. Therefore, he cheerfully remakes history. With him the Spensers, followers and admirers of Gaveston, just the people to whom Edward would turn when their friend, his favourite, is put to death. For similar reasons, the Elder and Younger Mortimers are present even in the opening scene of the play, though historically they first appeared at court much later. In order to make them prominent he gives them the oath-taking really belonging to the Earls of Pembroke and Warwick. . He completely changes history by putting these two Mortimers in the same relation towards Gaveston than they really bore only towards Younger Spenser. He effectively juggled with the dates of Irish troubles of 1315-16, the battle of Bannockburn in 1314 and of the Scottish raids into the north of England, bringing these happenings together as a result of Gaveston’s ill counsels. Similarly, he puts aside history in making Warwick, who had died in 1315, becomes one of the King’s victims after Boroughbridge. He conveniently glosses over Edward’s trouble with French King about the homage due for his French lands; and in many smaller ways moulds history to his dramatic needs. The result of this selection and alternation of the events of Edward’s twenty years is the most skillfully knit tragic plot, our first artistic masterpiece in play structure; and if the characters Marlowe create are not such as historical research will allow, they are for the most part sufficiently real to justify the conduct and actions attributed to them.

For a tragedy play, the characters delineated by Marlowe are fitting. The tragedy is wrought upon by the King owing to his own weaknesses. He has been portrayed by Marlowe as a voluptuous, pleasure seeker, lover of favourites, lacking diplomacy, bravery and courage. He always infuriates his subordinates, his wife and brother and tread on the road of his doom ignoring various signals. The Queen who is deserted and is bent upon doing anything to win the love of her husband, undergoes a tremendous change after being treated by Marlowe and shows her hatred for the King and her willingness to dethrone him. The Earl of Kent, who always advices the King, is insulted at the hands of the King and he also opposes him and joins the rebellious barons. The King is opposed from all the sides with enemies and greatest of them all is Younger Mortimer who is portrayed with great spirit and power. The lines of his character are toned down to suit the altered environment, but there is the same note of lawlessly aspiring ambition. He is eager to depose the King unless the latter consent to banish Gaveston. Gaveston, the favourite is portrayed with much insight and skill by Marlowe. He carefully strengthens his hold on the King’s affections by ministering to his artistic and musical tastes, and providing him with him with congenial entertainment, but he is captured and sentenced to death.

In the character of Mortimer we see a patriot at first and his change and his Machiavellian manoeuvre against the King. And when misfortune falls upon the King and he is compelled to yield first his throne and eventually his life, Marlowe shifts reader’s sympathy entirely to Edward. Prince Edward too brings about the intensity of the tragedy. He is true and untouched with worldly weaknesses as the mystery of his father’s murder is revealed he is activated and thus retribution of Younger Mortimer and Queen Isabella comes at the hands of him. Marlowe has best comprehended the psychology of his characters and has made them act aptly using his chisel dexterously.

In the words of Prof. Baker, “Marlowe has never received due recognition for his skilful treatment of the Isabella-Mortimer story. He saw keenly that it gave him a chance to contrast two kinds of human affections, as well as to contrast growing affection with merely impulsive affection in Edward and his favourite of the moment. But of, historically, Mortimer met the Queen only midway in the period covered by the play that permitted Marlowe too little time in which to show the slow growth of the Queen’s love for Mortimer. Introducing Mortimer early; bringing the Queen and him together early, he can show convincingly the gradual change in the Queen’s mind from mere recognition of friendly, interest, to increasing gratitude for it, to kindling affection and even passion.’

The Elizabeth chronicle plays are often called historical plays. The latter term is also applied more broadly to any drama based mainly on historical materials, including such recent examples as Arthur Miller’s The Crucible (1953), which treats the Salem witch trials of 1692, and Robert Bolt, A man for All Seasons (1962), on Sir Thomas More. (Abridged from M.H. Abraham).

**“Come death, and with thy fingers close my eyes**

**Or if I live, let me forget myself.”**

But at, as soon as he is deprived of his royal power and cast into the abyss of deep misery be weeping his fate silently-he begins to attract us. He is an absolutely forlorn and deserted character. He tells Lightborn that his heart will begin to melt, “ere I have done my tale.” And when he begins to tell his tale we feel sympathetic towards the King’s plight. Fear prevails in his conversation with Lightborn, where the dethroned, miserable King is aware that he is going to die at the hands of the ruffians as he says to Lightborn, “I see my tragedy written in thy brows”, and he tells him that before he kills him, he should wait for sometime so that he can concentrate in the Almighty God. He is too much obsessed by the idea of death that he says, “Something still buzzeth in mine ears, /And tells me if I sleep I never wake; /This fear is that which makes me tremble thus; /And therefore tell me, wherefore art thou come?”

**“Base Fortune, now I see that in thy wheel**

**There is a point to which when men aspire**

**They tumble headlong down.”**

The deviation from history can be justified owing to the need of the tragedy. But of, it has been condemned also as the historical truths get confused when the playwright introduces his own inventions in the play and that are sure to agog the students of history. Thus, some critics are of opinion that the dramatist must not lay their hands on historical facts if they wish to write any historical play.

**“My Lord, I see your love to Gaveston**

**Will be the ruin of the realm and you,**

**For now the wrathful nobles threaten wars,**

**And therefore, brother banish him for ever.”**

The murder scene that follows the abduction and reveals the height to which the King has been tortured is heart-rending. Regarding this murder scene Boas writes “Thus through ever-mounting stage of passion and pathos the play moves on to its superb climax in the last dread scene within the vaults of Berkley Castle. Here, the dramatist’s genius has achieved its highest triumph in combining with extreme and even painful realism that subtle poetic thought which keeps everything within limits of true art. The unhappy King is seen in dungeon standing up to the knees in “mire and puddle”, sleepless and starving, and with the added agony of the remembrance of past days of love and glory.”

**“And so it fares with me, whose dauntless mind**

**The ambitious Mortimer would seek to curb,**

**And that unnatural queen, false Isabel.”**

Edward the Second was the last play of Marlowe. It regarded as a pre-Shakespearean chronicle. In fact this drama in the past had been assigned to Shakespeare himself. Much has been written to show that Marlowe collaborated with Shakespeare in the Henry VI as it has the accent of the Duke of Guise and some lines are written in direct imitation of Marlowe.

Most of the plays of Marlowe have super humans e.g. Dr. Faustus indicates love for knowledge. He adopts some magical devices to gain knowledge. Barabas, in The Jew of Malta is a superhuman being and achieves the goal. He stands for destructive energy and it is difficult to challenge it. Tamburlaine is a very important character delineated by Marlowe. He is a man of gigantic stature. Edward The Second is a play of different nature. We find nobles, queens; they are normal human beings and have no supernatural power. They are real human beings of flesh and blood.

It is also precisely on the side of humour that Marlowe has chief inferiority to Shakespeare. He locked the saving grace of the dramatic poet and it may also be parenthetically noticed as significant in this respect that Marlowe never drew a woman’s character. It is apparent in all the women characters delineated by Marlowe.

**“Leicester, if gentle words might comfort me,**

**Thy speeches long ago had eased my sorrows;**

**For kind and loving hast thou always been.**

**……….**

**And highly scorning that the lowly earth**

**Should drink his blood, mounts up to the air.”**

The spirit of poetry and strength pervades the whole play. Although Edward The Second lacks the poetic fervor and intensity of passions which characterizes his earlier plays. The verse is highly commendable and is free from rant rhetoric and extravagance. There is nothing prosy, monotonous or commonplace in this play. For example, Gaveston in opening lines expresses his feelings saturated with intensity and fervor. How he portrays the amusements he would provide for King’s delight. Again we observe his poetic frenzy like Tamburlaine, where in lines he has to sign the order for Gaveston’s banishment for whom he has ceaseless devotion and affection. His sentiments were crushed when he was not inclined to write this document. We give another example to justify the poetic gratuitousness of Marlowe in this play when King is brooding over the absence of his favourite. Marlowe’s exuberance of passions is revealed when Edward II comes to know the news of Gaveston’s execution. In Edward The Second there are many poetic scenes which are full of spontaneous poetic sentiments. The two great scenes- the Edward’s abdication and death, he is robbed off his kingly glory and is made a dim star. Consolating words too pique him and he finds no comfort. When he is asked to renounce his crown he is worried about it and fears that he is worried about it and fears that it would not be placed on his son’s head. His passionate fury is expressed when he is asked whether he will renounce the crown or not. Marlowe’s poetic intensity is revealed when King is asked by the Bishop to choose.

Shakespeare’s historical plays are treated unparalleled in the history of drama. Although he makes some deviation from history, yet he reflects the spirit of the age he depicts.

Edward The Second is treated as a masterpiece in structure and characterization. We note Marlowe’s maturing genius in this play. In other plays of Marlowe, there is magic and supernaturalism of titanic powers, while writing, Edward The Second he presented a play depicting various facets of human life. There is nothing unbelievable, nor is there any sign of supernaturalism. The entire play is based upon logic and reality. The plot structure is par excellence. It is flawless. The blank verse is less strained. It is more pliable and nearer to the tones of the human voices. The theme is concerned with the veracious history of a King who is dominated by his favourites, that is, first Gaveston and then Young Spenser. Unfortunately, Young Mortimer has won the love of Queen Isabella who becomes his mistress. The King is detained in prison and murdered on the order of two accomplices that is, Queen Isabella and Young Mortimer, who were executed by their victim’s son, that is, Prince Edward. The critics are not happy about Marlowe’s characterization in Edward The Second. He has made so many deviations from history in this play. There are various points which indicate the looseness and vagueness about the characterization of Marlowe. In the character of Edward there is no moral pattern. His weaknesses are obvious. He is quite indifferent to his wife; he is careless about his French dominion and to the honour of England. In spite of this, he is made to fall the victim of circumstances. According to Charles Lamb, the death scene of Marlowe’s King moves pity and terror which is unparalleled in ancient and modern plays. In the death scene we find force, passion and tragic power of Marlowe. Edward The Second has various dramatic qualities. This play is very popular because of plot construction of Marlowe. He has surpassed his predecessors because we have the breath of life in this play. The character of the Queen is detestable sometimes, but her character may be justified as she is at first much attached to the King. She is alienated from the King by his love of Gaveston, his fondness for the Spensers and his insulting treatment of herself. Marlowe develops upon the Queen’s guilty love and shows how she tries to hide it to the last.

**“Madam, return unto the court again:**

**That sly inveigling Frenchman we’ll exile,**

**Or lose our lives; and yet, ere that day come,**

**The king shall lose his crown; for we have power,**

**And courage too, to be revenged at full.”**

Christopher Marlowe belongs to Renaissance period, which influenced him. After reading Edward the Second we find the various characteristics of this period. Due to this fact, the play is considered best in the history of English Drama. Mortimer is the truest representative of Renaissance spirit in the play. Some of his inherit characteristic attributed of Renaissance are his spirit of patriotism which makes him rise against the King. His character also has passion for power, wealth and sensuality. The play reflects a strong protest against Puritanism and Catholicism. This can be proved by the scene in which the Bishop of Coventry is insulted by the King and his favourite. The King also oppose the power of the Church and condemns it by saying that he will ablaze the foundation of the Church. In this period we find adventure and hunger for knowledge, passion for power, wealth and sensuality. Edward the Second is saturated with the spirit of Renaissance. All the nobles express their aspirations for power, adventure, chivalry and sensuousness. The play overwhelmingly presents the Renaissance characteristic of the love for sensual pleasure which is always apparent in the major characters of the play, the King, the Queen, Gaveston and the Younger Mortimer. And this love for sensual pleasure is the cause of the downfall of the King and the others. The play reveals the pride of aristocracy and noble blood among the ladies and gentlemen of high order. Here, we do not find common men or the main theme of the play is based upon the conflict between the nobles and the King. They aspire to become dominating figures due to aristocracy and honour. Edward the Second has the spirit of patriotism. All the nobles are very patriotic and wish to enhance the greatness of England without compromising with France. Lightborn is a man of criminal nature. He employs various methods to murder a person.

Marlowe was a born poet, the greatest poet and lyricist of the Renaissance before Shakespeare. Marlowe not only reformed the dramatic blank verse-by infusing variety, vigour and spontaneous flow and cadence but made it the apt vehicle for the poetry of high passion and imagination. He breathed into the blank verse the animation and life-spirit of high lyricism. It has been truly remarked that “all his heroes are essentially poets in their nature, for they are all reflections of Marlowe’s personality.” Imbued with the Renaissance thirst for illimitable power, infinite knowledge and unbound ambition without any moral inhibition, Marlowe communicated his spirit to the heroes of his dramas. Tamburlaine speaks high poetry of unquenchable aspirations in the most melodious resounding verses; he gives clear utterance in poetry to Marlowe’s love of the impossible. So also Barabas in The Jew of Malta speaks in high poetry of his ambition for boundless wealth not for power which wealth brings but for the joy of the greediness in wealth. Faustus is shaped in a similar mould: ‘’with him the passion takes the form of a desire to conquer the secret of nature but his words have the glow of enthusiastic rapture. Even Mortimer in Edward The Second and Edward himself are poets, given as they are the dreams of the endless joy of living a life of ease, splendor and power. Marlowe is not only a poet of passion. Tamburlaine’s raptures over the beauty of his wife Zenocrate at her dying moments, Faustus’ rhapsody over Helen’s beauty, Edward’s passionately pathetic self-pity- all these gave to the English dramatic verse the passion and emotion which go with high poetry. In this connection Schelling’s remark is worth quoting: “Marlowe gave the drama passion and not poetry; and poetry was his most precious gift. Shakespeare would have been Shakespeare had Marlowe never written or lived. He might not have been altogether the Shakespeare we know.”

In Tillyard’s opinion ‘there is in Edward The Second no sense of any sweep or pattern of history such as we find in Shakespeare’s history plays, and F.P. Wilson has made essentially the same observation. Marlowe sees no pattern in history because, unlike Shakespeare, he does not see in history the working out of a divine purpose, and therefore, he cannot see in history the working out of a divine purpose, and therefore, he cannot see in it any large scheme encompassing God’s plans for men and extending over many decades. Marlowe sees history as the actions of men who bring about their own success or failure entirely by their own ability to cope with events. This is the humanistic attitude of both the classical and the Italian Renaissance historians, and if it is not proclaimed in Edward The Second as loudly and as flamboyantly as it is in Tamburlaine, it is nevertheless present.”

Later, when the Prince receives the news that his father has been murdered, he grows frantic with sorrow and anger. It is Gunrey who discloses the secret of his father’s murder. Hence, the conspiracy against his father by his mother and Mortimer is exposed before him. But of, he is aware of the fact that Mortimer cannot be subdued, so, he seeks the help of the loads. When he finds himself strong enough, he accuses Mortimer of the murder and sentences him to be beheaded. Similarly, he does not spare his mother and sentence her to imprisonment and gives further orders of investigation.

Baldock who was a tutor of King’s favourite niece Margaret, expects a great future prospects, for he thinks that he would be able to convince her and win her favours as her would be husband Gaveston, who was the Earl of Cornwall, would also help him on his wife’s (Margaret) recommendation. But in, Younger Spenser advices he to be careful in his ways of winning favours. At this he replies, “Spenser, thou Know’st I hate such formal toys, / And use them but of mere hypocrisy.” He says that he is wearing curate-like (religious) clothes outwardly; “Though inwardly licentious enough, /And apt for any kind of villainy.”

Baldock and Younger Spenser are introduced to us in Act II, Scene I of the play. They are followers of the late Earl of Glocester, who after the Earl’s death are discussing about their future. It is then that they reveal themselves.

Edmund approaches the rebellious group and expresses himself to join them. At first they suspect him but later on, on Younger Mortimer’s faith, Barons accept him and Kent becomes their ally. But of, when he comes to know of, the conspiracy that the Queen and Younger Mortimer are hatching against the King questions them and is curious to fathom the matter. He joined them because he is just loving and wanted to help those who were fighting for the just cause. This brings forth his magnanimity and reveals the fact that he is undoubtedly a good man, but his inconsistency led to his demise, as Young Mortimer orders his execution after he comes to know that Kent may stand against them, for their plan of murdering the King has been disclosed to him. In conclusion, we can say that he was straight forward and had keen observation, but was wanting in correct judgement. Thus, unfortunately due to his straight forwardness he fails to rescue the King and is executed. He is the only character in the play, except the prince whose concern for the King is wholly untouched by jealousy, hatred and lust and is a patriot in the true sense of the word.

Edmund is a keen observer and very aptly evaluates what an incident conveys. Whatever he feels about a person he very bluntly interrupting, tells him his mistake. He grew suspicious that there was something fishy between the relationship of Isabella and Mortimer. He suspects that both of them always dissemble and they are conspiring against the King as is cleared from earlier incidents when he interrupts Warwick, Younger Mortimer and others. It is due to his straight forwardness that he is turned out of the court being called a traitor.

Before Baldock’s self-revealation as a hypocrite, the two are indulged in discussion over their future which is interesting because Spenser satirically describes how some people put on the mask of religion though internally they give vent to lascivious desires. And they are discussing whether Margaret would remain stable in her decision about marrying Gaveston. At this Younger Spenser says that he is ready to forfeit his life if she shows her fickle mindedness in her decision. They are arguing like children and are bent on proving that one is liked more than the other. Thus, the tension of the play is a bit lightened owing to their farcical colloquy.

Prince Edward was the son of Edward II and Isabella of France. The prince is obedient and dutiful to his parents. He is a simple boy and knows no evil of the world. He has a clear conscience. He believes in his father and mother and even in Mortimer. He has a natural affection for all. When he becomes the King he shows a high sense of administering justice to all.

Younger Spenser becomes King’s favourite like Gaveston as he shows his devotion to the King when he sends Levune to France to bribe French Lords so that they do not support the Queen and the Mortimer. This is how he becomes an apple of King’s eye. Barons again plead to remove him but King does not agree to their demand.

Marlowe is undoubtedly the poet of passion par Excellence. It is passion that heaves in his poetry at every turn. Yet it has other striking characteristics too, especially three marked ones- pictorial quality, ecstatic quality and vitalizing energy. The pictorial richness of Marlowe’s poetry reminds us of if the intense and quivering colour effects that we come across in the poetry of Keats…which are powered over, as it were, with glittering silver and gold and scarlet, are akin to the rich-hued and picturesque veined passages in The Eve of St. Agnes. As Frederick Boas observes: “Never again, till the coming of Keats, did the sensuous imagination that glories in the lust of the eye and the pride of life speak in tones so full and rich.” The ecstatic quality is well exemplified in Faustus’ apostrophe, and in the speech of Barabas on regaining his lost treasure. The ecstatic quality of Marlowe’s poetry reveals his easily excitable moods which are moved to exuberant expression by certain appeals to the imagination such as the appeal to beauty. Marlowe, the wistful visionary that always followed the trail of adventure in life as well in literature, lived in a self-wrought world of beauty and wonder. The vitalizing energy of Marlowe’s poetry is evident in all his four great tragedies- Tamburlaine, Dr. Faustus, The Jew of Malta and Edward The Second. It is this pervading energy that redeems these plays from many an absurdity and endows them with compelling beauty and elevating power. Not satisfied with vague descriptions, Marlowe often actualises his theme- as in the pageant of the Seven Deadly Sins in Dr. Faustus. Such a thing is native to Marlowe’s genius, and is the out flowing of a virile and vital imagination. It is this vitalizing energy that imparts to the young poet’s eloquence a vibrant music that compels the reader’s admiration.

Tables are turned both the favourites, for King looses the battle and along with the King’s misfortune, their wheel of fortune also turns hostile. After loosing the battle, both of them along with the King find asylum in Wales. But at, soon they are taken into captivity and both of them are sentenced to death by Rice Ap Howel.

After the Queen and Young Mortimer succeed in their plan of dethroning the King and Queen wishes her son to be coronated, Prince tells his mother, “Mother, persuade me not to wear the Crown. Let him be King. I am too young to reign.” He tells Mortimer that he would not become the King when his father is living. After sometime he tells his mother that he wants to meet his father but the Queen replies that it is impossible for him to meet his father. Young Mortimer also tries to mislead the prince saying that his uncle has betrayed his father. But of, he does not have faith in the Mortimer and seeks the help of his uncle assuming that Mortimer would harm him.

Edward The Second coming last in the series of Marlowe’s major dramatic productions marks a development in several aspects. It is the best of the English chronicle plays of the time. Though there is a wide gap between it and even the immature chronicle plays of Shakespeare like Richard III and Richard II, yet it marks a development in Marlowe’s power of characterization. The central character of the unfortunate King is not very attractive but is so portrayed that the pathos of his end is calculated to draw sympathy of the audience. The subordinate characters are sketched with some individuality and there is an attempt, not unsuccessful, of evolving something like a plot. “Edward The Second, in the matter of plot and construction, stands on a different level from any of the author’s previous works. Instead of being a collection on unconnected episodes, or the tantalizingly imperfect fulfillment of a great design, it is a complex and organic whole, working up by natural stages to a singular powerful climax. In style and also from the dramatic point of view, it marks an advance. The ‘high astounding terms’ of the earlier period have almost entirely disappeared, though there is still a plentiful supply of the unreasonable classical allusions which had so irresistible a fascination for Elizabethan playwrights. Otherwise the language is of chastened simplicity, verging at times on baldness but full, for the most part, of silvery charm and grace. But of, it is above all in power of characterization that the play shows most distinctive evidence of growth. Marlowe’s earlier dramas are dominated by the commanding figure of the hero, which overshadows and dwarfs the other personages, robbing them of all interest on their own account. In Edward The Second this fault is avoided, and while the King stands clearly out as the central character, we have other well-defined types in Gaveston and Mortimer, to whom though of inferior interest, may be added the Young Spenser and the Queen.”

**“Not that I love the city, or the men,**

**But that it harbours him I hold so dear**

**The King, upon whose bosom let me die**

**And with the world be still at enmity.”**

Marlowe had not indeed the dramatic capacity of presenting a character by the portrayal of its development through clash and conflict. It may be said with reasonable justification that each of his four great dramas centres round a single character of the superbly heroic type and it is not all mobile. It is ready-made from the beginning and ends as it began. The whole theme only illustrates the ready-made character. This is certainly a defect in a master dramatist. But of, in the case that he gave a superb individuality to his characters-the heroes of his tragedies. In fact, Marlowe was too much under the influence of Renaissance conception of greatness as taught by the great Machiavelli. On this point we can do nothing better than quote at some length from illuminating observation of A. Nicoll: “We may note the influence of Machiavelli… Most heard of him by report, and took him as a symbol of all that was athestical, immoral and corrupt. His Prince is merely a summing up of regular Renaissance ideals of conduct; it is the culmination of that individualism which marks off the newly awakened Europe from the anonymity and communal ideals of the Middle Ages. Machiavelli had made a god of virtue, that quality in man which drives him to find free and full expression of his own thought and emotions. It is this virtue on which Marlowe has seized not without some tremors of conscience in spite of his liberated mind. So he presents his heroes, Tamburlaine, Dr. Faustus, and Barabas, over-riding the ordinary moral codes of their times in order to find the complete realization of their particular ideas; in the Jew of Malta he brings Machiavelli forward in person to speak the prologue to his tragedy. One important result of this insistence upon ‘virtue’ must be noted. Call it what we please, virtue, ambition, will, tend to overlook class, and accordingly the dramas of Marlowe break away slightly from the more ancient medieval plan. For the Middle ages tragedy was a thing of princes only; for Marlowe it was a thing of individual heroes. Thus, his Tamburlaine, king though he may be by the end of the drama, is born a peasant. The Jew is but a Mediterranean money-lender, and Faustus an ordinary German doctor and alchemist. The medieval conception of the royalty of tragedy is here supplanted by the Renaissance ideal of individual worth. It is the union of the two which gives us the majesty of Macbeth. And Lear… This is one of Marlowe’s most outstanding contributions to the development of a truly august type of English tragedy. His main conception of serious drama- Renaissance virtue battling on to success and then falling unconquered before fate- is at root of all the great seventeenth century tragic activity; only Shakespeare made his figures more human and stressed more the fatal flaw in the greatness of their characters.

Edmund, Earl of Kent has great devotion for his brother. When barons try to rebel in King’s presence, he asks the King to punish them. “Brother, revenge it, and let these their heads, Preach upon poles, for trespass of their tongues.” (Act I, Scene I, Lines 117-118). When peers ridicule the coming back of Graveston, he snubs them. He also makes the King aware of the scorn and mockery with which barons greet Gaveston on other occasion, when Warwick warns the King that if supports Gaveston, he will have to lose his Kingship and Kent regards it as a regular affront on the King. When he gets suspicious about Isabella and Mortimer’s illicit-relations he tells it plainly to the King. Seeing and examining the reason of the upsurge in the Kingdom, he advises the King- “My Lord, I see your love to Gaveston/will be the ruin of the realm and you. / For now the wrathful nobles threaten wars. /And therefore, brother, banish him for ever.” After clearing the poignancy of the situation in front of the King, he is received insults at the King’s hand and is turned out of the court, that makes him realize the fact why barons are agitating against the King.

Lady Margaret introduces both of them to the King and assures him they would be of great help to him and remain faithful. Lady Margaret has also promised Spenser to raise him to higher post. Later on, on Lady Margaret’s recommendation Younger Spenser is appointed as King’s adviser and Baldock as King’s supporter. In the course of time, as there is upsurge in the Kingdom to remove Gaveston from high rank, Gaveston is killed by the Barons and Younger Spenser usurp Gaveston’s position who instigate the King to avenge his best friend’s murder and says that if he were in King’s place he would have: “Strike off their heads, and let them preach on poles!” Similarly, Baldock impel the King: “This haught resolve becomes your majesty,/ Not to be tied to their affection,/ As though your highness were a school boy still, /And must be awed and governed like a child.”

Before the year 1587 in which Marlowe’s Tamburlaine Part I was put upon the stage and the young dramatist rose suddenly to giddy heights of fame and popularity, English drama was in a chaotic condition-groping its way to a much-desired stability but pulled in different directions. “It is not necessary”, as Boas pointedly remarks, “to deprecate the tentative efforts of earlier Elizabethan playwrights in order to recognize that they had failed to point with certainty to a glorious future.” There were the learned, scholarly playwrights writing for the Court, or the Inns of Court, or the Universities. These neo-classicists insisted on form, decorum and dignity even with artificiality and rigidity. On the other hand, there were popular playwrights holding to the native tradition of formlessness but giving much of vivacity and vigour to the presentation. Seneca models in tragedy and imitations of Terence and Plautus in comedy, both in the courtly dramas and those for the public stage confused the issue. As medium of expression, rhymed lines and stanzas of various sorts still held their way, though the first blank verse tragedy had been produced as early as 1562 and prose had occasionally been used in some comedies. “The age, however”, as Nicoll remarks, “obviously wished for no trammels upon the theatre. Freedom, action, passion, the audiences desired, and these they found in the work of the romantic playwrights“. And Marlowe, when he first appeared on the stage more than fulfilled this popular desire for “freedom, action, passion.” His successive dramas were wonderful, almost overwhelming, embodiments of the spirit of Renaissance. All the four plays from his pen were indeed exemplary of the tragic art in dramatic poetry. But in, they were enough to give a permanence and stability to the drama. The comic art was being perfected by other masters of the age, particularly by Greene and Lyly. It was passion, vigour and poetry that the populace had thirst for and these were exactly the gifts that Marlowe brought to the drama.

Canker is ground with the grain. Same is the case with both the favourites. They both remain true to the King, though they provoke him but are ignorant to the fact that they are sailing in the wrong boat and ultimately in the race of winning favours they loose their lives.

Edmund was the son of King Edward I and his second wife Margaret of France- Edmund is the poet’s own creation. He never forgets that he has royal blood in him. He loves his brother and his country. He is just to all. He is frank and straight forward. He is a keen observer of things that go around him. He has a natural love for Prince Edward.

To conclude, Marlowe has shown great skill in presentation of the character of Prince Edward. He behaves with firmness and decision. His affection seems to give naturalness to our pity for the murdered King. His vigourness action hints that a hero King has come to take the place of the weakness which has so naturally worked out its tragical ending.

**“And there in mire and puddle have I stood,**

**This ten days space, and least that I should sleep,**

**Only plays continually upon the drum,**

**They give me bread and water being a King.**

**So that, for want of sleep and sustenance,**

**My mind is distempered, and my body is numbed.”**

(EXCEPT THE SETTING AND DEVELOPMENT OR ALIKE, WORDS AND SENTENCES are FROM ***Dr. S. Sen.***…)

**~ RITUPARNA RAY CHAUDHURI**.