Tamburlaine the Great Study Guide

Tamburlaine the Great by Christopher Marlowe

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Introduction

In 1587, Christopher Marlowe, William Shakespeare's contemporary and one of the star playwrights of the English Renaissance, produced a daring and thrilling play focusing on the triumphs of a Tartar conqueror. Famous for adeptly incorporating the style of blank verse (unrhymed iambic pentameter) into English drama, the play was so popular that Marlowe was compelled to write a sequel including Tamburlaine's and his wife's deaths. Together, the plays became known as *Tamburlaine the Great*. Poetically captivating, as forceful and powerful as Tamburlaine the character, Marlowe's verse in these works marks a major shift from the conventional, low comic style of other Renaissance works. The plays are not a straightforward glorification of Tamburlaine's violent conquests, since Marlowe frequently highlights his protagonist's excessive brutality and hubris, or excessive pride. However, their directness and eloquence make it difficult not to admire Tamburlaine, both for his rhetorical power and his lifelike animation.

Alongside Tamburlaine's ceaseless conquests and their implications about war and politics run more general themes of desire, ambition, and power. Marlowe uses his portrayal of Tamburlaine's capture, betrothal, marriage, and ultimate loss of his wife Zenocrate, the daughter of the Egyptian "soldan," or sultan, to highlight these themes in another context, questioning the true nature of his hero's romantic passion. The plays also comment on ideas of fatherhood and masculinity by way of Tamburlaine's expectations of his sons, including his cruel treatment and murder of his son Calyphas, whom he considers a coward. Marlowe develops all of these themes through his skillful and unique use of language, which is why he is considered perhaps the most important stylistic innovator of the period. Originally published in 1590, the plays are now available in modern editions with notes and introductory material, such as the New Mermaid edition, *Tamburlaine the Great: Parts I and II*, published by Ernest Benn Limited in 1971.

Author Biography

Born in Canterbury, England on February 6, 1564, Marlowe was the son of a shoemaker. He attended King's School in Canterbury and was awarded a scholarship to Cambridge University, where he studied dialectics. Because of a number of mysterious absences from college, Marlowe was in danger of not receiving his master of arts degree. But Queen Elizabeth's Privy Council intervened with a letter stating that he had been in the queen's service and not, as was the rumor, part of a Catholic conspiracy in Rheims, France. In fact, many historians believe Marlowe was a spy of the queen's advisor Sir Francis Walsingham, which would explain his powerful connections and the company of spies and politicians with whom he associated.

In any case, Marlowe moved to London in 1587 with his degree and began writing in earnest. Before the year was out, the first part of *Tamburlaine the Great* had been performed to great success, and Marlowe produced its sequel in the following year. *Tamburlaine the Great* was the only one of Marlowe's works to be published during his lifetime, but he wrote and produced at least five more plays, including *Edward II*, a sophisticated play about the downfall of a weak king and his treacherous usurper Mortimer, and *Dr. Faustus*, in which Faustus sells his soul to the devil in exchange for power and knowledge. Before writing these plays, however, Marlowe translated poetry by the ancient Romans Ovid and Lucan. Later, he translated (with some additions of his own witty innovations) the ancient Greek poem *Hero and Leander*.

While living in London, Marlowe associated with the dramatist Thomas Kyd and the poet Thomas Watson. In 1589, Marlowe and Watson were briefly imprisoned for their roles in the homicide of a publican. In the subsequent years, Marlowe was involved in several other scuffles and legal disputes. In 1593, Kyd accused him of authoring several heretical papers that had been discovered in Kyd's room. Marlowe appeared before the queen's Privy Council, which was the normal course for a gentlemen; it was afforded to Marlowe, most likely, because of his continued associations with powerful politicians, but there is no evidence that they examined him. Shortly afterwards, on May 30, 1593, Marlowe spent all day with Ingram Frizer, a known operative of the powerful Walsingham family, and two other men at a meeting house in Deptford, near London. Frizer stabbed Marlowe above the right eye and killed him. The reasons for the attack and murder remain a mystery. Frizer was pardoned of the murder within a month.

Plot Summary

Part 1, Acts 1—2

Tamburlaine the Great begins with a prologue declaring that, unlike the silly wordplay of previous literature, this play will feature the "high astounding" words and actions of a conqueror. Act 1 then opens with the king of Persia, Mycetes, complaining to his brother Cosroe of a band of outlaws led by a "Scythian" shepherd named Tamburlaine. Scythians would technically have lived north and northeast of the Black Sea, but Marlowe uses the term interchangeably with "Tartar," which signifies the area of East Asia controlled by Mongol tribes. Cosroe criticizes his brother for being a weak and foolish king, and Mycetes instructs his chief captain Theridamas to kill Tamburlaine and his band before they enter Persia. Then, two Persian lords inform Cosroe of widespread unrest and offer him the crown, which Cosroe accepts.

Act 1, scene 2 introduces Tamburlaine, who has captured the Egyptian princess Zenocrate and is declaring his love for her. Theridamas arrives with one thousand soldiers, compared to Tamburlaine's five hundred, but Tamburlaine convinces Theridamas in a parlay to join his side. In act 2, Cosroe joins with Tamburlaine to overthrow his brother. When Mycetes hears of this, his lord Meander forms a plan to throw gold on the field in order to distract soldiers, whom he considers to be greedy thieves. Tamburlaine encounters Mycetes attempting to hide his crown in a hole; Tamburlaine tells Mycetes that he will not steal his crown yet, but take it when he wins the battle. After Tamburlaine and Cosroe conquer Mycetes's army, Cosroe departs for Persepolis, the capitol. Tamburlaine decides to challenge Cosroe to a battle for the Persian crown. Tamburlaine triumphs and Cosroe dies, cursing Tamburlaine and Theridamas.

Part 1, Acts 3—5

In act 3, scene 1, the Turkish Emperor Bajazeth discusses with his subsidiary kings their siege of Constantinople, which was then held by Christians. He warns Tamburlaine not to enter Africa or "Graecia," which included much of the Balkan peninsula, then under Turkish control. In the next scene, Tamburlaine overhears the Median, or Iranian, Lord Agydas urge Zenocrate to disdain Tamburlaine's suit, but Zenocrate stresses that she wants to be his wife. Tamburlaine surprises them, and Agydas stabs himself to avoid torture. Act 3 concludes with Tamburlaine's victory over the Turks and Tamburlaine making slaves of Bajazeth and his wife Zabina.

Zenocrate's father, the "soldan," or sultan of Egypt, opens act 4 by vowing to stop Tamburlaine's advances upon Egypt with the help of the king of Arabia, who was Zenocrate's betrothed before Tamburlaine kidnapped her. Tamburlaine and Zenocrate then humiliate and torture Bajazeth and Zabina. Tamburlaine vows to overtake Egypt despite his wife's plea to pity her father. In act 5, the governor of Damascus, besieged

by Tamburlaine's army, sends a group of virgins to plead for mercy, but Tamburlaine has them slaughtered and hoisted on the city walls. When Tamburlaine goes to fight the soldan and the king of Arabia, Bajazeth and Zabina kill themselves by beating out their brains. Zenocrate finds them and is dismayed by their and her people's blood on Tamburlaine's hands. After the king of Arabia dies and Tamburlaine wins the battle, sparing the soldan's life and actually giving him more territory than before, Tamburlaine crowns Zenocrate queen of Persia.

Part 2, Acts 1—3

Orcanes, the king of "Natolia," or Anatolia, the region east of the Bosporus in present-day Turkey, and Sigismond of Hungary begin Act 1 by swearing to uphold a truce, while Tamburlaine advances on Anatolia from Egypt. Bajazeth's son Callapine, who is Tamburlaine's prisoner in Egypt, then convinces his jailer Almeda to help him escape, promising him a kingdom. Meanwhile, Tamburlaine instructs his three sons on the arts of war; he harasses Calyphas, the son not inclined to fight, for being a coward. Tamburlaine meets Theridamas, Techelles, and Usumcasane, and they prepare to march on Natolia.

In act 2, Sigismond agrees to break his vow with Orcanes and attack the Natolian army while Orcanes is preparing to engage Tamburlaine. Orcanes wins the battle, however, attributing the victory partly to Christ, since Sigismond broke his vow to the Christian savior. Tamburlaine then discovers that Zenocrate is sick. Her physicians can do nothing to save her, and she dies. Act 3 begins with the crowning of Callapine as the Turkish emperor, and Callapine's vow to avenge his father's wrongs. Tamburlaine then burns down the town in which Zenocrate died, forbidding the world to rebuild it, and gives his sons a lesson in fortitude. Theridamas and Techelles march northward, where they sack Balsera, a town on the Natolian frontier. They capture its captain's wife, Olympia, after she burns her son's and husband's bodies. Tamburlaine and Usumcasane then parlay with Callapine and his subsidiary kings, threatening each other and boasting.

Part 2, Acts 4—5

Act 4, scene 1 reveals Tamburlaine's sons Amyras and Celebinus attempting to convince their brother Calyphas to fight, but Calyphas refuses. After Tamburlaine returns in triumph, he stabs Calyphas, calling him slothful and weak and ordering that the Turkish concubines bury him. In the next scene, Theridamas attempts to court Olympia, but she wishes to die and tricks him into stabbing her. Tamburlaine then rides in his chariot drawn by the former kings of "Soria," or Syria, and "Trebizon," or Trabzon, an area in the northeastern section of present-day Turkey, and tells his soldiers to rape the Turkish concubines.

Tamburlaine's next conquest is of Babylon. Since the governor refuses to yield the city, Tamburlaine has him hung in chains and shot. He then orders the kings of Trebizon and

Soria hung, bridles Orcanes and Jerusalem on his coach, orders all Babylonian men, women, and children drowned, and commands that sacred Islamic books be burnt. Afterwards, Tamburlaine feels "distempered," and soon it becomes clear that Tamburlaine is deathly ill. En route to Persia, a messenger arrives to inform Tamburlaine that Callapine, who escaped from the battle in Natolia, has gathered a fresh army and means to attack. Tamburlaine scares them away, but he is too weak to pursue them. He retires to review his conquests and regret that he cannot conquer more. He then crowns his son Amyras, orders Zenocrate's hearse to be brought in, and dies.

Part 1, Act 1, Scene 1

Part 1, Act 1, Scene 1 Summary

This epic play, written during the Elizabethan period, tells the epic story of an ambitious would-be emperor and his rise to earthly greatness. His ascent to power is contrasted by his descent into a delusional arrogance and his resistance to what he himself describes as the "feminine" weakness of deep emotion. Themes of loyalty and of the relationship between fathers and sons are developed through a series of military conquests interspersed with brief interludes of tenderness and personal intimacy.

A brief prologue introduces the action of Part 1, the chronicle of how Tamburlaine conquers the world. It suggests that the audience, or the reader, is intended to view what happens as a tragedy, and to judge Tamburlaine's actions accordingly.

Mycetes, King of Persia, is upset, but asks his brother Cosroe, whom he says is better with words, to explain why. In a speech that mocks Mycetes for being ineffectual, Cosroe reveals that Persia is threatened with invasion. After responding with irritation to Cosroe's mockery, Mycetes reveals that the threat is coming from Tamburlaine, whom one of the lords (Meander) describes at length as a thief with ambitions to govern Persia. Mycetes instructs Theridimas, a valiant general, to lead an army to confront Tamburlaine. Theridimas promises that within a month, Tamburlaine will either be dead or pleading for mercy. As he goes out to prepare for battle, Cosroe comments that the empire needs a wiser king and makes a rude comment about how Mycetes should kiss "his royal seat." Mycetes calls Cosroe an enemy and goes out with Meander and other lords.

Cosroe reveals to Menaphon that several Persian nobles and army commanders are preparing to have him (Cosroe) declared king in Mycetes' place. As Menaphon responds with flattering support, two of Mycetes' lords return with a crown, which they pace on Cosroe's head as they proclaim him the new emperor. Cosroe accepts the honor, and vows to wear it for the good of the country. He makes plans to lead his rebellious army to join the soldiers with Theridimas, and they all go out, shouting "God Save the King."

Part 1, Act 1, Scene 1 Analysis

There are three essential purposes of this scene. The first is to foreshadow the appearance of the central character of Tamburlaine, defining him as an ambitious potential conqueror. This is the core defining aspect of who he is, with his eagerness for conquest and power defining his every action and almost his every relationship, including those with his friends and his children. The second purpose of this scene is to lay the foundations for the complicated power games that follow - the betrayals, the counter betrayals, and the ground battles, all of which result in Tamburlaine beginning to

accumulate the power he seems, even without actually being seen, so desperate to obtain.

The scene's third purpose is to set up a key, thematically relevant contrast between Mycetes and Tamburlaine. Mycetes is clearly portrayed here and in his other few appearances in the play as having significant difficulty inspiring and keeping the loyalty of those around him. Those following Tamburlaine, on the other hand, are unswervingly devoted and loyal to the end. The reasons for the disloyalty around Mycetes are easy to see -he is indecisive, touchy, and absent minded. It is even possible that he is senile. The reasons Tamburlaine inspires loyalty and devotion (and in the case of his wife-to-be, abject love) will be examined as possibilities occur.

Stylistically, this play has several similarities to those of the playwright's contemporary, Shakespeare. This is particularly true of its rhythmic patterns and rhyming schemes. There are also significant contrasts, particularly in language and imagery. These stylistic elements, particularly in Part 1, tend to be harsher, more muscular, more violent and more raw. In addition, there is the sense here of less psychological depth to the characters than in many of Shakespeare's plays. The characters in *Tamburlaine* are not complicated souls, being developed in fairly shallow terms with straightforward objectives and psychological contexts. A few characters, most notably particularly Tamburlaine himself, develop more depth and broader emotional range in Part 2, but at this point and for most of Part 1 the dialogue, language and imagery all mirror the essential content of the story - men at war, struggling for power and control.

Part 1, Act 1, Scene 2

Part 1, Act 1, Scene 2 Summary

Tamburlaine encourages Zenocrate, a recently captured princess of Egypt, to not fear him, saying she needs him to guarantee safe passage through his lands. When he asks whether she is betrothed to anyone, she tells him she is. He then tells her that he intends to have her for his wife, to conquer Africa and Asia, and to make her an empress. To illustrate his seriousness, he takes off the clothing of a shepherd that he wears and puts on battle armor as his generals speak flatteringly to him; Zenocrate tells him the gods will not allow him to fulfill his ambitions. Tamburlaine responds by saying Zenocrate is more beautiful and more valuable to him than all the treasure she travels with. One of Tamburlaine's generals, Techelles, comments with surprise that Tamburlaine seems to be in love. Tamburlaine says women must be flattered, but then admits he is indeed in love.

A Messenger arrives with news of the arrival of a thousand soldiers. Techelles and the other lords urge Tamburlaine to fight. Tamburlaine reveals his plans to talk first, and then orders that the treasure captured at the same time as Zenocrate be displayed to impress the Persians. He then prepares to either capture or kill the Persian commander.

Theridimas arrives, and speaks with flattering passion in defense of Persia. Tamburlaine uses the treasure and Zenocrate as examples of how the gods are blessing him, and says if Theridimas changes sides he will receive just as much blessing. Tamburlaine's generals assure Theridimas that Tamburlaine means what he says, and finally Theridimas gives in, saying he will join with Tamburlaine and be by his side as long as he lives. He and Tamburlaine shake hands, and Tamburlaine calls on the gods to witness their vow of friendship. He then turns to Zenocrate's servants, whom he threatens with slavery if they do not swear their loyalty. The servants do so, and so does Zenocrate.

Part 1, Act 1, Scene 2 Analysis

This scene introduces the two defining relationships of Tamburlaine's life and military career, Zenocrate and Theridimas.

Zenocrate, encountered first in this scene as a prisoner, in the course of the play comes to be the love of Tamburlaine's life. There are subtle indications at the beginning of this scene that in fact Tamburlaine has watched her from afar and desired her so deeply that he kidnapped her, but as is the case with many elements in the play such a situation is never defined outright and must be deduced rather than immediately perceived. That said, there is other evidence to support this premise; such as the circumstances in Part 2 surrounding Zenocrate's death. In those moments, Tamburlaine reveals depths of his love for her that transcend the merely appropriate. In consideration of this fact, it

becomes possible to interpret Tamburlaine's extravagant persuasions here as coming from a place of genuine love and desire, rather than a mere intention to add her to his list of conquests. Also, if this premise is accepted it adds a much-needed layer of emotion to the character, which as previously discussed could otherwise be seen as one-dimensional. In the meantime, Zenocrate's admission that she was once betrothed foreshadows the later revelation that she was once betrothed to the King of Arabia, an ally of her father's that Tamburlaine defeats.

The second defining relationship introduced here is with Theridimas, whose support as both a friend and a military advisor proves invaluable to Tamburlaine throughout the play. While the emotional depth of their relationship comes nowhere near paralleling the depth of the relationship with Zenocrate, the bond between the two men is nevertheless a consistent source of support, loyalty and trust. It would not be going too far to suggest that Theridimas is the foundation upon which Tamburlaine's empire is built. The question is why he changes sides with such relative ease. This question is related to that of why people are so loyal to Tamburlaine and yet so disloyal to Mycetes. One possible answer might lie in Tamburlaine's own capacity for loyalty. His generals here indicate to Theridimas that once Tamburlaine accepts that his generals and followers are faithful, he will be faithful to them in return. This capacity for loyalty and for consistently rewarding those who are loyal to him appears again and again throughout the play, particularly when it comes to Theridimas and later in Part 2 when it comes to his sons, one of whom he executes for being *disloyal*.

Part 1, Act 2, Scenes 1, 2, and 3

Part 1, Act 2, Scenes 1, 2, and 3 Summary

Scene 1 - Conversation between Cosroe and his generals reveal that Cosroe knows Theridimas has allied himself with Tamburlaine, who is described in great and flattering detail by Menaphon. Cosroe says that Tamburlaine is a potentially powerful ally, and resolves to join with him to seize control of the Persian throne from Mycetes, adding that someone with Tamburlaine's ambition and drive will be a powerful servant.

Scene 2 - Mycetes has discovered that Cosroe, Tamburlaine, and Theridimas have joined forces. He vows to defeat them, and Meander urges him to promise great reward to those who kill them. A Spy comes with news that the army of the traitors is much larger than that of Mycetes. Meander suggests that the size of Tamburlaine's army will make him careless, and then addresses the soldiers, promising them gold and riches if they succeed.

Scene 3 - In the company of Theridimas and other generals, Tamburlaine describes himself in terms in which he compares favorably to Ancient Greek gods and heroes. Theridimas comments that Tamburlaine's actions are even mightier than his words, and Techelles adds that he supports Cosroe in the same way he supports Tamburlaine. Tamburlaine says Mycetes' army is close, and the time has come for battle. He draws his sword, describing it as the finest weapon a soldier ever handled. Encouraged, Cosroe tells him to lead the way, and Tamburlaine goes out, followed by Techelles and others.

Part 1, Act 2, Scenes 1, 2, and 3 Analysis

An interesting aspect of this play is that, in several cases, important events take place offstage. An example is what has apparently happened between Scenes 1 and 2 - Cosroe has apparently negotiated an agreement with Tamburlaine. The purpose of this and other similar omissions is to create momentum and pace. This theory is supported by the nature and structure of these three scenes, which are all relatively brief and succinct, containing just enough information to move the action along to the next major turning point; in this case, the overthrow of Mycetes. A key exception to the minimalism of these scenes is the lengthy, detailed description of Tamburlaine's physical appearance in Scene 1. It seems clear that this description is intended to define him as a kind of lordly ideal, someone whose ambition and loyalty to those with whom he serves make him heroic. This description in some ways refers back to the Prologue, in which Tamburlaine's story was described as tragic, by physically helping to define him as a classic, tragic hero - an ideal man brought down by a particular weakness, traditionally called his "tragic flaw."

At this point in the play, that flaw might be defined as ambition, but there is the sense something deeper is going on. A clue can be found in Tamburlaine's likening himself to the Greek gods, the first of several such comparisons. In making these comments, Tamburlaine displays hubris, a kind of arrogance by which a mortal man sets himself up as god-like. Hubris is more than ambition, self-righteousness, or over-confidence, although it contains elements of all three. The defining quality of hubris is that the glories achieves are perceived as being pre-ordained by a god or gods, and perhaps being even greater than those accomplished by the gods. The typical journey of a hubristic person in literature or drama is that he or she is brought down to earth, and is reminded that he or she is a mortal human being. By the end of the play, when Tamburlaine dies not of a wound in battle but of an illness, it is clear that this is, in fact, his journey. His end, therefore, defines his beginning - his ultimate humanity defines, by contrast, his present self-declared godhood.

Part 1, Act 2, Scene 4

Part 1, Act 2, Scene 4 Summary

Mycetes appears, carrying his crown. He speaks in soliloquy about how frightening war is, how kings always make good targets in a war, and how he thinks it is a good idea to hide his crown so no-one can take it from him. Tamburlaine appears and confronts him. Mycetes tries to use his authority as king to order him away, but Tamburlaine stays and discovers the crown. Mycetes demands that he give it back and Tamburlaine does, saying it is only a loan. He then goes out, and Mycetes marvels that Tamburlaine "the thief" did not simply steal it.

Part 1, Act 2, Scene 4 Analysis

This brief scene is noteworthy for several things. First is the erratic behavior of Mycetes, which bears out the previously discussed possibility that he may be senile. Second is the fast-paced banter between Mycetes and Tamburlaine over the crown, a kind of hard-edged comic relief in the middle of all the plotting and counter-plotting. Third is Mycetes' reference to Tamburlaine as a thief, which echoes the description of Tamburlaine first relayed to him in Part 1, Act 1, Scene 1 and which functions as a symbol of an essential aspect of Tamburlaine's nature - he steals countries, he steals gold, and he steals princesses. This aspect of his personality could potentially be perceived as being at odds with the previously discussed description of him as a noble man, but there is another possible perspective that is perhaps less difficult to accept. At his core, Tamburlaine sees what he wants and takes action to get it, in many ways an admirable characteristic, albeit one taken to extremes in this character. It may be that the story of this play is that of a man who takes this admirable trait too far, into the realm of hubris. He believes he deserves the greatness he achieves; he will therefore stop at nothing to achieve it.

The soliloquy spoken by Mycetes is an example of a common narrative technique in which a character speaks his or her thoughts aloud while alone on stage. The technique is generally used to reveal feelings, thought processes, or attitudes. Here it is used to briefly illuminate Mycetes' state of mind and also to foreshadow later action in the play, as Tamburlaine and his armies target successive kings for usurpation. His exiting comment about Tamburlaine's not stealing the crown is ironic, in that stealing is exactly what Tamburlaine does - not literally stealing the crown, but stealing the empire.

Part 1, Act 2, Scenes 5, 6, and 7

Part 1, Act 2, Scenes 5, 6, and 7 Summary

Scene 5 - Conversation between Tamburlaine and Cosroe, in the presence of Theridimas, Meander, Techelles and other generals, reveals that Mycetes has been defeated, that Cosroe is now emperor, and that Tamburlaine is now regent (deputy king) of Persia. Cosroe makes Meander his chief advisor, proclaims that messengers are to be sent to all the other regents in the empire that their over-lord has changed, and announces his intention to subdue the remains of Mycetes' army. After he leaves, Tamburlaine tells Theridimas and his generals that he intends to get control of Persia for himself, along with control of Cosroe's other lands for his generals. He sends Techelles after Cosroe to give him fair warning that he (Tamburlaine) is taking control.

Scene 6 - Cosroe angrily vows to destroy Tamburlaine. Meander and his other generals speak of what an ambitious monster Tamburlaine is and resolve to defend themselves vigorously. Cosroe encourages his generals and his soldiers to fight hard and well in the name of what is right, and leads them into battle.

Scene 7 - A wounded Cosroe speaks angrily to Tamburlaine, Theridimas, Techelles, and others about their apparent betrayal of him and his good faith. Tamburlaine compares his determination to win the throne to that of Jupiter, the king of the gods who slew his father to become king himself. As he dies, Cosroe curses Tamburlaine, who takes the crown and puts it on, saying even the worst curses will not keep him from wearing it. He adds that the crown is more securely his than if the gods themselves had placed it on his head.

Part 1, Act 2, Scenes 5, 6, and 7 Analysis

Events once again move quickly in this section, and again this is at least partly the result of a key incident taking place offstage - in this case the defeat and apparent death of Mycetes. This narrative technique combines with the play's previously discussed muscularity of language to create a powerful sense of dramatic vigor, a sense of stylistic momentum that reinforces the story - in the same way that Tamburlaine moves quickly and aggressively and with apparent inevitability, so does his story. In other words, style and substance echo and reinforce each other.

Meanwhile, evidence of Tamburlaine's hubris is mounting. This includes Cosroe's description of Tamburlaine's defiance of the gods and Tamburlaine's own comment about the security of his crown at the end of Scene 7. More and more it is becoming clear that Tamburlaine sees himself as a god-like figure: invincible and mighty. The latter three acts of the play, along with the first two acts of Part 2, reinforce and develop this idea even further, with the result that his all too human end at the conclusion of Part 2 comes as a powerful reminder that even the greatest of men is merely mortal. This

reminder can be perceived as the play's core theme - even the greatest of men is human.

There is a significant, almost comic irony at the core of the action of these three scenes - that Cosroe, who has himself acted traitorously and usurped a throne, has himself been the victim of a traitorous act and has been usurped. This irony can be seen as having a parallel in Tamburlaine, whose god-like power and omnipotence is usurped by denying his own humanity.

Part 1, Act 3, Scene 1

Part 1, Act 3, Scene 1 Summary

Bajazeth announces to three of his regents that Tamburlaine is challenging his rule of the Turkish Empire. After commenting that his army is invincible and that his attention will not be distracted from his siege of Constantinople in Greece, Bajazeth sends a basso (messenger) to Tamburlaine with the command that he not advance into Africa or Greece, and with the offer to negotiate for peace. The Basso leaves on his mission. After he is gone, Bajazeth's regents speak flatteringly to him, and he speaks determinedly about how he will conquer the Greeks once and for all.

Part 1, Act 3, Scene 1 Analysis

In this brief scene the stage is set for Tamburlaine's next conquest. It is interesting to note how all the rulers he conquers, including Bajazeth and Cosroe, come across as over-confident and arrogant in much the same manner as does Tamburlaine. The core difference is that while all the rulers are confident and ambitious, which the play seems to be saying is a prerequisite for ruler-ship of any kind, Tamburlaine's attitudes are tempered by loyalty to his friends and his love for Zenocrate. In other words, he is not just a greedy emperor, as both Bajazeth and Cosroe are portrayed, but also a friend, a lover, devoted husband, and doting father. He is a complete man and a great one, but again with that one tragic flaw - hubris.

Part 1, Act 3, Scene 2

Part 1, Act 3, Scene 2 Summary

Zenocrate's loyal servant Agydas asks why she so troubled, saying that her kidnapping and rape at the hands of Tamburlaine ought to have been "digested" (made peace with) a long time ago. Zenocrate agrees that her first feelings of disgust have indeed been digested because of the attention and courtesy he has paid to her since, but admits that there is something else troubling her, and comments on how much she now loves Tamburlaine.

Tamburlaine and Techelles appear, without being noticed, and overhear as Agydas reminds Zenocrate that Tamburlaine is keeping her from seeing her father and from being granted the rightful honors of a queen. He urges her to hope for rescue from her father the Soldan (Sultan) of Egypt. Zenocrate tells him to speak of Tamburlaine more appropriately, but Agydas suggests that Tamburlaine is incapable of love because he thinks only of conquest and that he is not worthy of her. Tamburlaine comes forward, and lovingly takes Zenocrate away, glaring at Agydas as he goes.

Agydas speaks in soliloquy of his fear after seeing hatred and death in Tamburlaine's eyes. Accompanied by another of Tamburlaine's generals, Techelles returns with a dagger, and asks Agydas to foresee what it represents. Agydas speaks at poetic length about how the dagger means he will surely die a lingering and painful death. Determined to die more easily, he takes the dagger and stabs himself. Techelles and the second general agree that Agydas died honorably, and take his body out for a proper burial.

Part 1, Act 3, Scene 2 Analysis

Again, important action seems to have taken place offstage, as it is revealed in this scene that since Zenocrate's last appearance (Act 1 Scene 2), Tamburlaine has made her love him. Somewhere in the midst of all his plotting and conquests, he has spent what would in realistic terms have to be a considerable amount of time in staging a more romantic conquest for the kidnapped Zenocrate's affections. He has not gone so far as to marry her, however, a circumstance indicated by Agydas' comments that she is not being treated like the princess she truly is. Meanwhile, his comments about the Soldan rescuing Zenocrate foreshadow the action of Part 1, Act 4, in which the Soldan attempts to do exactly that.

There is a vivid contrast here between Tamburlaine's apparent affection for Zenocrate and his ruthlessness in causing Agydas' death. There can be little doubt that Agydas has it right - Techelles is there to kill him, apparently on Tamburlaine's orders. Why? Because Agydas has encouraged Zenocrate to be disloyal, and if there is one thing that is important to Tamburlaine, it is loyalty. The other important thing, of course, is

Zenocrate's love, meaning that Agydas' comments are treacherous on two counts since he encourages Zenocrate to not love Tamburlaine. Therefore, in Tamburlaine's mind, Agydas must die. Aside from the interesting and poignant way in which the loyal Agydas avoids potential suffering, his death points out these apparent paradoxes in Tamburlaine's character: complexities of perspective and attitude that make him much more than a ruthless conqueror and show him as the multi-faceted tragic hero he is clearly intended to be.

Part 1, Act 3, Scene 3

Part 1, Act 3, Scene 3 Summary

Tamburlaine, in the company of Theridimas, Techelles, Zenocrate and other attendants, greets the Basso mockingly, telling his regents that the crowns of Bajazeth's regents will be theirs when they win. Theridimas and Techelles both vow that victory will be theirs and Tamburlaine speaks encouragingly to them, calling himself "the Scourge and Wrath of God" and vowing to completely subdue Bajazeth, his armies and his empire.

Bajazeth enters, calling himself the greatest ruler in Africa and accompanied by his regents, by his wife Zabina, and by a guard of honor. He and Tamburlaine challenge each other, each swearing that the other will be soundly defeated. Bajazeth comments that Tamburlaine's regents will be harnessed to his wife's chariot and made to pull her, while the regents of each leader speak negatively about the other regents. After bragging about how Zabina has given him three strong and loyal sons, Bajazeth tells her to sit on his throne and wear his crown while he goes to battle with Tamburlaine and defeats him soundly. Tamburlaine then speaks in poetic praise of Zenocrate and tells her to sit beside Zabina and not move until he triumphantly returns. After further confrontations, Bajazeth and Tamburlaine go out to begin the battle.

As soon as they are gone, Zenocrate and Zabina speak disdainfully to each other, both bragging about their husband's prowess in battle and promising to make the other a servant to her servants. As sounds of the battle are heard, each woman prays for success for her husband, and then tells each other that each husband is about to destroy the other.

Bajazeth runs in, chased by Tamburlaine who quickly subdues him. Theridimas and Techelles come in with the news that Tamburlaine's army has won a resounding victory. As Zenocrate returns Tamburlaine's crown to him, Tamburlaine orders that the crowns of Bajazeth's regents be given to Theridimas and Techelles. Theridimas takes Bajazeth's crown from Zabina and gives it to Zenocrate, saying she is now empress. Bajazeth bemoans his loss but vows violent revenge. Tamburlaine vows to ensure that such revenge is never possible, as he plans to extend his armies over Bajazeth's former territory. Bajazeth and Zabina are tied up, and both cry to Mohammed for help. Tamburlaine orders them taken away and for a victory feast to be prepared.

Part 1, Act 3, Scene 3 Analysis

Tamburlaine's increasing power is defined with almost comic brevity in this scene, in which his war with Bajazeth is over almost before it begins. This is an example of how real time events in this play are compressed into what is referred to as stage time, in which things happen faster than they would normally in order to keep the story moving.

There are two important elements of foreshadowing in the confrontation between Bajazeth and Tamburlaine. The first can be found in Bajazeth's boast that Tamburlaine's regents will be harnessed to Zabina's chariot, an ironic foreshadowing of how it is in fact Zenocrate's chariot that gets pulled by Bajazeth's deputies. The second foreshadowing can be found in Bajazeth's equally boastful comments about Zabina having given him several sons. In addition to being a jab at the fact that Zenocrate and Tamburlaine are not yet legally married and that Tamburlaine as yet has no heir, the comment foreshadows the births of Tamburlaine's own three sons in Part 2.

The quarrel between the two commanders is essentially a bragging contest of the "mine is bigger than yours" variety that seems to be a common characteristic of many types of male rivalries. It is perhaps too simplistic to suggest that Tamburlaine's obsessive aggression is based on over-compensation for shortcomings in other areas of his life, and such a possibility is never actually discussed outright in the text. In terms of modern psychologically based character analysis, it is certainly a possibility worth considering. Possibilities of what Tamburlaine is compensating for are discussed later in this Analysis.

Part 1, Act 4, Scenes 1 and 2

Part 1, Act 4, Scenes 1 and 2 Summary

Scene 1 - The Soldan, accompanied by several lords and a Messenger, cries out with anger about Zenocrate being kept as a concubine by Tamburlaine, and about how Tamburlaine is advancing into Egyptian territory. The Messenger describes the army in detail, and the Soldan says no army of any size would frighten him. One of his lords reminds him that the speed of Tamburlaine's assault has caught him unready, but the Soldan tells him the way Tamburlaine is treating Zenocrate has made him (the Soldan) angry enough to brave anything. The Messenger pleads with the Soldan to understand how vicious and bloodthirsty Tamburlaine is, but the Soldan comments that Tamburlaine is an ignorant peasant and will be defeated in revenge for the way he treated Zenocrate.

Scene 2 - Tamburlaine orders that Bajazeth, kept in a cage like an animal, be brought out and placed at his feet. Bajazeth is let out, invoking an extravagant curse on Tamburlaine, who orders that Bajazeth kneel and prepare to be treated like a footstool. Still cursing, Bajazeth goes on all fours. Tamburlaine steps on him to climb onto his throne, speaking at poetic length about his power being the brightest light on earth challenging the sun and the stars in its brilliance. Zabina venomously asks how he dares to think so well of himself, leading Zenocrate to tell her servant, Anippe, to take better control of her. Bajazeth curses Tamburlaine yet again, and Tamburlaine orders him put back in his cage, vowing that as long as he lives he shall be kept there and Zabina shall feed him with scraps from Tamburlaine's table. He then brags about how no one will be able to free Bajazeth, about how other rulers shall talk forever about Tamburlaine's greatness in conquering him, and then announces his plans to take control of Damascus. Zenocrate pleads for mercy, and it becomes clear that Damascus is the home of the Soldan and his army. Tamburlaine tells her he will have no pity.

Part 1, Act 4, Scenes 1 and 2 Analysis

In the brief and verbally violent Scene 1, Tamburlaine's most dangerous opponent yet is introduced. There is the sense here that the Soldan might just be the one to defeat Tamburlaine - whereas Cosroe was unsuspecting and Bajazeth over-confident, the Soldan is both forewarned about Tamburlaine's aggressiveness and very, very angry over the way Tamburlaine has treated his daughter. There is also the sense, however, that this very strength could also prove a weakness, in that the Soldan is so angry that he might just act without thinking or proper preparation. The sense of suspense regarding the outcome of their conflict is heightened by the diversion provided by Scene 2. There, the increasing arrogance in Tamburlaine that the Soldan is up against is illuminated through Tamburlaine's humiliation of Bajazeth, his arrogant speech about how his glory is now brighter than that of the sun, and his supreme confidence that he will easily take Damascus. Along with this hubris comes an equally increasing degree of mercilessness, as indicated by his refusing mercy even to his beloved Zenocrate and by

his humiliating treatment of Zabina. All these elements foreshadow the even greater hubris he exhibits later in the play, a superiority complex that becomes pathological and nearly psychotic in Part 2.

Part 1, Act 4, Scenes 3 and 4

Part 1, Act 4, Scenes 3 and 4 Summary

Scene 3 - The Soldan attempts to convince the King of Arabia to join his battle with Tamburlaine, likening their efforts to those of several mythic warriors. The King of Arabia reminds him of what happened to Bajazeth, but the Soldan tells him that he has vowed to free both Bajazeth and Zenocrate at any cost. The King comments that he longs to fight Tamburlaine and agrees to join his army with that of the Soldan. After hearing the details of the size of the combined forces, the King of Arabia speaks confidently about their chances for victory. The Soldan orders that the combined forces defend Damascus and humiliate Tamburlaine.

Scene 4 - As he welcomes his guests to a banquet, Tamburlaine's words indicate that the Soldan has not surrendered and that a bloody battle is imminent. After enduring more curses from both Bajazeth and Zabina, Tamburlaine's temper runs short and he orders Bajazeth to eat food from the tip of his sword or die. Bajazeth stomps the food under his foot and Tamburlaine comes close to losing his temper and ordering their executions, but calms himself down and asks Zenocrate whether she thinks Bajazeth and his wife make good entertainment. When her response seems to him subdued, he asks what is wrong, and she tells him she is upset at seeing her father and his town under attack. She again pleads for mercy, but Tamburlaine says if Jupiter himself (the King of the Gods) were king of Damascus he would still lay siege to the city and would still win, but he does promise that the lives of her father and her friends will be preserved. He turns his attention back to Bajazeth, who tells him he intends to starve himself to death. As Zabina tells him to live just to spite Tamburlaine, Tamburlaine calls for another platter of food. A platter is brought in but instead of food it has crowns on it, which Tamburlaine identifies as the crowns of Egypt, Arabia and Damascus, and places on the heads of Theridimas, Techelles and another lord. After Bajazeth comments that they will not be wearing them for long, Tamburlaine tells the new kings they have earned their crowns, and urges them to hold onto them through loyalty and devoted service to him. Theridimas vows that if they do not serve him well he can take the crowns away. Tamburlaine speaks of his ambition to conquer the world as far south as the pole, and then tells Zenocrate that he will not crown *her* until he has done so.

Part 1, Act 4, Scenes 3 and 4 Analysis

The beginning and middle of the battle for Damascus are dramatized in these two scenes, with the former scene explored from the point of view of the defenders (the Soldan and the King of Arabia) and the latter scene shown from the point of view of the attacker (Tamburlaine). The former scene is relatively straightforward, as the Soldan is quite persuasive even though it seems the King does not need much persuading anyway. The latter is also fairly straightforward, depicting yet again Tamburlaine's arrogance.

Once again important action takes place offstage, as the dialogue indicates at the beginning of Scene 4 that Damascus has been taken. Aside from this key story point, Scene 4 is also significant in that it illuminates Tamburlaine's increasing mental instability, dramatized through his near loss of temper with Bajazeth. This encounter foreshadows several of Tamburlaine's later actions, including the murder of his son. His increasing hubris is also reiterated, as the taunting of Bajazeth increases in intensity though the appearance of the three crowns. Tamburlaine is clearly setting himself up as invincible, and while the action of the play seems to indicate that he has every reason for holding that belief, there is also the sense that he, as the saying goes, is "riding for a fall." In other words, he is charging ahead with such reckless confidence that his fall from grace and power seems inevitable.

At the same time as all of this is going on, Tamburlaine's tenderness towards Zenocrate is also reiterated, but what is important here is that his tenderness has limits. In spite of her pleas and his obvious affection for her, he indicates that he has no intention of leaving Damascus, and that he will not crown her empress until he has even more land under his control. Finally, Tamburlaine's previously discussed obsession with loyalty resurfaces, as he rewards the dutiful service of Theridimas and other lords with the reminder that they continue to be loyal or face having all their rewards taken away. It is possible to see here another aspect to Tamburlaine's refusal to crown Zenocrate empress, that he sees her pleas for mercy for his father as being disloyal. By crowning the others and not her, he is sending a clear message to her - do as he asks, feel as he feels, want what he wants and you will be rewarded, just like the regents.

Part 1, Act 5, Scenes 1 and 2

Part 1, Act 5, Scenes 1 and 2 Summary

Scene 1 - The Governor of Damascus notes the city is under siege from Tamburlaine, imagines him to be remorseless, and expresses the hope that the Four Virgins he is planning to send to him will awaken mercy in him. The First Virgin tells the Governor that if he had taken greater care in planning their safety, their mission would not be nearly the death warrant that it seems. The Governor urges her to think of the potential good their actions will provide to the city and to forgive him, then bids them farewell and goes out.

Scene 2 - In continuous action, Tamburlaine, Theridimas, Techelles and other regents join the Virgins. Tamburlaine says the Governor should have asked for mercy before the attack when he had the chance. The First Virgin speaks flatteringly to him and beseeches him to have pity on the city and its citizens. Tamburlaine tells her that her pleas are in vain, and tells Techelles to take the Virgins away and execute them. They plead again for mercy as they are taken away.

In soliloquy, Tamburlaine reveals his determination to not be merciful, saying all the gods could not convince him to change his mind. Techelles returns with news that the Virgins have been executed and their bodies hung on the walls of Damascus as a warning to its citizens. Tamburlaine tells him to continue the assault, and then when Techelles is gone, again speaks in soliloquy. He talks at poetic length about how Zenocrate's misery at what has happened to her home does more damage to him than his entire army does to the walls of Damascus, and how unmanly it is for warriors like him to have feminine thoughts like mercy. He then talks about how there is only one exception - if a warrior allows feminine thoughts and actions in the name of winning love from his woman. Apparently needing to be amused, he calls for Bajazeth to be brought to him.

Techelles and Theridimas bring news that Damascus has been completely captured, but that the Soldan and the King of Arabia are advancing determinedly. As Bajazeth and Zabina are brought in, Theridimas suggests to Tamburlaine that mercy be shown the Soldan in Zenocrate's name. Tamburlaine assures him he will indeed be merciful for Zenocrate's sake, and then taunts Bajazeth with the suggestion that if he is hoping for rescue by the Soldan, he is hoping in vain. He goes out, accompanied by Theridimas and Tech, and leaving Bajazeth and Zabina alone.

Bajazeth and Zabina again utter curses on Tamburlaine, this time expressing their desire for him to die a particularly violent death. His energy suddenly spent, Bajazeth tells Zabina that their curses are useless, and uses imagery from Greek mythology to suggest that Tamburlaine is too lucky to be defeated and that they have no hope of freedom. Continuing to use Greek imagery, Zabina wonders aloud why they should remain alive. Bajazeth agrees, begging Zabina to fetch him some water to help him live

long enough to tell her how much he loves her. She promises to do what she can to help him live and goes out.

Bajazeth speaks in soliloquy about his determination to end his life, calls for curses on Tamburlaine and the earth he calls his empire, and bashes his brains out on the walls of his cell/carriage. Zabina returns, discovers her husband's death, descends into hysterics, goes mad, and bashes her own brains out in the same way.

Zenocrate comes in, speaking at poetic length about her misery at seeing her home city subjugated and the bodies of the virgins on the city walls, and about her difficulty reconciling Tamburlaine's violence with his words of love. She then sees Bajazeth's and Zenocrate's bodies and calls upon the earth to weep for them, comparing the shame of their death with Tamburlaine's merciless greed for glory. A Messenger brings news that the Soldan and the King of Arabia have arrived and are ready for battle. Zenocrate debates with herself about who she should cheer for, commenting that the King of Arabia was her first true love and expressing the hope that Tamburlaine will be gentle in victory.

Sounds of battle are heard. The King of Arabia enters, wounded and wondering aloud what gods support Tamburlaine. The King and Zenocrate comfort each other as he dies. Tamburlaine comes in, leading the Soldan and followed by Theridimas and other regents. As the Soldan and Zenocrate greet each other, Tamburlaine announces that the Soldan will be allowed to keep his throne but only as Tamburlaine's regent. He speaks at length about how the gods of war have ordained that he conquer the world, how the weather itself obeys his command, and how hell is crowded with the souls of those he has slain. The Soldan speaks with flattering words about how grateful he is to be allowed to live and to be with Zenocrate. Tamburlaine promises that she has remained chaste, and then crowns her as his empress. He speaks at length about how the world will now pay tribute to them both, and how his empire is now to be peaceful. He then commands that the King of Arabia, Bajazeth, and Zabina be buried in royal tombs, and that after the funerals he and Zenocrate will be formally married.

Part 1, Act 5, Scenes 1 and 2 Analysis

At first glance, the gesture of the Governor seems both desperate and foolish, since there is every indication that the brutal Tamburlaine will pay absolutely no attention to the Virgins' pleas. The Virgins seem to know this better than the Governor, but nonetheless make a valiant effort to do as he demands.

The transition between Scenes 1 and 2 is particularly noteworthy in that the writing specifically indicates that the action is continuous - that even though the Virgins do not physically move, the action of the play changes location around them. This transitional technique is common in modern plays but is much less so in plays of the period in which the play was written.

The essential purpose of this section is to illustrate both Tamburlaine's increasing determination to conquer Damascus and, more importantly, his own "femininity" of character. It is here that the previously discussed idea that Tamburlaine is over-aggressive in an attempt to compensate for some kind of failing finds some evidential support. Specifically, his soliloquy suggests that on some level he feels he is less of a man and less of a warrior because he is so full of love for Zenocrate, and therefore is willing to soften his usually ironclad stance on the treatment of prisoners. Yet at the end of the soliloquy he suggests that the goal of winning a woman's love is the one justification for so-called "feminine" acts. In the context of the play as a whole, however, and with the suggestion that Tamburlaine is over-compensating, it is possible to see this comment as rationalization -- an effort to convince himself that he is still powerful.

This idea is reinforced by the fact that immediately after admitting his vulnerability to himself he calls for Bajazeth to be brought in. Tamburlaine at this moment feels weak, so he proves to himself that he is strong by dominating someone weaker than he.

This section of the play brings both the first part of Tamburlaine's conquest for earthly power and his simultaneous conquest for control over his feelings to a climactic finish, with a victory in the case of the first and a concession in the case of the second.

Tamburlaine's victory seems complete. By killing themselves, Bajazeth and Zabina have eliminated any threat that they could become free and lead a rebellion. Tamburlaine himself has conquered three empires, slaughtered thousands, and proven to be the leader he imagined and believed himself to be. His triumph is so absolute that he finally feels able to show mercy without the risk of it being perceived as weakness by either him or anyone else. There is the sense that until he was absolutely sure of his total control, he would never have been able to show mercy to the Soldan or to Zenocrate, or to make her his empress. And herein lies the paradox - in his victory is also a concession and capitulation to those "feminine feelings" he so despises but admits to being powerless against. The moment of his greatest masculinity (military triumph) is also the moment of his greatest femininity (making the ultimate offerings of mercy and love). Is this perhaps what makes him a truly heroic character, the ability to be both masculine and feminine without despising himself? Or is the capitulation to the detested feminine side of himself in fact the trigger that sends him deeper into paranoia, ambition, psychosis, and death in Part 2?

Both are true. In the final moments of this scene, this act, and this part of the two-part play, Tamburlaine can be perceived as an ideal of a man. It is clear that he perceives himself that way. The ideal, however, does not last long. His breakdown in Part 2 is quick and obvious. Perhaps he is unable to sustain the ideal because on some level he cannot reconcile himself to his feminine side. The action of Part 2 develops this lack of ease with himself, and develops his determination to over-compensate even more by becoming even more dominant, ambitious, and violent. Part 2 also traces how this over-compensation leads him into insanity, how he is brought back to reality and to his ideal by Zenocrate's eventual death, and how his entire being becomes so worn out by his struggles for control over both the world and his soul that it finally gives out.

Part 2, Act 1, Scenes 1 and 2

Part 2, Act 1, Scenes 1 and 2 Summary

A brief prologue reveals that Tamburlaine proved such a popular character with audiences that a second play chronicling his life was written, and also reveals that this play tells how both Tamburlaine and Zenocrate died and what happened in the aftermath of their deaths.

Scene 1 - In a speech to his regents and army, Orcanes refers to their duty to Callapine, the son of Bajazeth who is now living as a prisoner of Tamburlaine's. He also refers to impending peace talks with Sigismund, the King of Hungary. The Regents refer to the need for unity and truce in the face of Tamburlaine's increasing desire for more land, and to how Sigismund has brought with him a huge army. Orcanes speaks at length about his desire to destroy Sigismund and his army, but his Regents remind him again of Tamburlaine's increasing lust for conquest and of the necessity of the alliance with Sigismund. Orcanes concedes, realizing that in spite of having enough of an army to conquer Sigismund, he does not have nearly enough to conquer Tamburlaine. He agrees to negotiate for peace.

Scene 2 - In continuous action, Sigismund and his Regents arrive, saying they are ready for either war or peace. Both leaders speak boastfully of the size of their armies, leading regents on both sides to remind their leaders that their purpose was to negotiate an alliance in defense against Tamburlaine. Sigismund and Orcanes calm themselves and shake hands, with Sigismund swearing by Christ and Orcanes by Mohammed that they will be loyal to each other.

Part 2, Act 1, Scenes 1 and 2 Analysis

The Prologue steps outside the reality of the play for a moment and comments on the success the previous play had with an audience. This style of communication with the audience, specifically in prologues, was quite common in plays of the period (see, for example, the use of Chorus in Shakespeare's *Henry V*) and for several hundred years afterwards. The second half of the Prologue foreshadows the key events of Part 2 - Tamburlaine's continued advancement towards world domination, and the deaths of both Tamburlaine and Zenocrate.

Scenes 1 and 2 repeat the "bragging contest" motif, first utilized in Part 1 Act 4 to dramatize the competition between Tamburlaine and Bajazeth and employed in this case to illuminate the characters of Sigismund and, specifically, Orcanes. They both come across as childish and almost foolish, particularly since their Regents both need to remind them of the larger issues at stake. It may be that Orcanes and Sigismund say what they say and do what they do because they feel they are supposed to or are expected to, and are in a way merely exchanging formalities. It is more likely, however,

that these two scenes are intended to illuminate the foolishness of other conquerors who, unlike Tamburlaine, are unable to act from any place other than pure ego. In other words, what the narrative shows here are two *un*-ideal warriors, very different from the ideal presented by Tamburlaine at the end of Part 1.

Another repeated motif in this section is the way the two scenes blend together in a manner similar to that of the two Virgins scenes in Part 1. Here Sigismund and his regents in effect join the scene that started with Orcanes and his regents. This technique, which moves the action of the play along smoothly and with increasing momentum, is often identified as writing in "French" scenes, in which the beginning and ending of scenes are defined by entrances and/or exits of characters rather than by a change in setting. The technique is used much more frequently in Part 2 than in Part 1.

Part 2, Act 1, Scene 3

Part 2, Act 1, Scene 3 Summary

A conversation between Callapine, the still-imprisoned son of Bajazeth and Zabina, and his jailer, Almeda, reveals that Callapine is plotting to escape the captivity imposed by Tamburlaine. He tells Almeda that a small armada of ships is docked close by, and offers the command of several of them on a mission to seek aid from his allies. He then says if Almeda is successful, he will be richly rewarded with money, status, servants, and beautiful women. Almeda accepts the offer, vowing to die before allowing Callapine to be recaptured. Callapine is released, and he and Almeda go out together.

Part 2, Act 1, Scene 3 Analysis

There is a deliberate echo in this scene of Part 1, Act 1, Scene 2, in which Tamburlaine convinced Theridimas to leave Cosroe's service and join his. The point here is to suggest that Tamburlaine is to be confronted with the same kind of treachery he once confronted Cosroe with. In the words of the old saying, what goes around comes around.

Meanwhile, it is interesting to note that Tamburlaine dies of what are apparently natural causes before Callapine has a chance to fully defeat him. The most obvious explanation for this is that the play intends to suggest that Tamburlaine is destroyed not by the acts of another but by himself. His own body betrays him in the way his mind, which has told him to behave in a certain, non-feminine way, has betrayed his spirit, which has driven him to act in response to his so-called feminine feelings.

Part 2, Act 1, Scene 4

Part 2, Act 1, Scene 4 Summary

In the presence of their three sons (Calyphas, Amyras and Celebinus), Zenocrate asks Tamburlaine when he will retire from the constant combat that continues to dominate his life. Tamburlaine says that he will stop when the earth ceases to revolve, and tells her to bear herself like a queen. He comments on how their three sons are more precious to him than all the lands he has ever conquered, but that they do not look as aggressive as he would like. Zenocrate reminds him that they may resemble her in looks, but their attitudes are his, recounting an incident in which Celebinus controlled a rebellious horse. Tamburlaine compliments him, talking proudly about how he has inherited the ways of an emperor and how his children will be emperors from the moment they are born. Amyras asks for the same kind of praise, and gets it. Calyphas, on the other hand, asks permission to accompany his mother. Tamburlaine turns angrily on him, saying he shall inherit nothing unless he looks at the world with the same sort of military eye as his brothers. Zenocrate tries to calm Tamburlaine down, but Amyras and Celebinus agree with him. Calyphas, in an apparent effort to appease him, talks about his readiness to kill. Tamburlaine says he had better live up to his commitment, referring to the imminent battle with Orcanes.

Part 2, Act 1, Scene 4 Analysis

This scene initiates and defines the principal sub-plot of Part 2, the relationship between Tamburlaine and his sons. This is one of three sub-plots in Part 2 dramatizing father/son relationships; the others involving Callapine's intention to avenge the treatment of his now-dead father Bajazeth and the relationship between the Captain and his son in Act 3 Scene 4. These sub-plots create a more evident emotional context for Part 2 than there was in Part 1, where that context had to be deduced and inferred. Here the context is clearer, functioning on both dramatic and thematic levels.

In terms of the former, the relationship between Tamburlaine and his sons is a vehicle by which Tamburlaine's increasing mental instability and his obsession with power and control can be dramatized. This happens specifically through his treatment of the sensitive Calyphas. His actions in this context clearly become thematically relevant when viewed in the context of the previously discussed idea that Tamburlaine is over-compensating for having too much "feminine" feeling. He seems to be instructing his sons to not have the same kind of emotional "weakness" he has for Zenocrate and which he acted upon when he showed mercy to her father. In other words, the story of Part 2 is how he acts with increasingly obsessive and violent determination to deny that aspect of his humanity in both himself and his sons, to the point where he denies Calyphas his very life. It could be argued, in fact, that the mysterious illness (never actually defined) that ends Tamburlaine's life is the result of his having denied so strenuously and so violently such an important part of himself.

That is the psychological, perhaps even spiritual, explanation. The shorthand version is that he is trying to be a man, as well as an emperor. Amyras and Celebinus attempt to prove that they too are men and they too have the capacity to be emperors, worthy of their father's praise. Callapine in his sub-plot strives to prove exactly the same thing. These are the two lines of parallel dramatic and thematic action that define the course of events in the play's second half.

Part 2, Act 1, Scenes 5 and 6

Part 2, Act 1, Scenes 5 and 6 Summary

Scene 5 - In continuous action, trumpets sound and Theridimas comes in. He is greeted by Tamburlaine as a king, formally proclaims his loyalty, and announces that he and thousands of soldiers are there to support Tamburlaine in his battle against Orcanes.

Scene 6 - Again in continuous action, Techelles and another regent, Usumcasane, come in, greet Tamburlaine, proclaim their loyalty, and describe in detail the armies they have brought to support Tamburlaine's. Tamburlaine thanks them both, and says that being seated in the throne of the gods could not delight him more. He details his battle plans and vows in extravagant language to completely overcome Orcanes and his army to the point that the sun will be embarrassed for him. He then asks each regent in turn what conquests they have recently undertaken in his name, and each regent describes those conquests in detail. Tamburlaine invites them to a celebratory banquet.

Part 2, Act 1, Scenes 5 and 6 Analysis

The first level of function in this scene is to illustrate the thematically important mutual loyalty between Tamburlaine and his regents. They know they keep their lives if they are loyal and do what Tamburlaine asks, and Tamburlaine knows that if he rewards them well and keeps them loyal, he keeps his empire. It is a mutually beneficial relationship that seems, in the eyes and intent of the play, to be an ideal way in which such empires could or should be run. It is possible to discern here a comment on the political situation at the time in which the play was written - early in the reign of Elizabeth I of England, at which time political and military alliances and loyalties did not last long and were undermined by lies and mutual mistrust. Tamburlaine and his regents clearly trust each other with their lives, another aspect of the positive values of their relationship that exist in spite of their being obsessed with conquest and control. In the world of the play, this is not necessarily a bad thing.

The second level of function in this section relates to that of Scene 4. It must be remembered that the action of these three scenes is continuous, meaning that Tamburlaine's three sons are present when the three regents arrive. Tamburlaine is therefore instructing his sons, by example, on how to behave like an emperor. He is also, by giving his regents an opportunity to demonstrate their loyalty, giving his sons a lesson on how to be a good and loyal regent, a role they seem destined to play as they get older.

The third level of function here is to keep the main line of action active; presenting reminders that yet another battle is imminent. Finally, the fourth layer of function is to present another reminder of Tamburlaine's hubristic perception of himself as he again likens his position to that of a god.

Part 2, Act 2, Scenes 1, 2, and 3

Part 2, Act 2, Scenes 1, 2, and 3 Summary

Scene 1 - Sigismund confers with two regents, who remind him of the way their Christian forces were recently massacred by pagan forces led by kings allied with Orcanes, and strive to convince him to switch alliances and join forces with Tamburlaine. Sigismund reminds them of the truce he forged with Orcanes, and says his faith requires that he honor his commitments. His regents tell him that to not take the opportunity to defeat any pagans is in fact a betrayal of Christian faith. Sigismund is suddenly convinced, and orders that preparations be made to attack Orcanes and his pagan army.

Scene 2 - Orcanes prepares to unite with Sigismund and his army and then march on Tamburlaine. A Messenger arrives with news that Sigismund's army has attacked their army. Orcanes reacts with anger, his regents utter curses on Sigismund and his army, and Orcanes prays that revenge be taken on Sigismund for his faithlessness. He then calls for his army to take up arms, and goes out to lead the battle.

Scene 3 - Sigismund, wounded in battle, prays in a brief soliloquy for forgiveness for his dishonor. Orcanes enters, proclaiming that justice has been served and commanding that Sigismund's body remain unburied, left to be dishonored by wild beasts in the way he deserves. He then plans to celebrate his victory and this apparent justice.

Part 2, Act 2, Scenes 1, 2, and 3 Analysis

In this sequence of scenes, what at first may appear as an unnecessary diversion from the main plot, in fact, carries an important thematic relevance. Essentially, Sigismund is disloyal and therefore dies an undignified death, providing a powerful contrast with the mutually rewarding and sustaining loyalty displayed by Tamburlaine and his regents. In short, this sequence of scenes illuminates an important theme through providing a defining contrast: that showing a negative, the positive becomes more apparent.

Mention must be made here of the role that faith, or more specifically, religion, plays in the action. In dramatic and other literature of the time, "pagan" was the term generally used to describe followers of Islam. For hundreds of years there was an intense spiritual and military rivalry between Christian and Muslim forces that was played out in Europe, Africa, and Asia. In general, European literature was written from the perspective that Muslims were bloodthirsty, barbaric heathens; anti-Christian and anti-God. It is interesting to note that while Sigismund's regents clearly operate from this perspective, and Sigismund is convinced to do the same, his disloyalty in breaking his agreement is apparently punished. The play seems to be making the point that loyalty is more important than faith or religion, and almost goes so far as to suggest that Christians have at least as much capacity for disloyalty as the reputedly ruthless Muslims.

In this context, it is significant that Tamburlaine possesses no overt or apparent allegiance to either Christianity or Islam. Instead, his language is full of references to Classical Greek mythology, which in both the period the play was written and the contemporary culture can be seen as being more symbolic than literal. In other words, Tamburlaine is invoking the spirit or the intent or the values of the gods, rather than the gods themselves. This essentially makes him a non-religious, more purely idealized figure.

Part 2, Act 2, Scene 4

Part 2, Act 2, Scene 4 Summary

Tamburlaine and his three sons attend Zenocrate, who lies in bed as physicians attempt to treat her. Tamburlaine speaks at poetic length about Zenocrate's beauty and how the various manifestations of God and heaven join forces to entertain and celebrate her. He then asks the physicians whether there is anything they can do for her, and they tell him that if she survives this difficult phase (of whatever never-defined illness is troubling her), she will live. Tamburlaine then speaks with even more poetic language about how he would be unable to live if she died. Zenocrate urges him to live and then begs to be allowed to die. She urges her sons to emulate their father, and then calls for music, which she says will enable her to pass from life peacefully. Music plays as Tamburlaine speaks with increasing poeticism about what a good and beautiful woman she was. Zenocrate dies, and with increasingly over-wrought imagery Tamburlaine prays both that her soul be reborn in heavenly glory and that it be returned to live again on earth with him.

Theridimas, who has been nearby all this time, attempts to calm him by reminding him she is dead. Tamburlaine angrily tells him to be quiet, ordering that she be embalmed and not buried until he himself is dead, at which time they will both be buried in a large, ornate tomb. He then vows to burn the town in which she died to the ground.

Part 2, Act 2, Scene 4 Analysis

The death of Zenocrate is an important turning point for both Tamburlaine and the play, marking the beginning of his decline into near-insanity and death. It is significant that the language here is the most overtly romantic of both parts. Even Tamburlaine's earlier professions of love were not defined with imagery as lush or as passionate as the imagery here. This aspect of the scene suggests that his feelings for Zenocrate evolved into something very true and very deep. These are not the formal lamentations of an emperor, but the deeply felt cries of grief of a man whose soul was moved by the love of and for a woman. Tamburlaine here is at his most vulnerable, or in the terms of earlier discussions at his weakest and most "feminine." It is no coincidence that in the following scenes he is at his most violent; an aspect of his personal emotional transformation that manifests in the shockingly cruel murder of the sensitive Calyphas. As was the case before when he mocked Bajazeth following a moment of vulnerability, he compensates for vulnerability with cruelty.

Part 2, Act 3, Scene 1

Part 2, Act 3, Scene 1 Summary

Orcanes and three other kings present Callapine, who is accompanied by Almeda, with a crown symbolizing his inheritance of his father Bajazeth's empire. Callapine formally expresses his gratitude and loyalty, and also communicates his intentions to take revenge on Tamburlaine. In turn, Orcanes and the three kings pledge their loyalty and their armies. Callapine acknowledges them and then follows through on his promise to Almeda and proclaims him a king. Almeda says he has no interest in being a king, saying Tamburlaine wanted to be king and has since amounted to nothing.

Part 2, Act 3, Scene 1 Analysis

This brief scene again keeps the action of the main plot moving, indicating that a large and angry net is closing around Tamburlaine. As the action of the previous and following scenes indicates, however, Tamburlaine is much too concerned with other, more personal matters to be too aware of what is going on in the outside world.

Part 2, Act 3, Scene 2

Part 2, Act 3, Scene 2 Summary

As the town where Zenocrate dies burns to the ground, Tamburlaine and his three sons follow Zenocrate's hearse. Tamburlaine urges his sons to cease mourning, but all three comment that they are completely consumed with grief. Tamburlaine speaks at detailed length of his plans for turning them into soldiers worthy of being called the sons of Tamburlaine the Great. The sensitive Calyphas worries that he and the others will be killed or wounded before they can properly learn their lessons, but Tamburlaine speaks at mocking length about how they must learn to be strong. He cuts his arm to demonstrate how a wound means nothing, saying that to be ornamented with blood shed in battle is to be ornamented with a greater jewel than rubies. Calyphas is uncomfortable, but Celebinus and Amyras both ask for wounds of their own. As Tamburlaine cutshis sons, he confidently assures them of victory when they encounter Orcanes and his armies, and vows again to make them great warriors. He then prepares to march away to unite with the armies of Techelles and Theridimas and thereafter face off with Callapine.

Part 2, Act 3, Scene 2 Analysis

This scene develops Tamburlaine's state of mind, with his actions poised on the knife-edge line of apparent insanity and an aggressive warrior. Examined within the latter context, the burning of the town and the demonstration of the relatively unimportant nature of a superficial wound come across as appropriate for both the violent, ruthless, bloodthirsty, warlike time in which the play is set and the time in which it was written. Within the larger context of the two plays and Tamburlaine's overall character, however, his actions become vivid examples of his determination to appear strong in the face of what he perceives as personal weakness and vulnerability. This determination seems at this point to be evolving into an obsession, which in turn evolves into near insanity.

Part 2, Act 3, Scenes 3 and 4

Part 2, Act 3, Scenes 3 and 4 Summary

Scene 3 - The armies of Techelles and Theridimas arrive at the gates of the capital city of their latest conquest, with Techelles urging a violent assault and Theridimas urging that they wait to see if the city will surrender peacefully. The Captain of the city's guard appears, accompanied by his wife Olympia and their son. Techelles and Theridimas demand that he surrender the city, describing in detail what will result if he does not do so. The Captain swears that he will never surrender and withdraws. Theridimas and Techelles issue orders to begin the assault; war horns sound, and the assault begins.

Scene 4 - Within the city walls, Olympia urges the Captain to escape with her and their son. The Captain reveals that he has been fatally wounded, and dies. Olympia wishes that she would die as well, takes the Captain's dagger, and prepares to kill herself and her son, referring to the tortures that await them if they are captured alive. Her son asks to be killed, in an effort to both save himself from those tortures and so that he can be reunited with his father. Olympia stabs him and he dies. As she is preparing to cremate their bodies and kill herself, Theridimas and Techelles appear, demanding to know what she is doing. When she explains, Techelles compliments her on her bravery and on behaving like the true wife of a soldier. When Olympia comments that there was no man greater than her husband, Theridimas tells her that if she surrenders to him he will take her to Tamburlaine, an even greater man. He speaks at poetic length about Tamburlaine's glory and strength, referring to how even the gods speak his name in awe. Olympia pleads to be allowed to die, but Theridimas confesses he has fallen in love with her and refuses to let her die. Olympia surrenders, and Theridimas tells his soldiers to ensure that she is treated well.

Part 2, Act 3, Scenes 3 and 4 Analysis

The Captain and his son, while seen only briefly, offer another illumination of the play's secondary theme, illustrating the kind of loyalty and devotion possible between father and son. The actions of the son can possibly be seen as extreme and even unrealistic, but again they are appropriate to the violent, militaristic, representational world of the play. In particular, the son's loyalty echoes both Callapine's and that of Tamburlaine's sons Celebinus and Amyras, and in that echo can be found the suggestion that all sons owe similar degrees of loyalty to their fathers.

At the same time, Theridimas, who could conceivably be described as Tamburlaine's spiritual son, proves his loyalty to his "father" by completing his latest military assault. His falling so suddenly in love with Olympia can be seen as his emulating his "father" in romantic matters as well, given that Tamburlaine also fell deeply in love with a woman taken by force. Olympia, however, does not follow the same path previously taken by

Zenocrate; rather, her despair and loyalty and ultimate fate echo that of Zabina, who dreaded life without her husband so much that she ended her own.

It is interesting to note the passing reference made by Techelles regarding Olympia having behaved like a true soldier's wife. This echoes Tamburlaine's earlier treatment of Zenocrate, who he repeatedly urged to act more like the wife of an emperor, and also the treatment of his sons, who he has repeatedly urged to behave more like the sons of an emperor.

Part 2, Act 3, Scene 5

Part 2, Act 3, Scene 5 Summary

A Messenger brings Callapine news of the approach of Tamburlaine's massive army. Callapine tells him his army is as big and as mighty, and then he, Orcanes, and the Three Kings brag that Tamburlaine will soon encounter complete defeat. Callapine prepares to lead them onto the field of battle.

Tamburlaine enters, accompanied by his sons. Tamburlaine salutes his enemies with a reference to the salutes paid to the Trojans by the Greeks at the beginning of the Trojan War. Callapine and the Kings counter with comments about how he will soon end up in chains. After more mutual taunting, Tamburlaine comments on the tortures in hell that await the traitorous Almeda, who stands with Callapine. Callapine then starts to crown Almeda, but Almeda asks permission from Tamburlaine, who tells him to take it so he can be slaughtered like the other kings. Theridimas arrives, and Tamburlaine tells him that Almeda's execution will be his particular responsibility. He then tells Theridimas and his armies to prepare for war, and both sides go out to complete their arrangements.

Part 2, Act 3, Scene 5 Analysis

This scene marks the beginning of Tamburlaine's final military confrontation: the battle with Callapine, Orcanes and the Three Kings. Again, the motif of the bragging contest appears, and again it seems Tamburlaine is demonstrating to his sons how to be an emperor, and again the thematic question of the nature of loyalty is examined. This occurs through the confrontation between Almeda and Tamburlaine, in which Tamburlaine's curses illuminate his character by illustrating what happens when people are *not* loyal to him. There is clear contrast here between the disloyal Almeda and the unswervingly loyal Theridimas. The particularly interesting element here is that Almeda asks permission from Tamburlaine to accept the crown offered by Callapine. This defines Almeda's loyalty as being extremely shallow, since Tamburlaine's threats have clearly frightened him into believing that where his loyalty should have remained with Tamburlaine in the first place. Callapine must be able to see that, meaning that when he follows through on the crowning it is much more of a taunting of Tamburlaine than it is any kind of earned honor conferred on an ally - Almeda has proven himself to be completely unworthy, but Callapine nevertheless wants to irritate Tamburlaine.

Part 2, Act 4, Scene 1

Part 2, Act 4, Scene 1 Summary

On the battlefield, Amyras and Celebinus emerge from their tent, eager to join the fight and taunting Calyphas for not being as eager as they. Calyphas says he takes no pleasure in killing the way they do, and Amyras warns him that Tamburlaine will be furious. He and Celebinus run out when they hear the war-trumpets blast. Calyphas calls a servant and they play cards. As they play, Calyphas says he does not care what his brothers say, and complains about the noise of the war horns.

Tamburlaine, Theridimas and Techelles come in, followed by Amyras and Celebinus leading on Orcanes and the Three Kings, who have been captured. Tamburlaine taunts the Three Kings for being held captive by children, and then seeks out Calyphas, whom he angrily calls a coward. Theridimas, Techelles, other regents, and Amyras all urge him to be merciful, but Tamburlaine says it is time for his sons to learn a lesson in what being a warrior requires. He speaks of returning Calyphas' weak soul to the world of spirit from which it came, saying that it is ill suited to continue to live in a world that cannot contain his glory. He then stabs Calyphas, calling him a greater enemy than any he might ever face, saying no-one has yet seen his full strength and ordering that the concubines (prostitutes) of the men he has just captured be made responsible for the burial of the body. Soldiers exit with the body as Orcanes and the Three Kings utter curses on Tamburlaine, who compares them with barking dogs and says he will bridle their tongues like those of horses, loot and destroy their cities, and continue on his path of conquest until he hears the gods themselves tell him to stop. He then leads his captives into his tent.

Part 2, Act 4, Scene 1 Analysis

This scene marks the apparent height of Tamburlaine's insanity as he takes his determination to teach his sons how to be warriors to an obsessive extreme. As previously discussed, he seems intent upon making them grow up without the "feminine" weaknesses he sees himself as suffering from, and so over-compensates with excessive acts of violence. There is a certain degree of parallel here between this killing and the killing of the Captain's son (Act 3 Scene 4). In both cases a son is killed by the will of his father, but where the fearful Captain urges the killing to spare his son, the arrogant Tamburlaine simultaneously punishes his son and uses him as an example. It now remains for the third father/son parallel, the story of Callapine and Bajazeth, to illustrate by contrast the true emotional core of that particular type of relationship - loyalty. In pursuing his vengeance, Callapine's actions illuminate the play's core theme. He is by far more loyal to his father and the example he provided than Tamburlaine is to his son.

Part 2, Act 4, Scene 2

Part 2, Act 4, Scene 2 Summary

Olympia speaks in a brief soliloquy about her grieving misery, and bemoans the lack of means and opportunity for killing herself. Theridimas comes in, saying he has been looking for her and eager to hear whether she will permit him to love her. She refuses, saying she grieves too intently for her husband and her son and begging him to kill her. Theridimas tries to convince her that if she gives in to him she will become a queen, but she says the idea holds no appeal for her. He threatens to take her by force, but she stalls him by offering what she describes as a rare ointment that repels any attack. Theridimas is skeptical, but Olympia says she can prove it. She puts the ointment on her throat and asks that he stab her. When Theridimas asks why she never gave it to her husband to use in his defense, she says she did not have time. Theridimas stabs her, and she dies. In soliloquy, Theridimas berates himself for being so stupid as to believe her, saying he is now in hell and vows to bury Olympia with the rites due a queen.

Part 2, Act 4, Scene 2 Analysis

Aside from dramatizing an extremely clever means of committing suicide, this scene becomes thematically relevant when it is considered that Olympia is acting out of loyalty to her dead husband. Once again the play's core thematic issue is explored, and once again loyalty's virtues seem fairly well defined.

Part 2, Act 4, Scene 3

Part 2, Act 4, Scene 3 Summary

In a comparable image to that of Bajazeth being pulled about in a cage, Tamburlaine rides a chariot pulled by two of the three kings. Amyras, Celebinus, Techelles, Theridimas and several soldiers, all of whom guard Orcanes and the other king, follow him. Tamburlaine taunts the two kings; Amyras pleads to have a turn being pulled, and Tamburlaine tells him he can have a turn tomorrow. One of the kings calls Amyras cruel, but Tamburlaine tells him to be respectful, saying Amyras will one day conquer the lands he (Tamburlaine) has not yet won.

The concubines who buried Calyphas are brought in, and are revealed as the queens of the three kings. Tamburlaine turns them and their jewels over to the soldiers to do whatever they want with, and the soldiers run out happily with the pleading concubines. When the kings plead for mercy, Tamburlaine angrily taunts them again with stories of his inevitable and overwhelming victory, his own personal glory, and his plans to conquer the legendary, mighty city of Babylon.

Part 2, Act 4, Scene 3 Analysis

Tamburlaine's determination to not just control but also to humiliate those he has conquered is given dramatic emphasis here, as he mercilessly humiliates the kings and their wives, bragging in more extravagant language than ever about his glory and power. At this point he is at a similar place to where he was at the end of Part 1 - he has conquered immense amounts of territory, subdued great leaders, and has proven himself capable of triumphing over his despised "feminine" side. From this moment on, however, he deteriorates, descending further into insanity as well as illness. As previously discussed, this can be seen in psychological terms as a deterioration of the body triggered by the deterioration of the spirit. His downfall now becomes as inevitable as his rise.

Part 2, Act 5, Scene 1

Part 2, Act 5, Scene 1 Summary

A Messenger gives the Governor of Babylon news that Tamburlaine's armies have begun their assault on the city, that defeat is inevitable, and that the Governor should hang flags of truce. The Governor angrily refuses; calling the Messenger disloyal and suggesting that nothing should deter him or any other Babylonian from defending their city to the end. Two Citizens separately rush in and plead with the Governor to offer a truce. The Governor rejects them both, calling them cowards.

Theridimas and Techelles appear, also urging the Governor to surrender. The Governor again refuses, soldiers swarm the walls of the city, and Tamburlaine appears in his chariot, pulled as before by the kings and followed as before by his remaining sons and their prisoners. Tamburlaine speaks about his triumph over Babylon, comparing it to those of other great warriors and commenting on how its beautiful streets are now being walked upon by his soldiers. Theridimas and Techelles present the Governor, and Tamburlaine orders his execution, commenting on how foolish he was to not surrender. The Governor says nothing could make him surrender, adding that he is still not afraid. He then attempts to bribe Tamburlaine by suggesting that if he is allowed to live he will reveal the location of a golden treasure, but then foolishly reveals the location of the treasure when Tamburlaine asks. As the Governor is led away to be executed, Tamburlaine comments that the "horses" (the two kings) pulling his chariot are tired and must be executed and replaced. Theridimas takes the two kings out, who are replaced by the protesting Orcanes and the remaining king. The Governor, still alive, is hung from the walls of the city and used as target practice by Theridimas and Tamburlaine.

As he shoots, Tamburlaine orders that the leaders of the city be thrown in the lake and drowned along with their wives and children, that all the religious artifacts of the city be collected and burned, and defiantly calls on the gods of the city to defend it. Techelles reports that the executions have been carried out. As Tamburlaine comments that there is nothing left to do but celebrate the totality of his triumph, he is suddenly struck ill. He comments that neither sickness nor death will ever conquer him, and goes out.

Part 2, Act 5, Scene 1 Analysis

In this, the final scene of actual conquest in the play, several important motifs again appear. There is the motif of loyalty, which emerges in the Governor's angry refusals to surrender and his suggestions that those who encourage surrender are disloyal. There is the motif of Tamburlaine's cruelty, which manifests in his treatment of the Governor, of the citizens of Babylon, and of his horses. It is interesting to note here that there is no protest of this behavior from any of his regents. Are they afraid of him? Or are they loyal to a fault, trusting that even their evidently near-insane leader is still doing the right

thing? Within the context of the play and its overall theme, it would appear that the latter is the true explanation.

Finally, there is the motif of Tamburlaine's arrogance and hubris, developed through his defiance of the gods and his claim that there is nothing to do but celebrate his triumph. It is significant that the first attack of the mysterious illness that eventually kills him follows almost immediately on the heels of this shout of victory. His hubris, not to mention his disloyalty to his detested "feminine" side which did, after all, bring him to his fuller humanity, are about to be rewarded with suffering and death.

Part 2, Act 5, Scene 2

Part 2, Act 5, Scene 2 Summary

Callapine is near Babylon, getting ready to attack Tamburlaine. His chief ally, the King of Amasia, assures him of victory, and says that Tamburlaine shall die and in his lack of burial he shall be awarded the dishonor he deserves. Callapine recalls the treatment his parents (Bajazeth and Zabina) received at Tamburlaine's hands, comments on the drive which has awakened in him to revenge such recollections, , and prays for God's help in achieving that revenge. He compares Tamburlaine's pride to the moon, which expands and then vanishes into nearly nothing. He then vows to never surrender, and prepares his assault.

Part 2, Act 5, Scene 2 Analysis

In his final appearance in the play, Callapine's words and determination show him to be living up to the standard and example of his father. Both the play's primary themes entwine and reach their highest point of positive meaning as Callapine's loyalty to his father and his desire to avenge his death, lead him into confrontation with Tamburlaine, whose positive loyalties to his sons and to his allies have become twisted and perverted by his over-powering loyalty to his own hubris. The ambivalence, or two-sidedness, of the virtue of loyalty reaches its climactic, fullest dramatization here and in the following final scene of the play, as both sides of the coin are clearly revealed.

Part 2, Act 5, Scene 3

Part 2, Act 5, Scene 3 Summary

Theridimas and other regents each speak at poetic length of how the lights of the sky, the triumphs of the gods, and the glory of heaven all count for nothing if Tamburlaine dies.

Tamburlaine appears, again drawn in his carriage by Orcanes and the Third King and again accompanied by his sons. He urges Theridimas and the regents to raise their swords in defiance of the gods making him ill, collapses, rises again to urge the regents to battle the gods in his behalf, and then admits that he is dying. He has a vision of Death, calling it his slave and urging it to leave him alone and travel the battlefields instead. A Physician urges him to take some medicine, speaking at length of how his various blood vessels and organs are starved of spirit and must be restored. Tamburlaine resolves to live yet another day.

A Messenger brings news that Callapine has gathered a fresh army and is prepared to renew his attack. Tamburlaine describes this news as medicine, comments that merely showing his face will be enough to send Callapine and his armies running with fear, and goes out. A moment later he returns, commenting that Callapine did indeed flee, but that he now perceives his strength is gone. He calls for a map, using it to show Amyras and Celebinus the lands they need to conquer next. As he studies the map, he bemoans the fact that he is dying with so much of the world left unconquered. Celebinus and Amyras protest that if he dies they will have no spirit left for conquest. Tamburlaine says his body is not strong enough any more to hold on to the "fiery spirit" it contains, that his spirit will be shared between them when he dies. He then hands his crown to Amyras, who wonders aloud how he will continue with his father gone. Tamburlaine urges him to not let love exceed his desire to live an honorable life, and tells him to take the reins of his chariot and steer his "horses" the same way he did.

As Amyras climbs into the chariot, Tamburlaine calls for Zenocrate's hearse to be brought in. As he waits, he is urged to continue to fight, but Tamburlaine tells them has no more strength left. The hearse appears, and Tamburlaine refers to this as his last sight of joy on earth. He urges Amyras to govern with power and courage, warning that if he does not do so his prisoners will destroy him. He then bids his sons farewell, grieving that they will be deprived of his company. He then dies.

Amyras cries out that both heaven and earth must both now come to an end, for the worth of both together will never equal that of Tamburlaine.

Part 2, Act 5, Scene 3 Analysis

The first part of the scene, in which Tamburlaine's three primary regents speak with poetic intensity about Tamburlaine's greatness, can be interpreted as the politically

appropriate expressions of extreme grief at the death of a monarch. Such expressions were common at the deaths of great kings, such as England's Henry VIII, for example, or the conqueror Alexander the Great. In the context of the play, however, and its overall theme of loyalty, these speeches can also be interpreted as an expression of that theme; the regents' lament for the man who gave them so much in return for having been given so much. These interpretations are far from mutually exclusive, with the former providing the logical and factual context for the more emotional and thematically relevant aspects of the latter.

The second part of the scene, in which Tamburlaine urges his regents to take up arms against Death and comments that Callapine has indeed turned and fled, can also be interpreted in one of two ways - he is either delusional or is once again exhibiting his hubris. Again these two possibilities are not necessarily mutually exclusive. He is no more delusional or hubristic than he has ever been - but given that he has always been somewhat delusional because of hubris, or hubristic because of his delusions, that is not actually saying too much. Do Callapine and his army turn away? Probably not. Does he really think that by raising swords death can be chased away? At the stage he is at, probably yes. In short, throughout both plays Tamburlaine has shaped both his physical and his spiritual world to his own designs. His final moments are no exception.

Tamburlaine's instructions to his sons to deny their grief and continue to be strong sum up not only what he has been trying to teach them all along, but also his entire journey as a character and as a conqueror. Tamburlaine is essentially telling Amyras here to not do as he has done: let himself be weakened by love. The irony, of course, is that almost immediately after he gives this instruction, he calls for Zenocrate's hearse, indicating that his love for her is still alive, and therefore also indicating that all his efforts at banishing and/or controlling his "feminine" side have failed. His final instruction to Amyras, offered after Tamburlaine takes comfort in seeing Zenocrate's hearse one last time, essentially amounts to a reiteration of the previous point - be strong, be tough, be merciless to your enemies, otherwise you will be destroyed.

Tamburlaine's hubris makes one last appearance, in his comment on how miserable they will be once he has died and they are without his company. This comment could not be more in character - on some level he has always thought of himself as a great man, and has never seen any reason why everyone else should not see him the same way. On another level, however, he has always seen himself as a failure for falling victim to the weaker, "feminine" emotions. His last moments are one last attempt at living his mask, his armor of "Tamburlaine the Great" as opposed to living the life of "Tamburlaine the Man."

Characters

Agydas

Agydas is the Median, or Iranian, lord traveling to Egypt with Zenocrate when Tamburlaine captures them. Tamburlaine overhears Agydas advising Zenocrate to resist the "vile and barbarous" Tamburlaine's advances. Agydas stabs himself to avoid torture.

Alcidamus

See King of Arabia

Almeda

Almeda is Callapine's jailer, whom Callapine convinces to release him by promising Almeda a kingdom in Turkey. Callapine does in fact give him a kingdom before battling with Tamburlaine, although Almeda will never rule it because Tamburlaine wins the battle.

Amyras

Tamburlaine's son and successor, who reluctantly accepts the crown while his father is dying, Amyras is a militaristic young man who idealizes his father. He revels in war, asking his father after they subdue the Turks whether they can release them and fight them again so that none may say it was a chance victory. However, as Amyras laments in the final lines of the play, he is no equal to Tamburlaine and will not be able to continue the glory of his reign.

Anippe

Anippe is Zenocrate's maid, whose right it is to treat the Turkish Empress Zabina as a servant after Tamburlaine subdues the Turkish armies.

Bajazeth

The emperor of Turkey in part 1, until Tamburlaine conquers his armies and makes him a slave, Bajazeth is a proud Islamic leader who ultimately beats his brains out on his cage rather than be subject to more humiliation and starvation. Bajazeth swears before his last battle to remove Tamburlaine's testicles and force him to draw his wife's chariot. While captive, Bajazeth frequently curses Tamburlaine, highlighting his most barbarous

moments. Bajazeth's son Callapine extends the recurring theme of a bitter and vengeful enemy to Tamburlaine into part 2.

Bassoes

Now spelled "Bashaws" or "Pashas," a bassoe was the title given to Turkish officials. In the play, bassoes are servants of Bajazeth.

Callapine

Bajazeth's son and heir to the Turkish Empire, Callapine has dedicated his life to avenging his father's cruel treatment and to destroying Tamburlaine. Callapine is a cunning leader who manages to win over his jailer and escape from Tamburlaine's prison. Callapine also escapes from the battle that he loses to Tamburlaine, returning to attack Tamburlaine's army at the end of the play. Although Callapine is no match for Tamburlaine, he does manage to stay alive and unconquered throughout the play, completely committed to, as he puts it, "conquering the tyrant of the world." The implication is that he will return to haunt Amyras after Tamburlaine dies.

Calyphas

Calyphas is Tamburlaine's son, whom Tamburlaine murders after he refuses to fight in the battle against the Turks. Calyphas is somewhat weak and slothful, which Tamburlaine despises. But Calyphas is also simply uninterested in war; he is content to play cards and fantasize about women.

Captain of Balsera

Olympia's husband, the captain refuses to yield his hold to Techelles and Theridamas, and he is killed in the subsequent invasion.

Casane

See Usumcasane

Celebinus

Tamburlaine's son, Celebinus, is a forceful young man who emulates his father.

Cosroe

Brother to the Mycetes, king of Persia, Cosroe usurps his brother's title with Tamburlaine's help. Cosroe worries about the state of the empire under his brother's ineffectual rule, and he determines at the bequest of several Persian lords to take the crown and rule more wisely. Although Cosroe is not as weak as his brother, he is naive enough to leave Tamburlaine and his companions with all of their soldiers after they win the battle for the Persian crown, and Tamburlaine quickly challenges him to battle and triumphs.

Frederick

A peer of Hungary, Frederick persuades Sigismund to break his vow of peace with Orcanes.

Gazellus

The viceroy, or ruler with the mandate of a king, of the Turkish territory of Byron, Gazellus is an ally and advisor to Orcanes.

Governor of Babylon

Stubborn and unyielding, the governor of Babylon refuses to allow Tamburlaine inside his city. When he is conquered and under threat of death, however, he attempts to bribe Tamburlaine by telling him where a stockpile of gold is hidden. Tamburlaine has him hanged nevertheless.

Governor of Damascus

The governor of Damascus fears that Tamburlaine will slaughter everyone in his city, but his attempt to plead for mercy, sending four virgins to Tamburlaine's camp, fails.

King of Arabia

The king of Arabia, also known as Alcidamus, is betrothed to Zenocrate before she is captured by Tamburlaine. Zenocrate prays for his life to be spared but Alcidamus is killed during Tamburlaine's battle with the soldan of Egypt, and, as he dies, Alcidamus declares his love for Zenocrate.

King of Jerusalem

The king of Jerusalem is an ally of Callapine's, and after defeating him Tamburlaine forces him to pull his chariot.

King of Soria

The king of "Soria," or Syria, is one of Callapine's subsidiary kings. After conquering him, Tamburlaine forces him to pull his chariot until he loses strength, at which point Tamburlaine has him hanged.

King of Trebizon

Like Soria, the king of Trebizon is an ally of Callapine's who is forced to pull Tamburlaine's chariot after he is conquered. The king of Trebizon is hanged when he becomes too tired to pull the chariot.

Meander

The Persian lord closest to Mycetes, Meander councils the king on defending himself from the uprising, but he changes his allegiance to Cosroe after the battle.

Menaphon

Menaphon is the Persian lord closest to Cosroe. He is key in the conspiracy to overthrow Mycetes.

Mycetes

Mycetes is the king of Persia from the opening of part 1 until Tamburlaine and Cosroe overthrow him. He is a weak king whose speech is characterized by repeated sounds and clichés. Although he complains that his brother abuses him, he does nothing about it. When Tamburlaine discovers Mycetes attempting to hide his crown on the battlefield, an absurd attempt to ensure that no one will steal it, Tamburlaine lets the king keep it until he wins the battle.

Olympia

Wife to the Captain of Balsera, Olympia is a resigned but shrewd woman who watches her husband die, stabs her son, and then attempts to burn herself on their funeral pyre before Theridamas prevents her. Then, rather than submit to Theridamas's romantic advances, she tricks him into stabbing her in the neck.

Orcanes

The king of Natolia, or Anatolia, a region slightly larger than the Anatolia of present-day Turkey, Orcanes is a fierce enemy to Tamburlaine. He has more vocal power than most of Tamburlaine's other enemies, and he is a somewhat more complex figure as well, actually paying tribute to Christ because he believes that Christ was responsible for his victory over the king of Hungary, who broke his Christian vow of peace with Orcanes. After Tamburlaine enslaves him, Orcanes curses Tamburlaine with insights such as, "Thou showest the difference 'twixt ourselves and thee / In this thy barbarous damned tyranny."

Perdicas

Perdicas is Calyphas's idle companion, with whom Calyphas is playing cards before his father stabs him.

Sigismund

The Christian king of Hungary, Sigismund makes a vow by Christ to maintain peace with Orcanes, but his advisors persuade him to break the vow and attack Orcanes while they have the opportunity. When Sigismund has lost the battle and lies dying, he repents of this perjury and begs for Christian forgiveness.

Soldan of Egypt

The soldan of Egypt is Zenocrate's father. He despises Tamburlaine for stealing his daughter and invading his land. After Tamburlaine conquers his armies, spares his life, and gives him back more than his former territory, however, the soldan praises Tamburlaine and consecrates his daughter's marriage.

Son

The son of the captain of Balsera is a brave young man who allows his mother to stab him in order to avoid torture at the hands of Tamburlaine's army.

Tamburlaine

Majestic and eloquent, with the ability to conquer not just kings and emperors but the audience of the play, Tamburlaine is one of the most important characters in Elizabethan drama. He is the source of the poetry that made Marlowe famous, and he can be both captivating and repellant because of his brutality. The key to his character is power and ambition, of which Tamburlaine has a superhuman amount, as well as the willingness to use any extreme in order to be triumphant. Unconcerned with social norms or everyday

life, Tamburlaine views himself in relation to the gods, and Marlowe uses him as a tool to ask philosophical questions such as what is the furthest extent of human power and accomplishment, and whether this is significant in comparison with heaven.

Tamburlaine begins his life in what Marlowe calls Scythia, a region north and northeast of the Black Sea, and rises to power first in Persia, subsequently conquering much of North Africa, the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and India. Marlowe's work concentrates on his battles with Turkish emperors and their subsidiary kings, whose territory at that time included much of the Middle East and North Africa. Tamburlaine's personal life is closely related to his outward conquests; he wins his wife by conquering her father's kingdom and then devastates much of the Middle East in his fury over her death. He sees his sons entirely as military leaders and murders his idle and slothful son Calyphas after he refuses to fight against the Turkish armies. At the end of his life, Tamburlaine is unsatisfied with the extent of his conquests. His thirst for power is unquenchable and, as his son and heir Amyras emphasizes, none can match Tamburlaine's power.

Like most of Marlowe's protagonists, Tamburlaine has a complex relationship with the audience of the play. He inspires a mixed reaction because he is brutal without bounds yet simultaneously passionate and glorious. Elizabethan audiences would be particularly offended, as well as somewhat titillated, by the presumptuousness of what they would consider a heathen□although the historical Tamburlaine was a Moslem, Marlowe shows him burning sacred Islamic texts and generally speaking as though he thinks of the gods in ancient Greek and Roman terms. This emphasis on mythology is also significant because Scythia is the area traditionally believed to hold the mountain to which Zeus chained Prometheus, a Titan who is famous for stealing fire from the gods and who, like Tamburlaine, dares to challenge Jupiter and the other classical gods.

Techelles

Tamburlaine's close companion, Techelles is an ambitious military leader entirely loyal to Tamburlaine. He came with Tamburlaine from Scythia and continues to be a skillful general after Tamburlaine makes him king of Fez, North Africa. Techelles's devotion to Tamburlaine, including his willingness to slaughter the virgins of Damascus and drown the population of Babylon, reveals Tamburlaine's power as a leader.

Theridamas

The chief captain in the Persian army, Theridamas is sent to kill Tamburlaine but instead becomes his loyal and lifelong companion. Telling Tamburlaine he has been, "Won with thy words, and conquered with thy looks," Theridamas quickly becomes one of Tamburlaine's three closest advisors and most able generals. Tamburlaine makes him king of Argier, in North Africa, and Theridamas is critical to the sieges of Balsera and Babylon in part 2. At Balsera, Theridamas falls in love with Olympia, the wife of Balsera's captain, and stops her from throwing herself on her husband and son's funeral pyre.

Tamburlaine calls Theridamas majestic when he first meets him, and it is clear from part 1 that he is a valiant and powerful Persian lord, although he is perhaps not as power hungry as Techelles and Usumcasane, since he says in Act 2, Scene 3 that he could live without being a king. It is when he threatens to rape Olympia and gullibly accepts her magic war ointment over her "honour," however, accidentally stabbing her, that Theridamas is revealed to be a warrior at heart and not a lover.

Uribassa

Uribassa is Orcanes's ally and a viceroy of an unspecified Turkish territory. He and Gazellus are viceroys for Callapine while the emperor is Tamburlaine's prisoner in Egypt.

Usumcasane

Usumcasane is Tamburlaine's close companion who, like Techelles, comes from Scythia and is so devoted to Tamburlaine that he is unable to comprehend Tamburlaine's death from illness.

Virgins of Damascus

After hearing their pleas for mercy on their city, Tamburlaine has the four virgins of Damascus slaughtered and hoisted on the city walls.

Zabina

Zabina is the proud Turkish empress of Bajazeth. She tells Zenocrate before their husbands go to battle that she would make her a slave, so at first the audience feels little sympathy for her when she is made the servant of Zenocrate's maid. However, after Tamburlaine tortures her and her husband, keeping them inside a cage, and she and Bajazeth kill themselves, Zenocrate and the audience pity them and feel astonished at Tamburlaine's cruelty. Before she goes mad and kills herself, Zabina reveals herself to be a practical person by urging her husband to eat and stay alive, hoping that at some point they will be freed.

Zenocrate

Daughter to the soldan of Egypt, Zenocrate is captured by Tamburlaine at the beginning of part 1, and she remains with him as his concubine, and then his wife, until her death in part 2, act 2. Initially, she resists Tamburlaine's romantic suit and calls herself "wretched" because she is forced to remain with him, but by act 3 she has fallen in love with him and is swept up in the glory of conquest. Zenocrate is dismayed by the prospect of Tamburlaine making war with her father and her people, however. Her most

difficult moment comes in part 1, act 5, scene 2, after Tamburlaine's brutal siege of Damascus. Distraught after seeing Tamburlaine slaughter four innocent virgins, she then comes upon the bodies of Bajazeth and Zabina, who have killed themselves because of Tamburlaine's cruelty. Nevertheless, she wishes Tamburlaine victory over her father and her former betrothed, Arabia, praying that their lives may be spared.

Tamburlaine's frequent superlative descriptions of Zenocrate's beauty and divine nature reveal Zenocrate's critical influence on the actions of the play. Tamburlaine's conquests in part 1 are closely related to winning Zenocrate, and in part 2 are largely a result of lamenting her death. These eloquent speeches, however, do not necessarily shed light on Zenocrate's true character or her struggle, particularly in part 1, of allegiance between her lover and her people, which is also a struggle between brutality and peace. This struggle resolves after the Soldan agrees to Zenocrate's marriage with Tamburlaine, although in part 2, act 1, Zenocrate wonders when her husband will finally cease his bloody conquests. Also, Tamburlaine's struggle with his son Calyphas, who is completely uninterested in war, is an extension of the conflict between peace and war in his mother's character.

Themes

The New Human

Tamburlaine, with his cruelty, his ambition, his tremendous capacity for violence, and his intense passion for his wife, represented a new and shocking type of hero for late sixteenth-century audiences. He was the equivalent of what audiences today might consider a Romantic hero□a passionate male obsessed with war who defies convention and whose fervency goes far beyond what is even conceivable for most people. Audiences were not even necessarily intended to understand Tamburlaine, such was his shock value and his capacity to break through the very fabric of society with his ceaseless conquests and unquenchable thirst for power.

Because Tamburlaine was a new type of hero, conquering the traditions of restraint and mercy with his passion, eloquence, and power, he challenged the traditional morality system that pervaded London theaters in the early Elizabethan period. Unlike the conventional plays that preceded *Tamburlaine the Great*, Marlowe's work does not consist of a simplistic didactic, or morally instructive, lesson emphasizing that humans must adhere to a strict and traditional moral code. Instead, the play attacks the philosophical problem of humanity's relationship to the universe and provides an example of a new and extreme worldview that seems to ignore traditional morality. It is Tamburlaine's conviction that he is as powerful as a god, and he refuses to see himself as an impotent human in a massive, oppressive universe. He believes that he can control the world and is tremendously optimistic about the possibilities of human achievement.

Marlowe does not straightforwardly advocate this worldview; Tamburlaine's relationship with the audience is complex, and he often inspires repugnance and alienation. However, Tamburlaine is not simply an anti-hero whose worldview the audience finds persuasive solely because he is a devilish figure of temptation. Tamburlaine is likely an exhilarating figure, in part, because he represents a passion that the audience is meant to admire. The play challenges the idea that humans are locked into an oppressive moral system and suggests that a new type of humanity is possible, which will break through these boundaries. The Renaissance movement in continental Europe stressed the emergence of a new model for humanity, open to diverse types of knowledge and entirely new ideas, and Tamburlaine was a vital contribution to the development of this ethos in England. Although Marlowe raises the possibility that he has gone too far, Tamburlaine provides a compelling case for a new type of human.

Power and Ambition

One of the play's principle themes is conveyed in its depiction of excessive cruelty and ambition, the characteristics that define its main character and make him controversial. In fact, the theme of power pervades nearly every aspect of the play, from Tamburlaine's

conquests, to his role as a father, to his relationship with Zenocrate. Tamburlaine's military brilliance and his ability to carry out such horrendous acts□such as slaughtering the virgins of Damascus and drowning the population of Babylon□are the results of these character traits, as are his eloquence and rhetorical power that convince Theridamas and others to join him. Marlowe's audience could be expected to find such excessive displays of power un-Christian and even repulsive, as well as to find themselves somewhat captivated by it.

Ambivalent reactions to these themes extend to the other aspects of Tamburlaine's life; the audience is asked to ponder whether the hero's extraordinary passion for his wife is actually romantic love or a form of perverted possession and desire. They must judge whether Tamburlaine is justified in murdering his own son because that son is weak and lazy. Tamburlaine is generally unwilling to place his love above his military ambitions (although he does spare Zenocrate's father). He often seems to perceive Zenocrate as a treasure to be won, such as in his initial declaration of love for her, when he describes her in terms of great wealth and power. Similarly, he views his sons solely in terms of their courage and fortitude, and he has no regrets about stabbing Calyphas because he was too slothful to enter a battle.

It is possible that Marlowe implies, according to the conventions of a tragedy, that Tamburlaine's downfall occurs because of the excessive appetite for power that is his tragic flaw. If this is the case, Tamburlaine's and Zenocrate's illnesses and deaths could be seen as a punishment from the heavens for Tamburlaine's presumptuousness. This is not necessarily clear, however, since there is no great evidence that the illness involves any divine intervention; in fact, God does not seem to interfere with human affairs in the play. In any case, Marlowe poses provocative questions about the place of power and ambition in society, the desirability of these characteristics in an age of tremendous artistic and scientific advances and the evils that can result from an excessive display of power.

Style

Blank Verse

In his prefatory tribute to the first folio edition of Shakespeare's plays, Ben Jonson cited (though in deference to Shakespeare) "Marlowe's mighty line," and critics tend to agree that Marlowe's innovation in verse was the first and most influential predecessor to the stylistic achievements of the era. It was *Tamburlaine the Great* that made this powerful verse style famous. Marlowe stresses in the prologue to part 1 that it is his intention to depart from the "jigging veins of rhyming mother wits," or unsophisticated rhymes like those of a mother giving silly advice in the form of a jig, of his predecessors. Instead, Marlowe wanted to create a work of high philosophical ambitions and powerful, "astounding" verse.

The poetic tool Marlowe uses for his "mighty line" is blank verse, or unrhymed iambic pentameter, which is a meter with five beats of two-syllable units called iambs. This style, adapted from Greek and Latin heroic verse, was developed in Italy before Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, introduced it in England. Marlowe was perhaps the chief innovator to instill blank verse with emotional force and rhythmic eloquence, and he was also influential in skillfully suiting his characters' temperaments to the nature of their lines. Tamburlaine's lines, for example, are not just musical and eloquent but extremely powerful and majestic, with hard consonant sounds and decisive, accented peaks and flourishes, while those of Calyphas and Mycetes rhyme ineffectually and repeat sounds frequently, to no purpose.

Rhetoric

Although Tamburlaine's speeches may sometimes sound overwrought, in Elizabethan England they were fine examples of rhetoric, or the art of speaking and writing effectively. Marlowe does not follow the strict logical rules of classical rhetoric, which was used in ancient Greek philosophy but, like the ancient Greeks, he does use language as a powerful tool to convey the truth and to be persuasive. Marlowe's compelling and insightful use of comparisons, his evocative diction, or word choice, his startling imagery, and his ability to incorporate his words into a compelling and musical rhythm of speech combine to create some of the most powerful examples of rhetoric in Elizabethan drama. Elizabethan audiences might sometimes find Tamburlaine pompous, but his rhetoric is the dramatist's chief tool in portraying Tamburlaine as such a captivating figure.

In addition to their usefulness in winning over the audience, Tamburlaine's powers of rhetoric are critical to his military triumphs. Tamburlaine's rhetoric compels Theridamas to join him and allows him to inspire his soldiers to victory. Also, Tamburlaine relies on rhetoric to win over Zenocrate and instruct his sons in the arts of war. Of course, he supports his rhetoric with his majestic looks and forceful actions, but this style of speech

is the key means by which he is able to communicate his power. Marlowe saw rhetoric as one of the most important keys to power and truth. He disdained the low comedy and clichéd rhetoric of previous dramatists. In fact, he wrote such grand and forceful speeches that writers began to parody Marlowe's style after *Tamburlaine the Great* became famous, seeing Marlowe as the prime example of powerful, and sometimes ostentatious, rhetoric.

Historical Context

Elizabethan England

When Queen Elizabeth I succeeded to the throne of England in 1558, the nation was poorer and less powerful than the continental powers France and Spain. England had been torn by internal religious strife between Protestants and Catholics, and was quite unstable. Elizabeth, an adept and shrewd monarch who surrounded herself with pragmatic advisors, presided over a period of increasing power and prosperity, making peace with France in 1560, defeating the Spanish Armada in 1588, and garnering relative peace with Catholics and Puritans. England was not without its problems, however. England enjoyed a sometimes precarious political stability. Elizabeth narrowly survived a number of assassination attempts that would have resulted in a fierce battle of succession since, despite pressure from Parliament, she never married or produced an heir.

In this environment of relative tolerance and stability, the flourishing of the arts in continental Europe spread to England, and the late sixteenth century became famous for an extraordinary flowering in literature known as the English "Renaissance." Writer and statesman Sir Thomas More, and poets Edmund Spenser and Philip Sidney, were among the key figures in developing "humanism" in English literature; this involved the revival of classical literature and an emphasis on individual humanity instead of strictly religious themes. Marlowe was perhaps the first major innovator in humanistic English drama, however, along with his friend Thomas Kyd. Marlowe was also very influential over Jonson and Shakespeare, whose writing came at what is generally considered the height of the English Renaissance.

Tamerlane

The conqueror Tamerlane, known in Europe by this corrupt version of the Persian "Timur-i Leng," or "Timur the lame," was a fearsome military leader, famous for his brutality and his devotion to Mongol-Islamic religious practices. Born in Ulus Chaghatay, an area in present-day Uzbekistan, in 1336, Tamerlane was a member of a Mongol tribe that had converted to Islam during his father's rule. He was a thief and brigand during his youth, attracting allies and preparing for his bid for leadership, which was at first unsuccessful. After he built an alliance with the neighboring prince Amir Husayn (marrying his sister to fortify their relationship), Tamerlane was able to drive all other serious threats to his control from Ulus Chaghatay. Husayn and Tamerlane then became involved in a leadership struggle, and Tamerlane laid siege to Husayn's city, allowed a local warlord to kill him, and took four of his wives as concubines.

By 1379, Tamerlane had suppressed a series of rebellions and established sole control over Ulus Chaghatay. Partly to keep other warlords in his control, since they would be under his eye as a subservient army, he then began a series of extremely successful

conquests into neighboring lands. From 1386 to 1388, Tamerlane invaded Persia and Anatolia but afterwards was forced to return to defend his homeland against a former protégé called Tokhtamish. Tamerlane finally defeated Tokhtamish in 1390. After two more years spent defending against enemies from the north, Tamerlane invaded Iran in 1392, where he installed his sons as governors. In 1398, he set off for India, where he sacked Delhi and murdered 100,000 Hindu prisoners. In 1399, he campaigned into Syria and Anatolia, defeating the Ottoman Sultan Bayazid I and taking him captive in 1402. In 1405, Tamerlane was preparing for an ambitious conquest into China when he fell ill and died. He had established no sustainable infrastructure, and his vast empire rapidly decayed after his death, despite the fact that he nominated a grandson as his successor.

Tamburlaine the Great, particularly in part 2, contains a great number of historical inaccuracies and alternative representations, partly because there was a limited amount of historical information available at the time and partly because Marlowe did not always interpret that information correctly, but mainly because Marlowe's dramatic goals differed from the historical reality. For example, since Marlowe likely did not conceive of the work in two parts, it was necessary to use events prior to Bajazeth's demise, and, in the case of Orcanes's defeat of Sigismund, nearly fifty years after it, in order to form a coherent drama in part 2. Also, the play's depiction of Bajazeth and his wife's enslavement inside an iron cage stems from an alternative reading of the historian Arabshah. Other examples, such as Tamburlaine's love for Zenocrate, are entirely fictional, and reflect Marlowe's desire to cast the play in the manner most effective for developing his major themes.

Critical Overview

Among most successful plays of the Elizabethan era, the two parts of *Tamburlaine the Great* captivated audiences with their eloquent rhetoric and powerful verse. Although they remained popular as pieces of literature, they were not frequently performed in later periods and are infrequently performed in the early 2000s in comparison with Marlowe's other works. The grandiose wars and conquests of the plays may not translate well to the modern stage, but the work is now, and has been for centuries, a prominent subject for stylistic and thematic literary criticism.

Marlowe's reputation suffered because of the numerous scandals surrounding his private life, including the circumstances of his death. Claims that he was an immoral atheist and blasphemer initially affected the critical evaluation of his plays. The dramatist's critical reception recovered, however, and *Tamburlaine the Great* became one of the principle subjects for critics interested in the development of blank verse and the style of Renaissance drama. Most critics consider it extremely important, if not the most important work, in developing the style that came to a height around the turn of the sixteenth century.

Regarding the principle thematic meaning of the work, two analytical views eventually emerged to explain Tamburlaine's ambivalent character. The first view stresses that Tamburlaine is a brutal and un-Christian tyrant whose power and ambition is reprehensible. As Roger Sales points out in his 1991 study *Christopher Marlowe*: "Tamburlaine's rise to power is usually at the expense of a series of legitimate rulers. Might is shown to triumph over right." The second main analytical view stresses, instead, that Tamburlaine's glory and majesty inspire the audience to recognize the highest limits of human achievement□a view that J. W. Harper calls "romantic" in his 1971 introduction to the plays: "the view that he is a perfect symbol of the Renaissance spirit and the spokesman for Marlowe's own aspirations and energies." Harper stresses that the first view□that Tamburlaine is a "stock figure of evil"□is more accurate than the "romantic" view. But, like most critics, he acknowledges that there is some truth to both interpretations.

Criticism

- Critical Essay #1

Critical Essay #1

Trudell is an independent scholar with a bachelor's degree in English literature. In the following essay, Trudell argues that Marlowe's play is a psychological drama in which Tamburlaine represents the awesome potential of basic psychological desires.

On the surface, *Tamburlaine the Great* is a play about war and conquest, that is concerned with ambition, domination, and power in the public sphere, while private conflicts and domestic life are neither glorious nor important. Actions in the play take on epic proportions, and Tamburlaine places his life on the scale of the gods, whom he frequently challenges and to whom he often compares himself. Although Marlowe is concerned with ambition, power, and violence, his principle interest is in the origin of these themes in Tamburlaine's internal psychology. In fact, Tamburlaine is actually much less interested in conquest and political rule than he is in winning over his idealized wife, extending his sense of self to the next generation, and satisfying his egotistical desires to feel majestic and triumphant.

One of the most important pieces of evidence that *Tamburlaine the Great* is a psychological drama lies in its treatment of Tamburlaine's relationship with Zenocrate. Zenocrate is entirely Marlowe's own addition to the narrative; she does not appear in any historical documents about Tamerlane the conqueror and there is no evidence that Tamerlane fell passionately in love with anyone. The historical Tamerlane had a number of wives and concubines, including the warlord Amir Husayn's sister, whom he married to fortify their alliance, and also a former wife of Husayn, after Tamerlane had him killed. Unlike these women, Zenocrate does not help forward Tamburlaine's practical political goals in the play; if anything, she does him harm since she arouses the attempted vengeance of the king of Arabia and her father, the soldan of Egypt.

In fact, Tamburlaine seems almost to adjust his political ambitions, conquering Zenocrate's people, her betrothed husband, and her father, in order to win his wife entirely and become the king of their relationship. Of course, Tamburlaine states that he will not alter his military aims for his wife, and he does not accommodate her request for mercy on her people, but he does spare the soldan's life and give him back more than his former territory. This is an action suitable not for a warrior with purely political and military ambitions, but for a son-in-law who wishes to be the magnanimous ruler of his marriage. Tamburlaine views his domestic life as a battle to be won, and his wife a treasure to be pillaged, by conquering her territory and subduing the other males who lay claim to her.

Likewise, the conquests of part 2 do not originate in Tamburlaine's grand plan for military expansion as much as they signify the destruction and violence he feels are necessary to grieve for and honor his late wife. Marlowe stresses that this is the case in the prologue to part 2: "But what became of fair Zenocrate, / And with how many cities' sacrifice / He celebrated her sad funeral." As before, Tamburlaine forces the conditions of his personal life on the outer world; he burns the city where Zenocrate died, pillages many others, and drowns the entire population of Babylon in order to express the

devastation of his marriage. Whereas, before his marriage, he killed the four virgins of Damascus after showing them the "imperious Death" that sits on his sword, representing the penetration of Zenocrate's virginity, now he drowns the women and children of Babylon in order to cease their fertility and ensure that, like his wife's dead body, they are barren.

Marlowe is careful to highlight that there is often something strange and shocking about Tamburlaine's transference of his psychological state onto the state of the world. The paradox that Tamburlaine "celebrated" a "sad funeral" with the sacrifice of numerous conquered cities highlights the theme, which is also common in part 1, that Tamburlaine's militaristic displays of brutality and power are often inappropriate and perverse in the context of his personal life. Marlowe chooses two moments in *Tamburlaine the Great* to portray this theme most acutely, the first of which comes at the confluence of the slaughter of the virgins of Damascus and the suicides of Bajazeth and Zabina. When Zenocrate discovers their bodies, having just witnessed Tamburlaine's slaughter of her people, she is torn between repulsion and devotion towards her husband, and the audience feels the same way. Tamburlaine's defeat and imprisonment of Bajazeth and his wife seem appropriate at first, given Bajazeth's threat to bind Tamburlaine in chains and make him a eunuch, but when the Turks are tortured inside a cage and humiliated as an ornament to Tamburlaine's domestic scene, events rapidly begin to take on a cruel and barbarous significance. By the time Zabina sees her husband's gory remains and goes mad, the audience feels appalled that Tamburlaine could cause such a thing to happen.

Similarly, when Tamburlaine ignores the protestations of his sons and comrades in part 2, and murders his son Calyphas for failing to fight against the Turkish armies, the audience is repulsed by Tamburlaine employing brutal, military force on his defenseless child. Calling him, "not my son, / But traitor to my name and majesty," Tamburlaine kills Calyphas because he fails to satisfy Tamburlaine's sense of psychological self-preservation. In his address to Jove immediately before he stabs his son, Tamburlaine tells the God to take back his son's soul because it is, "A form not meet to give that subject essence, / Whose matter is the flesh of Tamburlaine."

Perhaps the most shocking aspect of this moment is the idea that Tamburlaine could be so self-obsessed as to murder his son, without regret, simply because his son does not fulfill his function as an extension of Tamburlaine's ego. Audiences alternate between finding Tamburlaine's violence and cruelty evil and finding it somewhat titillating; they feel ashamed and disturbed when they encounter extreme moments of cruelty□which they had previously admired□invading Tamburlaine's personal and domestic life. However, the recurring aspect of Tamburlaine's character, with which audiences find it perhaps most difficult to sympathize, is his incredible egotism. Tamburlaine has absolutely no inhibitions in acting out his most basic psychological desires. He has no boundary between his internal sense of self and his desire to impose his sense of self upon the world around him.

Marlowe uses this psychological drama to arouse suspicion about the desirability of Tamburlaine's enormous egotism and emphasize that his presumptuousness is

unnatural and un-Christian. Like the orthodox moralists of his age, Marlowe is concerned about excessive pride, and he is careful to highlight its dangers and temptations, which lurk inside everyone's mind but, unlike Tamburlaine's, are not always externalized. Marlowe also demonstrates through Tamburlaine's outwardly-directed psychology that human beings are passionate, romantic creatures with glorious and limitless aspirations. However much it seems to highlight the dangers of great ambition, *Tamburlaine the Great* also suggests that the human psyche, if blown to the proportion of Tamburlaine's, and allowed to escape the bounds of humility and internalization, is capable of rising to the scale of a god.

Tamburlaine is not a model for human psychology or an everyman figure; he is entirely unique, even unrealistic at times, and none of the other characters approach his eloquence or power in the play. Theridamas, although he is a majestic conqueror, cannot conquer Olympia in the domestic sphere as Tamburlaine has conquered Zenocrate; Theridamas succumbs to a simple trick and, in his attempt to bring his military might down upon his desired wife, accidentally kills her. As Amyras points out to his father when they learn of his impending death: "Your soul gives essence to our wretched subjects, / Whose matter is incorporate in your flesh." Tamburlaine's allies are merely part of his majestic flesh, which eclipses all other glory and allows little else to coexist with its majesty.

Nevertheless, Marlowe sees Tamburlaine as a signal of the potential inherent in every human psyche, which has such shockingly powerful and violent desires that it is capable of almost anything. Nearly everyone, from the audience to the other characters in the play, reveals his/her taste for power and majesty by becoming so enthralled by Tamburlaine. This is a natural reaction, the reaction Marlowe intends by stressing that one can capture almost any passion and conquer almost any impediment to one's deepest desire if one is willing to disregard convention and carry out acts of ruthless violence. Marlowe is pointing out the fact that the world is not, as was commonly believed, a series of strictly orthodox moral hoops through which a person must jump in order to lead a happy existence, but a brutal arena in which the most violent, ambitious, and unappeasable desires and egos will rule. Tamburlaine shows that a basic aspect of the human psyche□its appetite for power□has a limitless potential and allows for the greatest of human achievements.

Source: Scott Trudell, Critical Essay on *Tamburlaine the Great*, in *Drama for Students*, Thomson Gale, 2005.

Topics for Further Study

Tamburlaine is famous for arousing a mixed reaction in his audiences. What was your response to his character? Were you, like Theridamas, "Won with [his] words?" To what degree did you find him cruel and barbarous, and at which points did you find him cruelest? Is Tamburlaine a hero and a protagonist? Why or why not? Discuss the reactions you think Tamburlaine is meant to inspire. How are these reactions important to Marlowe's goals in the play?

Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus* (1594) is also about a power-hungry character who inspires ambivalent reactions in the audience. Read this play and compare it with *Tamburlaine the Great*. How are the moral themes of the plays similar? How do they differ? What does *Dr. Faustus* imply about one human's relationship to the universe? How does this differ from the implications of *Tamburlaine the Great*? How do the plays differ in style and form? Which one sheds more light on today's society, and which one would you rather see performed today? Explain your choices.

Identify the key scenes in *Tamburlaine the Great*, including the most eloquent scene, the most daring scene, the scene with the most important turning point, and the scene most crucial to establishing Marlowe's major themes. Support your choices with examples and quotes, and explain your decisions. Then, perform one of these scenes with your classmates. Think about the best way to portray the scene according to the point it is trying to make, and think about which characters are most important to the scene and how to emphasize their importance. What is the best way to deliver what Ben Jonson called "Marlowe's mighty line?" How can you approach your performance of the play to best express what you consider to be its meaning? Use your answers to improve your performance.

Tamburlaine the Great departs substantially from the actual history of the Mongol warlord, Tamerlane. Read a prominent history book about Tamerlane and discuss how this changes your view of the conqueror. How does the contemporary view of Tamerlane differ from Marlow's portrayal? How might Marlowe's play be different if it treated Tamburlaine as he is depicted in modern histories? Support your answer with examples and discuss, more broadly, the goals of history texts and how they differ from those of historical fiction.

Compare and Contrast

1400s: Tamerlane rules his vast territories by allowing his soldiers to keep the booty from the conquests and filling his treasury with ransom money extracted from conquered cities.

1580s: The Ottoman Empire, at the height of its power, controls most of Tamerlane's former territories and arouses fear and misunderstanding from Christian nations.

Today: The Middle East, which is the primary location of the events in *Tamburlaine the Great*, contains a number of prosperous nations with rich natural resources, but it is one of the most politically unstable regions in the world.

1400s: England is in the midst of the Middle Ages. Henry IV has just come to power, having deposed his cousin Richard II, and he will deal forcibly with the insurrections and other problems resulting in part from the devastation of the Black Plague in the mid-1300s.

1580s: Elizabeth rules England with shrewd pragmatism and, although her treasury has been overstretched by military expenses, she creates a stable environment for trade.

Today: Tony Blair is prime minister of England, and his tenure has been characterized by center-left economic and social policies, as well as his alliance with the United States in a pre-emptive war with Iraq.

1400s: The Americas have yet to be discovered by Europeans, and Native Americans live a traditional way of life that varies by region and civilization.

1580s: The most brutal Spanish conquests of native populations in South and Central America have largely come to an end, but English and French colonialists have yet to establish the firm hold that will lead to the widespread displacement and massacre of Native North Americans.

Today: In the United States, Native Americans struggle with poverty and a lack of appropriate resources on reservations, but the Native American population is not becoming fully integrated into mainstream culture and does not necessarily desire to do so.

What Do I Read Next?

Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus*, first performed in 1594, concentrates on a forceful and eloquent main character who sells his soul to the devil in exchange for knowledge and power. It is one of Marlowe's most sophisticated achievements.

Tamburlaine the Conqueror (1964), by Hilda Hookham, is an eloquent account of the historical Tamerlane and a thorough, definitive treatment of his career.

Shakespeare's *Henry V*, first performed about 1599, deals with an ambitious and charismatic king who penetrates further into France than any other English monarch. It is an example of further accomplishments in elegant rhetoric and blank verse in the years after Marlowe's death.

In addition to his plays, Marlowe wrote a number of poems including the delightful *Hero and Leander* (1598), a treatment of the ancient Greek story of two lovers who can meet only when Leander swims across the Hellespont strait.

Chelsea Quinn Yarbro's *A Feast in Exile* (2001) is a popular historical vampire novel in which Tamerlane the conqueror captures the Count of Saint-Germain, a vampire, during Tamerlane's siege of Dehli. Tamerlane keeps the count in his service as a healer.

Further Study

Battenhouse, Roy W., *Marlowe's "Tamburlaine": A Study in Renaissance Moral Philosophy*, Vanderbilt University Press, 1964.

This book provides an analysis of the play as a didactic and conventionally religious moral statement, in which Tamburlaine is meant to be a figure of evil.

Eliot, T. S., "Christopher Marlowe," in *Selected Essays, 1917—1932*, Harcourt, Brace, 1932, pp. 100—07.

Eliot's discussion of Marlowe's style is one of the most influential modern critical evaluations of the dramatist, and it includes an analysis of the verse in *Tamburlaine the Great*.

Manz, Beatrice Forbes, *The Rise and Rule of Tamerlane*, Cambridge University Press, 1989.

Manz offers a useful historical account of the Mongol conqueror.

Ribner, Irving, "The Idea of History in Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*," in *ELH*, Vol. 20, 1954, pp. 251—66.

Ribner discusses Marlowe's classical sources in *Tamburlaine the Great* and argues that the play denies the role of providence in human history.

Rowse, A. L., *Christopher Marlowe, A Biography*, Macmillan, 1964.

Rowse's book is a colorful and controversial biography addressed to a wide audience.

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Jonson, Ben, "To the Memory of My Beloved, the Author Master William Shakespeare, and What He Hath Left Us," in *William Shakespeare: The Complete Works*, by William Shakespeare, edited by Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, Oxford University Press, 1988, pp. xiv—xvi.

Marlowe, Christopher, *Tamburlaine the Great: Parts I and II*, edited by J. W. Harper, Ernest Benn, 1971.

Sales, Roger, *Christopher Marlowe*, St. Martin's Press, 1991, pp. 51—83.

BOOKRAGS

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Introduction

Purpose of the Book

The purpose of Drama for Students (DfS) is to provide readers with a guide to understanding, enjoying, and studying novels by giving them easy access to information about the work. Part of Gale's□For Students□ Literature line, DfS is specifically designed to meet the curricular needs of high school and undergraduate college students and their teachers, as well as the interests of general readers and researchers considering specific novels. While each volume contains entries on □classic□ novels

frequently studied in classrooms, there are also entries containing hard-to-find information on contemporary novels, including works by multicultural, international, and women novelists.

The information covered in each entry includes an introduction to the novel and the novel's author; a plot summary, to help readers unravel and understand the events in a novel; descriptions of important characters, including explanation of a given character's role in the novel as well as discussion about that character's relationship to other characters in the novel; analysis of important themes in the novel; and an explanation of important literary techniques and movements as they are demonstrated in the novel.

In addition to this material, which helps the readers analyze the novel itself, students are also provided with important information on the literary and historical background informing each work. This includes a historical context essay, a box comparing the time or place the novel was written to modern Western culture, a critical overview essay, and excerpts from critical essays on the novel. A unique feature of DfS is a specially commissioned critical essay on each novel, targeted toward the student reader.

To further aid the student in studying and enjoying each novel, information on media adaptations is provided, as well as reading suggestions for works of fiction and nonfiction on similar themes and topics. Classroom aids include ideas for research papers and lists of critical sources that provide additional material on the novel.

Selection Criteria

The titles for each volume of DfS were selected by surveying numerous sources on teaching literature and analyzing course curricula for various school districts. Some of the sources surveyed included: literature anthologies; Reading Lists for College-Bound Students: The Books Most Recommended by America's Top Colleges; textbooks on teaching the novel; a College Board survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; a National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; the NCTE's Teaching Literature in High School: The Novel;and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) list of best books for young adults of the past twenty-five years. Input was also solicited from our advisory board, as well as educators from various areas. From these discussions, it was determined that each volume should have a mix of □classic□ novels (those works commonly taught in literature classes) and contemporary novels for which information is often hard to find. Because of the interest in expanding the canon of literature, an emphasis was also placed on including works by international, multicultural, and women authors. Our advisory board members□educational professionals□ helped pare down the list for each volume. If a work was not selected for the present volume, it was often noted as a possibility for a future volume. As always, the editor welcomes suggestions for titles to be included in future volumes.

How Each Entry Is Organized

Each entry, or chapter, in DfS focuses on one novel. Each entry heading lists the full name of the novel, the author's name, and the date of the novel's publication. The following elements are contained in each entry:

- Introduction: a brief overview of the novel which provides information about its first appearance, its literary standing, any controversies surrounding the work, and major conflicts or themes within the work.
- Author Biography: this section includes basic facts about the author's life, and focuses on events and times in the author's life that inspired the novel in question.
- Plot Summary: a factual description of the major events in the novel. Lengthy summaries are broken down with subheads.
- Characters: an alphabetical listing of major characters in the novel. Each character name is followed by a brief to an extensive description of the character's role in the novel, as well as discussion of the character's actions, relationships, and possible motivation. Characters are listed alphabetically by last name. If a character is unnamed□for instance, the narrator in Invisible Man-the character is listed as □The Narrator□ and alphabetized as □Narrator.□ If a character's first name is the only one given, the name will appear alphabetically by that name. □ Variant names are also included for each character. Thus, the full name □Jean Louise Finch□ would head the listing for the narrator of To Kill a Mockingbird, but listed in a separate cross-reference would be the nickname □Scout Finch.□
- Themes: a thorough overview of how the major topics, themes, and issues are addressed within the novel. Each theme discussed appears in a separate subhead, and is easily accessed through the boldface entries in the Subject/Theme Index.
- Style: this section addresses important style elements of the novel, such as setting, point of view, and narration; important literary devices used, such as imagery, foreshadowing, symbolism; and, if applicable, genres to which the work might have belonged, such as Gothicism or Romanticism. Literary terms are explained within the entry, but can also be found in the Glossary.
- Historical Context: This section outlines the social, political, and cultural climate in which the author lived and the novel was created. This section may include descriptions of related historical events, pertinent aspects of daily life in the culture, and the artistic and literary sensibilities of the time in which the work was written. If the novel is a historical work, information regarding the time in which the novel is set is also included. Each section is broken down with helpful subheads.
- Critical Overview: this section provides background on the critical reputation of the novel, including bannings or any other public controversies surrounding the work. For older works, this section includes a history of how the novel was first received and how perceptions of it may have changed over the years; for more recent novels, direct quotes from early reviews may also be included.
- Criticism: an essay commissioned by DfS which specifically deals with the novel and is written specifically for the student audience, as well as excerpts from previously published criticism on the work (if available).

- Sources: an alphabetical list of critical material quoted in the entry, with full bibliographical information.
- Further Reading: an alphabetical list of other critical sources which may prove useful for the student. Includes full bibliographical information and a brief annotation.

In addition, each entry contains the following highlighted sections, set apart from the main text as sidebars:

- Media Adaptations: a list of important film and television adaptations of the novel, including source information. The list also includes stage adaptations, audio recordings, musical adaptations, etc.
- Topics for Further Study: a list of potential study questions or research topics dealing with the novel. This section includes questions related to other disciplines the student may be studying, such as American history, world history, science, math, government, business, geography, economics, psychology, etc.
- Compare and Contrast Box: an □at-a-glance□ comparison of the cultural and historical differences between the author's time and culture and late twentieth century/early twenty-first century Western culture. This box includes pertinent parallels between the major scientific, political, and cultural movements of the time or place the novel was written, the time or place the novel was set (if a historical work), and modern Western culture. Works written after 1990 may not have this box.
- What Do I Read Next?: a list of works that might complement the featured novel or serve as a contrast to it. This includes works by the same author and others, works of fiction and nonfiction, and works from various genres, cultures, and eras.

Other Features

DfS includes □The Informed Dialogue: Interacting with Literature,□ a foreword by Anne Devereaux Jordan, Senior Editor for Teaching and Learning Literature (TALL), and a founder of the Children's Literature Association. This essay provides an enlightening look at how readers interact with literature and how Drama for Students can help teachers show students how to enrich their own reading experiences.

A Cumulative Author/Title Index lists the authors and titles covered in each volume of the DfS series.

A Cumulative Nationality/Ethnicity Index breaks down the authors and titles covered in each volume of the DfS series by nationality and ethnicity.

A Subject/Theme Index, specific to each volume, provides easy reference for users who may be studying a particular subject or theme rather than a single work. Significant subjects from events to broad themes are included, and the entries pointing to the specific theme discussions in each entry are indicated in boldface.

Each entry has several illustrations, including photos of the author, stills from film adaptations (if available), maps, and/or photos of key historical events.

Citing Drama for Students

When writing papers, students who quote directly from any volume of Drama for Students may use the following general forms. These examples are based on MLA style; teachers may request that students adhere to a different style, so the following examples may be adapted as needed. When citing text from DfS that is not attributed to a particular author (i.e., the Themes, Style, Historical Context sections, etc.), the following format should be used in the bibliography section:

□Night.□ Drama for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 234-35.

When quoting the specially commissioned essay from DfS (usually the first piece under the □Criticism□ subhead), the following format should be used:

Miller, Tyrus. Critical Essay on □Winesburg, Ohio.□ Drama for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 335-39.

When quoting a journal or newspaper essay that is reprinted in a volume of DfS, the following form may be used:

Malak, Amin. □Margaret Atwood's □The Handmaid's Tale and the Dystopian Tradition,□ Canadian Literature No. 112 (Spring, 1987), 9-16; excerpted and reprinted in Drama for Students, Vol. 4, ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski (Detroit: Gale, 1998), pp. 133-36.

When quoting material reprinted from a book that appears in a volume of DfS, the following form may be used:

Adams, Timothy Dow. □Richard Wright: □Wearing the Mask,□ in Telling Lies in Modern American Autobiography (University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 69-83; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 1, ed. Diane Telgen (Detroit: Gale, 1997), pp. 59-61.

We Welcome Your Suggestions

The editor of Drama for Students welcomes your comments and ideas. Readers who wish to suggest novels to appear in future volumes, or who have other suggestions, are cordially invited to contact the editor. You may contact the editor via email at: ForStudentsEditors@gale.com. Or write to the editor at:

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