UNIT 1 CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE AND THE ELIZABETHAN DRAMA

Structure

1.0 OBJECTIVES

This Unit helps you to understand the Elizabethan drama of which Christopher Marlowe is one of the chief representatives. The focus in this unit is on the distinctive growth of Elizabethan comedy and tragedy. An attempt is made to show how tragedy effectively reflects the cultural aspirations and the keen intellectual sensitivity of the Elizabethans.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Christopher Marlowe is the originator of the mature English tragedy. Between the playwrights who preceded him like Thomas Kyd and those who succeeded him like

William Shakespeare and John Webster, Marlowe is the crucial nexus, in terms of ideas and dramatic forms.

1.2 CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE

Christopher Marlowe (1564-93) is the most intellectual of the playwrights during the Elizabethan age in English literature. The period known for unprecedented literary activity in England, finds its genius, chiefly, in drama whose most eloquent spokesman was William Shakespeare. Marlowe is, undoubtedly, the greatest of Shakespeare's predecessors in drama. To him, goes the credit of heralding the powerful English tragic drama that remains, even today, as one of the chief achievements of English literature. Marlowe died very young, before he was thirty, in suspicious circumstances but left about half a dozen tragedies all written in a period of five years — *Tamburlaine* (1587), *Doctor Faustus* (1586), *The Jew of Malta* (1589), *Edward II* (1591), and *The Massacre at Paris* (1592). Endowed with vast biblical and classical scholarship, a rebellious spirit and poetic imagination, Marlowe marks the end of an adolescent phase in English drama and begins its mature tragedy. In effecting this transition, Marlowe had to attempt to reconcile the traditions of medieval Christianity with the rise of the Reformation, on the one hand, and reconcile these two with the continental Renaissance humanism and the revival of the fascinating classical learning and literature, on the other. Additionally, there was the linguistic and lyrical upsurge of the blank verse and its liberating tone of freedom from the rigors of metrical verse. Whatever Marlowe wrote was poignant, for he could never separate his personal yearnings from his dramatic reflections. A very striking personality and a powerful dramatist, he is a significant part of a still greater tradition of the Elizabethan drama—tragedy in particular, which was taking shape in his time. Marlowe is judged with a sense of regret that he died young and that his talents left many a masterpiece unwritten, especially in view of the fact that Shakespeare, similarly gifted could achieve greatness with longer years of life. On Marlowe's four hundredth anniversary, Harry Levin reassessed Marlowe's importance thus:

> Marlowe must abide the question of history, which Shakespeare has all but overflown. Yes, he is for all time, we must agree with Ben Johnson. And Marlowe then, was he primarily for his age? Certainly he caught its intensities, placed its rhythms, and dramatized its dilemmas as no Elizabethan writer had previously done, and as all would be doing thereafter to some extent...
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> Marlowe's output was meteoric in its development, and in its expression as well. In that sense, his end was not untimely, and it is futile to sentimentalize now over his fragments and unwritten master works. Shakespeare needed maturity to express ripeness, although he could never have matured without assuming first the youthful stance that Marlowe had made permanently his own. Insofar as he must seem for ever young, we are inclined to feel old as we belatedly reread him.[1]

An understanding of this emerging tradition is necessary for clearer perspectives on Marlowe's dramatic endeavours and achievement.

1.3 ELIZABETHAN DRAMA: RELIGIOUS BEGINNINGS

One of the finest dramatic traditions in literature, the Elizabethan drama emerged in the middle of the sixteenth century in England in response to the growing needs of popular entertainment, national and cultural aspirations. To begin with, the

Elizabethans had to reckon with theatre as a vehicle for religious and moral instruction. After the decline of classical drama in Europe, the Middle ages witnessed the use of theatre in the church for religious instruction. This has, in fact, led to the rebirth of western drama after the Middle Ages. The antiphonal singing, the essential part of a Roman Catholic prayer in the church, displayed dramatic possibilities that could be effectively used for instructional purposes. Further, illustrations of the stories of the Old and New Testament, particularly during festivals like Christmas and Easter, through dramatic presentation, became an integral part of the Roman Catholic liturgy.

1.4 MIRACLE AND MYSTERY PLAYS

What began as a religious performance by the clergy extended itself to include lay performers. As the performances gradually became buoyant during the festivals, the clergy came to be excluded from participating in such joyous celebrations. The exclusion of clergy entailed the relaxation of church control over such performances, leading to the secular growth of, what is essentially, a Christian drama. This religious tradition of theatre became popular in England by the fourteenth century as Mystery and Miracle plays, the former dealing with biblical stories and the latter with the lives of the Christian saints. In course of time, cycles of plays evolved presenting various stories but with a singular theme. Though composed by the clergy, with a certain secular disposition, in iambic verse, the theatrical organization went into the hands of social and trade guilds associated with towns like York, Chester, Coventry, Wakefield and Lincoln. These cycles, largely bereft of any lasting literary value, facilitated the replacement of Latin by the vernacular as the medium of religion, the shift of theatrical activity from cathedrals to open public places, and in theatrical experience, a change from a sense of religious solemnity to the pursuit of popular taste. A significant development for the later Elizabethan drama was the mixing up of the solemn religious practices with the comic frivolities inherent in day to day life.

1.5 MORALITY PLAYS

The later advances of English religious drama was in the form of a morality play which was, in turn, followed by interludes, the non-allegorical religious plays about earthly characters with a predominant satirical tone. The morality tradition is significant for the abstract characterization of several qualities, both good and vicious. The dramatic story is an allegory of the interplay of the forces of good and evil. The dramatic conflict, essentially between good and evil, leads to the inevitable victory of the good over evil, the former characterized by the strength of religion and the latter smarting under a comic impotence. The morality plays have a long history in England beginning with the fifteenth century and lasting the whole of the sixteenth century. The plays had to reckon with the growth of English nationalism, its political and economic power. More importantly, they had to come to terms with the tides of classical revival and the new humanist learning from Italy. The representative morality plays of the early Tudor period, like *The Castle of Perseverance* (1425), *The Pride of Life* (1425) and *Everyman* (1500) (translated from Dutch, the authors anonymous) survey human life from birth to death through the conflicts occurring between one of the cardinal virtues and the seven deadly sins. Social reality of human life was beneath the concern of the early morality play. Plays of the late period like *Impatient Poverty* (anonymous, 1547-58), Lewis Wager's *Mary Magadelene* (1490),Nathaniel Woodes' *The Conflicts of Conscience* (1581), John Rastell's *The Nature of the Four Elements* (1517-27) largely dispense with the allegorical form, assume a protestant stance and deal with the issues of the upbringing of the youth and the evils of social corruption. Significantly, these morality plays betray an awareness of the new age of Renaissance, its affluence and

learning, though the awareness particularizes the Christian formulation of the essential fallibility of man. The plays are substantially dramatic unlike the early morality plays and display, forcefully, the tenor of the English language.

1.6 RISE OF ELIZABETHAN COMEDY AND TRAGEDY

The long years of the morality tradition, through the vicissitudes of church doctrine and the pressures of the new age, led to the evolution of the Elizabethan dramatic genres of comedy and tragedy. Though the biblical tradition presented dual perspectives on the predicament of man, either of the comical insignificance or of unmitigable suffering, parallelling the generic perspectives of the subsequent comedy and tragedy, the Elizabethan tragedy or comedy, in the making, came to increasingly bear the secular burden of the times. The concern with human condition **per se** is the chief characteristic of Elizabethan drama. The growth of the new classicism or learning is definitely a major contributory factor but, more importantly, the socio-economic and cultural growth of the nation made the focus on human material possible. If we look at the earliest English comedy, Nicholas Udall's *Ralph Roister Doister* (1553) or the earliest tragedy written by Thomas Sackville and Thomas Norton, *Gorboduc* (1561), the Tudor setting and ethos is particularly striking notwithstanding the classical dramaturgy through which the plays take shape. The new blank verse, having unburdened metrical rigor generates a new literary freedom hitherto unknown. The new verse presents a heroic spirit in language, emotion and action.

1.7 THE GROWTH OF THE ELIZABETHAN THEATRE

The early Elizabethan drama, before the regular playhouses were constructed, permeated a broad gamut of the social life of the times. Nicholas Udall's plays were school plays enacted by the boys as part of the liberalized school curriculum. In spite of their amateur playing, the boys used to be requisitioned to stage the plays before royal dignitaries or in the court itself. The early English tragedy had its advent at the Inns of the Court. *Gorboduc* was written and produced by two lawyers at the Inner Temple. Oxford and Cambridge became important centers for staging Latin drama, so much so that even Queen Elizabeth used to visit the universities to witness the performances. Later, the royal court, with the ostensible purpose of regulating theatre, assumed the function of theatrical organization, providing grants and costumes to several amateur boy groups. John Lyly staged several comedies for Queen Elizabeth and established the genre of Elizabethan comedy. Tragedy, however, could not find patronage either at the royal court or in London. It had to await the advent of adult acting companies and the erection of Public theatres on the outskirts of London. It is in these theatres like the Curtain, the Rose, and the Globe, that the Elizabethan stage came into being, a stage that introduced the plays of Marlowe and Shakespeare.

While the growth of Elizabethan drama as a native tradition was a steady one moving self-assuredly without meekly copying classical models, the same would not have been possible without Elizabethan Drama registering itself as significant European theatre since the Greek drama of the fifth century B.C. In its European phase, Elizabethan theatre not only integrated within itself various elements of classical drama but also the Greek formulations about comedy and tragedy. The task for the Elizabethans was not only to be forcefully English but also thoughtfully European and distinctively Elizabethan.

1.8 ELIZABETHAN COMEDY

The Latin form, with its division into five acts, of the plays of Terence and Plautus structured English romantic comedy right from *Ralph Roister Doister*. The plays abounded in classical themes like love, intrigue and friendship and character types like the braggart lover, the parasite servant, and the scheming old man. The comedy developed into two distinct traditions of the romantic and the critical comedy. Beginning with Udall's *Ralph Roister Doister*, the romantic comedy grows through the court plays of Lyly like *Compaspe* (1581), *Mother Bombie* (1590) and *Endimion* (1583), George Peele's *The Arraignment of Paris* (1584) and Robert Greene's *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* (1590) and culminates in Shakespeare's comedies like *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1595), *As You Like It* (1600) and *Twelfth Night* (1601). Primarily meant for aristocratic entertainment, romantic comedy pursues the theme of love—love as a blend of sentiment, foible, eccentricity, artifice, dedication and self-centeredness. Romantic love is more in the nature of the ludicrous rather than the ridiculous. Melodramatic to the core and farcical in treatment, this comedy, set in a pastoral or old world ambience, evokes a romantic mood and an atmosphere of exhilaration, celebration, chivalry and enchantment. With song and imaginative idealism, romantic comedy provides an escape route into a world of fancy and imagination from the grim realities of life.

The other tradition of comedy belongs to the redoubtable Ben Jonson who presented what are called the comedies of humour like *Every Man in His Humour* (1598), *Volpone* (1606) and *The Alchemist* (1610). Essentially city comedies, Jonson evolves his plays as social purgatives to the prevalent moral degradation. Funny yet serious, the laughter evoked is carefully controlled. Falling back on the tradition of rogue fiction, Jonson's protagonists are rogues who succeed until the end by their ability to gull others for their avaricious needs. Their eventual failure is a moral corrective driven home forcefully by the playwright.

1.9 ELIZABETHAN TRAGEDY : THE SENECAN INFLUENCE

The earliest inspiration for the English tragedy were the Latin plays of Seneca. It was the retributive revenge motive, belief in fortune or chance, stage declamation and soliloquy of the Senecan plays that made the plays of Thomas Kyd, Marlowe and Shakespeare extremely popular with the Elizabethan audiences. The appeal of the blood letting Seneca to the Elizabethans, bred on the Christian morality tradition, is apparently strange and curious. But the Elizabethans found a satisfying correlation between the contradictory traditions. F.P. Wilson sums up the Senecan appeal to the devout Elizabethans.

> The extent of his influence on English tragedy, academic and popular, would have not been so great if the themes, the doctrine and the form have not proved congenial. The Elizabethans would enjoy the impression which his tragedies gave that crime meets its punishment in **this** life. They had the same appetite, or at least the same stomach, for sensational incident and violent passion ... Also they shared with him a taste for moral statement, for pity sentential and love of rhetoric. His doctrine, it might be thought would have repelled a Christian audience but this was not so. The medieval *contemptus mundi* had held that we are born in sin linked to it before we are able to sin...[2]

1.10 GREEK ORIGINS OF TRAGEDY

However, Seneca did not exhaust the Elizabethan 'tragedy' which looks back to ancient Greece for the spirit and theory of western tragedy. The Greek tragic theory and vision helped Marlowe and Shakespeare enormously in achieving great complexity and depth in their plays. The dramatic form of tragedy owes to a lyric sung in honour of Dionysus, Greek God of vegetation and wine in the course of the fertility feasts, made to commemorate the harvest and vintage. The original Greek word, tragedia, comes from another word meaning a goatsinger, possibly the ritual song and dance known as dithyram, attended by the sacrifice of a goat. The dithyram evoked ideas of death and renewal of life, a process evoked by harvest and vintage. The point is that death is an inescapable positive fact of life preceding fresh lease or renewal of life. In the hands of the Greek Dramatists like Aeschylus (525-426 BC), Sophocles (996-406 BC) and Euripedes (485-406 BC), tragedy focused on the aesthetic beauty though it varied in emphasis from dramatist to dramatist. Aeschylus to whom tragedy as a dramatic form owes its existence strove to elevate tragedy to the realm of fundamental truths, Sophocles gave the concept of dramatic unities and cherished tragedy as an art form unencumbered to achieve or present anything. Euripedes (485-406 BC) used tragedy to reflect upon the darker aspects of life.

1.11 ARISTOTLE'S DEFINITION OF TRAGEDY

In the course of Greek drama, tragedy acquired a high seriousness both in its purpose and treatment of materials and reckoned with the concerns of the whole community and strove to raise fundamental questions about human existence and also to provide deep psychological insight into the metaphysical and epistemological processes of the world and human life. Aristotle, the Greek philosopher in the fourth century B.C. after examining Greek drama of his time very minutely, offers a definition of tragedy and its constituent elements in his treatise on drama called Poetics. For him, "tragedy is a representation of an action which is important, complete and limited in length. It uses language made beautiful in different ways and in different parts of the play. It is enacted not recited and by arousing pity and fear, it gives an outlet to emotions of this type."[3]

Aristotle uses the medical metaphor, namely, catharsis to describe the function of tragedy which is to purge the emotions of pity and fear in the audience. On seeing a tragedy the audience unburdens the constricting emotions that inhibit the understanding of their own life.

The elements of tragedy, according to Aristotle, are plot, character, diction, ideas music and spectacle. The plot must have a beginning, middle and end. The moving devices of plot are peripeteia and anagnorisis. Peripeteia entails an ironic frustration of purpose on the part of the protagonist who is not only a man of noble birth but obviously blessed with outstanding qualities, producing an opposite result from the one intended. The increasing failure of the protagonist is on account of the tragic error or hamartia. Essentially, the protagonist moves or is driven towards anagnorisis, the discovery of the true situation. The progression of the plot displays both verbal and dramatic irony. Verbal irony occurs when the actual intent of the speaker or the writer is expressed in words that carry the opposite meaning. Dramatic irony enables the spectator or reader of a play to know more than its character. The irony is tragic since the audience or the reader understand the predicament of the protagonist who indulges in self-delusory assertions.

1.12 THE ELIZABETHAN FORMULATION OF TRAGEDY

While the significance of the Aristotelian formulation of tragedy is immense for the Elizabethans, the immediate fascination for the Elizabethans may have been the Roman models of tragedy like those of Ovid, Plutarch and Seneca who gave a Roman sense of virility, dignity and energy to the Greek tragic sense. The Elizabethan fascination for the tragic form as it comes to them through the Greeks and Romans is on account of their love for the regenerative force of life, coupled with a sense of wonder and mystery at the forces inherent in the world and human life. The tragic dilemma as dramatised in the Greek plays came to characterize the new ambivalence felt by the Elizabethans in the midst of individual and national prosperity and achievement, on the one hand, and the need for a new definition of individual and public morality, on the other hand, for which the orthodox Christianity offered no satisfying solutions. If we look at the dominant motifs of Elizabethan Drama, the revenge motive, modelled after the Senecan plays, running through Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* (1589) Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* (1589) and *The Massacre of Paris* (1592), Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (1601), Cyril Tourner's *The Revenger's Tragedy* (1606-7) and John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* (1613-14) what is accepted as a retributive justice in Seneca for an order of justice and individual morality becomes, unlike in Seneca, the essential question in Elizabethan Drama about the very stability of the societal moral system. The Elizabethans where increasingly burdened with a Renaissance inspired man-centered world where human possibilities assume the force of a moral axiom distorting the distinctions of good and evil or right and wrong. The human potentialities flower in an inextricable admixture of good and evil. In a mature play of Shakespeare like *King Lear* (1605) the radical questioning extends to the cosmic forces inherent in nature, morality and justice. The inevitable tragic assumption is a non-absolutist view of the world and an acceptance of the dialectical functioning where in the good and evil interact in a mutually supportive manner. T.S. Tomlinson sums up the moral vision of the Elizabethan tragedy:

> ...the central paradox of Elizabethan tragedy in particular seems to be that it sees the good and the valuable as — at least in part — actually nourished and supported by chaos and evil .... Nevertheless there is a sense in which the Elizabethans generally, to experience the tragic and the chaotic, at the same time experience energy and richness of life ... Shakespeare has seen in the chaos and destruction of tragedy – even possibly in evil itself – a source of energy and vitality greater than any found elsewhere. Less richly, and in greatly varying emphases, the writing of other Elizabethan dramatists bears out the truth of this central paradox. The deepest response to evil and good or to the valuable and chaotic, sees them, as in the same sense, dependent on each other for their form, substance and the very existence.[4]

The basic question Elizabethan tragedy raises is a relational one — between man and nature, nature in the larger sense of a cosmic force external to man, and nature embedded in the human condition. The Renaissance which brought a keen awareness of the infinite human potentialities makes this question a very poignant one for the Elizabethans. How does or should man relate himself to the forces within himself and to those external to him in the environment? The orthodox Christianity skirted the issue under the obligation imposed on man to obey the moral laws stipulated by it. Could the moral law be at variance with the natural law evolved by the same author of moral law—God? Moral law should synchronize with natural law in order to avoid a disjuncture between man and his situation. However, the condition of nature within man cannot be a law unto itself, as Marlowe was to dramatize in his powerful Renaissance play of infinite human ambitions and adventure, *Tamburlaine*. But moral law, independent of human nature, could not be the regulating factor. A corelation within nature, between nature within man and the one external to him in

environment regulates human condition. The corelation is of a very complex nature without being restrictively adversarial or benevolent to man. It provides a framework of mutual support and opposition, the only framework for human growth. Writing about Shakespeare's dramatic world, Tomlinson points out the essential dynamics in Shakespeare's dramatic world that explains considerably the whole of the Elizabethan dramatic perception:

> The point, rather, is that in the fabric of Shakespeare's verse, the world of nature is given us as having an existence which, paradoxically, is at once independent of, and intimately related to man's status and worth. Any full realization of nature, Shakespeare is saying, must ultimately be in terms of man's consciousness; but the Shakespearean tragic paradox includes also a demonstration that nature, so far from being a mere background or illustration of a morality or goodness truly grounded in man alone, is in itself an indispensable source of nourishment, the given body of experience and substance sustaining and supporting human life. The tragic hero often fails to see this, and sees it only imperfectly. But the playwright sees it.[5]

The richness of Elizabethan tragedy is not simply ideational. The tragic form in the Elizabethan plays, more so in Shakespeare's plays which present the apotheosis of the growth of the complex and sophisticated Elizabethan world view, itself structures the Elizabethan thought and speaks more eloquently than what the characters articulate. The Greeks formulated the tragic form through their experiences of life. The discipline of the tragic form evolved by them is essentially an aesthetic value deeply cherished by them. The Elizabethans go a step further and make the dramatic art of tragedy a key to understanding the rich complexity of the Elizabethan mind and life. They endeavoured more in the direction of the evolution of the art of tragedy that mirrors their cultural and intellectual ambivalence than in the direction of the intellectual exercise of their minds. The strength of the Elizabethan mind lay in an intellectual understatement and in finding metaphors of dramatic action which speak out their minds eloquently.

The Elizabethans have immensely enriched the Greek tragic form both in their adherence to dramatic form and in the liberties they have taken from the rigorous discipline of the Greek dramatic art. The Elizabethan tragic protagonist is an Aristotelian hero, usually of a noble birth, blessed with outstanding qualities but suffers from a serious tragic flaw or hamartia in his character that sets the play in motion. The Chorus plays the introductory and summative function as in Greek Drama. Plot is a major element as in a Greek Drama using the devices of peripeteia and anagnorisis. The interest of the audience is sustained by the spectacular action and dramatic irony whereby the audience knows the predicament of the protagonist that the latter fails to understand. The plot leads the protagonist to a tragic recognition of his weakness while the audience gains a cathartic experience of the feelings evoked in the course of the play.

The Elizabethan drama abounds in the number of dramatic characters in a play while their number was limited in the Greek Drama. The dramatic unities are followed more in their breach by the Elizabethans who try to encompass a larger and larger framework of time and place, for their renaissance aspirations drive them to boundless action. Similarly, a zest for a diversity of experiences always haunted the Elizabethans making it impossible for them to stick to the Greek dramatic distinctions of tragedy and comedy. Consequently, Elizabethan drama intermixed tragic and comic experiences, a practices so abhorrent to the Greeks.

For the Elizabethans, more specifically for Marlowe and Shakespeare, tragedy is not a restrictive view of human excellence or weakness as the Greeks are often inclined to present but an affirmative view of human aspirations whose pursuit brings a glory to the definition of man. Struggle, conflict, suffering and failure may be the inescapable attendants but the human spirit is not stifled in its pursuits by what attends to them. The ability to withstand them is the tragic glory of man.

1.13 SUMMING UP : THE MODERNITY OF ELIZABETHAN TRAGEDY

What the Elizabethans have done in formulating a tragic method and vision is the definition of a modern scientific temper and attitude to life that began with the Renaissance and extends itself to contemporary times. Hieronimo, Tamburlaine, Dr. Faustus, Hamlet, King Lear, Othello and Macbeth, if we are to forget their Elizabethan lineage, are striking dramatic approximations of the states of mind modern man struggles to cope with, as restlessly as the Elizabethan protagonists attempted to do. In the age of nuclear technology, we are still beset with a Tamburlaine and the Faustanian problem of reconciling infinite human potential with situational possibilities. In the realm of personal relations, we err as tragically as Lear, Hamlet or Othello. The story of man has remained unchanged for the last several centuries. Man succeeds eminently with his given potentialities but fails far more easily than he succeeds. The tragedy of the contemporary man is strikingly Elizabethan and, particularly, Marlovian. As Harry Levin would say we "cannot but discern" our "culture hero in the ancient myth of Icarus (and) in Marlowe's tragedy of the scientific libertine who gained control over nature while losing control of himself."[6]

1.14 REFERENCES

1. Harry Levin "Marlowe Today" *Drama Review* 8, 4, 1963-64, pp.22-23.
2. F.P. Wilson. *The English Drama 1485-1585.* Oxford. Clarendon Press, 1969. Pp.126-127.
3. Aristotle quoted in translation from poetics in Collier's Encyclopaedia.
4. T.B. Tomlinson. *A Study of Elizabethan and Jacobean Tragedy.* Cambridge. Cambridge University Press. 1964. pp.3-4.
5. Ibid., pp.11-12.
6. Harry Levin. *The Overreacher: The Study of Christopher Marlowe.* Boston: Beacon Press 1952, p.134.

1.15 KEY WORDS

Reformation — A religious movement in the sixteenth century Europe for the reformation of the doctrines and institutions of the Christian Church led by Martin Luther (1483-1546). The Reformation laid primacy on the individual faith to the exclusion of sacramental action. It held that the scripture, the word of God, speaks directly to the conscience of the Christian without the intermediary of the Church authority.

Renaissance — A complex of literary and artistic movements stimulated by the study of classical literature and art during the fourteenth and fifteenth century in Europe. Historical self-consciousness, reform of Christian society through classical education, liberation of the human mind from superstition and error were some of the important features of the Renaissance movement. The movement synchronizes with the growing prosperity of the European nations. More than anything else, Renaissance championed the worth of the human individual.

Seven Deadly Sins Classification of sins found in the works of Christian theologians since St. Thomas Acquinas: The sins are pride, avarice, lust, anger, gluttony, envy and sloth. These sins are essentially viewed as acts of rebellion against God.

Cardinal Virtues The principal moral qualities that determine man's goodness. These are prudence, temperance, justice and fortitude. The fourfold classification goes back to the classical philosophy. St. Ambrove in the fifteenth century applied the term cardinal to these virtues of faith, hope and charity.

1.16 QUESTIONS

1. Trace the growth of English tragedy since the Mystery and Miracle plays.
2. Critically examine the role of the Renaissance in the growth of the Elizabethan Drama.
3. Point out the elements of Aristotelian tragedy in Elizabethan drama.
4. Discuss how Elizabethan tragedy departs from Aristotelian formulations of tragedy. In what ways do these deviations enrich the Elizabethan drama.
5. Discuss the salient features of the mature Elizabethan tragedy.
6. Critically examine Christopher Marlowe's dramatic endeavours that make him an outstanding predecessor to William Shakespeare.
7. In what ways is the Elizabethan tragedy close to us in the twentieth century?

1.17 SUGGESTED READINGS

1. Fredrick S. Boas. *An Introduction to Tudor Drama.* Oxford, Clarendon Press. 1993. A survey of the growth of the English stage through the schools, universities, inns of court and the royal court with a special focus on the biographical plays and the poetic tragedies of Christopher Marlowe.

2. Tucker Brooke & Mathais A. Shabber. *A Literary History of the Rennaissance Volume II.* Albert C. Baugh ed. New York. Appleton Century Crofts. 1967. Discusses Renaissance literature in England, surveys the religious prose, the Elizabethan lyric, verse and prose narratives of the time; Elizabethan comedy and tragedy, Edmund Spenser, Christopher Marlowe, William Shakespeare, Jacobean Drama, Caroline drama and the seventeenth century poetry.

3. Harry Levin. "Marlowe Today," *Drama Review*, 8, 4, 1963-64. An assessment and a tribute to Marlowe on his 400th anniversary.

4. T.B. Tomlinson. *A Study of Elizabethan and Jacobean Tragedy* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1964. A critical discussion on the dominant issues in Elizabethan and Jacobean tragedy with focus on the revenge theme.

5. F.P. Wilson. *The English Drama.* 1485-1585. Oxford. Clarendeon Press. 1969. A Historical Survey of the English drama through the early and later Tudor period with a special focus on the generic growth of comedy and tragedy during the period.