THE PRODIGAL SON MOTIF IN
MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE DRAMA

A Thesis
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for the Degree Master of Arts
by
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Approved by

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INTRODUCTION

The parable of the prodigal son has for many centuries offered playwrights a fertile source for dramatic creation. From its earliest use in 13th century France through its handling by some of the greatest writers of the English Renaissance of the 17th century, down to such modern works as Miller's _Death of a Salesman_, the motif has proved both lasting and popular. A study of the plays written during the medieval and Renaissance periods will reveal that while, as one would expect, the authors of these plays used the basic structure of the parable of the prodigal son to portray a variety of morals, several tendencies are constant throughout the works.

One constant process is that of secularization. During the early Middle Ages, when the theater expressed primarily religious matter, the moral conveyed by the plays was one of religious didacticism. With the rise of Humanism, the religious import of the parable's interpretation waned while ethical instruction became the dominant moral. With the emergence of Renaissance drama the earlier religious interpretations practically disappeared as the primary intent became the production of sentimental comedy. The early plays presented generalized characters that readily allowed allegorical interpretation of the plays. As time went on,
however, the very specificity of the characters created by the dramatists discouraged these allegorical interpretations and secularized the plays.

Intertwined with the process of continuing secularization is the constant process of humanization that the primary characters, the forgiving father and the prodigal son, undergo. This humanization is the result of the authors' increasing tendency to give these characters specificity, to localize them, and to give them recognizable qualities. Throughout the history of the plays the father and son evolve from two-dimensional, allegorical characters into personalized individuals.

The parable of the prodigal son itself appears in the King James version of the Bible in the book of Luke 15:11-32 (see appendix A). One of a group of parables used by Jesus to rebuke the Pharisees for their unwillingness to forgive sinners, the parable has been traditionally interpreted as a symbol of the grace of God offered to repentant sinners.¹ The father figure corresponds to God, giving His gifts of life and free will and joyously accepting back those who have strayed. The prodigal son represents those who have strayed from the house of God by abusing the gifts given him, and abandoning his duty toward God and his respect for himself.

All men are destined to sin, according to St. Paul (Romans 5:12): "Therefore, as by one man sin entered the
world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." The prodigal son is therefore a type for all sinners. This prodigal son can, however, merely by repenting, be re-installed to his former state in the grace of God, as exemplified by the joyous reunion of Father and son. The story of the prodigal son is thus symbolic of a quintessential aspect of the Christian religion.

The parable "remains one of the central expressions of Christ's message, and has often been seen as the embodiment of the Christian view of man's relationship with God."² This relationship is revealed in mankind's spiritual journey, consisting of his innocence, fall, and redemption. The action of the parable symbolizes all three of these states and demonstrates, through the primacy doctrine of redemption offered, "the nature of God's love for mankind."³

The elder brother, who is seen alternatively as representative of the Pharisees or self-righteous Man, is peripheral to the central theme of the parable. The primary doctrine can be espoused just as easily with or without his presence. Indeed, in the dramatic representations of the parable the elder brother is often deleted altogether. In those in which he appears his roles are diverse.⁴

The encapsulation of the central tenet of redemption offered in the concrete form of a parable made the motif of the prodigal son popular among the authors of early morality plays intent upon dramatizing didactic religious works for
their audiences. French and English morality plays, such as Courtois d'Arras and Lusty Juventus, utilize the prodigal son motif directly in an attempt to educate and reinforce within the mind of the audience the doctrine of redemption offered. The presence of both a disobedient child and generational conflict made the motif popular during a later period among the writers of educational drama, including the Dutchmen Gnapheus and Macropedius and the English Gascoigne, who provided instruction on the themes of duty and obedience. The parable's use of an archetypal human experience, the coming of age, and the presence of a happily resolved conflict within a basic family structure, also made the motif popular among the writers of English Renaissance sentimental comedy. Secularized, and by this time very familiar to the audience, the motif was finally adapted to diverse uses by dramatists such as Beaumont and Shakespeare.

Ervin Beck, in his article "Terence Improved: The Paradigm of the Prodigal Son in English Renaissance Comedy,"\textsuperscript{5} has offered a set of guidelines to identify those plays that utilize the prodigal son motif by defining the motif's constituent components. These ten components include: the son's request for greater freedom, usually typified by an economic independence, the result of a forwarded inheritance; the granting of the request by the father figure; a journey away from home into a "far country;" a period of riotous living inherently opposed to the moral code of the father's
home; a loss of financial means as a result of this period and the resultant need to resort to common labor; the accompanying humiliation and despair; the son's repentance and return home; the father's hospitable reception; a joyous celebration, usually contrasting the period of deprivation by the provision of those necessities lacking earlier; and finally, the elder brother's reaction. Utilizing the presence of these components as the basis for identifying those plays that belong to the corpus of prodigal son plays, a chronological listing of the major plays of the 13th through 17th century, utilizing the motif, may be constructed. This is included in Appendix B.

A study of selected plays from these periods will reveal the causes for the motif's exceptional flexibility in adapting to the varying dramatic traditions of England and the Continent from the 13th to the 17th century. It will also allow an examination of the methods utilized by the various authors in their continuing efforts to increase specificity and humanize the primary characters of the forgiving father and the prodigal son.

The plays selected for textual examination are representative of their respective genres and will be considered in chronological order to allow the analysis of continuing trends. The plays chosen also exhibit the multinational heritage of the motif. Courtois d'Arras, a 13th century French play, is indicative of the structure and intent of the
morality plays utilizing the motif. \textit{Rappresentazione del Figliuol Prodigo} is an Italian play that exhibits a slight shift in moral. \textit{Acolastus}, a Dutch play that quickly spread throughout most of Western Europe, and \textit{Glass of Government}, an English play, are representative of the diversity of structures and morals presented in the educational drama of the 15th and 16th centuries. The motif diverged during the Renaissance into two identifiable traditions. \textit{The London Prodigal} is an apt example of the public theatre tradition. \textit{Eastward Hol}, authored by a collaboration of the celebrated English dramatists Jonson, Marston and Chapman, is an excellent example of the private theatre treatment of the motif. Summaries of these six plays are included in Appendix C.
CHAPTER I

The early cyclical plays sought to reproduce in its entirety man's spiritual history, defining man's relationship to God through the major events of the Old Testament and the life of Christ. As such, the prodigal son motif was not utilized in these plays. With the emergence of the morality play, however, the parable became a popular dramatic subject. Robert Potter states that "where the cycles take their form in fulfilling the totality of human history and defining its crucial rhythms, the morality play takes its shape from a different figure and pattern—the life of the individual human being." 6

The plot of the morality play "is ritualized, dialectical, and inevitable: man exists, therefore he falls, nevertheless he is saved. This pattern is repeated in every morality play." 7 The redirection of emphasis to the life of the individual and the constant concern with the theme of fall and redemption made the parable of the prodigal son a natural source for dramatic representation. The parable

depicts mankind's spiritual journey, which, owing to his essentially fallen nature, inevitably takes him to the land of sin and temptation, far removed from his heavenly origins. Remorse and a desire for forgiveness, prompted perhaps by fear and despair, cause the sinner to journey back to his
father, who shows mercy and receives him unconditionally.\textsuperscript{8}

The first of the morality plays to utilize the prodigal son motif was an early 13th century play, \textit{L'Enfant Prodigue}, which exists today only in partial fragments. The play of greatest importance during this period, however, is another French play, \textit{Courtois d'Arras}, written in the Arrageois dialect around 1228.\textsuperscript{9} Produced in the city of Arras, one of the larger urban communities of the 13th Century, it is part of a distinct tradition prevalent in that city.

A manufacturing city with a population of approximately twenty thousand, Arras "had enough prosperous and educated burgher-patrons to support a group of resident poets and jongleurs. Some of these entertainers were practitioners of the traditional mimic skills; many had clerical schooling; some had acquired a knowledge of ecclesiastical drama."\textsuperscript{10} Out of this resident group of entertainers arose a distinctive tradition that included a high degree of mimic skill and the development of stock characters and situations in imitation of the lower aspects of real life.

\textit{Courtois d'Arras} is a faithful representation of the Biblical parable, and the traditional allegorical interpretation is invoked as the father, at the end of the play, paraphrases the Biblical passage in his speech,
He has been lost and is now found. Than this there is no greater or better adventure. By the mother of God, as the scriptures say, there is greater joy for the one sinner who admits his faults and repents than for the other ninety-nine of the hundred who have never transgressed. We can well kill an ox to express our joy at his return. And let us sing *Te Deum laudamus*.\(^{11}\)

Working within the traditional allegorical construction and within the predestined innocence/fall/redemption pattern of the morality drama, the characters are restricted in many aspects.

Unlike such other morality plays as *Mankind*, which allow the dramatists a wide field of choice in creating characters to tempt and redeem Man within the innocence/fall/redemption pattern, the choice of characters in the prodigal son plays is largely pre-determined as the play is essentially a re-enactment of a specific Bible story. Thus, the use of the prodigal son motif institutes severe strictures upon the characters. Because the figures must enter the "formulaic world of the moralists,"\(^{12}\) many of the characters' dimensions are rigidly controlled by the ritual function they must fulfill in the "necessary sequence of human life."\(^{13}\)

The characters that appear within the play are the result of what Robert Potter terms a "relentless determinism"\(^{14}\) that defines their actions. The father must acquiesce to his son's request, for God has given Man free will. The son must leave his state of innocence because it is the
nature of Man to fall into temptation. The characters that appear to tempt and deceive Man cannot question or change their roles. The son can find redemption only by returning home.

As a result the characters of the father and the prodigal son do not possess complex personalities. The father, restricted to a mere sixty-eight lines, appears in the play only twice; at the beginning when the son requests and is granted his inheritance, and when the son returns home. The only aspect of his character that is developed is one of loving concern. The presence of this emotion is a given in the action of the parable, for he must joyously welcome back his wayward son if the plot is to remain the same.

Courtois' character is defined to a somewhat greater extent. Early in the play we discover that he has overslept and ignored his work. His father opens the play addressing his son:

Turn, turn your animals out to pasture:
Cows, sheep, goats and pigs.
The time is long past when they should have been in the fields.
Now the grass is wet and tender.
The nightingale and the lark began their songs long ago.
Up, dear son, you have slept too long.
Your lambs should have already eaten the fine grass.15

The prodigal son is thus depicted as somewhat lazy and undependable.
Courtois requests his inheritance because of a distaste for labor and a desire for a more pleasurable life. In anticipation of receiving his inheritance, he says,

Now let the devil be in domination. 
There will never be enough pleasure to suffice.16

In the parable no cause is given for the request. Here the reason offered by the playwright is still rather vague and is not initiated by any specific occurrence. The desire for a life of pleasure may be rationally assumed as the cause for the request of the inheritance as the prodigal proceeds to squander it with "riotous living." It is also continuous with the morality tradition in which Mankind is tempted first by the Deadly Sins of the flesh, sloth, gluttony, and lechery.

The line from the parable, "and there wasted his substance with riotous living," provided a source upon which the playwright greatly expands. Here he finds the subject for almost half his play, as Courtois, alone, encounters the perils of the life he desires. Guided only by this line and the elder brother's statement in the parable that the prodigal "hath devoured [his]living with harlots," the playwright creates three characters to instigate the prodigal's fall as well as a locale in which that fall may occur.

The play, unlike the parable, offers a graphic portrayal of the prodigal's fall. The tavern, a site traditionally
associated with Satan in the morality tradition, including *Mankind*, provides the setting. The selection of the inn and the activities that take place within (a common denominator among the morality plays utilizing the prodigal son motif) may have been ultimately suggested by a widespread medieval tradition identified by W.E.D. Atkinson and further refined by Alan Young in his book, *The English Prodigal Son Plays.*

The paradigm, as reconstructed through the examination of pictorial representations and sermons, follows the prescribed guidelines:

The son approaches his father and requests his share of his inheritance, which his father reluctantly gives him. He departs to find his fortune in the world. He arrives at an inn and is received into the company of several profligates. He is entertained by one, or more usually two, women. Often he becomes the loser in a sequence of gaming, but in any event he loses his wealth through riotous living. Later, destitute, he is cast out of the inn, abused by the women, and stripped of his clothes to pay his debts. He roams the countryside, a friendless pauper. He enters into the employ of a farmer to act as a swineherd for his keep. Dejected and forlorn, he returns to his father with the intent of imploring him to take him as a servant. Upon his return he is greeted by his father who joyously accepts him back as his son. The father orders a great feast prepared in honor of his son who has returned.

The scenes of drinking and whoring in the tavern in *Courtois*, however, have ample precedent in the Arrageois dramatic tradition as described by Richard Axton in his *European Drama of the Early Middle Ages.* One of the stock
situations developed fully by several of the resident dramatists, the plays of Arras are replete with "the vicious pleasantries of the tavern folk, their slick banter, drinking, quarrelling and dicing." The Courtois playwright, in accordance with the tradition, portrays the action within the tavern in a realistic manner.

The world that Courtois enters in the tavern is coarse, deceptive, and treacherous. Throughout the scene Courtois is portrayed merely as a naive soul tempted into a world of obscenity, deceit, and physical hardship:

Attracted to the tavern by the crier's extravagant boasts of luxury and the promise of everything on credit, the country-raised Courtois succumbs at once to the gay flattery of the girls. That their 'courtoisie' is a glittering veneer, transparent to all but the prodigal bumpkin, is shown by skillful dialogue, the repeated use of 'asides' and the rapid alteration of the courtly formulae with blunt vernacular terms.

Courtois' gentle naivete may be seen in his admiration of the courtyard and its flowers and later in his dialogue with one of the meretrices seducing him:

Poirette
I am your sweetheart and your mistress;
I love you truly with a gentle heart.
I give you this wine as a token of love--believe me, dear, I won't deceive you.

Courtois
My dear young lady, I accept
with a trusting heart and in good faith.

While the earthly world Courtois enters is portrayed in
verisimilar and immediate terms, with frequent references to real people and nearby towns,\textsuperscript{23} it still presents a microcosm of the material world in which Man exists. This is essential to the underlying intent of the drama. Potter describes the process through which the morality play acted:

Lured with vicarious pleasure into recognizing its own innate weaknesses, the audience is subtly prepared to accept the unfortunate and unpleasant consequences—physical, mental, economic, even philosophical—as a case of collective guilt. The enthusiasm with which the morality plays allow humanity free rein is only exceeded by the inevitability with which the plays bring the liberated creature to a reckoning. To the extent that the anguish of this dilemma is general and frightening, the solution of repentance will prove more compelling, both as a collective response to an individual problem and as an individual escape from the collective guilt. Thus the moralities argue by analogy, using an individual figure to demonstrate the general problem to motivate an individual act of repentance.\textsuperscript{24}

Since the audience is to see themselves within the character of Courtois, his character is, of necessity, limited in its development. While he may express or embody fairly representative human traits—desire for an easy life, folly, imperfect vision, regret—these traits may not be synthesized into a distinct personality, for that might impede the audience's intimate association with the protagonist. More important is the representation of the human condition in relation to God—sloth and avarice, a rebellious nature, susceptibility to the deceits of Satan, repentance—that allows the drama to imitate the drama of man's spiritual
existence.

This tradition of drama as penitential literature through the innocence/fall/redemption pattern, and the attendant definition of character, would dominate the prodigal son plays of England until the introduction of educational drama and the rise of the Renaissance stage. The playwrights of the Continent, however, adapted the parable for two new genres: the sacre rappresentazione, arising in Italy during the 14th, 15th, and early 16th centuries; and educational drama, dominant in Northern Europe during the 16th century.

The sacre rappresentazione, similar in form to the French mystere, was the result of the unison of two former genres—the Ludi, immoral plays of the old Roman tradition, and the devozione, sombre representations of scripture acted out within the church by priests. While "any attempt to fix an exact date when the liturgical drama passes into the sacre rappresentazione must be academic and futile," its development into a dominant theatrical form may be safely regarded as occurring during the 14th century. Though in later centuries the sacre rappresentazione finally wandered far from its original content, and was often corrupted by foreign additions, yet the rappresentazione was essentially a devout and moral spectacle, fundamentally religious. Its arguments were originally taken from the Gospel...and were intended to be an exposition of the fundamental principles of faith and morality."
The plays were written in Italian and were enacted by companies of young boys, and presented in churches, oratories, or in open air upon a stage erected in a piazza or field. Joseph Kennard, writing in 1932 in *The Italian Theatre*, provides a characteristic description of what he conceived of as a typical audience,

As the people were assembled they laughed and shouted, the children screaming and throwing eggs and apples, and everyone trying to get the best seats. But during the recital we have the impression of a devout and quiet audience. Although women were probably permitted at such a religious spectacle, and men of mature years also attended, the audience was largely composed of youths, since the chief object of the spectacle was to inspire them to good conduct.27

The plays of the *sacre rappresentazione*, then, were loosely reconstructed enactments of scripture designed to provide humanistic as well as religious morals for secular audiences. The story of the prodigal son fulfilled the necessary and desired qualifications and became one of the favorite subjects of the genre. Alessandro D'Ancona's collection28 includes three reenactments of the tale of the prodigal son. *Dei Figliuoli Prodigo* by Antonio Pulci, *Il Figliuol Prodigio* by Giovannamaria Cecci, and Castellano Castellani's *Rappresentazione del Figliuol Prodigio*. Perhaps the most noted of these plays, Castellani's *Rappresentazione* is an apt example of the genre.

Castellani's play retains all of the basic features of
the Biblical parable and, like Courtois, contains all ten of Beck's components. The theme of fall and redemption is strong throughout the work. While this play shares many similarities with Courtois, there are also important differences, evident from the opening of the play.

The play begins with a symbolic confrontation between good and evil as a group of virtuous youths and a group of wicked youths clash. One wicked and one virtuous youth scuffle. The wicked youth, defeated, retreats as a coward. The prodigal, one of the members of the group of wicked youths, is depicted as already having aligned himself with the wicked. Castellani's play depicts the fall of the prodigal from a state of grace as a process already initiated before the request for his inheritance.

Whereas in Courtois the prodigal's request is motivated by a perception of belief in the desirability of a worldly life, in this work the playwright provides a concrete and immediate motivation. The prodigal has just lost all his cash in a game of cards. He is subsequently urged by his friend to acquire more from his father. Thus, not only is an immediate cause illustrated, but the request is shown as having been generated by previous untoward acts.

The scene in which the prodigal requests and receives his inheritance reveals several distinct differences between the dealings of the Courtois playwright and Castellani. The first difference appears in the father's pleadings with
his son to remain because he will grieve too greatly in his absence. The father also includes a note of danger, warning his son of the worldly life. The prodigal, deaf to his pleas, determines to leave. Whereas Courtois' father expresses hope that his son will find a good life and never be in want, here the father casts a pall of gloom over the departure, foretelling grief for his son. The playwright thus lays the basis for the fear and grief the father will experience during his son's absence.

While Courtois leaves home an innocent young man, only to be deceived by new companions feigning concern, the prodigal of Castellani's play has already begun his fall and when he leaves home he joins a group of old associates. Here no deception occurs as these characters remind him that it is his money that buys their comradeship and that they will disappear when the money does. Once fallen, the prodigal encounters his old comrades, who, predictably, mock and refuse to aid him.

The inn is still the locale for the prodigal's actual fall. The number of characters involved in the prodigal's fall is larger in this play, as the prodigal has several companions, several ruffians are present during the gaming, and still other characters appear in the prodigal's ejection from the courtesan's house. The prodigal's fall is divided, unlike that in Courtois, into two separate actions,
one involving gaming and the other the courtesan. This reinforces the perception of the prodigal's fall as a process, developed through a series of conscious actions.

As in Courtois the father has been given actions and dialogue which impart a sympathetic and loving nature. Whereas in Courtois this was all accomplished before the departure of the prodigal, in Castellani's play the father is depicted in several scenes as the action of the play alternates between father and son, home and odyssey. The father repeatedly expresses his love for his son and demonstrates his good nature by ordering the distribution of alms. As Castellani has extrapolated the prodigal's grief to its greatest possible point, so he portrays the father so deeply drowned in grief that he nears death.

In the scenes with the father another new character appears. A servant is present to serve as an auditor for the exposition of the father's emotions and fears. Both the servant and the elder brother, in separate scenes, reassure the father by reminding him of Divine Providence. These scenes reinforce for the audience the Biblical nature of the story unfolding and, like the symbolic struggle that opens the play, reassures the audience of the predestined ending. The prodigal is certain to return, just as good will defeat evil.

During his return to his father's home the prodigal expounds the moral of his downfall to youths in the audience
who may be tempted as he was, inserting a more directly
didactic mechanism than appears in Courtois. The prodigal's
speech particularizes the play within a specific human
experience. While the parable is a metaphor for the fall
and redemption of all men, the characters in this play have
been personalized and humanized. The very human concerns
and actions accentuate the aspect of familial conflict and
lessen the allegorical interpretation of the play.

While still retaining a strong religious message, the
primary tenor has shifted to one of moral instruction.
Youths are to be warned of the folly in disobeying or
ignoring the advice of their fathers. Because the new moral
is more secular, the characters described in the play are
also more humanized. Reason and emotions beyond those
immediately necessary for the representation of the parable
have been added.

In Courtois the father's presence on stage was limited.
In Castellani's play the father's character has been
expanded and deepened. Indeed, the story has now become
one of the fates of both the father and son. While
Courtois' father asks his son to reconsider, now the father
offers specific reasons in an attempt to persuade his son
to stay. He appeals to his son's reason, warning him of
danger. He also appeals to his son's emotion, telling him
of the grief he will suffer in his absence.

The father reappears throughout the play, grieving
almost to the point of death. Surely this is not a character completely analogous to God. Rather, he has been shaped by Castellani's attempt to create a character of exceptional human compassion and frailty, one that will move the audience to sympathize with the father. As such the father is humanized, but not really individualized. He is an archetypal good father in that he is given no specific traits to individualize him.

The character of the prodigal is humanized as he becomes less of a symbol of mankind's spiritual journey and more representative of rebellious youth. While in Courtois the prodigal's fall is swift, in this play the prodigal's fall is a process, already initiated before the play's opening and symbolized by his association with the wrong crowd (an eternal complaint among parents). The prodigal is not enticed directly by the boasts of advisers or parasites as was Courtois. Rather, he becomes the leader of his group as they travel off to the inn. A series of conscious decisions by the prodigal follows—he calls for cards, acts against the advice of his companions in his wagers, and demands amatory pleasures—which immerse him deeper and deeper in the immoral world he has embraced.

After the prodigal's fall, his companions, while representing the shallowness of the material world, also represent the tenuous nature of the ties among immature young men in contrast to the bond between father and son. In address-
ing himself to the youths in the audience, rather than the entire audience, the prodigal's speech on his return home emphasizes the humanistic over the religious tenor. Rather than relating his recent history to man's spiritual journey, the accent is placed on the very human experience of wayward youth.

Castellani, in his *Rappresentazione del Figliuol Prodigo*, has created a play that carries forth the traditional allegorical interpretation of the parable of the prodigal son, while simultaneously presenting an exemplum on the dangers of juvenile delinquency. In the process of developing the second, and in some ways dominating moral, the characters of the forgiving father and the prodigal son have been particularized. As such they become archetypes of the caring father and the juvenile delinquent. They do not, however, possess any unique qualities that act to individualize them. This development would have to await the parable's adaption into the mainstream of English Renaissance drama.
CHAPTER II

The genre of educational drama arose in Northern Europe during the latter 15th century and was soon firmly established throughout much of the Continent, later crossing the Channel into England. The plays were produced by schoolmasters intent upon "teaching their pupils the admired Latin style of both Terence and Plautus without morally endangering their young pupils by exposing them prematurely to the bawdy and pagan world of Roman comedy." 29 While presenting these models of colloquial Latin and Christian morals, the schoolmasters often chose plots that demonstrated to their students the impropriety and danger of disobeying the advice of their elders and authorities.

The motif of the prodigal son afforded a perfect vehicle for the presentation of this moral and became one of the favorite subjects of the genre. The German Wimpheling's Stylpho (1478) was the first of these plays. Stymmelius utilized the motif in his work Studentes (1549), as did the Dutch humanist Macropedius in a series of school dramas: Asotus (1510), Petriscus (1536), and Rebelles (1535). The most influential of these plays, however, were Acolastus (1529) by Gnapheus and The Glass of Government (1575) by George Gascoigne.

The plays were performed before students studying
Latin, often by their own classmates. The plays were a pedagogical tool for teaching Latin, the lingua franca of the Church, diplomacy, and scholarship. Parents were often included in the audience as the schoolmasters sought to convince them of the importance of sending their children to school. The overriding function of the plays, however, was the instruction of the children in the proper duty and obedience they owed their schoolmasters and parents.

The fates of the prodigal students in these plays span a range from subservient return and acceptance to denial and execution. In some plays the student returns to the university, penniless, yet with a greater appreciation of life; in others he returns stripped of all pride and totally subservient to his instructors; and in still others the student dies as a result of suicide, depravation, or execution. The severity of the students' conditions and their different fates are determined by the particular moral asserted by the playwright. The two plays most influential on the later English Renaissance tradition, Acolastus and Glass of Government represent the two extremes of this spectrum.

Acolastus was first published in Latin in the city of Antwerp in 1529 and "during the Sixteenth Century it became the most celebrated play in Northern Europe and one of the most frequently printed among all the literary works of its time."30 By 1534 the play had been reprinted eleven
times, not only in Holland, but also in Paris, Cologne, Leipzig, and Basel. Dover Wilson has stated that "it would be difficult to overestimate the extent of its influence." It was the best and most widespread of the school plays of the more humanistic tradition.

The school play of the humanistic tradition begins "with the desirable, aged society in control; experiments with a new, disorderly society initiated by the young hero; but finally returns and re-forms around the original, stable society." The decision to reject the society of the father is represented as a process with readily identifiable causes. The presence of such a state in a young man is perceived as a natural state in the maturation process. His reformation "is effected not by arbitrary device, or merely factual discovery, but rather by a causative process that leads to his self-recognition and a purgation of his vicious humor."

In Gnaphus' play, the characters of the forgiving father and the prodigal son are both given rounded personalities. The son mistakenly considered his father, Pelargus, "a selfish tyrant and something of a fool." Acocastus' misconceptions are apparent in the following speech:

My father will never give me the money without first exhorting me not to dissipate my wealth...And he'll do it with such a straight face! That's how little confidence he has
in me. But he doesn't know to what deaf ears he will tell his fairy-tale. However, I'll take care to give polite answers, quite different from my real thoughts, until the old boy has paid me the money. That's how fathers deserve to be fooled when they rule us too sternly. 35

Acolastus believes that he is perfectly capable of looking out for himself without any help from his father. He is encouraged in this belief by his friend Philautus who has taught him his philosophy, rejecting parental authority and trusting to one's own wisdom.

Affected by humanist philosophy, the playwright Gnapheus presents Acolastus' prodigality as merely a stage in the young man's development. Eubulus states that the son's rebellion is merely a stage in a natural process:

It is human nature to take little notice of the good that we possess, but when it is snatched from our sight to desire it eagerly. Your son, looking with a youthful eye, scarcely sees this and has little regard for it, but time will change all that. When he is older and has suffered misfortunes the fool will be wise. A man appreciates the value of good health only after he has been sick. Then he is angry with himself. He was eager to be free. That's how it is with your son. He is going off course now; later he will realize this. 36

In contrast with the plays of earlier periods in which the son's prodigality was representative of a universal religious experience, the plays of educational drama particularizes the experience to one of human maturation.

While the experience is one common to youth, the
individual character of Acolastus is described by his father; "I am well acquainted with your character. If you had conquered your passions, rather than being conquered by them, then I admit you might have cause to rejoice. But since I know that the situation is just the opposite, I cannot but lament your folly and at the same time grieve to see you depart." Acolastus is thus characterized as an individual in the midst of an experience common to maturing youth.

An explanation of the father's willingness to grant the prodigal his inheritance is revealed in the dialogue between the father, Pelargus, and his friend Eubulus. The minor role of the servant in Castellani's play has now been taken by a more fully developed character, a source of solace and advice for the father, who allows the father to express his grief and concern. It is in response to the urging of this adviser, Eubulus, that Pelargus grants his son's request.

Eubulus tells Pelargus that since Acolastus is obstinately bent on exile, remember this wise saying: 'He that's held against his will, more eager is to leave you still.' Just let him follow his inclination, so that presently when, with greater self-knowledge, he is restored to his senses, he may perceive the evils into which his own wantonness has led him. If he then hurries back to the shelter of your wings and you extend your grace to him as a suppliant, be sure you will bind your son to you more tightly than ever.
Thus the father's decision to grant the son his freedom is motivated by a logical plan which assumes the son's rebellious nature is a natural occurrence, and that all difficulties will resolve themselves with his maturation.

Throughout the remainder of the play the father re-appears several times, as the same character did in Castellani's play, expressing loving concern for his son and grief at his absence. Added to these emotions, however, is another—anxiety over whether or not he, the father, has taken the proper action. Pelargus struggles between the love of a father and the reason behind Eubulus' advice: "Though his advice is hardly in accord with my opinion, perhaps I shall not be sorry if I follow it."\(^{39}\)

In educational drama the villains of the play also exhibit rounded personalities and motivations. Philautus seduces Acolastus with his philosophy of self-love because of a "deadly hate" for Pelargus.\(^{40}\) Pantolabus is a former prodigal who aids in fleecing Acolastus that he may fill his belly. Pamphagus is a skilled professional, eminently self-assured. Styled after the villains of Plautus and Terence, they are no longer the agents of temptation depicted in the morality plays, but rather specific and individualized characters.

Pamphagus and Pantolabbus, perceiving Acolastus' weakness, combine to ensnare him with flattery. Acolastus exudes excessive pride; "So I shall reign, a mighty monarch.
What! haven't I a right to call myself the white-haired boy? Cock of the walk? I shall give precedence to no one, not even the gods." Along with excessive pride, Acolastus is guilty of avarice, as evidenced in his gambling, and lechery, as he demands the amatory delights of Lais.

As in Castellani's play the son's fall is portrayed as a process. It is described now, however, as a natural stage in a young man's maturation, initiated prior to the beginning of the play and progressing by increments. The fall is aided by the son's association with Philautus, an improper influence on his youthful development.

The inn is still the locale of the prodigal's fall and the activities that take place are almost identical to those described in Rappresentazione del Figliuol Prodigo. Most of the immoral activity occurs offstage, as in Roman comedy, and is revealed by the dialogue between servants coming fresh from the scene. In this manner Gnaphus guarded his student audience from being exposed to excesses in vice. His graphic portrayal of Acolastus' expulsion and time as a swineherd, in contrast, clearly demonstrates the painful results of prodigality.

The authors of the school plays of the more severe tradition were not as interested in showing repentance by the prodigal, but often dwelt on the punishments, or painful results, extended by society to those who have rebelled
against the moral code. These punishments often take extreme forms. Floggings occur in Rebelles and Asotus. Nice Wanton, another play of the tradition, shows the sad fate attending a brother and sister, Ismael and Dalilah, who, petted by their mother Xantippe, play truant from school, meet Iniquity, are led by him into gambling and immorality, and finally die, the sister of disease, the brother by hanging.42

Gascoigne's The Glass of Government, representative of the tradition, includes the whipping of one prodigal for fornication and the execution of another for robbery. Richard Helgerson, in his book, The Elizabethan Prodigals, states that,

Within the tradition of the prodigal son play, The Glass of Government represents a change in perspective and a hardening of attitude which parallels the development of sixteenth-century humanism. By the 1570's...the struggle to convince gentlemen of the importance of educating their sons in good letters had been successful. In consequence, Gascoigne makes prodigality result from nature rather than nurture.43

Prompted by repentance for his prodigal youth, Gascoigne created a play of strident didacticism which presents a dichotomy of high rewards for the virtuous and dire consequences for the unrepentant.

In his experience the earlier Gascoigne comes close to finding a justification for the misgovernment of his youth. It has made him an Everyman. Even before it
hardens into that paradigm of prodigality which requires repentance at its end, his life assumes an architypal design...Because of this experience, Gascoigne can proudly say to men younger than he, 'Make me your mirror.' He has passed through all the stages of youth and knows the dangers and disappointments of each.44

The play opens with Phylopaus and Phylocalus, two citizens who through hard work and virtue have risen "from mean estate unto dignity,"45 discussing the futures of their sons:

You shall understand sir that my neighbour here and I have foure sonnes, of equall age...the eldest exceedeth not twenty yeares, and the youngest is about nineteen yeares old, they have been already entred in grammer at such schooles as we have here in the City, and if, we be not abused by reportes they have shewed them-selves forward enough to take instructions: so that we are partly perswaded to send them unto some university. (I,ii)

The doubling of the fathers allows them to express their desires and fears for their sons. A servant is also present, as in Acolastus and Rappresentazione del Figliuol Prodigo, to act as a source of solace and advice. It is this servant, Fidus, who recommends enrolling the young men with Gnomaticus, a schoolmaster.

While the fathers of the prodigal sons are still characters in the play, it is against the teachings of the schoolmaster Gnomaticus that they rebel. As the primary relationship has shifted from father/son to schoolmaster/
student, the children may now be described as prodigal students. The schoolmaster assumes the role of the forgiving father and he, also, is accompanied by a servant acting as a device for exposition.

The fathers and the schoolmaster are portrayed as concerned and considerate men. The fathers demonstrate their largesse in offering the future mentor of their children a

token of our ready will to please you, we shall desire you to take at thy hands these twenty angels as an earnest or pledge of our further meanings. (I,iii)

and Gnomatus his concern for the higher values of education over the petty concern of profit:

take you no care, but let me pray unto almighty God, that he give me grace to enstruct your children, as you may hereafter take comfort in my travyle...I would be loathe to make bargaines in this respect, as men do at the market or in other places, for grasing of Dren or feeding of Cattle. (I,iii)

The schoolmaster's kindness toward his students is exhibited when he releases the four brothers from their appointed tasks one day that they might visit a kinsman. Gnomatus' compassion, perhaps too great, is demonstrated when, discovering the two eldest sons have associated themselves with unsavory and deceiving companions, he does not
punish them, but rather advises they be transferred to the
University that they may be removed from the source of
their temptation. Thus, as Gnomaticus' sermon-like lessons
reveal his righteousness and piety, his actions reveal him
a thoughtful and compassionate man.

The prodigal students, Phylautus and Phylosarchus,
are shown from the outset as turned from the path of moral
righteousness. They do not properly reverence their
fathers:

Phylosarchus
some parentes are never contented
what dutie soever the childe
performeth, they forget what they
once were themselves. (II,ii)

They share a disdain for their slower brothers:

Phylosarchus
Let them go like a couple of
blockheads, I would we two
were at some Universitie, and
let them do what they list. (II,ii)

Both express a desire to be transferred to the Univer-
sity at Douayes, the seat of learning for English recusant
Catholics, for there is "the varietie of delights and
pleasures which are dayly exercised" (III,iv). Phylautus
seeks the comradeship of gallants,

at the University we should have
choyse company of gallant young
gentlemen, with whom we might
acquaint our selves, and passe
some times in recreation. (II,iii)
Phylosarchus, whose name means "lover of flesh," seeks the companionship of young women.

Phylautus
   I have heard Dowaye prayed
   for a proper citie, and wel
   replenished with curteous people
   and fayre women.

Phylosarchus
   Marry Sir ther would I be then,
   oh what a pleasure it is to be-
   hold a fayre woman: surelie
   they were created by God for
   the comfort of man. (II,iii)

While both prodigals desire transfer to the University for the wild life that abounds there, they seek to satiate different appetites.

By doubling the prodigals Gascoigne is able to portray two different types of improper activities, criminal actions against the society's laws and immoral actions against the society's mores. Phylautus, who desires the comradery of young gallants, is a practitioner of deception. He asks his brother to alibi for his absence, "Let us say then that we were together" (III,iii). He speaks with Eccho, the mastermind of the villians, and finally goes off with another villian, Dick Drom, to commit a robbery. As a result of this crime against society's law Phylautus is executed.

Phylosarchus, a lecherous young man, is easily deceived by Lamia and her Aunt Pandarina, even though the deception is obvious to Phylautus:
Phylosarchus
I desire her, I pray you tell
me Phylautus, do you not playnely
perceyve that she hath an affection
towards me.

Phylautus
Surely Phylosarchus, I dare not
swere it, although in deede the
franknesse of her entertainement
was much, but when I consider that
it was at the verie first sight, it
maketh me thinke that her curtesie
is common and may be quickly
obteyned. (III,iv)

Phylosarchus, the quicker of two prodigals, is shown as a
fool blinded by pretended love. Later he, with the aid of
the traitorous servant Ambidexter "had gotten a fair minion
forsooth, and stayed with her at Brusselles" (V.ix), and
is later whipped for fornication in the Calvinist city of
Geneva.

In The Glass of Government, unlike the other plays dis-
cussed, there is not substantial change in the personalities
of the prodigals depicted. There is no movement within the
characters and the concept of innocence/fall/redemption
has been deserted. The normal pattern of repentance is
abandoned in order that a visible demonstration may be made
of the dire consequences of rebelling against proper
authority. At this point the secularization of the motif
has been completed. The religious interpretation of the
parable has disappeared, replaced by a strictly social one,
reinforced by the appearance, for the first time among the
plays here examined, of the constabulary, policemen and
judges, the enforcers of social justice.

The tension of Gascoigne's play lies not in the contrast between the fallen and redeemed states of an individual, but rather between the immoral and moral paths followed by the pairs of brothers. The prodigal students Phylosarchus and Phylautus have already bent their minds toward an immoral path before their encounter with the villainous figures, as they express a desire for the variety of delights and pleasures available at the university.

Whereas in Acolastus the rebellious nature of the prodigal is described as a natural stage in the process of maturation (and the elder brother is conspicuously absent), in Glass of Government only Phylautus and Phylosarchus become prodigals, although their brothers Phyloamusus and Phylohimus have been exposed to the same environment. It is the individual nature of the young men's personalities that determines their propensity for rebelliousness. The difference between the prodigals and their successful brothers is the relative quickness of their minds, as explained by the schoolmaster, Gnosticus:

The quickest wits prove not always best, for as they are ready to conceive, so do they quickly forget, and therewithal, the fineness of their capacity doth carie such oftentimes to delight in vanities, since man's nature is such, that with ease it inclineth to pleasure. (II,iv)

Phylautus and Phylosarchus have received no different
treatment than their brothers. All have been schooled in the humanities, including Tully, Terence, and Virgil. This proved harmless for the slower witted sons. Without proper instruction in Protestant Christian morals to balance them, Phylautus and Phylosarchus assimilated some of the pagan ideas and "wanton discourtesies" in those works. The cause of their prodigality "is not in the...environment but in themselves, in their quick...minds." 46 The inherent attributes of individuals are thus depicted as the cause of prodigality among some youths.

The characters in Acolastus are well-rounded and the playwright is careful to create reasonable and compelling motivations for the action taken by the characters, even though those actions strictly adhere to a formulaic structure. The result was a play that was popular throughout Northern Europe for many years. The characters of Gascoigne's Glass of Government, an inferior play, operated in a stridently didactic play dominated by long lectures on morality. As a result they were individualized to a much lesser extent. The characters were constructed to move headlong in one direction, toward immorality and the inevitable punishments attending it.

The essential changes in the prodigal son plays in the sixteenth century were the result of the continuing particularization of the motif. No longer an allegorical representation of Everyman's spiritual journey, the school
plays utilized the motif to expound upon the proper defer-
ence and duty owed secular figures of authority. This
instruction was necessary because of a natural tendency for
rebellion among youth; depicted by Ganpheus as a stage of
maturation, by Gascoigne as the result of inherent qualities
in some young men.

The secularization of the motif also allowed the
alteration of the innocence/fall/redemption pattern in
plays such as The Glass of Government. In the earlier
morality plays it would have been impossible to produce a
play in which the prodigal, like Phylautus or Phylosarchus,
was never redeemed. However the breaking of the pre-
determined pattern of innocence/fall/redemption opened
a myriad of new dramatic possibilities for the playwrights
of the Renaissance.
CHAPTER III

By the end of the sixteenth century a thriving professional theatre had burgeoned in Renaissance England, producing a dramatic tradition emphasizing entertainment as well as instruction. Playwrights revelled in plot complexity, intrigues, and romantic entanglements. Influenced by both the indigenous morality tradition and the adopted school play tradition of the Continent, the English playwrights of the latter 16th and early 17th century quickly adapted the prodigal son motif to the Renaissance stage.

The motif was utilized extensively, and its popularity might be measured by its repeated use by the major dramatists of the period. Plays by major dramatists include Thomas Middleton's *A Trick to Catch the Old One*, Thomas Heywood's *The English Traveller*, John Fletcher's *Wit Without Money*, Phillip Massinger's *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*, *Northward Ho* by Thomas Dekker and John Webster, and *Eastward Ho* authored by George Chapman, Ben Jonson, and John Marston.

The reasons for the motif's popularity are varied, but much may be attributed to the fact that it centers upon a conflict within a basic familial structure which is happily resolved. The basic plot also invited the in-
corporation of some favorite dramatic situations: characters in disguise, romantic intrigues, and tavern scenes. The prodigal son of religious drama, later the prodigal student of educational drama, now transferred before an urban commercial audience, became the prodigal apprentice of Renaissance drama.

Among the diverse audience attracted to the public theatres during this period were merchants and tradesmen and their sons and apprentices. "From the sober tradesman's point of view, stage plays demoralized apprentices and encouraged idleness and unthriftiness," and Thomas Nashe writes in Pierce Penilesse (1592) "some Petitioners of the Counsaile against them object, they corrupt the youth of the Cittie and withdrawe Prentises from their worke."  

The dramatists, partly in keeping with the school play tradition and perhaps partly as a result of criticism of sober tradesmen and Puritans "frequently exerted themselves to provide a didacticism that...pleased audiences whose appetite for instruction could scarcely be satisfied." Nashe verifies the didactic nature of the plays as he writes:

as for corrupting the youths when they come, thats false; for no Play they have, encourageth any man to tumults or rebellion, but layes before such the halter and the gallows; or praiseth or approoveth pride, lust, whoredom, prodigalitie, or drunkennes, but beates them downe utterly."
Didactic plays built on the motif maintained their popularity in the public theatres, but by the end of the sixteenth century professional drama was beginning to show a cleavage along class lines, and this cleavage grows distinct as a few dramatists, like Thomas Heywood, became the protagonists of middle-class ideals, and others, like Beaumont and Fletcher, concentrate their effort upon courtly plays designed to please aristocratic taste.51

Alan Young, in his book The English Prodigal Son Plays, asserts that the dramatists of the English Renaissance were divided between "those public theatre dramatists who continued to accept sober didacticism and prudential homiletics as having a place in theatrical entertainment" and "those writers for the private theatre who vigorously opposed such a view and attacked the literary taste and what they saw as the outmoded moralism of the public stage."52 The authors of such public plays as The London Prodigal and The English Traveller tend to insist...that drunkenness, gambling, thriftlessness and riotous living as exemplified in the life-style of the Prodigal Son are ruinous and bring suffering and misfortune in the place of financial stability, favorable social status and comfortable living...Such plays are characterized by a moral earnestness of tone that reminds us of the earliest English Prodigal Son plays. Frequently they are didactic in an explicit way, spelling out the moral lesson that the audience is supposed to observe.53

The London Prodigal is an apt example of the plays
utilizing the prodigal son motif that appeared in the public theatres of the English Renaissance. Enacted at the Globe theatre by William Shakespeare's troupe, the King's Majesty's servants, the play originally appeared in 1604 in a quarto which named Shakespeare as the author. Subsequent scholarship, however, has challenged that claim of authorship and the play is generally regarded as having been written by an anonymous dramatist.\textsuperscript{54}

As the title indicates, the story takes place in the city of London. Early prodigal son plays were dominated by rural characters and did not specify a particular locale because of the allegorical nature of the drama (Courtois is a notable exception in localizing the action). The school plays often gave the names of foreign cities or universities, but usually did not specify where the actual drama was taking place.

The prodigal son plays of the Renaissance theatre often specify London, and even parts of the city (Eastcheap, Cuckholds' Haven, etc.) as the site of the action. Young, in discussing \textit{London Prodigal}, states that

\textit{Typical...is the fact that the play is set in and around London, which further increases the audience's sense of familiarity, while the vices of the Prodigal, though traditional, are at the same time made strikingly typical, being those of the typical City gallant, while the misery associated in the parable with the Prodigal's feeding of pigs is now transformed into Matthew's being threatened with debtors' prison.}\textsuperscript{55}
With the plays of the Renaissance the location was particularized as part of the process of the shift from the depiction of a universal event for all Man to the depiction of an event for a particular audience.

The play opens as the wealthy merchant, Flowerdale, has just returned to London from overseas. He approaches his brother to inquire about the behavior of his son, Matthew Flowerdale, during his absence. Informed of his son's prodigal activities, he determines to disguise himself and observe his son. Disguised characters also appear in Henry IV (part I) and Knight of the Burning Pestle.

The father decides not to counsel his son,

For counsel still is folly's deadly foe,
I'll serve his youth, for youth must have his course;
For being restrain'd, it makes him ten times worse:
His pride, his riot, all that may be nam'd, be;
Time may recall, and all his madness taze.

He decides to observe, rather than overrule, his son because he feels his son's actions are merely a stage in the process of maturation:

...his youth may privilidge his wantonness. I myself ran an unbridled course till thirty, nay, almost forty:— well, you see how I am. For vice once looked into with eyes of discretion, and well balanced with the weights of reason, the course past seems so abominable, that the landlord of himself, which is the heart of his body, will rather entomb himself in the earth,
or seek a new tenant to remain in him; which once settled, how much better are they that in their youth have known all these vices and left them. 57

In the father's view, much in accordance with the thoughts of Eubulus in Acolastus, this stage may even be beneficial, for "they that die most virtuous, have in their youth liv'd most vicious: and none knows the danger of the fire more than he that falls into it." 58

The uncle, the only individual who knows of the father's subterfuge, is a confidant and assumes the same role as the father figure's servant in the earlier plays. The role of the father has been expanded. He is no longer a passive figure, but rather a character who takes action and initiates movement.

The father is no longer the staunch upholder of all of society's values, as he himself is prepared to engage in deceit and deception, as long as the cause and intended result is good. He refers to his own prodigal youth; "I myself ran an unbridled course till thirty, nay, almost forty" 59, something not done by any of the previous father figures discussed. He is, in many ways, the most individual and human of the father characters yet examined. He displays a past history, a capacity for deception, and a good sense of humor. His wit is evident from the first scene as he bandiss with his brother about the relative immorality of his son's actions:
Flowerdale Junior
Why I'll tell you, brother; he is a continual swearer, and a breaker of his oaths; which is bad.

Flowerdale Senior
I grant indeed to swear is bad, but not in keeping these oaths is better... I hold this rather a virtue than a vice. Well, I pray proceed.

Flowerdale Junior
He is a mighty brawler, and comes commonly by the worst.

Flowerdale Senior
By my faith this is none of the worst neither; for if he brawl and be beaten for it, it will in time make him shun it; for what brings man or child more to virtue than correction?—What reigns over him else?

Flowerdale Junior
He is a great drinker, and one that will forget himself.

Flowerdale Senior
O best of all! vice should be forgotten: let him drink on, so he drink not in churches...Hath he any more attendants?

Flowerdale Junior
Brother, he is one that will borrow of any man.

Flowerdale Senior
Why you see, so doth the sea; it borrows of all the currents in the world to increase itself.

Previous father figures were portrayed as limitless repositories of forgiveness and compassion, and Flowerdale displays his compassion and largesse as he provides for his son's new wife after she has been abandoned by everyone else. Flowerdale's compassion has its limits, however,
as having viewed his son's unsavory actions, he finally orders his own son arrested for his vile activities. He relents only in response to the touching and eloquent plea of his son's new wife. While the arrest order is partially taken to "curb" Matthew, it springs from an exceptional distaste for what he realizes his son has become. He describes his son as

...a libertine;
Even grown a master in the school of vice:
One that doth nothing but invent deceit;
For all day he honors up and down,
How he the next day might deceive his friend. 61

He finally tells his son, "Go hang, beg, starve, dice, game; that when all's gone,/Thou may'st after despair and hang thyself." 62

The didactic nature of the play, instructing its audience in the ethical impropriety of the riotous excess displayed by the prodigal, limits the number of facets exhibited in the prodigal's character. He is seen throughout until the point of his sudden conversion, as an increasingly unsavory character. During Matthew's first appearance on stage he lies to his uncle. As a ruse to borrow some money he tells his uncle he has just been robbed. When this fails he offers as security some possession he claims his father is sending him.
Matthew Flowerdale
What? why then I have six pieces of
velvet sent me; I'll give you a piece,
uncle...

Flowerdale Junior
From whom should you receive this?

Matthew Flowerdale
From whom? why from my father...

Flowerdale Junior
Have you the letter here?

Matthew Flowerdale
Yes, I have the letter here, here is the
letter: no--yes--no; let me see;
what breeches wore I o' Saturday?
Let me see: o' Tuesday, my
calamanco; o' Wednesday, my
peach-colour satin; o' Thursday
my velure; o' Friday my
calamanco again, on Saturday,--
let me see,--o' Saturday--for in
those breeches I wore o' Saturday
is the letter--0, my riding
breeches, uncle, those that you
thought had been velvet; in those
very breeches is the letter.63

These last lines make Matthew's lies humorous and Alexander
Leggatt, in his book, Citizen Comedy in the Age of Shake-
peare, asserts that "there is something engaging about his
more innocent prodigal excesses."64 The rest of the play,
however, presents an unrelenting display of the vast
array of improper and increasingly vicious acts in which
he engages.

In most of the Renaissance plays the prodigal appears
already in a fallen state. In previous periods the prodi-
gal was the object of a deception enacted by a group of
tempting villains. While gamblers, usurers, hariots, and
innkeepers still appear, the prodigal now becomes the deceiver. With the fall from innocence no longer of interest, the prodigal need no longer be a naïve character in an overpowering world, but, rather, can become a plotter and schemer, as Hal does in tricking his tempter, Falstaff in Henry IV or as Quicksilver does in Eastward Ho.

Yet of them all, Matthew Flowerdale is the commensurate deceiver. While in some Renaissance plays of the motif the prodigal dedicates his machinations to a good cause, as in A New Way to Pay Old Debts and Knight of the Burning Pestle, Matthew's character is controlled by an over-riding self-centeredness and a disregard for societal strictures. His constant quest for money to finance his gambling, drinking, and whoring is the motivation for his continuous deceits.

The earliest deceits are seemingly harmless lies to his uncle. His reaction to the news of the death of his father "manages to avoid both callous joy at what he will inherit, and affected sorrow." 65 The next deceit involves Matthew's claim to great wealth and feigned love for Luce, the daughter of a rich knight. He attempts to demonstrate his learning and honest nature;

...I have been reading over Nick Machiavel; I find him good to be known, not to be followed. A pestilent human fellow! I have made certain annotations on him, such as they be. 66
Falsifying a will, Matthew tricks the knight into matching him with his daughter. He reveals his true concern, "As for this wench, I not regard a pin, / It is her gold must bring my pleasures in". When, after his marriage, the knight refuses his daughter's dowry and disowns her, Matthew addresses his wife, "A rattle-baby come to follow me! Go, get you gone to the greasy chuff your father: bring me your dowry, or never look on me." His parting advice to her is "Why, turn whore: that's a good trade; / And so perhaps I'll see thee now and then".

Deprived of his anticipated income, and losing what money he has in a dice game, he turns to a more sinister manner of acquiring money:

...the dice and the devil and his
dan go together...I can borrow no
more of my credit...I would I
knew where to take a good purse, and
go clear away; by this light I'll
venture for it. God's lid, my
sister [in-law] Delia: I'll rob her,
by this hand.

Failing in this attempt, the prodigal associates himself with his counterpart in the parable "to serve the hogs, and drink with hinds/As I am very near now". He finally contemplates suicide, saying "When money, means, and friends, do grow so small/Then farewell life, and there's an end of all". And later, "I have passed the very utmost bounds of shifting; I have no course now but to hang myself." As in both the folk tradition and earlier
dramatic presentations, although the act of suicide is contemplated, the prodigal fails to act upon his resolution.

Matthew turns to begging. First he approaches the gamblers to whom he has lost his money. He then approaches, in short order, a cockatrice whom he has previously favored; a ruffian; an ancient citizen; a citizen's wife, whom he propositions; his wife's former suitor, to whom he lies about his wife's health; his uncle; his disguised father; and his wife, who has disguised herself as a Dutch serving maid. He plots to make love to the serving maid, telling her of his wife's death, and to convince her to steal from her master to support him.

About to be arrested for the murder of his wife who has disappeared, Matthew is for the second time saved from prison by the constancy and devotion of his wife, who reveals her true identity. Witnessing the altruistic actions of a woman he had abused brings about the prodigal's conversion;

...wonder among wives!
Thy chastity and virtue hath infus'd
Another soul in me, red with defame,
For in my blushing cheeks is seen my shame. 74

In earlier plays the repentance of the prodigal was the result of a coming of awareness, caused by humiliation and despair. In the plays of the Renaissance the act of
repentance, like the decision to emulate a prodigal lifestyle, is often given a more specific cause. The realization of the wife's patient endurance serves as the specific act which effects Matthew's repentance and conversion.

Once the conversion has occurred, the father doffs his disguise and the traditional reconciliation takes place:

Matthew Flowerdale
My father! O, I shame to look on him.
Pardon, dear father, the follies that are past.

Flowerdale Senior
Son, son, I do; and joy at this thy change,
And applaud thy fortune in this virtuous maid,
Whom heaven hath sent thee to save thy soul.75

Before the characters depart for the traditional celebration, the moral is reinforced and assurances are given as to the prodigal's future actions:

Flowerdale Senior
And sirrah, see
You run no more into that same disease:
For he that's once cur'd of that malady,
Of riot, swearing, drunkenness, and pride,
And falls again into the like distress,
That fever's deadly, doth till death endure:
Such men die mad, as of a calenture.

Matthew Flowerdale
Heaven helping me, I'll hate the course as hell.76

Almost all of the earlier conventions of the motif
are present in *London Prodigal*, "but the conventions are
humanized." The story, now set in a class-conscious
and monetarily controlled society, has further extended
the secularization of the motif. The location has been
specified, as well as the individual characters in the
play. The audience has also been particularized, as while
the public theatre plays attracted the citizenry, another
tradition arose in the coterie theatres. The plays of
the private tradition were presented for a more elite
audience and parodied the sentiment, morality, and
middle class virtues presented in the public plays.

Alexander Leggett cites *Eastward Ho* as "the subtlest
and most elaborate parody of the standard prodigal
story," and the play is an excellent example of the
manner in which playwrights for the coterie theatres
lampooned the plays of the public tradition. Authored
by George Chapman, Ben Jonson, and John Marston, it was
first enacted in 1605 at Blackfriars, a coterie theatre,
by the children of the Queen's Revels. It "revived the old
tradition of school plays, dramatizing the parable of the
Prodigal...This old dramatic theme, familiar to all
schoolboys, was well suited to performance by a company
of children."

The parodies of the coterie drama presented the same
urban settings and the same merchants, apprentices,
roisterers, and romantic intrigues as the public tradition.
In *Eastward Ho* the authors "duly presented all the stock ingredients of the typical public theatre Prodigal Son play. Indeed it is almost as though they set out to create what would superficially appear to be a 'textbook' example of the type."\(^{80}\)

Touchstone, the forgiving father, has a vastly expanded role. He is husband as well as father in this play, and father of a prodigal daughter as well as employer of a prodigal apprentice. Rather than the passive figure portrayed in the early representations who grants his son's request and sits idly by in grief, Touchstone is mastermind of a plot to demonstrate "Which thrives the best, the mean or lofty love."\(^{81}\)

Touchstone, like Flowerdale Senior, is given more of an individual personality than the father figures of the earlier traditions. One constant character trait is his exaggerated dedication to the virtue of thrift and industry, exemplified by the use of the leftovers from his prodigal daughter's wedding for the nuptial feast of his virtuous daughter. He spouts proverbs throughout the play, including the aphorisms "keep thy shop, and thy shop will keep thee" (I,i.64-5), and "Light gains make heavy purses" (I,i.65-6). Indeed, Touchstone's "love of proverbial wisdom is so exaggerated"\(^{82}\) that the element of parody is unmistakable. Close examination of the text reveals that "Touchstone's preaching becomes comic through sheer repetition,"\(^{83}\)
emphasized by Quicksilver's retort "I am proud to hear thee enter a set speech i' faith" (III,ii.162-3). Touchstone also has the unique trait of ending each speech with the phrase, "Work upon that now."

His personality is also more complex. He is capable of physical action, stripping Quicksilver of his cloak early in the play. He is capable of loving his wife, while yet acknowledging the folly of her infatuation with social advancement. While in the earlier plays the father's character was an unchanging constant, here Touchstone has to undergo a conversion in the last act before he rescinds criminal charges against Quicksilver and forgives him.

Two prodigals appear in *Eastward Ho* and, while in the earliest plays of the motif the fall of the prodigals is accredited to a single factor, here each is given a specific character and the cause of their prodigality differs. Quicksilver is susceptible to the allurements of prodigality and rebelliousness because, like Satan, he is too proud. He constantly refers to his own heritage: "I am a gentleman, and may swear by my pedigree" (I,i.136-7), and "As I am a gentleman born, I'll be drunk, grow valiant, and boat thee" (I,i.185-6). He imagines himself the victorious Sampson, "I, Samson, now have burst the Philistines' bands" (II,ii.42-3). That this pride is the cause of his fall is related by the industrious apprentice, Golding:

54
It is great pity; thou art a proper young
man, of an honest and clean face...but
thou hast made too much and been too
proud of that face, with the rest of thy
body; for maintenance of which in
neat and garish attire...thou hast
prodigally consumed much of thy
master's estate. (IV,ii.337-346)

While the bare outline of Quicksilver's actions and hare-
brained schemes for raising money are similar to those of
Matthew Flowerdale, "He brings to his swaggering a flair
that makes, theatrically, a refreshing change from the
wholesome maxims of Touchstone...he cuts a dash."84

Gertrude, the prodigal daughter, is tainted by
"ambition and nice wantonness." She weds a thirty-pound
Knight, Sir Petronel, dreaming of coaches and castles in
the country. Her social ambitions "are more amusing than
offensive,"85 for she is "no calculating social climber,
but a child indulging in pre-Christmas fantasies."86

Gertrude, in contrast to Quicksilver, exhibits a dullness
of wit, as evident in the following passages:

Gertrude
Is my knight come? O the Lord, my band!
Sister, do my cheeks look well? Give me
a little box o' the ear that I may seem
to blush; now, now!

..............................
And how chance ye came no sooner, knight

Sir Petronel
'Faith, I was so entertained in the Progress
with one Count Epernoum, a Welsh knight;
we had a match at balloon too with my Lord
Watchum for four crowns.
and

Gertrude
As I am a lady, I think I am with child already, I long for a coach so. May one be with child afore they are married, mother?

Hamlet
Your coach is coming, madam.

Gertrude
That's well said. Now, heaven, methinks I am e'en up to the knees in preferment! (sings)
But a little higher, but a little higher, but a little higher! There, There, there lies Cupid's fire!

(III,ii.39-42, 48-53)

The prodigal characters have been differentiated by their individual qualities, and it is through these qualities that they are inclined to prodigality. The prodigal characters of the private theatre were often treated in a more sympathetic manner than were their public theatre counterparts as they were rebelling against a societal code that the coterie dramatists viewed as dated and simplistic. In some plays, such as Massinger's A New Way to Pay Old Debts, the prodigal becomes the hero.

The wasting of the prodigal's inheritance loses much of its allegorical meaning in the Renaissance plays and the loss of financial means becomes important within itself. The parental strictures which the prodigal apprentices violate are often instructions on the proper middle class virtues of industry and thrift that the authors seek to
parody.

Quicksilver's greatest error was his association with the usurer, Security. The earlier agents of temptation, representative of the sins of the flesh, have been replaced by this agent of mercenary temptation. The error committed by the prodigal Gertrude was that she allowed herself to be deceived and wed to a pauper.

The follies of Quicksilver and Gertrude are "quite clear, but it is difficult to work up severe moral indignation against them, or to feel they deserve any punishment beyond the comic explosion of their dreams." Quicksilver's appointed punishment is greater than the audience's perception of his crime, however. He is tried by Golding, who has arisen to the position of alderman. He is imprisoned and sentenced to the gallows. Leggatt states that the discomfiture Quicksilver suffers is "more detailed and elaborate than in the conventional plays." This comic exaggeration of the traditional punishments meted the prodigal serves to martyr the prodigal and convict the middle class virtues that incarnate him.

The act of repentance is also terribly exaggerated as Quicksilver becomes a preacher for his fellow inmates. The terrible voices of the convicts that keep the neighbors awake parody the spiritual message of the psalms Quicksilver leads them in singing. The unforgiving Touchstone is tricked by Golding into visiting the jail where he observes
the repentant Quicksilver. The overly humble Quicksilver
sings,

Farewell dear fellow prentices all,
And be you warned by my fall:
Shun usurers, bawds, and dice, and drabs:
Avoid them as you would French scabs.
(V,v.134-7)

Touchstone is "ravished with his Repentance" (V,v.127) and
says,

I can no longer forbear to do your humility
right. Arise, and let me honour your
repentance with the hearty and joyful
embraces of a father and friends love.
Quicksilver, thou hast eat into my
breast. (V,v.146-150)

The parodying of the act of repentance draws strongly
upon the almost ludicrously serious repentance scenes from
earlier plays like Nice Wanton in which the prodigal
daughter repents as she crawls across the stage in the
deadly throes of disease. Indeed, Jonson and his
collaborators' parody succeeds only because of the theatri-
cal tradition of the prodigal son motif had been long
established by such earlier English plays as Nice Wanton,
Disobedient Child, Misogonus, Glass of Government,
Falsegrove's translation of Acolastus, and The London
Prodigal. These works made the audience very familiar with
the stock characters and dated morals of the motif.

The London Prodigal and Eastward Ho represent the
prodigal son plays of the Elizabethan stage in their
exceptional degree of localization and development of rounded individual characters. They also display the increased plot complexity with disguised characters, doubled prodigals, love interest, and sub-plots common in Renaissance drama. The mercantile interests and sentimental comedy abundant in *London Prodigal* and *Eastward Ho* are elements found in almost all of the plays of the motif during this period. Both plays also demonstrate the expansion beyond the original narrow construction of the motif that allows the diversity and complexity that makes these plays of the Renaissance more entertaining and enduring than those that preceded them.

The *London Prodigal* is an example of the didactic tradition of the public theatre that sought to edify its audience, not through the religious universal abstractness of the morality play, but rather through the particular secular detail of realistically drawn characters with identifiable personalities. By this time the motif had become so secularized that it was possible to display before a devoutly religious audience a parody of what had once been a sacred theme.
CHAPTER IV

The humanist secularization of the prodigal son motif allowed Renaissance dramatists working outside the mainstream of the motival tradition to adapt selected aspects of that tradition and turn them to diverse usages. The earlier plays had already demonstrated how the structure of the motif could be altered in the more severe works of the educational drama genre by deleting the third phase of the former religious pattern of innocence/fall/redemption. Many of the plays of the Renaissance, performed before an audience already familiar with the motif, deleted the first phase of the pattern and the prodigal arrived on stage already in a fallen state. Plays such as Philip Massinger's A New Way to Pay Old Debts and Thomas Randolph's The Drinking Academy presented the character of the prodigal disengaged from the traditional paradigm.

The motif also permeated Renaissance drama in a variety of other manners. Some dramatists utilized the audience's familiarity with the characters of the motif to provide their own audience with a quick or ready guidepost to the personality of a character or an important situation. Other dramatists, like Beaumont in his play, Knight of the Burning Pestle, utilized the audience's familiarity with the tradition as a basis for the comic distortion or inversion of the
motif. The best and most enduring of the Renaissance prodigal son plays, Shakespeare's *Henry IV*, utilized the motif to deepen and enrich the text of an historical play with which it shared structural similarities.

The story of the prodigal son, by this time humanized and particularized, was so familiar to the audience that a dramatist could use a reference to the parable or to the dramatic tradition as a touchstone to quickly identify characters or illuminate situations. The parable of the prodigal son "is the most frequently mentioned Parable of the Gospels in the plays" of Shakespeare, as cited by Richard Noble in his book *Shakespeare's Biblical Knowledge*. Shakespeare makes specific reference to the story in at least nine of his plays.

The brotherly conflict between Oliver and Orlando is quickly characterized in the opening scene of *As You Like It* when Orlando complains that his elder brother treats him like a prodigal; "Shall I keep your hogs and eat husks with them?" (I.i.36-37) Orlando asserts that his brother's treatment of him is unjust; "What prodigal portion have I spent, that I should come to such penury?" (I.i.37-38)

In *Comedy of Errors* the sergeant who lies in wait for spendthrifts to arrest is described as dressed in "the calf's-skin that was killed for the prodigal." (IV,iii.19) In *Two Gentlemen of Verona* the comic character Launce compares himself to the "prodigious son" that has received his
inheritance. A more extended reference occurs in The Merchant of Venice.

Shylock, taking his leave of his daughter, says,

I am bid forth to supper, Jessica.
There are my keys.—But wherfore should I go?
I am not bid for love; they flatter me:
But yet I’ill go in hate, to feed upon
The prodigal Christian. (II,v.11-15)

By using the term "prodigal" the author evokes from the audience memories of former usurer characters that tempted the central Christian character of the early prodigal son plays. Shylock, through this simple reference, is associated with a tradition of characters that are agents of evil. Antonio, by the same reference, is associated with the young hero threatened with dire consequences, but saved in the end by the grace of love.

The investment that fails for Antonio, causing a subsequent loss of financial means, is a loss at sea involving shipping, "a ship of rich lading wrack’d on the Narrow Seas" (III,1.3-4). Gratiano had earlier made allusion to a ship leaving and returning to harbor:

How like a younker or a prodigal
The scarfed bark puts from her native bay,
Hugg’d and embraced by the strumpet wind!
How like a prodigal doth she return,
With over-weather’d ribs, and ragged sails,
Lean, rent, and beggar’d by the strumpet wind!

(II,vi.14-19)
Antonio's loss is thus associated with the motif as the prodigal ship leaves well-bedecked but is the victim of forces outside the protective shelter of its home. The winds, like the méretrices and whores of the tradition, entice and destroy. The ship returns with its ribs overweathered, like those of a starving man protruding from his emaciated body. The ship returns home lean, beggared, and with ragged sails, as the prodigal son returns hungry, broke, and dressed in rags.

The popularity of the motif, and the resultant familiarity with it, provided dramatists, as exemplified by Shakespeare, a readily available structure with which to embellish or illustrate situations and identify or define characters. The easy translation of elements from the motif was made possible by the diversity of morals previously conveyed, the ability of the motif to adapt to the secular humanist drama of the Renaissance, and its continuing popularity in both the public and private traditions.

The audience's familiarity with the prodigal son paradigm also allowed dramatists to create comedy through the distortion or inversion of the motif, as in Francis Beaumont's The Knight of the Burning Pestle. One of the three major strands in the play concerns the relationship among the members of the family of Master and Mistress Merrythought and their sons, the elder, Jasper, and the
younger, Michael.

Jasper is identified as the prodigal in the play, "thou art a wastethrift, and art run away from thy master" (I.iv.10-11). He is an apprentice angrily released from his indenture by his master because of his infatuation with the merchant's daughter. Jasper's behavior is not that of a prodigal, and he contends to his master,

I have not lost in bargain, nor delighted
To wear your honest gains upon my back;
Nor have I given a pension to my blood,
Or lavishly in play consum'd your stock.
These, and the miseries that do attend them,
I dare with innocence proclaim are strangers
To all my temperate actions. (I.i.19-25)

When Jasper approaches his father, Master Merrythought gives his eldest son his blessing and his inheritance of ten shillings. He soon becomes rich, however, and by the end of the play has achieved all his desires without any change in personality.

The inheritance Jasper receives is small because his father is the real prodigal. He drinks and sings continually throughout the play. He enters singing

Nose, nose, jolly red nose,
And who gave thee this red nose?

Nutmegs and ginger, cinnamon and cloves;
And they gave me this jolly red nose.
(I.iv.49-50,55-56)
Merrythought reveals his philosophy on life,

how have I done hitherto this forty years? I never came into my dining room, but...I found excellent meat and drink o' th' table; my clothes were never worn out, but next morning a tailor brought me a new suit: and without question it will be so ever; use makes perfectness. If all should fail, it is but a little straining extraordinary, and laugh myself to death. (I.iv.70-79)

His reaction to his impoverization is one of joyous unconcern:

Not a dernier left, and yet my heart leaps. I do wonder yet...that any man will follow a trade, or serve, that may sing and laugh, and walk the streets...I have nothing left, nor know I how to come by meat to supper; yet am I merry still. (IV,v.5-11)

In Beaumont's comic inversion this philosophy does not result in tragic consequences, however, as Jasper returns with wealth enough to support his father.

In Beaumont's play the sequence of a journey to a far country, the financial loss of means, and the humiliation and despair initiating the return home is the fate of the thrifty and industrious Mistress Merrythought and her beloved son, Michael. Mistress Merrythought has been judiciously "scraping up" an inheritance for Michael:
you promis'd to provide for Jasper, and
I have laid up for Michael. I pray you,
pay Jasper his portion: he's come home,
and he shall not consume Michael's stock.
(I,iv.86-90)

After Jasper has received his blessing and ten
shillings and leaves, it is Michael's turn.

Mistress Merrythought
So, Michael, now get thee gone too.

Michael
Yes, forsooth, mother; but I'll have
my father's blessing first.

Mistress Merrythought
No, Michael; 'tis no matter for
his blessing. Thou has my blessing;
begone. I'll fetch my money and
jewels, and follow thee. (I,iv.134-141)

Michael "is obsequiously loyal to his worthless mother and
his passivity and lack of wit are intended to prevent the
audience from giving him the least sympathy."92 After
foolishly losing their money the "thrifty wife and son
(like the prodigals in conventional plays) wander the
streets, lost and helpless."93

The wife and son, destitute, return to their home where
Master Merrythought is revelling in comfort with a band of
merry fellows. The prodigal father refuses to accept them
back, however, locking them out of the house until they
repent and sing a catch. Merrythought sings,
If you will sing, and dance, and laugh,
And hollo, and laugh again,

We shall be merry within this hour.

(III,iv.12-13,16)

They refuse to sing. Merrythought sings his reply,

Begone, begone, my juggy, my puggy,
Begone, my love, my dear!
The weather is warm,
'T will do thee no harm:
Thou canst not be lodged here. (III,iv.51-55)

Near the end of the play, however, they relent and return to their home and sing for Master Merrythought:

Merrythought
Woman, I take you to my love again;
but you shall sing before you enter;
therefore despatch your song and so come in.

Mistress Merrythought
[within.] Well, you must have your will, when all's done. ---Mick, what song canst thou sing, boy?

Michael
[within.] I can sing none, forsooth,
but A Lady's Daughter, of Paris properly.

Mistress Merrythought
Song.

It was a lady's daughter, &c.

[Merrythought opens the door. Enter Mistress Merrythought and Michael]

Merrythought
Come, you're welcome home again.

(V,iii.62-71)

Thus, the audience's familiarity with the motif provided Renaissance dramatists with an apparently limitless

67
source of comedy as the traditional structure was distorted or upended. Beaumont's The Knight of the Burning Pestle, Fletcher's Wit Without Money, in which "prodigality wins through, unrepentant and uncorrected,"94 and The Scornful Lady by Fletcher, "an even more detailed reversal of the conventions."95 are examples, as well as two other works by Fletcher, Monsieur Thomas and The Wild Goose Chase, of plays that create comedy by reversing the traditional roles of the motif.

The majority of plays utilizing the motif took as their central subject the creation of a fictional representation of the prodigal son story. When Shakespeare began writing Henry IV, however, he was dramatizing a particular era of English history. Shakespeare "took a familiar and at the time highly popular dramatic paradigm," that of the prodigal son, "and exploited it in a quite novel fashion."96 The historical situation presented John Oldcastle, Prince Hal, and King Henry. The relationship of these three principal characters exhibited a distinct correlation to the story of the prodigal which, though

secularized and modernized... contained the same three principal characters: the tempter, the younker, and the father with property to bequeath and counsel to give.97

The secularized moral was not that of citizen comedy, in which the prodigal is redeemed into a world of economic responsibility, but one in which the prince is redeemed into
a world of political responsibility.

The main theme...is the growing up of a madcap prince into the ideal king...and the play was made primarily...to exhibit his conversion and to reveal his character unfolding towards that end, as he finds himself faced more and more directly by his responsibilities. It is that which determines its very shape.

Two of the most critically analyzed aspects of the play may be explained in terms of the alterations Shakespeare made to fashion history to correlate more with the structure of the motif. The alteration of Hotspur's age (from being 23 years Hal's senior to only 3 years older than the young prince), "may well have been influenced by a sense of the dramatic effectiveness of the contrast between brothers in the Prodigal Son paradigm." Also,

Hal is like the Prodigal Son in that he appears to attain true virtue through proper humility and contrition for his sinful behaviour, whereas Hotspur is like the Elder Brother in that his seeming virtue appears tarnished when fully revealed for what it truly is.

The translation of young Hal's historical tutor in vice, John Oldcastle, into the boisterous and appealing Falstaff, was effected through the assimilation of earlier tempters of the English prodigal son tradition. Alan Young notes similarities between Falstaff and Cacurgus, the tempter in Misogonus. Dover Wilson notes a resemblance between Falstaff and Riot, the figure of temptation that
appears in Youth, citing the lines in which Hal calls Falstaff "that villainous abominable misleader of Youth" (II,iv.442) and "the tutor and the feeder of my riots" (part II: V,v.62). The character Riot, like Falstaff, escapes from tight corners with a quick dexterity; like Falstaff, commits robbery on the highway; like Falstaff, jests immediately afterwards with his young friend on the subject of hanging; and like Falstaff, invites him to spend the stolen money at a tavern.\textsuperscript{103}

The popularity of the motif allowed its ready adaption to the history play, Henry IV. The superimposing of the tradition deepened and enriched the text for its audience. The portrayal of Falstaff in terms of the Vice of morality plays defined the role for the audience that the character must assume. Hal, like Everyman, and like the audience, must be tempted by the revelry and worldly life that the jovial Falstaff represents. In the end, however, the audience knows that the prodigal Hal must reject Falstaff and accept the responsibility of the world of his father, as foretold by Hal's speech:

\begin{verbatim}
I know you all, and will awhile uphold
The unyok'd humor of your idleness.
............... 
So when this loose behavior I throw off,
And pay the debt I never promised,
By how much better than my word I am,
By so much shall I falsify men's hopes,
And like bright metal on a sullen ground,
My reformation, glittering o'er my fault,
Shall show more goodly, and attract more eyes,
\end{verbatim}
Than that which hath no foil to set it off.
I'll so offend, to make offence a skill,
Redeeming time when men think least I will.
(I,i.201-202,214-224)

Hal's entrance into the prodigal's world is not a fall, but rather a descent, a conscious and calculated act. This descent allows Hal to associate with members of English society from whom his royal birth would otherwise have isolated him. The result is a broadening of his experience and the rise to the throne of a king who knows the concerns and desires of drawers and hostlers, serving-maids and thieves, as well as one who can balance Hotspur's idea of honor with that of Falstaff. Hal's character is more complex than that of previous prodigals, who had only one choice; embrace the world they had entered, or return to the home from whence they came.

In retaining the knowledge he has accumulated during his unbridled adolescence Hal moves beyond the more simplistic concern of earlier characters. Hal has profited from his experience as no prodigal before him. Falstaff is his tutor in more than vice, as he displays before Hal another part of the kingdom young Hal is to inherit. Hal's inheritance is not the kingdom of God, but rather a worldly kingdom that requires knowledge to rule effectively. Hal's descent is an educational experience that serves him well during his reign.
CONCLUSION

The parable of the prodigal son, purported to have been spoken by the central religious figure of Western civilization, has been preserved throughout the centuries in a static form. Its inclusion in the Bible has assured its wide dissemination and its familiarity in literary circles. While the presence of the original text provides an unchanging constant, the parable has been a popular source among dramatists throughout the history of the theatre who have utilized the motif either to present a varied array of morals, or as a touchstone for an exploration of the human condition.

The popularity of the motif was a result of the story's simplicity, vitality, and openness to many interpretations. The large number of plays utilizing the motif allows the identification, through the use of Beck's paradigm, of a corpus of plays representative of different literary periods and cultures. The study of this corpus of plays reveals, in microcosm, some general tendencies in the evolution of drama.

One may observe the continuing secularization, illustrated by the shift in moral from the religious allegory of the morality plays, to the serious ethical instruction of the school plays, which finally results in the motif's use
in the citizen comedy of the Elizabethan stage. During the English Renaissance, disengaged from its previously limiting religious interpretations, the motif was diversified and came to permeate the drama of the period. The secularization of the motif became complete as the playwrights of the coterie theatre parodied the plays performed in the public theatres, an event that could only have occurred after the motif's complete disassociation from religious doctrine.

Another process that evolved in correlation with that of secularization was the particularization of the motif. The careful analysis of the characters of the forgiving father and the prodigal son reveals the manner in which they evolved from two-dimensional characters with few identifiable human qualities to personalized individuals. As the religious content waned the playwrights acquired more freedom in expanding and developing the story, deleting some elements, introducing new characters and subplots, and constructing parodies. The playwrights, writing for a more particularized audience, sought to localize the action and specify the characters; giving them pedantic occupations, identifying idiosyncracies, and convincing motivations for their actions.

The motif was utilized by all the major dramatists of the period, each tailoring it to his own purpose. Shakespeare, however, did not create yet another fictional
representation of the standard plot, nor did he write a play that sought to parody the traditional story. Rather, in *Henry IV* he utilized the motif as a superstructure for the historical tale of young Hal. The story of Hal's descent into the world of inns and thieves, his tutelage at the hands of Falstaff, and his refutation of that world in favor of the world of his father was overlaid with the traditional innocence/fall/redemption pattern of the motif to create a powerful and enduring play. Treating Hal's unbridled adolescence as an educational experience introduced a new element of complexity and returned to the drama a universality that had been earlier abandoned.

Shakespeare's *Henry IV* would be one of the few prodigal son plays to endure in popular performance until the re-emergence of the motif in modern drama. In the play *Golden Boy*, for example, Clifford Odets portrays an inter-generational conflict that results in the son's death before he can return to his father's home. Albert Camus presents a tragic version of the motif in *The Misunderstanding*, as the son returns home only to be murdered by his mother. In *Death of a Salesman*, Arthur Miller depicts the prodigal son returning home only to become embroiled in a continuous storm of insecurity, anger, and apathy that ends in tragedy. These modern plays, while breaking, altering, or inverting the motif to create tragedy, retain the same universality that powers both *Courtois d'Arras*
and Henry IV. The story of the prodigal son has proved both lasting and popular in the theatre throughout the centuries, but through all its evolution and change, individual plays have acquired their enduring strength from the conviction and genius of their authors.
APPENDIX A

THE PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON

11 And he said, A certain man had two sons:
12 And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living.
13 And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.
14 And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want.
15 And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.
16 And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat; and no man gave unto him.
17 And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough to spare, and I perish with hunger!
18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father I have sinned against heaven, and before thee.
19 And am no more worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants.
20 And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.
APPENDIX A (cont.)

21 And his son said unto him Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

22 But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet;

23 And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry;

24 For this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found. And they began to be merry.

25 Now his elder son was in the field; and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard musick and dancing.

26 And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant.

27 And he said unto him. Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound.

28 And he was angry, and would not go in; therefore came his father out, and intreated him.

29 And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment; and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends;

30 But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf.

31 And he said unto him. Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine.

32 It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad, for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.
APPENDIX B

CHRONOLOGICAL LISTING OF MAJOR PLAYS UTILIZING PRODIGAL SON MOTIF

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>APPROX. DATE</th>
<th>AUTHOR</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>NATION OF ORIGIN</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1228</td>
<td>Anonymus</td>
<td>Courtois d'Arras</td>
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<td>1478</td>
<td>Wimpheling</td>
<td>Stylpho</td>
<td>Germany</td>
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<tr>
<td>1489</td>
<td>C. Castellani</td>
<td>Rappresentazione del Figliuol Prodigio</td>
<td>Italy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1503</td>
<td>A. Pulci</td>
<td>Del Figliuol Prodigio</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1510</td>
<td>Macropedius</td>
<td>Assutus</td>
<td>Holland</td>
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<tr>
<td>1527</td>
<td>B. Waldis</td>
<td>Parabell van vorlorn Sohn</td>
<td>Germany</td>
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<td>1529</td>
<td>G. Gnaphes</td>
<td>Acolastus</td>
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<td>1530</td>
<td>Anonymus</td>
<td>Pater, Filius et Uxor, or The Prodigal Son</td>
<td>England</td>
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<td>1535</td>
<td>Macropedius</td>
<td>Rebelles</td>
<td>Holland</td>
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<tr>
<td>1536</td>
<td>Macropedius</td>
<td>Petriscus</td>
<td>Holland</td>
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<tr>
<td>1542</td>
<td>G. Cecchi</td>
<td>Il Figliuol Prodigio</td>
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<td>1550</td>
<td>R. Wever</td>
<td>Lusty Juventus</td>
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<td>1550</td>
<td>Anonymus</td>
<td>Nice Wanton</td>
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<td>1560</td>
<td>Thomas Ingeland</td>
<td>The Disobedient Child</td>
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<td>1570</td>
<td>L. Johnson (?)</td>
<td>Misogonus</td>
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<td>T. Richards (?), A. Rudd (?)</td>
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<td>1575</td>
<td>George Gascoigne</td>
<td>The Glass of Government</td>
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<td>1590</td>
<td>Anonymus</td>
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78
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<thead>
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<th>TITLE</th>
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<tr>
<td>1597</td>
<td>William Shakespeare</td>
<td>Henry IV (Part One)</td>
<td>England</td>
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<td>1604</td>
<td>Anonymous</td>
<td>The London Prodigal</td>
<td>England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1605</td>
<td>Thomas Bedker and John Webster</td>
<td>Northward Ho</td>
<td>England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1605</td>
<td>George Chapman, Ben Jonson, John Marston</td>
<td>Eastward Ho</td>
<td>England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1605</td>
<td>Thomas Middleton</td>
<td>A Trick to Catch the Old One</td>
<td>England</td>
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<tr>
<td>1607</td>
<td>Francis Beavon</td>
<td>The Knight of the Burning Pestle</td>
<td>England</td>
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<td>1611</td>
<td>Jo. Coike</td>
<td>Greene's Tu Quoque, or The City Gallant</td>
<td>England</td>
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<tr>
<td>1614</td>
<td>John Fletcher</td>
<td>Wit Without Money</td>
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<tr>
<td>1625</td>
<td>Thomas Heywood</td>
<td>The English Traveller</td>
<td>England</td>
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<tr>
<td>1626</td>
<td>Ben Jonson</td>
<td>The Staple of News</td>
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APPENDIX B (cont.)

ENGLISH RENAISSANCE PLAYS CONTAINING ELEMENTS OF THE PRODIGAL SON MOTIF


*As noted by Alan R. Young in The English Prodigal Son Plays*
APPENDIX C

PLOT SUMMARIES OF SELECTED PLAYS

COURTOIS D'ARRAS

The play opens as the father awakens his son who has overslept and ignored his work. Courtois tells his father that he cannot work so hard for him; that he is being used as a serf. Courtois requests his inheritance in the form of hard cash, for he wishes to live a more pleasing life. The father tells his son that he should resolve himself to the life he now enjoys. The son ignores his father's advice, however, and the old man grants the prodigal his inheritance, hoping that he will find a good life and never be in want.

Courtois, walking alone, comes upon an inn. He is enticed by the innkeeper to sample the wine and make his luxurious residence at his inn. Two women enter and immediately begin to flatter the young man, one making sexual overtures toward Courtois. Courtois arises and goes into the garden to relieve himself. Inside the two women reach an agreement with the innkeeper. After the women have stolen his money the innkeeper is to strip Courtois of his clothes in payment for his bill. Upon his return, Courtois gives his purse to one of the women, anticipating her return for a feast.

As the second act opens, Courtois, deceived by the
whores and left at the mercy of the innkeeper, is stripped of his clothing and cast out to fend for himself. Bankrupt and alone, he sits at a cross road lamenting his foolishness. He is encountered by a tenant-farmer who offers him work as a swineherd. Courtois, alone as a swineherd, laments his position. Remembering the admonitions and prophecies of his father, determines to return and ask his pity. As he approaches home he is recognized by his father who rejoices at his return. The son is forgiven for all errors in judgment and the father decrees a feast be prepared in honor of his son's return. He also orders the servants to clothe him in fine garments.

The brother enters and contends with his father over the treatment his brother is receiving. The play ends as the father responds,

Por amor Diu, biaus fieus, ne dire!
Cil est en la fin bien prove:
ne li doit estre reprove.
Dont n'est cho molt grant aventure?
Damesdieus, cho dist l'Escriture,
fait d'un pecheor gregnor joie,
qant il se connoist et ravoi,
que des autres nonante neuf.
Bien en devons tuer no beuf
De joie k'il est revenus.
Chantons Te Deum laudamus.
RAPPRESENTAZIONE DEL FIGLIUOL PRODIGO

The play begins with the meeting of several youths, among whom some are virtuous (*fanciulli buoni*), others wicked (*fanciulli tristi*). When it is proposed that they should go to a tavern to amuse themselves with gambling, a quarrel arises between one of the virtuous and one of the wicked youths. This leads to a fight, in which the wicked youth is defeated and runs away. The virtuous youths then depart, leaving several of the wicked, two of whom begin to play cards.

We now discover that one of these is *il Prodigo*. He loses all his ready cash. His fellow player urges him to get more from his father. They discuss the best means of achieving this, and the Prodigal departs on his errand.

The Prodigal demands his portion, announcing his intention of leaving home. The father pleads with him to stay, urging his own grief and the danger to which the Prodigal will be exposing himself, but to no avail. The elder brother's arguments, uttered with somewhat greater asperity, are equally in vain. The Prodigal receives his money and departs. The father utters a gloomy farewell, in which he foretells grief for his son.

The Prodigal rejoins his comrades and announces his success. They welcome him joyfully, and assure him they are at his command so long as his money lasts. They all set off
to pursue a life of pleasure.

The father appears, grieving for his absent son, fearing for his safety now that he no longer has the protection of his father, and for his own life if the boy does not return. He sees to the giving of alms and is consoled by a servant. He expresses his grief to the elder brother, who also comforts him, with assurance of Divine Providence. The father takes heart.

The Prodigal and his friends, on their travels, arrive at an inn. The Prodigal appoints one of them, Bruno, his steward, with instructions to see that they are well provided for. The host greets them, offering wine, food, cards and dice.

The host goes to some of the rogues (ruffiani) and tells them he has victims for them to fleece. They question him as to the wealth of the travellers, and agree to play their part.

The Prodigal calls for cards. As he and his friends are about to begin a game, one of the rogues enters and allows himself to be persuaded to play with the Prodigal, from whom he proceeds to win ever larger amounts. In spite of the remonstrances of his friends, the Prodigal stakes and loses a great sum. This puts an end to the game. The Prodigal next demands amatory pleasures. The host tells a servant to lead him to Lucrezia (a cosa specchiata he has already promised the young man), with private instructions to fleece him skill-
fully. The Prodigal's comrades promise to wait for him, but warn him not to lose any more money.

The father again laments the absence of his younger son. Much time has passed, bringing him closer to death, but still his dear son does not return, does not hear his sighs and repent. A servant again reminds him of Divine Providence.

The Prodigal is driven out half-naked by a maid-servant (ancilla) and a rogue (ruffiano), perhaps from the house of Lucrezia, although there is nothing to indicate this. We are left to assume that Lucrezia has followed the host's instructions. The Prodigal is now a penniless outcast. He apostrophizes fate which has led him to this downfall. His comrades have deserted him, now that he no longer has money to spend on them. He who was formerly so proud must become a slave. He meets his comrades and begs assistance, but they mockingly pretend not to know him.

He takes a position as swineherd and goes with a servant to be instructed in his duties.

Alone, he grieves once more over his poverty, tormented by a sense of sin, and meditating suicide. As in the parable, he thinks of his father's house and resolves to return and ask forgiveness. On his way home he points out the moral of his downfall to youths who might be tempted to make the same mistake.

Seeing his father at a distance, he hesitates to
present himself: shame holds him back; reason tells him to
go forward. He throws himself on his father's mercy, as in
the parable, and is made welcome. The elder brother returns,
learns of his brother's homecoming, angrily refuses to
enter, is rebuked by his informant and then by his father,
repents of his attitude, and is reconciled with his
brother. 104

ACOLASTUS

As the play begins, Pelargus, the father of the prodigal
Acolastus confers with his friend, Eubulus, as to what
course of action he should follow concerning his son. His
son considers him a selfish tyrant and believes himself
capable of taking care of his own affairs without the
advice of his father. Eubulus advises Pelargus to allow his
son to have his freedom. In this manner, he contends, the
young Acolastus shall discover the folly of his ways, and,
when he turns for help to his father and is forgiven, he
will learn to appreciate the loving kindness of his father.
Pelargus accepts his friend's advice with reservations.

The second scene introduces Philautus, a friend of
Acolastus, who has been kindling within him a desire for
freedom and luxury. After speaking with him, Acolastus
leaves to request his inheritance of his father. Pelargus,
after an exceedingly brief speech on proper moral behavior,
gives to his son his just portion of the inheritance. After
Acolastus has exited, Pelargus briefly laments the departure
of his son. The first act ends with a brief interlude in which Acolastus rejoices with Philautus over his newly acquired fortune and freedom.

The next act opens with the meeting of two parasites, Pantolabus and Pamphagus. Pantolabus complains of his wretched condition, his loss of his old master and therefore his source of income. A comic dialogue ensues. Pantolabus asks to become a pupil of Pamphagus. Pamphagus accepts him and tells him of a dream he has had, forecasting wealth to come. The next short scene consists of a farewell between Acolastus and Philautus. The third scene reveals Pamphagus and Pantolabus together speculating upon a future adventure. Pamphagus smells money on the wind and prophesies the arrival of a pigeon. The two parasites play upon his vanity and dreams of luxurious life until he delightedly accepts them into his service. They conduct him to an inn and arrange for a banquet and musicians.

Pamphagus, in a soliloquy, rejoices of his fortune in finding such a fool and expounds upon his great abilities at deceit, guile, and subterfuge. Pantolabus leads Acolastus to the inn of Sannio. Sannio, after being informed by Pantolabus that the guest is to be a victim of Pamphagus, sends for Lais, a lovely courtesan. Meanwhile Pelargus speaks with Eubulus of his concern for his son. Eubulus reassures him and tells him to have faith in God. Another scene depicts two servants at the inn, Syrus and Bromia,
conversing on the events taking place. Lais arrives and makes love to Acolastus. A bed is prepared and they retire for the night.

The fourth act begins the next morning as Pamphagus relates to Pantolabus how he shall cheat the young man of all his money with his shaved dice. Pamphagus carries out this plan and then contrives with the innkeeper to leave Acolastus to him that he might collect his clothes in payment for his debt. Lais joins Sannio in stripping Acolastus when she discovers he cannot pay for her services. After being struck by Lais, Acolastus is cast out. Alone, he laments his miserable condition, blaming his own folly and the crafty lies and intrigues of the characters who have abandoned him.

Acolastus attempts to beg some food from a passing farmer. The farmer will not give him any food, but offers him a job by which he may earn his bread. Acolastus agrees to become a swineherd for the farmer. The scene shifts to reveal Pelargus once again speaking with Eubulus, despairing the loss of his son and worrying about his welfare.

Acolastus, alone in the fields, laments his condition, the food he must subsist on, and the filth in which he must live. Obsessed with self-pity, he curses the day on which he was born and contemplates suicide. Repenting the past actions that were contrary to the advice of his father, he determines to return home.
Approaching his home hesitantly, he is recognized by his father. Pelargus raises him from his knees and forgives him all his transgressions. Calling to his servants to bring forth a robe and ring, and giving orders that a feast be prepared, the father paraphrases the ending of the Biblical parable, saying, "this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost, and is found."

THE GLASS OF GOVERNMENT

Two rich citizens of Antwerp, Phylopaes and Phylocalus, being neighbors and friends, each place their two sons with a schoolmaster. The schoolmaster, Gnomaticus, instructs them in their duties. A long lecture follows revealing the logical progression of honor and obedience due God, King, Minister, Magistrate, Parents, Elders, and one's own body. The elder sons, both quick to learn, desire a more exciting life and dream of being transferred to the University for "the variety of delights and pleasures which there are dayly exercifed." The younger brothers, Phylotimus and Phylomusus, being somewhat duller, study their lessons with diligence.

Several villainous figures are introduced as they connive a method to sustain new income. Dick Droom, Eccho (a parasite and seducer of youths), a young meretrix named Lamia, and her aunt Pandarina discuss their present state and hopes of maintaining themselves. The first act ends
with a chorus in which the actions of parents are extolled: "the care which Christ did take to save his sheep,/ Hath bene condamned, to fathers care on child."

While the younger brothers study, the elder brothers, Phylosarchus and Phylautus, encounter Eccho, Lamia, Dick Droom and Pandarina. Phylosarchus is stricken by Lamia's beauty and Eccho deceives him with a tale of her arrival with her aunt from Valentia. He promises to try to bend Lamia's favor toward him.

Eccho goes to the schoolmaster and, by deception, frees the four brothers from their afternoon duties. All four brothers rendezvous with Eccho. The younger remain behind to study. Phylautus and Phylosarchus accompany Eccho to meet Lamia, Pandarina, and Dick Droom. On the way Eccho tells Phylosarchus how he has advanced his cause with Lamia and accepts money as a sign of gratitude. Pandarina and Lamia deceive the young men, telling them that Lamia is a rich young woman, unrightfully dispossessed of her inheritance. Phylosarchus is enticed further and promises his aid. The chorus which ends the second act speaks of the "wicked means malicious men can make" and warns the audience against them.

Upon their return Phylosarchus and Phylautus are rebuked by the younger brothers for expressing disrespect toward an elder. Phylosarchus' father, learning of his son's involvement with Lamia, confers with Phylautus' father and Gnomati-
cus and a decision is made to send the four young men to the University of Dowaye. The younger brothers then appear and study by reciting verse renditions of the lectures earlier given by the schoolmaster.

In the fourth act the fathers send off Ambidexter, a servant, along with their sons to the University. Eccho reveals that Polysarchus has ordered a feast prepared at the home of Lamia. Eccho and Dick Droom discuss their good fortune. A magistrate gives orders to his officers to incarcerate Lamia, Eccho, and Pandarina. Long lectures are given on the righteousness of the duties of parents, magistrates, and teachers.

Act five opens with Dick Droom alone, Eccho and the others having been arrested. He determines to travel to Dowaye. The fathers are shown expressing grief over the absence of their sons. Letters arrive from Dowaye which reveal the successes of the younger brothers, Phylomusus has entered the ministry and Phylotimus is to become secretary to the Falsegrave. The letters also reveal the elder sons, along with the servant Ambidexter, have frequented the bordellos and taverns and ignored their schoolwork. The fathers determine to send Fidus, a servant, to apprehend Ambidexter and bring home the elder sons. Eccho is sentenced to be whipped three times a day until he confesses.

Fidus returns with Ambidexter and encounters the schoolmaster and the magistrate. He tells how Dick Droom
had warned the elder brothers of Eccho's arrest. Phylautus and Dick Droom fled Dowaye only to later be executed for robbery in Palsegrave's court, in sight of his younger brother. Phylosarchus had fled to Geneva and, despite the earnest suit of his brother Phylotimus, the minister, he was whipped. Ambidexter, who had accompanied Phylosarchus, abandoned him.

The magistrate orders Ambidexter and Eccho whipped and Lamia and Pasdarina sent to the dunking stool for three market days. Fidus, the magistrate, and the schoolmaster depart to tell the fathers the sad news. The epilogue, in chorus form, incites the audience to follow the example of the younger sons, to study hard and avoid vice.

THE LONDON PRODIGAL

Flowerdale (Senior), just returned from abroad, discusses with his brother, Flowerdale (junior), the conduct of his son, Matthew Flowerdale, during his absence. The uncle informs the father that Matthew Flowerdale has partaken in many immoral activities, describing him as a libertine, swearer, brawler, drinker, and spendthrift. The father asserts that this is merely a stage in the child's youth that may even prove beneficial, for "they that die most virtuous, have in their youth liv'd most vicious." He determines to observe Matthew. He feigns his own death, leaving a false will in which Master Flowerdale receives no inheri-
tance. The father then disguises himself as a servant and enters his son's employ.

Matthew, already far in debt and now deprived of his inheritance, contrives to marry Luce, the daughter of Sir Lancelot Spurcock, a wealthy knight. The prodigal drafts a will naming various valuable holdings in which Luce is the sole beneficiary and Spurcock sole executor. Surreptitiously, he allows the contents to become known to Spurcock. The knight, convinced of the young man's wealth and love for his daughter, chooses the prodigal over her other, more worthy suitors. The marriage takes place.

Flowerdale (senior), having accompanied his son for some time and witnessed the excesses of his vice, instructs his brother to have the prodigal arrested. The uncle charges the prodigal with owing a large debt. His deceit in the falsified will is revealed. Spurcock regrets having wed his daughter to such a miscreant. He orders her to leave her prodigal husband. Honoring her wedding vows, she asserts she will remain with her husband in his time of trouble, as is her wifely duty. Spurcock refuses to grant her dowry and disowns her. Young Flowerdale is about to be carried off to debtor's prison, when his wife intervenes on his behalf so eloquently that the uncle dismisses the charge.

The prodigal, just set free by his wife's entreaties, casts her aside, telling her he does not wish her without
her dowry, that the marriage was only a device to acquire wealth. He takes what money she has. Disowned by her father and cast aside without pity by her husband, Luce is left abandoned. Flowerdale (senior) sees to her maintenance and disguises her as a Dutch serving maid so she, too, may be near Master Flowerdale.

The prodigal quickly loses all his money at dice. He attempts to rob his sister-in-law and her husband, but is interrupted. He attempts to borrow money from the men who beat him at dice. Unsuccessful, he goes to the house of a harlot he had frequented and lavished money upon previously. She does not wish to see him and sends a ruffian to bar him from her house. He begs in the street from an "ancient citizen," a "citizen's wife," two of the minor characters in the play, his uncle, his servant (disguised father), and a Dutch serving maid (his disguised wife), telling various lies.

Spurcock arrives and charges the prodigal with murdering his daughter, as she has disappeared and cannot be found. As he is about to be arrested, Luce once again intervenes in his behalf, casting off her disguise and revealing herself to all assembled. She swears her faithfulness to her husband.

Matthew is suddenly converted by the chastity and virtue of Luce and repents his prodigal ways. Flowerdale (senior) reveals his true identity and persuades Spurcock
to reconcile with his daughter. Spurcock accedes and grants his daughter's dowry. Several of the other characters who previously rebuked him when he begged money of them now supply pledges of money for bridal gifts. All depart for a feast.

EASTWARD HO!

The first scene introduces the earnest and amiable master goldsmith, Touchstone, and his two apprentices. Quicksilver arrives, dressed in cloak and pumps, far beyond what his position would suggest, and carrying a sword. Touchstone chides Quicksilver for ignoring his work and cavorting about town. Touchstone also recounts the combination of hard work, morals, and thrift that has led to his own advancement. Golding, the hard-working and honest apprentice is taunted by Quicksilver. In the ensuing argument Quicksilver offers to draw and Golding easily overpowers him.

The second scene introduces Mistress Touchstone, her daughter Gertrude, who has adopted the frivolousness and vanity of her mother, and Mildred, a sensible girl more inclined to the values of her fathers. Master Touchstone is informed of Gertrude's desire to accept Sir Petronel Flash's proposal of marriage. He is mildly opposed to the match because he knows his daughter intends to marry, not for love, but for the rise in position attendant to the bride
of a knight. He relents, however, determined to "prove which thrives best, the mean or lofty love."

Act II opens with Touchstone, Golding, and Mildred on stage. Touchstone's intention with the final words of the last act becomes clear as he offers the hand of his daughter to Golding. A brief interlude shows Quicksilver drunk and disorderly. The next scene takes place in the house of an usurer. Quicksilver, one of his constant customers, is included in a plot to ensnare Sir Petronel, a prodigal himself, with the promise of money to satiate the desires of his new bride.

The humble Golding soon rises to the position of deputy-alderman, while Sir Petronel, having sent Gertrude off by coach to his imaginary castle and filched her dowry, sets sail for Virginia. He is accompanied by the prodigal Quicksilver, who has robbed his master. A shipwreck soon foils their plans and they are brought before Golding, the deputy-alderman.

Gertrude, her eyes opened, repents her former actions and returns home. Sir Petronel and Quicksilver are imprisoned. Touchstone refuses to come to their aid though there are several reports of their miraculous conversion. They are shown in prison easing the worries and tending their fellow prisoners. Golding devises a ruse to enlist Touchstone's aid in obtaining their release. Touchstone is informed of Golding's incarceration and rushes to his aid. Once at the prison touchstone sees the repentant
prodigals and is moved to drop all charges and extend his forgiveness. Quicksilver promises to wed Sindefy, the mistress procured for him by the usurer (who has been cuckolded in a sub-plot of little importance to this examination).
Page 98 does not exist.
NOTES


2. Young, p. 4.

3. Young, p. 3.

4. In *Nice Wanton* the elder brother effects a deathbed repentance by his prodigal sister; in *Rappresentazione del Figliuoi Prodigio* the elder brother is reconciled with his brother after his return; in *Rebelettes* there is no elder brother; in *Acoclustus* an elder brother is referred to, but never appears; in *Eastward Ho* and *Glass of Government* the elder brothers are elevated in status during the play and preside over or observe the judgment of their prodigal counterparts. *Asotus* and *Courtois* are two plays in which the brother plays the part specifically outlined for him by the parable.


8. Young, p. iv.


11. *Courtois*, Act XII, lines 642-652:

   *Por amor Dieu, bais fieux, ne dire!*
   *Cil est en la fin bien prove:*
   *ne li doit estre reprove.*
   *Dont n'est cho molt grant aventure?*
   *Damesdieu, cho dist l'Escriture,*
   *fait d'un pecheoi gregnor joie,*
   *qant il se connois et ravoe,*
que des autres nonante neuf.
Bien en devons tuer no buef
De joie k'il est revenus.
Chantons Te Deum laudemus.


15. Courtois, Act I, lines 1-9:
Jetès, jetes vos biestes fors;
vakes, brebis, kievres et pors
piech' a deuissent estre as chans.
Or est l'erbe arosse et ténre;
li losegnos et li chalendre
ont piech' a commencie lor chans.
Or sus, biaux fieux, trop as geu:
ja deuissent avoir peu
la agnelet l'erbe menue.

16. Courtois, Act I, lines 38-39:
Or scit diable en tent dangier!
Dehait ja mais le souffera!

Play of the Sixteenth Century by Gulielmus Graphæus

18. Young, op. cit.
19. Axton, op. cit.

22. Courtois, Act IV, lines 214-219:
Pourette
Mais vostre amie et vostre ancielle,
qui bien vous aime de cuer fin,
yous done par amors le vin
et, sacies, pas ne vous dechoi,
Courtois
Damoisiele, jou le rechoi
de bon cuer et de bon corage.

23. A discussion of contemporization and localization in
English cycle drama may be found in V.A. Kolve's
The Play Called Corpus Christi (Stanford: Stanford
24. Potter, p. 36.
27. Kennard, pp. 31-32.
28. Kennard, p. 34.
32. Beck, p. 112.
34. Atkinson, p. 6.
41. Atkinson, p. 129.
43. Helgerson, p. 53.
44. Helgerson, p. 54.
46. Helgerson, p. 54.


49. Wright, pp. 607-608.

50. Nashe, p. 90.

51. Wright, p. 614.

52. Young, p. 231.

53. Young, p. 232.


55. Young, p. 235.


65. Leggatt, p. 35.


77. Leggatt, p. 35.
78. Leggatt, p. 35.
80. Brooke, p. 252.
81. George Chapman, Ben Jonson, and John Marston, Eastward Ho, included in Brooke, op. cit. (I, ii).
82. Young, p. 254.
83. Leggatt, p. 49.
84. Leggatt, p. 48.
85. Leggatt, p. 48.
86. Leggatt, p. 49.
87. Leggatt, p. 51.
88. Leggatt, p. 51.
90. The nine plays are Comedy of Errors (IV, iii, 18), Two Gentlemen of Verona (II, i, 3-4), 1 Henry IV (IV, ii, 36-8), 2 Henry IV (II, i, 160-1), As You Like It (I, i, 40-2), Merry Wives of Windsor (IV, v, 7-9), Winter's Tale (IV, ii, 103-4), Merchant of Venice (II, vi, 14-9), and Richard II (II, ii, 84-5).


93. Young, p. 266.

94. Leggatt, p. 53.

95. Leggatt, p. 47.

96. Leggatt, p. 46.

97. Young, p. 196.


100. Wilson, *Fortunes*, p. 22.

101. Young, p. 198.

102. Young, p. 195.


104. This summary is quoted from Atkinson's *Acolastus*, pp. 217-9.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


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THE PLAYS


THE PLAYS (cont.)


