CHAPTER VIII

TECHNIQUES OF WRITING
We are no longer justified in finding fault with the Elizabethan and the Jacobean playwrights for their use of more than one plot in their plays. For we have learnt to know that the use of multiple actions was rather the rule than an exception of the times. Therefore, the Elizabethan and the Jacobean plays, even at their best, appear to have some looseness of structure about them. This use of the multiple plots is "an easy-going device, often used simply to fill out a play, and has an obvious effect in the Elizabethans of making you feel the play deals with life as a whole, with any one who comes onto the street the scene so often represents; this may be why criticism has not taken it seriously when it deserved to be".  

Further, we find the love of multiplicity as being characteristic of all forms of sixteenth century art, not only of literature. The separate items or parts of a picture or poem or a play are felt 'to be relatively equal in material value', though the main and secondary parts are adequately discriminated. Naturally, almost all the literary artists of the time, "Rabelais, Ariosto, Cervantes, Spenser and Shakespeare saw beauty in multiplicity of detail".  

If we examine Heywood and Dekker with an awareness of the conditions prevailing at that time we will have an altogether different picture of their work and craftsmanship. We have to consider the extent to which they have been influenced by

1. William Empson: Some Versions of Pastoral, p.27.
the concepts of civility, citizen virtues and patriotism, markedly dominating the age. Their plays, to a large extent, have been coloured by the popular, theological tenets. As they are professional dramatists they have given to the audience what they have demanded, comedies, tragedies and history plays. But invariably in all these plays there is a moral bias.

The themes which they took up for writing affected the form of their plays in three conspicuous ways. On the side of the dramatic structure, the themes as well as the taste of the public led to the use of multiple actions and consequently some looseness of structure. Secondly, the themes from the ordinary life around them do not lend themselves to a high poetic treatment and inspired writing. An elevated poetic style, while dealing with familiar domestic incidents of a middle-class home, is bound to be 'indecorous' - it may even create an effect of parody. So, the range of poetic imagery is restricted. The persistent moral concern of Dekker and Heywood necessitated the adoption of certain Morality play techniques like the debate, the presentation of external or internal conflict between virtue and vice, good and evil and the popular dramatic convention of soliloquy, aside and chorus in a refined fashion. These traditional methods are mostly used to indicate the dramatic leit-motif behind the changes of situation and to exhibit the motivation governing the behaviour
of the characters. A careful study of the techniques of writing shows that Heywood and Dekker are conscious artists and skilful craftsmen. Dekker, as we have seen, gives us an authentic account of the laborious involved in writing a play. The author has to spend 'many nones and midnights' to 'repose three howres of mirth' and

Much Labour, Art, and Wit, make vp a Play.'

He feels the artistic necessity of employing new techniques, when the conventional methods are inadequate, as "the storie m needs". He insists on the liberty and freedom of the artist in his selection and processing of the source material for his plays.

Dekker employs certain traditional, almost archaic techniques derived from the native Moralities in an effective way and adopts the morality pattern wherever it is useful. To emphasise the main action of the play Dekker usually juxtaposes analogous and contrasting episodes, characters and tones. This method

5. "And whereas I may, 'by some more curious in censure, then sound in judgement) be critically take, that I falsifie the account of time, and set not downe occurrents, according to their true succession, let such (that are so nice of stomach) know, that I write as a Poet, not as an Historian, and that these two doe not liue vnder one law". Dekker: The Whore of Babylon, ed, Bowers, Vol. II, p.497.
gives him ample scope to vary and reiterate the central theme; it offers him enough of freedom to bring out the various aspects of the underlying theme. These juxtapositions and contrasts may occasionally interrupt the main line of the primary action, but they enrich and add dramatic variety to the play.

The entire first Act of *Patient Grissil* is devoted to the exposition of the main theme of the play. Gwalter his brother Pauia Mario, Lepido are introduced as ' Hunters' with 'a noyse of hornes' - an impressive opening indeed. Within twenty lines the conversation turns to the topic Gwalter's marriage and the number of proposals from 'neighbour-princes'. By a clever twist Gwalter draws a comparison between hunting and choosing a wife. His words:

> Then can you blame me to be hunter like,  
> When I must get a wife? but be content,  
> So yo'ule ingage your faith by other to vs,  
> Your wills shall answere mine, my liking yours,  
> And that no wrinkle on your cheekes shall ride?  
> This day the Marquesse vowes to choose a bride.

give a powerful hint of his determination to choose a bride, Grissil, in an unconventional fashion. He wants to convert his men to his point of view and make them approve his choice. Thus a subtle enigmatic hint of the main issue, his intention of making his courtiers and subjects realise the virtue of his

bride, is given. The minds of the audience are turned to the hidden plan and their interest is aroused.

The family of Janicola is introduced in the second scene and the interest aroused in the first scene is worked out with remarkable subtlety. Grissil's father moves the topic of Gwalter's love for her. Her reply reveals to us, for the first time, the bond of pure love existing between them. The expected social dismay at such a marriage is brilliantly expressed by the words of Babulo.

Immediately after the marriage Gwalter states his plan of making the world realise the virtue and patience of his wife Grissil. He employs his own courtiers, who are against the marriage, as the instruments of her torments and trials. To bring out the full significance of Grissil's ideal virtues of womanhood, Dekker introduces two contrasting episodes: that of Julia, the sister of Gwalter, who runs away from the responsibilities of married life and dallies with the thoughts of virginity, and Gwenthyan, cousin to Gwalter, who tests the patience of her husband.


"Although the Marquesse sometimes visits vs,
Yet all his words and deedes are like his birth,
Steept in true honor: but admit they were not
Before my soule looke black with speckled sinne,"


"Thats al one sir, beggers are fit for beggers, gentlefolkes for gentlefolkes: I am afraid that this wonder of the rich louing the poor, will last but nine daies: ..."
of her husband as much as Gwalter tests Grissil's. The shrew herself tells:

Cozen Marcesse, cozen Julia, and Lawrs and Laties all, it shall not need: as her cozen has tryed Grissil, so Gwenthan has Sir Owen.9

Evidently, Dekker meant the character of Gwenthan as a foil to that of Grissil, and the episode as a whole serves as a comic analogy to the main theme. Julia herself points out the purpose of her episode:

Nay brother your pardon awhile: besides our selves there are a number heere, that haue behelde Grissils patience, your owne tryals, and Sir Owens sufferance, Gwenthians frowardnes, these Gentlemen louertine, and myself a hater of loue...10

The episodes thus juxtaposed with the central theme enrich and add variety to it. They are always subordinated to the main theme and they are employed to bring out the full significance of the main lesson, the patience and constancy of Grissil. Marquesse says in the end:

Since Julia of the maids, and Gwenthan Of froward wiues, intreate a kinde applaude, See Grissil among all this multitude, Who will be friend to gentle patience?11

10. Ibid., p.289, 275-278.
11. Ibid.,
This plain technique of driving home the function of the play and its morality may look too simple to admire. But, one cannot deny that the technique employed serves the purpose. Perhaps it was partly necessitated by theatrical exigencies. "For a practical man of public theatre, one of Henselowe's journeyman-dramatists moral problems had to be stated and answered, if at all, in the broadest possible terms".12

The improvement in Dekker's art and the refinement of his technique are strikingly clear in *The Shoemakers' Holiday*. He gives all the necessary information to the audience to arouse their interest and turn their minds to the central theme of the play within the first ten lines. The after-dinner conversation between the Lord Mayor and the Earl of Lincoln turns to the love of Rose and Lacy after the first four lines. Their difference of opinion, the social gulf between the two and the novelty of such a marriage are stressed. The general outline of the action, the determination of both the Mayor and the Earl to 'prevent' the marriage, Lincoln's plan to send his nephew to France, are hinted. In the later part of the opening scene Simon Eyre comes with his jolly crew of shoemakers to Lacy to get his newly married journeyman Rafe discharged from the army. When he realises the national need, Eyre changes his mind, sends Rafe to fight for the honour of the gentle craft. The wars in France lead to the separation of Jane and Rafe.

Lacy has already made up his mind to 'ore-reach' his uncle's 'policies'. He coaxes his cousin Askew and despatches the army to France under his leadership. Thus within the first two hundred lines Dekker has informed his audience enough to rouse their interest and curiosity.

These two strands of the play are telescoped with the progress of Eyre to dignity and power. The connection is established by the introduction of Lacy into the services of Eyre in the disguise of a shoemaker. Eyre is a shoemaker to the Lord Mayor also. This gives a chance to Dekker to introduce the delightful scenes of Lacy's wooing his Rose. The plot of Rose and Lacy and the story of Jane in separation, progress of Eyre. It is Eyre who offers protection to the lovers, promotes their marriage, and defends them in his capacity as the Lord Mayor and finally obtains royal pardon.

That all the three plots of the play - the rise of Eyre, the marriage of Rose and Lacy, the separation of Jane and Rafe - are based on Deloney's The Gentle Craft has been finely worked out by Professor A.F. Lange. Dekker enhanced the dramatic effect of the plot he borrowed by introducing a new character Hammon which has no parallel in Deloney. As R.A. Law has shown at some length, the function of the character of Hammon corresponds

13. A.F. Lange in Introduction to the play in Gayley's Representative English Comedies, Vol. III.
to that of Paris in *Romeo and Juliet*. Evidently Dekker has made a very ingenious use of what he borrowed from Shakespeare. Rose's father considers Hammon as a proper gentleman and tries to make him his son-in-law. This situation has no parallel in the original. In this incident "the whole function of the gentle Paris in *Romeo and Juliet*, with his modest affection for the maiden, and also Old Capulet's endeavour to drive his daughter into the marriage are translated into Dekker's comedy, with Rose's father corresponding to Capulet and with Paris rechristened as Hammon".

Again, Jane's struggle like Juliet's against her marriage while her lawful husband is still alive, is a situation created by the introduction of Hammon into this plot. No such struggle exists in Deloney. Here also Hammon functions as Paris. By introducing the character of Hammon Dekker not only made the play dramatically more impressive but also morally effective. He serves as a test for the constancy of Rose as well as Jane.

By the time Dekker started writing *The Honest Whore* he established himself as a successful dramatist. His art had reached its maturity. What distinguishes *The Honest Whore* of Dekker from his other plays is the superb clarity and comprehensiveness with which he presents a variety of domestic problems.

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15. Ibid., p.358.
of a large number of people. In the first part of the play there are four conspicuous strains: the love story of Hippolito and Infelice and the efforts of the Duke to prevent that marriage; the domestic torture of Candido with his shrewish wife; the gallants and their pleasure hunting, and finally the conversion and troubles of Bellafront. The second part of the play is further enriched by the introduction of Friscobaldo who watches his daughter's troubles, traps Matheo and forces him to turn over a new leaf. To wield this vast material into a regular play, Dekker evolved a form which conveniently mirrors the varied incidents and reflects his views on events, people and their relationships.

The entire first Act of The Honest Whore, Part I, as in Patient Grissil is given to the exposition of different aspects of the play. The scene opens with a mock-funeral of Infelice arranged by her father to dupe her lover Hippolito. Matheo prevents his friend from interrupting the funeral and thus averts fighting. Hippolito takes a ceremonious vow of sorrow. The second scene introduces the household of Candido and acquaints the audience with his wife's perverse longing to provoke him. The third scene prevents the reviving of Infelice and the truth of the mock-funeral is given as a surprise. The fourth scene depicts the plans of the gallants to make Candido's, the mirror of patience as vexed as an English cuckold. It is only in the second Act that Bellafront is introduced. Matheo brings Hippolito to her house to divert his mind from Infelice. Thus
even before the entrance of the 'honest whore', the necessary
ground for her introduction is prepared and the audience is
acquainted with the necessary facts and the main drift of the
play.

Dekker connects the different episodes of the play by a
subtle interaction of the characters. He makes an attempt to
fuse the different plots in the final scene. By an ingenious
manipulation he brings all the characters together in the Bethelhem
monastery. Hippolito and Infelice are married off, Candido and
his wife are reconciled, Matheo is forced by the Duke to marry
reformed Bellafront, whom he initiated into sin and the play
closes with a happy note of reunion.

The second part is equally impressive in its variety and
organisation. In a single scene of two hundred lines Dekker
prepares the audience for the new sequence of action. The
remark of Lodovico to Infelice, when Bellafront approaches
Hippolito with a petition, gives the first hint of the possi-
bility of change in the hero:

What stockings have you put on this morning,
Madam? if they be not yellow, change them; that
paper is a Letter from some Wench to your Husband.16

Hippolito is instrumental in bringing Friscobaldo and his

I, i, p.140, 111-113.
daughter Bellafront together. That he is no longer the same man is sharply hinted at by his own words:

The face I would not looke on! sure the 'twas rare
When in despit of grievfe, 'tis still thus faire.17

Decker's skill lies in his deft subordination of different episodes juxtaposed together to the main issue to serve his moral purpose - that of establishing the honesty of Bellafront, the whore. In the first part of the play Hippolito is responsible for the conversion of Bellafront from her evil ways to an honest way of life. In the second part of the play the same Hippolito tries to seduce her with equally eloquent professions of love. She resists all temptations and remains faithful to her husband, Matheo. Thus the character of Hippolito serves a dual purpose. He is instrumental in converting her and he is also the chief agent in establishing the real conversion in her. The sequence of events and the juxtaposition of different episodes serve to bring out the full significance of the main theme. The series of incidents are telescoped into an impressive pattern but not fused into a coherent whole. Jacobean audience and consequently the dramatists "preferred to experience a succession of striking situations and to carry away a number of such separate images, rather than the memory of a unified and integrated aesthetic experience - that it had, in

short, neither use nor capacity for the Aristotelian 'whole'."18
Dekker, here, is one with the tastes of the age.

The Witch of Edmonton is also constructed on the same prin-
ciple of juxtaposition of different moods, episodes and tones
together. Two important incidents are fused together in the
opening scene, Winnifride, who has already an affair with her
master Sir Arthur and is already 'with-child', marries Frank
secretly and after her marriage she turns into an honest wife.
Thus a note that there is something 'rotten' in the human affairs
is struck in the beginning itself. Frank who lacks courage to
tell his father about his secret wedding, marries Susan, the
daughter of Carter, a rich yeoman. This marriage forms the
chief link between the two families and connects these two episodes.

Till now, the plot of Mother Sawyer is worked out indepen-
dently and her diabolic potentialities to create mischief are
sufficiently indicated. Frank's sudden impulse to kill his
wife Susan is attributed to the evil effects of the witch's
damned traffic. The devil comes in the form of a 'dog' and
'rubs' against Frank. Thus the popular belief in witchcraft is
made one of the chief reasons for the domestic crime. The witch
is connected with the other plots chiefly through her associa-
tion with Cuddy Banks and her promises that she will help him

18. Una Ellis Fermor: Jacobean Drama, p.31.
in his love affair with Kate, the second daughter of Old Carter. The witch of Edmonton in a way is shown as the source of mischief.

All these four streams of the play, the family of Old Thorney, the prosperous household of Old Carter, the simple life of Old Banks and the diabolic traffic of the witch, are dovetailed by interactions. In the final scene Frank is executed. All the chief characters of the play assemble to witness the trial of Frank and the play closes with a tone of acceptance. The words Old Carter to Old Thorney:

We have lost our children both on's the wrong way, but we cannot help it: better or worse, 'tis now as 'tis.19

point to the analogy between the two important actions.

The chief action of Match Me in London is the unlawful lust of a monarch for his citizen's wife and her successful withstand- ing of all temptations. Despite some plain symptoms of the decadence of Dekker's art the play reveals his keen sense of the theatre. The play opens with Malevento counting his money at the dead of the night, intermittently shouting at his daughter and servants. His plans to wed Tormiella to rich Gazetto are frustrated by her elopement with Cordolente, an enterprising tradesman.

The domestic harmony of the couple is disturbed by the intervention of the old usurer, the disappointed lover and the lascivious king who takes away Tormiella to the court and tries to seduce her. His court is full of intrigue and his domestic life is spoiled by his own evil desires as well as the court intrigues. Thus, in both the plots the miseries of two virtuous women, the Queen and Tormiella, are presented and the actions run parallel till the end. The two plots are interconnected by the entrance of Cordolente into the court in the disguise of a shoemaker and the reconciliation between the two distressed wives. The domestic skill of Dekker is evident in the subtle manipulation by which he makes both the aspects of the play contribute to the main moral of the play, the rewards of virtuous womanhood. The play ends with the words of the king:

... wel were that City blest,
That with but, Two such women should excell;
But there's so few good, th'art no Parallell! 20

From a study of his plot construction it is clear that Dekker is a typical Elizabethan in his use of the multiple actions. Even if he is not able to organise the different actions and fuse them into a coherent whole as successfully as Jonson did in his _The Alchemist_, he has enough of constructive skill to organise them into a unified pattern. The different subplots

are used as a contrast or as an analogous reflection of the main action. They serve either as a criticism on or as a parallel to the chief action and thus they help to bring out full significance of the central theme.

The world of Dekker is equally varied and rich. His plays offer us the finest picture of Elizabethan and Jacobean life and its ways. No other English writer of his time has depicted so many pictures of Londoners and their ways in so vivid and natural a manner. The plays are full of adventurous tradesmen, citizens, valiant apprentices, their wives, sweet hearts and children an impressive galaxy moving through the streets of London elbowing out each other in shop and tavern. The total effect is one of Chaucerian plenty and vividness.

Dekker's finest characters are happy men with incorrigible cheerfulness or patient people with a fortitude to endure the vagaries of fortune. His men and women are slightly idealised copies of real people. They convince us as living human beings because they are ideal representations of real characters from everyday life. In his presentation of historical characters in *The Shoemakers’ Holiday* Dekker maintained 'reasonable historical accuracy'\(^1\). In his delineation of character he improved on the historical account he borrowed. Simon Eyre according to

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\(^1\) W.K. Chandler: *The Sources of the Characters in *The Shoemakers’ Holiday*,* M.P. Vol. XXVII, 1929, p.175.
history is little more than one of the long list of the Lord
Ayres and Dekker's presentation of his character is thoroughly
fresh and original. He made Ayre an embodiment of many exemplary
qualities and an object of emulation for hard working craftsmen.
The King of The shoemakers' Holiday is a typical popular idol
who mixes with his subjects freely, enjoys their hearty cheer.
What Dekker seems to be aiming at in his portrayal of the king
is not so much historical and chronological accuracy as depict-
ing an ideal king of the type the citizens liked. Though one
sometimes feels that the success of his good women is mechanical
it is impossible to say that they are wooden. In his presen-
tation of ideal women Dekker lays too much emphasis on the
chief trait of the character. The characters are not shown in
their process of making, but they are continuously revealed.
The motives for the change of character are not given adequate
dramatic exposition. They are directly stated through the accept-
ed conventional stage devices like the soliloquy, aside or debate.

The language of Dekker is vividly topical; his blank verse
has a colloquial case, and an admirable simplicity and a kind of

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22. M.E. Lawlis: 'Another Look at Simon Eyre's Will,' N.Q.,

23. A.P. Lange (Gayley's Representative English Comedies, Vol.III,
pp.3-17) was the first to suggest that the king in the play
was Henry VI. W.K. Chandler (M.P. XXVII, 1929, pp.175-182)
supported the view of Lange and Spencer in his edition of
the play lists Henry VI in the dramatic personae. L.M.
as the king Dekker had in mind.
lyrical grace, it is always dramatically adequate and effective and at times attains high poetic level. In brief he has as Lamb says 'poetry enough for anything'. He knows the effect of dramatic poetry on his audience and varied his style according to the theme and occasion. The occasional imagery used in his domestic plays is derived from the daily experience and it suited his themes. For example, Firke comments about the assumed dignity and task of his mistress, Mrs. Eyre,

O rare, your excellence is full of eloquence, how like a new cart wheele my dame speaks, and she lookes like an old musty ale-bottle going to scalding. 24.

Like Dekker, Heywood took every care to make his plays artistic. Time was when it was possible to maintain with Hazlitt and Lucas that Heywood's plots had 'little artifice or regularity of design' and the 'peculiar oafish simplicity' which made him unable to create a single piece, which is not deformed by page of 'utter drivel'. For anyone who knows that the use of two or even more plots in a play was almost an unviolated Elizabethan dramatic convention, suggestions of the kind that Heywood 'might better have employed "the two hours traffic" of his stage in filling out the story of the Frankfords appear out of place. Miss Townsend in her brilliant essay "The Artistry of

Heywood's Double Plots" discovers the carefully worked out intricacy of structure, the 'artistry' of his plays. His dramatic craftsmanship lies in his "psychological art of arousing just the proper amount of interest", for "too much interest in the action about to be dropped must generate in his audience impatience with that about to be taken up; too little, meant a lack of suspense and a reluctance to return to the first action when the second had been carried in its turn to the breaking off point".25 As her main concern is with the 'artistry' of Heywood's plots Miss Townsend refers to the function of the plots in bringing out the full meaning of the central theme only in passing.

Michel Grievelet who realised this necessity of establishing the 'dramatic meaning' of Heywood's plots explored the 'texture of ideas' which holds the different parts of the play together. He shows how in The English Traveller, the play he has rightly selected, within each plot "the travel idea and the house idea are contrasted". And from plot to plot, the contrasts are in their turn contrasted. Themes and images reappearing here and there, from time to time, in different circumstances, weave an intricate web of mental reference between the two parts of the dramatic composition".26 Thus, in a way, the


artistic unity of his plays and the subtle craftsmanship of Heywood are well established.

As we have already seen, Heywood was writing as a practical dramatist for the public theatres. He was fully aware of the inherent limitations of his 'native' themes and the 'slender' arguments. He strongly advocated that the humble native themes could be taken up as themes for plays and from his practice realised the inadequacy of the conventional forms. In his processing of the source material for his plays he had the citizen theatre in his mind. Therefore a study of Heywood's plays, keeping in view the themes he selected and his aims, reveals that he employed certain dramatic techniques which are apt and effective and adequate for his purposes.

The Four Prentices of London and The Two parts of Edward IV are by no means the dramatisation of a single action. Each play is an episodic representation of various elements which appeal to the citizen audience and move them to tears or complacent laughter or enthusiastic applause. The chief connecting link of the various episodes in The Four Prentices of London is the family of the Earl. Similarly in Edward IV, the different incidents, however disjointed they may appear at the first glance, are connected by their direct or indirect bearing on the family of Shore. The defence of London by Shore and others is meant not only to glorify the citizen valour but also to make the domestic tragedy of Shore more effective when we realise that
the very king, in whose defence Shore fought at the risk of his life, seduced his wife, the tragedy becomes more poignant.

In How a Man may Choose a Good Wife from a Bad and The Fair Maid of the West Heywood employed the same episodic structure in a more subtle and refined way. The different incidents of the plays are subordinated to the central theme, the chastity and constancy of the women. The troubles created by Master Arthur to get rid of his wife, the evil counsel of his mistress, the persuasive suggestions of the Old Father to leave her good-for-nothing husband, the offer of her rescuer to marry her - all these diverse strains serve to illustrate the unswerving loyalty of Mrs. Arthur to her husband. In The Fair Maid of the West the virtue, constancy and courage of Bess Bridges shine throughout the crowded incidents of the play. This method of emphasizing the central theme through apparently varied and disconnected incidents creates the illusion of presenting the whole life of a time with all its varied activities. Of course, we cannot deny charges of some outward discrepancies and heterogeneity. But, beneath the incongruous sequence of events there runs a unifying theme, a current of ideas, all leading to an effective dramatic exposition - an effect not solely one of plenty and variety but also cumulative.

A full understanding of Heywood's dramatic craftsmanship involves a study of his use of sources. His variations on his favourite domestic situation of a virtuous but weak wife seduced
by an ignoble guest or friend and the magnanimous husband who forgives the sinner, is of immense interest to a student of Heywood's technique.

It looks as though Heywood experimented on this theme in his *Edward IV*. The 'promotion and fall of Jane Shore' was but a small part of Edward's reign. Heywood gave it an unusual prominence in both the parts of the play and to suit his dramatic needs he made almost daring alterations. In the historical accounts Matthew Shore was an unimpressive figure, little more than an unfortunate husband of the King's concubine. Out of this thin figure hovering in the chronicles Heywood created an ideal citizen, an honourable goldsmith, a staunch defender of his King and City. Similarly, as against diverse historical or narrative accounts, Heywood presented Jane as an exemplary wife unfortunately seduced by a ruthless royal lover. The final scene of reconciliation and reunion of the couple at the time of their death is Heywood's own invention. All these major alterations show that Heywood carefully processed his source material not only with a keen eye for the stage but also with a persistent moral concern.

A number 27 of popular novels are suggested as the possible

sources for Heywood's *A Woman Killed with Kindness*. What is evident from the suggested sources and the changes Heywood made is his admirable sense of selection. Heywood's debt to the popular novelists like Painter, Greene and Gascoigne is undeniable. But one is compelled to feel that in his use of the material Heywood was following his own artistic and moral inclinations as a dramatic craftsman and a believer in Christian forgiveness and charity. He owes much to his predecessors in the field of the Domestic drama, especially in the matter of creating its characteristic setting. Yet the fact remains that elements such as Christian forbearance and restraint on the part of the hero, the exonerating penitence of the wife and the final forgiveness and reconciliation are Heywood's own. In the sources for his play he may have found some suggestive outlines, but the impressive English middle-class setting, the countryside atmosphere, the central theme of the plays are his own. His characterisation is authentic, fresh and original.  

The art of Heywood lies not solely in his unification of the material derived from a wide variety of sources but in creating a domestic tragedy; by making required additions and alterations. The main plot of *The English Traveller*, as Heywood himself tells us, is based on an actual occurrence within his 'knowledge'. In the story

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28. The sources have hardly provided Heywood any substantial models for his dramatis personae. Heywood's characters are so real and life-like that critics like R.B. Sharpe felt that the play contains "a good number of more or less well concealed personal identification". *The Real War of Theatres*, p.230.
narrated in his Gunaileion the outlines of The English Traveller are particularly paralleled except for the two main differences noticed by Otelia Cromwell. 29 The prose version, "is much more, likely to derive from the play than the reverse". 30 Yet, the differences show Heywood's keen sense of the theatre. In the prose version the suspicion of the old father is aroused by a local rumour whereas in the play it is Delavil, Geraldine's friend, who as part of his designs on Mrs. Wincott, 31 carries tales to Old Geraldine against his son's affair with the lady. This gave scope for Heywood to introduce the theme of violation of the sacred bond of friendship which makes the tragedy all the more moving. It also gives a relevant hint about the seduction of Mrs. Wincott. Delavil cleverly contrives the separation of the lovers, by making the old father suspect his son's honesty, removes the main source of Mrs. Wincott's strength and exploits the situation.

Secondly, in the prose version the wife is confronted with


31. That a Delavil had such a design in his mind is evident from his words to Mrs. Wincott:

"For therein hath my brain exceeded yours:
I studying to engross you to myself,
Of his continued absence have been cause".

her guilt through a letter. But in the play, the scene in which young Geraldine confronts Mrs. Wincott with her sins is undoubtedly a more effective one.

The sub-plot of the play borrowed from Plautus's *Absterraria* was made thoroughly contemporaneous and the material was "adapted to the purpose of the English dramatist with only the slightest manipulations". The story had a topical interest because the gulling of the young heirs was common in the society of his times.

*A Woman Killed with Kindness* opens with the wedding feast of Frankford where all the important characters of the play assemble. The high-spirits at the feast lead to the hawking match between Acton and Charles which results in a duel and enmity between the two country gentlemen. Thus the sub-plot arises out of the main-plot. The inter-connection between the two plots is further established by the fact that it is Wendoll a figure from the sub-plot who informs Master Frankford of the quarrel. Frankford takes him as a gentle dependant and thus unwittingly becomes an agent of the ruin of his own domestic life.

From this point the two plots run parallel illustrating the central theme of honour and virtue. The similarities and

contrasts between the two plots are indicative of the thematic unity, for virtue and honour are inextricably tied together. Heywood, as Miss Townsend points out, "could not have failed to intend the dramatic contrast between the chaste Susan and the unchaste Anne, between the honourable Sir Charles and the dishonourable Wendoll, between the rewards of virtue and the wages of sin". Further the titular significance of the play is brought out in both the plots. Sir Charles feels the 'surcharge of kindness' on his soul and Master Frankford kills his wife with kindness'. This unity resulting from honour-virtue relationship and from the theme of kindness is further elaborated by Peter Ure.

Though Heywood's skill in creating effective dramatic situations is sufficiently noticed, their artistic relevance is very often questioned. Van Fossen in his recent edition of A Woman Killed with Kindness notes the dramatic importance of such a scene which may look like a disjointed unit at first glance. He shows how in the second scene of the first act 'the servants' frolick in the yard, provides a comic counterpart of the festivities that have preceded, and builds, in the dancing that closes the scene, to a height of gaiety that continues the


mood established in the first scene, a mood contrasting sharply with all to follow the play". The dramatic skill of Heywood lies in his subtle combination of separate scenes leading unto the emotional climaxes of the main plot.

Michael Grivelet has shown at length the texture of ideas and images combining the different parts of *The English Traveller*. One may find certain discrepancies 'on the level of outward happenings' of the two plots, but once the "attention has been drawn to the deeper moral argument inherent in both of them, we have no real sense of a break and change in the trend of our thoughts when we leave one series of events for the another."

Heywood employed a different technique altogether in *The Wise Woman of Hogsdon*. In the first Act of the play, he shows the wild-headed behaviour of young Chartley and 2nd Luce's pursuit after him in a disguise. In the second Act of the Play he makes the wise woman of Hogsdon the pivot of action. In a brief soliloquy given to 2nd Luce Heywood states this shift in action to the house of the wise woman, and drops a hint enough to raise the interests of the audience in the future action. Luce says

"I heard them talk of Hogsdon, and a wise woman, where


those aims shall be brought to action. I'll see
if I can insinuate myself into her service; that's
my next project: and now good luck of my side".37

The different episodes of the play are thus brought together
2nd Luce who succeeds in ingratiating herself into the good
looks of the wise woman carefully watches everything. By a
strongly motivated sequence of situations, all the characters
are drawn together in the final Act in the house of the wise
woman and at a ripe moment 2nd Luce exposes the entire game
and corners Chartley. Grace is married to Sencer, city Luce
to Boyster. 2nd Luce steps out of her disguise, after out-
wititng everyone including the wise-woman, her mistress. The
play closes with the happy announcement of Chartley:

One nuptial feast
Shall serve three bridals, where be thou chief guest.38

The main-plot of The Captives is derived from Plautus'
'Rudens'. Though Heywood followed the original in the general
line of action he made a number of alterations to suit his pur-
pose. From the number of changes he made, as Prof. Judson notes,
it is evident that Heywood recognised the necessity of making
them. These additions consist mainly "of songs, scenes required

37. Thomas Heywood: The Wise Woman of Hogsdon, Mermaid Edi-
tion, I, 11, p.264.
to give points of contact between the two plots, and a concluding scene in which the Elizabethan play-goer was enabled to learn how things turned out. At no point does Heywood give one the impression of being mastered, or even hampered, by his sources." 39

The main-plot of the play presents the restoration of Palestra and Scribonia - who lived as 'captives' in the hands of the procurer Mildew - to their parents. They preserve their chastity and honour in spite of the plans of the procurer. The opening scene of the play is devoted to Raphael's arrangements with Mildew for the purchase of Palestra and Sarlab's evil counsel to the procurer to run away with the girls and money. The second scene presents the quarrel between the two friars and Friar John's lecherous intentions of seducing the lady of his benefactor Lord Averne. The central theme in each plot is the test of chastity: premarital chastity in the main plot and post-marital chastity in the other. After starting the two plots with similar themes Heywood develops them fairly independently with the monastery as the place of action. Finally all the important characters in both the plots are brought together. Lord Averne invites all:

"We invite you and your friends to feast with us". 40

Fortune by Land and Sea depicts the reunion of two families, the Hardings and the Forrests. The old friendly relationship between the families is shattered by the newly acquired wealth of Hardings. The first two scenes of the play show the misfortune of Old Forrest. His eldest son is killed in a tavern brawl. The third scene shows the prosperous household of Old Harding and his imperious behaviour. Young Harding, who marries Susan Forrest without his father's knowledge comes to his father and tells him about it. The father disapproves his son's choice because Susan is poor. The fourth scene presents the meeting of Young Forrest and Rainsford who killed his brother. After some sharp exchange of words Young Forrest challenges Rainsford for a duel. In the first scene of the second act Young Harding and Susan, the newly married couple are reduced to the status of menial household servants and thus the 'fortunes' of Young Harding on land begin. In the second scene Young Forrest kills Rainsford and he takes shelter in the hovel of Old Harding. Mrs. Harding protects him and sends him to her brother. This marks the beginning of Young Forrest's adventures on the sea. From this point the two actions are developed in alternate scenes. The troubles of Young Harding come to an end by the death of his old father. Young Forrest distinguishes himself as a brave sailor and comes back from the sea with riches. After his return he marries Anne Harding, the young widow who helped him once. Thus the two families are reunited by the inter-marriages and the new
relationship is established on a more enduring basis than the
old one. The play ends with the words of Young Forrest:

"In us, the world may see our fates well scann'd
Fortune in me by sea, in you, by land.41

In all these plays Heywood may not have succeeded in creat-
ing perfectly unified works of art. But he has taken every
care to create reasonably well-knit plots. His dramatic crafts-
manship and acute knowledge of the stage are unmistakably evident
in every play. None of his plays would introduce actions without
a purpose. He shows a fine sense of proportion in arranging
the sequence of events and in making one action a complement
or a foil or a relief to the other. This is not to claim uncommon
artistic merits for Heywood but only to show that he has taken
enough care in constructing his plays. He is a born dramatist
with a natural gift for creating an effective and well organised
play. Therefore one is not justified in charging him with care-
lessness and thoughtlessness. He rises above the average
dramatist of his times in his artistic consciousness. He realised
the dramatic potentialities of the native themes from ordinary
life and not merely advocated their importance and necessity
but also showed their worth in his practice. It is not for
nothing that Charles Lamb felt, (as compared with Heywood whose
'plots are almost invariably English'?) "sometimes jealous,

41. Thomas Heywood: Fortune by Land and Sea, ed, Barron Field,
Shakespeare Society, p.78.
that Shakespeare laid so few of his scenes at home". 42

Heywood's characters are equally native. It is not an exaggeration to say that no other Elizabethan dramatist, not even Dekker, created so many living pictures of ordinary Elizabethans. All his characters, sailors, tradesmen, merchants, apprentices inn-keepers and drawers are the true representatives of their kind. His country gentlemen "are exactly what we see but of the best kind of what we see". 43 Even his minor characters like the serving men and maids are not unimpressive figures crossing and recrossing the stage; each has an individuality of his own and they are faithful and loyal of that ideal kind who sweat more 'for duty, not for meed'. We certainly feel that they are idealised copies of the real people of his times, and this idealisation is in conformity with his moral aim.

Heywood deliberately employs a simple style and he is confident of creating the required dramatic effects with it. That he is capable of writing in a loftier vein is evident from 'The Rape of Lucrece' as well as the frequent poetic utterances of a high poetic order like the much admired soliloquy of Frankford,

'O Nan! O Nan!'  

Though his versification is not on a high poetic level, it is mostly on a high dramatic level and is always adequate for the situation. It has been rightly pointed out that his verse is economical and tidy, formed to extract all the dramatic value possible from the situation. Its imagery and emotional range are restricted to the ordinary life and its experiences. Therefore his poetry is homely and effective, if not highly evocative, and considering his subject matter Heywood’s choice of plain style is well judged.