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Towards a Reformed Theatre: David Lyndsay and *Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis*

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Sir David Lyndsay's *Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis* is, notoriously, the lone surviving complete dramatic text of pre-Reformation Scotland. Yet scholars have often pointed out that a play which is so poised, inventive and theatrically confident cannot have sprung fully formed from a theatrical desert.¹ Both its writer and its audiences must have had experience of developed traditions of performance in order to create, and to respond to, a play of such theatrical sophistication and audience engagement. One important line of response has been to look beyond Scotland, to scripts that survive in other European traditions that influenced Lyndsay. Enlightening work has been done on his use of French forms such as the *sottie*, *farce* and *moralité*.² It seems very likely that he was also aware of and responsive to the English interlude tradition, especially the politically engaged plays of the Henrician court.³ But in terms of local traditions, as A. J. Mill pointed out back in 1930, 'any attempt to reconstruct the dramatic background of Lyndsay's play must [. . .] be largely conjectural.'⁴ Rod Lyall confirmed sixty years later that 'the most obvious range of influences upon Lindsay's drama is unfortunately the least visible.'⁵

Despite its length, of over four thousand lines, the action and characterization of the *Thrie Estaitis* shows marked similarities to the briefer allegorical-political

¹ See Anna Jean Mill, *Mediaeval Plays in Scotland* (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1927), pp. 101–04; David Lindsay, *Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis*, ed. by R. J. Lyall (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1989), pp. xxii–xxvi. All references to the play to this edition.

² See Anna J. Mill, 'The Influence of the Continental Drama on Lyndsay's *Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis*', *Modern Language Review*, 25 (1930), 425–42; *Thrie Estaitis*, ed. by Lyall, pp. xxiii–xxiv; Peter Happé, 'Staging Folly in the Early Sixteenth Century: Heywood, Lindsay, and Others', in *Fools and Folly*, ed. by Clifford Davidson (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 1996), pp. 73–111; Sarah Carpenter, 'The Politics of Unreason: *Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis* and the Practices of Folly', *Theta*, 10: *Folly and Politics* <<http://umr6576.cesr.univ-tours.fr/publications/Theta10>> [accessed 28 March 2013].

³ Carol Edington, *Court and Culture in Renaissance Scotland: Sir David Lindsay of the Mount* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1995), pp. 166–67; *Thrie Estaitis*, pp. xxv–xxvi; Sarah Carpenter, 'Plays and Playcoats: A Lost Scottish Interlude Tradition?', *Comparative Drama*, 46.4 (2012), 475–96.

⁴ Mill, 'Influence', p. 425.

⁵ *Thrie Estaitis*, p. xxii.

forms of the French *sottie* and the English courtly interlude. Its first half traces the youth of the ruler, King Humanitie, seduced from his virtuous path by three idle courtiers, Wantonness, Placebo and Solace, who introduce him to Dame Sensualitie. As he sleeps in her arms, three more dangerous political vices, Flatterie, Falset and Dissait, infiltrate the court and take over government of the kingdom in conspiracy with the corrupt Spirituality. Disguised as virtues, they bar virtue and virtuous counsel from the young monarch, until Divine Correction is sent from God to waken King Humanitie to his responsibilities and command him to call a Parliament of the Three Estates. The second act of the play focuses on this parliament, in which the Estates are challenged by John the Commonweal to reform the unjust oppression of the poor, and the corruption of the Spirituality is exposed. After forceful debate, the vices are hanged, the Spiritual Estate are exposed as fools, and the parliament passes reforming laws before Folly arrives to conclude with a *sermon joyeux* [joyous sermon].⁶ This action clearly echoes the form and subject matter of many French and English political allegorical plays; but it is unlikely that they can be the sole, or even the most immediate, influence either on Lyndsay's dramaturgy or certainly on his audience's theatrical experience. The play's lively ease with performance suggests there must also have been well-developed local traditions of dramatic entertainment.

Without surviving texts from Lyndsay's contemporary or predecessor playwrights in Scotland, we cannot explore these more local influences on the dramatic genre, the speeches and dialogue, the crafting of scenes and characters of the *Thrie Estaitis*. Yet although it is inevitably a limitation, this lack of play scripts might be a positive incentive to explore other kinds of evidence of local theatrical traditions. In approaching the *Thrie Estaitis* itself, the performance contexts are anyway almost as important as the surviving text. It appears to have been produced in different versions: we have evidence of varying performances at Linlithgow (1540), Cupar (1552) and Edinburgh (1554).⁷ While we cannot compare texts for these different versions, since none survives for the Linlithgow performance, we can appreciate their significantly shifting meanings by recognizing the theatrical implications of, for example, the changing venues, audiences, and dramatic modes, as well as the changing political contexts that inflect performance.⁸ A debate-interlude performed at court before an adult king, like the Linlithgow play, carries a

⁶ For this French genre, see *The New Oxford Companion to Literature in French*, ed. by Peter France (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

⁷ For information on the three performances see *Thrie Estaitis*, pp. ix–xiv; Greg Walker, *The Politics of Performance in Early Renaissance Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 117–62. Lyall questions whether the Linlithgow interlude can properly be seen as an early version of the *Thrie Estaitis*, but the similarities are accepted by most scholars.

⁸ For the shifting political contexts see Walker, *Politics of Performance*.

different theatrical and political force from the larger scale, open-air, mixed and public productions at Cupar and Edinburgh when the reigning monarch is an absent child. Different things can be differently said through such varying performances, even where the topics, action and cast appear to change relatively little. In the absence of comparative texts, there may therefore be other kinds of dramatic evidence that might help us to understand the sorts of theatrical strategies that were available to Lyndsay, and his creative use of them in his own play. Anna Mill's seminal work on theatre in mid-sixteenth-century Scotland confirms that we can reconstruct rather more about the organization and the production of performance, both courtly and public, than we can about its spoken or scripted content.⁹ In Lyndsay's particular case, records of his own professional engagement with a wide variety of performance modes can give us insight into his activities as organizer, consultant, producer, director and performer, if not as playwright. In understanding the *Thrie Estaitis*, it is therefore well worth revisiting this practical theatrical experience and reflecting on how it may have shaped Lyndsay's dramatic composition and attitudes to drama.

This may throw light not only on *Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis* itself, but more widely on mid-sixteenth-century modes of poetic and dramatic writing under the pressures of humanism, and of religious and intellectual reform. Lyndsay has been recognized as an especially compelling writer and thinker for his period, since he demonstrates the complex fluidity and lack of clear polarization between Roman Catholic and Protestant, traditional and humanist, in the lead-up to the Scottish Reformation.¹⁰ In retrospect his position might seem paradoxical: faithful to traditional Roman Catholic doctrine through his life, after his death he was admired and valued by the Scottish Kirk as an influential early Reformer; a court insider who as Lyon King of Arms promoted the central ceremonial of state and monarchy, his writings show an outspoken and often comic informality in their critique of kingly weakness and the machinery of power. This all means he cannot be placed securely in any of the camps which came to define the Reformation. His work offers, as Carol Edington establishes so persuasively, 'a process of enquiry, discussion, and debate' rather than a settled adherence to any established confession or party.¹¹ As such, he offers exceptionally interesting evidence for the urgent and developing currents of thought that characterize pre-Reformation culture. Exploring the context for the dramaturgy of the *Thrie Estaitis* may itself reveal this intricate interaction of influences, allowing us to see how Lyndsay's play-writing was able to

⁹ Mill, *Mediaeval Plays*.

¹⁰ Edington, *Court and Culture*, pp. 145–78; Clare Kellar, *Scotland, England, and the Reformation, 1534–61* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003), pp. 81–83, 128–36.

¹¹ Edington, *Court and Culture*, p. 211.

respond aesthetically, as well as ideologically, to the conflicted intellectual climate and topical issues of the time.¹²

Lyndsay's mixed and diverse career brought him into practical contact with a range of theatrical experience. Broadly, we might think about this in two relatively distinct if overlapping categories. As a young courtier, and companion to James V from infancy, he was actively engaged in both formal and informal versions of court performance. Treasury records and his own autobiographical statements reveal him as an actor in a range of entertainments apparently testifying to his own talent and inclination as much as to any official duty. Later he would have had the opportunity to expand this personal knowledge of the possibilities of court performance on diplomatic visits to the courts of England, France and the Low Countries during the 1530s. The 1540 Linlithgow play, if it is — as widely accepted — Lyndsay's work, demonstrates how richly creative he became in the devising of courtly interlude. On the other hand, as Lyndsay's career developed during the personal reign of James V, he took on increasingly eminent and public roles as a herald and diplomat, rising to become the senior herald of Scotland, the Lyon King of Arms. In this function he would have been professionally involved in a wide range of courtly ceremonial and display, in relation not only to such special events as royal weddings, entries and funerals, but also to the more regular management of tournament sports, diplomatic, seasonal and parliamentary ceremonial. Although the evidence for all these activities is scattered and often sketchy, when drawn together it suggests a sustained personal and professional interest and recognized ability in the production of performance both large and small scale, right across Lindsay's career: he is first recorded as performing in a play at court in 1511, while his major drama the *Thrie Estaitis* was performed in Edinburgh in 1554, the year before his death. This sustained practical theatrical interest and experience feeds into his literary work, both poetic and dramatic, and although the relationship between practice and writing is rarely entirely straightforward, it is undeniably illuminating.

Some of the earliest glimpses we have of Lyndsay show him in the role of theatrical performer at court, rather than as a poet, herald or courtier. In fact what may be his first named appearance in the royal *Treasurer's Accounts* records a payment in October 1511 for: 'ij ½ elnis blew taffatis and vj quartaris zallow taffatis to be ane play coit to David Lindesay for the play playt in the

¹² The title of this paper is in part a reference and homage to an essay which explores another aspect of Lyndsay's response to the developing thought of pre-Reformation Scotland, John McGavin's 'Working Towards a Reformed Identity in Lindsay's *Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis*', in *Interludes and Early Modern Society*, ed. by Peter Happé and Wim Hüsken (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), pp. 139–260.

King and Quenis presence in the abbay'.¹³ Although this is the only entry that links him explicitly to the performance of a play, our knowledge of his subsequent career makes it likely that he continued to be more or less closely involved in the theatrical activity at court over the next thirty years. Similar parti-coloured playcoat entries recur periodically through the reigns of James IV and V. While there is no direct evidence of what kind of play or entertainment was performed, it is probable that Scotland developed some tradition of courtly interlude along the lines of the Tudor drama performed at the court of Henry VIII.¹⁴ The 1540 Linlithgow interlude certainly shows a mature and effective familiarity with this kind of theatre, with its lively interaction with its court audience, engagement in topical political issues, and dependence on allegorical and type figures in a drama of ideas. Taffeta playcoats very similar to Lyndsay's 1511 costume are recorded in the *Treasurer's Accounts* for its performance date at Epiphany 1540.¹⁵ The surviving description of the interlude suggests that these costumes were probably designed for Placebo, Pikthanke and Flatterye, characters representing comic court retainers not unlike the parts of Wantonness, Placebo and Solace in the *Thrie Estaitis*, or in England Mery Reporte in Heywood's *Play of the Weather*. This would be a natural performance role for Lyndsay as a young courtier, giving him practical understanding of the registers and dynamics of interlude drama as performed to court and monarch.

Lyndsay's theatrical skills in his early career were also exercised in less formal activities. He was appointed 'ischar to the Prince', the future James V, apparently from his birth in April 1512.¹⁶ In later years he recalled to the young king memories of his infancy in which Lyndsay would entertain him:

Sumtyme playand fairsis on the flure
[. . .]
And sumtyme lyke ane feind transfeigate
And sumtyme lyke the greislie gaist of Gye,
In divers formis, oft tymes disfigure,
And sumtyme dissagyist full plesandlye.¹⁷

Perhaps no more than children's games, these nonetheless confirm a personal pleasure in acting and in theatrical sensation. They also alert us to Lyndsay's knowledge of popular as well as courtly performance. The traditional tales and figures he mentions here are the kind that recur in accounts of popular

¹³ *Accounts of the Lord High Treasurer of Scotland*, 12 vols (Edinburgh: H. M. General Register House, 1877–1978) [LHTA], IV, 313.

¹⁴ See Carpenter, 'Plays and Playcoats'.

¹⁵ LHTA, VII, 276–77.

¹⁶ LHTA, IV, 441.

¹⁷ David Lyndsay, 'The Dreame', in *Selected Poems*, ed. by Janet Hadley Williams (Glasgow: Association for Scottish Literary Studies, 2000), pp. 1–40 (ll. 13–18).

entertainment, such as the shepherds' games recorded in *The Complaynt of Scotland*.¹⁸ One especially suggestive comparison is the early sixteenth-century text titled 'The Maner of the Crying of Ane Playe' which appears to be the introduction to a May game.¹⁹ The speaker, a lively comic dwarf who identifies himself as 'Welth', addresses an audience of Edinburgh merchants in outspokenly comic and fantastic mode. Like Lyndsay he adopts a series of mythical personae, including 'the spreit of gy' (14). It seems likely that Lyndsay's charades for the infant king were not simply spontaneous invention but themselves drew on popular dramatic forms that were well established and widely known.

Both the courtly interlude and popular performance leave their mark on the *Thrie Estaitis*. Although the play text itself is designed for a mixed and public audience and large-scale open-air performance, it draws on some of the key features of indoor, courtly interlude drama. The scenes of the first half at the court of King Humanitie, the use of social type-characters, the quick-witted wordplay between characters and audience, and the political debate enacted before the twin kings Humanitie and Divine Correction, all show the influence of interlude mode.²⁰ Even the play's affectionately critical treatment of the young King Humanitie seems to reflect the tone of licensed banter with the monarch that characterizes much sixteenth-century Scottish court poetry. Lyndsay's experience of performing at court appears to inform his assured sense of what might and might not be said to and about royalty. The play's lively engagement of its spectators through direct address and comic play also suggests a writer with practical experience of audience interaction which translates well from the intimacy of the great hall to the open public playfield.

The *Thrie Estaitis* shows a similar lively exploitation of the familiar topics and techniques of popular dramatic games. Most explicitly, the farce episode that enlivens the Proclamatioun for the Cupar performance includes a scene almost identical to Lyndsay's own performances for the child king. Towards

¹⁸ Robert Wedderburn, *The Complaynt of Scotland, c. 1550*, ed. by A. M. Stewart (Edinburgh: Scottish Text Society, 1979), pp. 50–52. See also Janet Hadley Williams, 'Sir David Lyndsay's "Antique" and "Plesand" Stories', in *A Day Estivall: Essays on the Music, Poetry and History of Scotland and England*, ed. by Alisoun Gardner-Medwin and Janet Hadley Williams (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1990), pp. 201–26.

¹⁹ *The Asloan Manuscript*, ed. by William Craigie, 2 vols (Edinburgh: Scottish Text Society, 1923–25), II, 149–54.

²⁰ For the relationship of the play to the interlude tradition see e.g. Walker, *Politics of Performance*, pp. 117–54; *Thrie Estaitis*, pp. xxv–xxvi; Sarah Carpenter, 'Monarch, State and People: Dramatised Ideologies in the 1550s', *Theta*, 9: *Ideologies in Debate: Spectacle and Representation in Tudor England* <<http://umr6576.cesr.univ-tours.fr/publications/Theta9/>> [accessed 10 April 2012].

the end the Fool comes in '*with ane scheip heid on ane staff*', a theatrical practical joke to frighten the boastful foot soldier Fynlaw, who responds in terror:

Quhat sicht is yone, schiris, that I see?
In nomine Patris et Filii [In the name of the Father and the Son],
 I trow yone be the spreit of Gy!
 Na, faith, it is the spreit of Marling,
 Or sum scho-gaist, or Gyrcarling. (11. 249–53)

This miniature farce-within-a-farce assumes an audience familiar with performed fright-games, whether from the nursery or from popular festivity. Yet more significant than this inset episode, the theatrical motifs and techniques that belong to popular play are also at times used to shape the characterization and action of the main play. In particular, the chief Vices of the first part of the play, Flatterie, Falset and Dissait, interact with the audience very much like the dwarf in the May game. Like him, Flatterie describes to the onlookers the adventurous journey he has taken to arrive in Edinburgh, while Dissait offers a similarly comic account of his heritage and ancestors. Both, like Welth, chat openly and intimately with the spectators, urging them to recognize their familiarity with the speaker. Flatterie, indeed, actually identifies himself as a well-known figure of entertainment, alluding to his own seasonal theatrical role:

Quhat say ye sirs, am I nocht gay?
 Se ye not Flatterie, your awin fuill,
 That yeid to mak this new array?
 Was I not heir with yow at Yuill? (ll. 628–31)

Such use of popular motifs not only serves to engage the spectators theatrically, but advances the purposes of the play's allegory. The political vices that will corrupt the king and undermine the processes of government present initially as familiar figures of entertainment, asserting solidarity with the audience. The spectators are drawn into a sense of recognizable harmless enjoyment which acts to postpone their ethical judgement and even to implicate them in the dangerous political processes at work in the wider play.

Lyndsay's easy use of these forms is ideologically revealing. Popular performance games of the kind typified by Welth in the May play soon came to be associated by religious reformers with 'superstition'. Linked to Roman Catholic seasonal festivity, and thence to potentially pagan practices, the foolery and theatre games associated with Yule and with May were condemned and gradually repressed by the Reformed Kirk.²¹ Lyndsay, however, seems to have had no hesitation not only in drawing on their dramatic forms, but in

²¹ See Margo Todd, *The Culture of Protestantism in Early Modern Scotland* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002), pp. 183–226.

playing on the audience's affectionate familiarity and readiness to participate in such performance play. Like the reformers, he rejected what he saw as the idolatry of various kinds of Roman Catholic festivity;²² but he does not appear to read these popular dramatic games as limited to that context. Audiences were familiar with and responsive to their theatrical techniques, and Lyndsay was ready to use those responses to shape and enrich his own dramatic writing. In all, it seems that Lyndsay was ready to draw on his experiences of both courtly and popular performance practice, transplanting the techniques to different theatrical ground. The intimacy of elite court performance came to inform the drama of public spectacle; the festive ritual of popular play became the vehicle for reformist political criticism.

The more public and official strand of Lyndsay's long career as herald at the Scottish court seems equally likely to offer potential for theatrical development. Heralds were traditionally associated both with the organization of ceremonial, and often with its recording.²³ They wrote narratives in which, according to the fifteenth-century Ordinances of Thomas of Lancaster: 'toutes manieres de solemnitees, actes solomnelz et faitz des nobles aussi bien touchant les faitz d'armes comme aultrement soient veritablement et indifferemment registrez' [all kinds of ceremonies, solemn acts, and the deeds of noblemen, both deeds of arms and otherwise, are faithfully and objectively recorded].²⁴ By the sixteenth century, heralds in England were often responsible for the literature which celebrated tournaments and royal entries, noble weddings and funerals.²⁵ This literature gives us insight not just into the administration, but

²² *Ane Dialog betuix Experience and ane Courteour*, in *The Works of Sir David Lindsay of the Mount, 1490–1555*, ed. by Douglas Hamer, 4 vols (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1931), I, 267–74, ll. 2279–2322; 2501–40.

²³ See Maurice Keen, 'Introduction', in *Heraldry, Pageantry and Social Display in Medieval England*, ed. by Peter Coss and Maurice Keen (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2002), pp. 8–12; Katie Stevenson, 'Introduction', in *The Herald in Late Medieval Europe*, ed. by Katie Stevenson (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2009), pp. 5–8; Richard Firth Green, *Poets and Princepleasers: Literature and the English Court in the Late Middle Ages* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), pp. 168–72.

²⁴ Anthony Richard Wagner, *Heralds and Heraldry in the Middle Ages: An Inquiry into the Growth of the Armorial Function of Heralds*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 138 (trans. from Green, *Poets and Princepleasers*, p. 170). The date and authorship of the ordinances is disputed, see Adrian Ailes, 'Ancient Precedent or Tudor Fiction' in *The Herald*, ed. by Stevenson, pp. 29–39.

²⁵ English heralds' accounts survive for such events as: the tournament between Lord Scales and the Bastard of Burgundy 1467, in Samuel Bentley, *Excerpta Historica* (London: S. Bentley, 1831), pp. 171–212; 'The Marriage of the Princess Margaret, 1468' ed. by Thomas Phillipps, *Archaeologia* (Society of Antiquaries), 31 (1846), pp. 326–38; 'The Marriage of Richard Duke of York, 1478', in *Illustrations of Ancient State and Chivalry*, ed. by W. H. Black (London: Roxburghe Club, 1840), pp. 25–40; *The Receyt of the Ladie Kateryne* (1501), ed. by Gordon Kipling, EETS 296 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990); *The Spousells of the Princess Mary* (1505), ed. by J. Gairdner, *Camden Miscellany*, vol. 9 (n.s. 53) (1895).

into the ideology embodied in such displays. Accounts of court spectacle were designed both to publicize and to reinforce majesty: in the words of the Somerset herald who recorded Margaret Tudor's progress to Scotland and entry into Edinburgh in 1503, they aimed at 'thexaltacyone of noblesse'. Their richly detailed descriptions of magnificence were designed 'to thende to confort the hertes of age for to here it, and for to gyffe corage to the yong to do there after'.²⁶ The magnificent performance of nobility imaginatively asserted the glory of princes and aimed to stir the heart to reverence and emulation.

Lyndsay was clearly responsive to the power of such spectacle as a vehicle of royal magnificence and political authority, from early in his career. In the *Testament of the Papyngo* (c. 1530) he reflects with nostalgia on his memories of the reign of James IV whom he served as a young man, apparently being recognized as one of his 'spetiall serwandis'.²⁷ Lyndsay recalls in particular the chivalric battle sports for which James was renowned:

Triumphand tournayis, justing and knightly game
With all pastyme according to ane king.
He wes the glore of princelie governing.²⁸

At least in retrospect Lyndsay links the glorious spectacle of tournament performance with glorious governing, apparently accepting the important role of chivalric magnificence in the functioning of kingship.

The *Papyngo* was written early in James V's personal reign, recalling to him the admirable example of the father he would not himself remember. At the same time Lyndsay was supporting the young king's own interest in such warlike magnificence, composing a report especially for the nineteen-year-old monarch on the 'gret tournament' he witnessed on his first official international trip as herald to the Low Countries in 1531.²⁹ Lyndsay was clearly conscious of the political role of this kind of theatrical display. In 1537 he was actively involved in the organization of James's wedding in Paris to Madeleine de Valois, the daughter of François I, for which a fifteen-day tournament was mounted.³⁰ The king spent hugely on scores of ells of green, white and

²⁶ College of Arms MS 1st M 13 fol. 76a (printed in Thomas Hearne's edition of *Joannis Lelandi Antiquarii De Rebus Britannicis Collectanea*, vol. iv (London, 1770), p. 265).

²⁷ Robert Lindsay of Pitcottie, *The Historie and Cronicles of Scotland*, ed. by Ae J. G. Mackay, 3 vols (Edinburgh: Scottish Text Society, 1899–1911), I, 259.

²⁸ David Lyndsay, *The Testament of the Papyngo*, in *Selected Poems*, ed. by Hadley Williams, pp. 58–97 (ll. 502–04).

²⁹ See Janet Hadley Williams, "of Officiaris Serving Thy Senyerie": David Lyndsay's Diplomatic Letter of 1531', in *A Palace in the Wild: Essays on Vernacular Culture and Humanism in Late-Medieval and Renaissance Scotland*, ed. by L. A. J. R. Houwen, A. A. MacDonald and S. L. Mapstone (Leuven: Peeters, 2000), pp. 125–40.

³⁰ See Andrea Thomas, *Princelie Majestie: The Court of James V of Scotland, 1528–1542* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2005), pp. 184–88. Expenses on the event are recorded in NAS E21/35 (LHTA VI, 450–67).

carnation velvet, satin, taffeta and ribbons to make tournament clothes and caparisons, as well as on feathers, spears and other accoutrements. Appropriately magnificent performance in the tournament was not only a personal pleasure, but a means of confirming James's status and promoting a companionship of nobility with the French royal family who had already prompted the city of Paris to offer the exceptional honour of a royal entry to the Scottish king. Reports of this tournament suggest that its chivalric display did indeed enhance James's standing among the French, as well as cementing his relationship with the Dauphin, the future Henri II. A French chronicle recorded that in the wedding tournament 'sur tous aultres faisoit bon veoir le noble Roy d'Escosse et aussy Monseigneur le Daulphin qui estoient merueilleusement bien montez et équipez de toutes choses' [above all others it was wonderful to see the noble King of Scotland and also M le Dauphin, who were marvellously well mounted and equipped at every point].³¹ As herald, Lyndsay had a professional association with the management of tournament and his poetry shows an easy familiarity with this organizational role. Describing a joust in *The Historie of Squyre Meldrum*, he comments: 'the heraldis put thame sa in ordour | That na man passit within the bordour' and 'the heraldis cryit hie on hicht | "Now let them go! God save the richt!"'.³² His writing reflects the practical involvement in tournament performance that the external evidence confirms.

But in spite of this active participation and apparent responsiveness, a rather more ambivalent view of chivalric spectacle seems to emerge from Lyndsay's writing. Apart from the account of the great tournament in the Low Countries which he wrote for the king in 1531, and which has not survived, he did not as far as we know undertake the traditional heralds' literature promulgating the glory of such events. While praising James IV's tournament spectacles, Lyndsay emphasized to the adolescent James V that in spite of his excellent capacity to 'Ryde hors, ryn speris with gret audacitie' chivalric sports should be primarily pleasant pastimes which should not distract him from the more serious pursuit of learning 'to be ane king'.³³ The rhetoric of his diplomatic letter from Brussels in 1531 may suggest similar priorities: the 'gret townament' seems to be pushed rather to the outskirts of consideration. This letter is addressed to the Secretary, Sir Thomas Erskine, and is occupied largely with such diplomatic business as the renewal of a trade treaty, correction of rumours of the death of James V, and the movements of the Emperor

³¹ *Cronique du Roy François Premier de ce Nom*, ed. by Georges Guiffrey (Paris: Renouard, 1860), p. 205.

³² David Lyndsay, *The Historie of Squyre Meldrum*, in *Selected Poems*, ed. by Hadley Williams, pp. 128–74 (ll. 437–48).

³³ *Papyngo*, p. 68, ll. 286–89.

Charles V. Janet Hadley-Williams has demonstrated persuasively the business-like and plainly spoken tone of this letter, characterizing it as a 'concise and perceptive official communication'.³⁴ The only point at which a more florid lexis and nuance emerges is towards the end of the letter, after official business has been dealt with, where Lyndsay comments on the tournament almost as an afterthought:

my | *Lord* It war to lang to me to writ to *zour* | *Lordschip* ye triwmphis yat I haiff
sein sen my *cumin* to ye cowrt Imperall | yat Is [deletion] to say ye triwmpband
Iustynis || ye *terribill* turnementis || ye *feychtyn* on fut In *barras* || ye *naymis*
of *lordis* and *knychtis* yat war hurt ye day of ye gret towrnament quhais
cercumstans I haiff writtin at lenth In articles to schaw ye *kyngis* grace at my
*haym cuming*³⁵

This offers a noticeable shift in register from the preceding paragraphs. In context, the suddenly obtrusive alliteration has a faintly exaggerated effect, suggesting that the triumphs are a delightful diversion for the young king separate from the serious diplomatic business shared between Lyndsay and Erskine. Lyndsay may enjoy and respect the spectacle but it seems not to be central to his understanding of political diplomacy or the concerns of government.

His poetic representations of chivalric performance show a similar distancing. 'The Justing betwix James Watsoun and Jhone Barbour' which presents a farcical combat between the king's body-servants is a parody which relies on the magnificence of tournament without contributing to it. When Lyndsay does describe a serious tournament encounter it is in *Squyer Meldrum*, a work which Felicity Riddy has sensitively characterized as one which 'honours, laughs at, and in the end discards romance'.³⁶ In spite of his professional commitment to chivalry and the associated science of heraldic display, Lyndsay does not seem to make any imaginative transfer of its values or aesthetic beyond the core activities themselves. Although he was instrumental in developing the impressive *Lyndsay Armorial*, the first native register of arms in Scotland, the topic does not animate his own poetry. Nor does he exploit its potential theatricality in his drama. In the Linlithgow interlude, although the representative of the Temporal Estate is identified by traditional knightly accoutrements 'armed in harnes, with a sword drawn in his hande', chivalric skills are mocked in the satirically presented comic courtiers. One of them, clearly farcically characterized like Watson and Barber, foolishly boasts 'he was the best juster and man of armes in the world', and there is no display of

³⁴ Hadley Williams, 'of Officiaris', p. 140.

³⁵ Hadley Williams, 'of Officiaris', p. 127.

³⁶ Felicity Riddy, 'Squyre Meldrum and the Romance of Chivalry', *Yearbook of English Studies*, 14 (1974), 26–36 (p. 36).

serious chivalry to counteract the parody. The *Thrie Estaitis*, although its grand theatrical scale would allow greater scope, shows little interest in any of the kinds of courtly spectacle associated with tournament. For all his professional engagement with the performance of chivalry, Lyndsay does not seem to draw on it as an expressive mode for his own drama, or his theatrical or political thinking.

A similar ambivalence characterizes Lyndsay's engagement in other kinds of ceremonial. Acting as Lyon King, he was a key figure in the spectacular state funerals both of James V's first wife Madeleine and of the king himself in 1542. This involved ceremonial performance in presenting the soul-penny offering for the Queen and very probably, following heraldic practice, playing a central role in the cortège for James in the offering of the king's arms and accoutrements, and even in the proclamation of the next monarch.³⁷ He was also responsible for the practical supervision of James's exequies. He is recorded as personally authorizing the payments for enormous quantities of black cloth for hangings and mourning clothes, for hundreds of painted arms, the cloth of state and banners.³⁸ He also took receipt of a set of the king's garments to be put on the royal effigy, furnished with replica regalia. The Master of the Wardrobe, John Tennent, passed 'to Lyoun harret the day that the kings grace wes beryit ane dowblat of variant taffateis stickit with ane pair of blak hois of clayt cuttit out upoun blak taffateis quhilk wes put upoun the kingis figure'.³⁹ The late sixteenth-century historian John Leslie emphasizes the elaborate ceremonial splendour of the occasion: 'quhat evir culd be devysed in solemne pompe, or honourable decore, or duilful dolour and dule, sturt and kair, heirall was done fillit with all dew ceremonies and all diligence'.⁴⁰ As Lyon Herald, it is clear that Lyndsay was centrally and personally responsible for the complex organization and production of this impressive public spectacle, which occupied the streets and church buildings of the city as its stage.

It may be significant that Lyndsay does not appear to have seen it as part of his heraldic role to write any account of this funeral ceremonial, leaving it to historians like Leslie to memorialize its splendour. Later in his career he does describe a noble funeral in his poetry, in the *Testament of Squyer Meldrum*; but while his account luxuriates in the spectacular detail of the heraldic event,

³⁷ See Clare Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual in Early Modern England* (London: Croom Helm, 1984), pp. 216–34.

³⁸ See Thomas, *Princelie Majestie*, pp. 212–16.

³⁹ John Harrison, 'The Wardrobe Inventories of James V (particularly BL MS Royal 18C XIVf. 184–215)' Stirling Castle Palace: Archaeological and Historical Research 2004–2008, Historic Scotland <<http://sparc.scran.ac.uk/publications/pdfs/L2%20wardrobe%20inventories%20of%20james%20v.pdf>> [accessed 10 April 2012], p. 52 (fol. 214^r).

⁴⁰ John Leslie, *The Historie of Scotland*, trans. by J. Dalrymple (1596), ed. by E. G. Cody and W. Murison, 2 vols, Scottish Text Society (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1888), II, 259–60.

Lyndsay presents himself not as recording and communicating the power of the ceremony but as assuming again an organizational role. His relationship to the Squire's funeral is primarily practical, setting a distance between himself and the emotional effects that the spectacle is presumably designed to perform and to elicit from those attending. So Meldrum's testament requests: 'My friend, Sir David Lyndsay of the Mont, | Sall put in ordour my processioun'.⁴¹ Lyndsay's organizing voice then merges into Meldrum's as he carefully records the numbers, status and order of the various mourners, the detail of arms and insignia to be borne, and the accompanying heraldic ceremonies. These directions envisage an event that for spectacle might almost match the funeral of James V himself, held a decade or so earlier: the thousand footmen in matching clothing, Meldrum's silver banner accompanied with trumpets and tabors, his arms borne in honour and a 'multitude' of earls, lords and knights all in Meldrum's livery and carrying victory laurels. In fact the extravagance of the projected funeral itself conveys, in context, a pronounced edge of affectionate irony at this flamboyantly idealized chivalric pageantry. The effect is of a description which celebrates the *production* of the lavish spectacle of the funeral, rather than that spectacle's realization and enactment of a response to mortality and noble loss. This may be connected to conflicting attitudes to spectacle and ceremony in Reformation thinking. Huston Diehl argues that English Renaissance plays show 'an intense interest in images [. . .] and spectacles of the traditional Church' but that they are typically shown 'in order to demystify and contain them'.⁴² Lyndsay shows a similar interest in such spectacle, while holding back from its emotive power by concentrating on how it is constructed.

For even while asserting its glory, the poem challenges the traditional ceremonial of funeral. Meldrum himself, calling for 'musick and [. . .] menstrallie' about his bier, refuses conventional engagement in sorrow, commanding instead 'mirthis musicall, | To dance and sing'. He resists the spectacular performance of grief:

Duill weidis I think hypocrisie and scorne,
With huidis heklit doun ovirthort thair ene.
With men of armes my bodie salbe borne.
Into that band see that no blak be sene. (ll. 127–30)

This makes an interesting if oblique comment on the acres of black cloth, the reverential 'dule wedis' and hoods provided for the mourners at James V's funeral. These views may, of course, be personal to Meldrum whom Lyndsay

⁴¹ David Lyndsay, *The Testament of Squire Meldrum*, in *Selected Poems*, ed. by Hadley Williams, pp. 174–82 (ll. 92–93).

⁴² Huston Diehl, *Staging Reform, Reforming the Stage: Protestantism and Popular Theater in Early Modern England* (Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press, 1997), pp. 4–5.

treats as a valued if idiosyncratic friend. But it means that even while celebrating the honourable production of ceremonial display, the poem raises its association with hypocrisy and suggests through Meldrum its incapacity to express true belief or feeling. James Goldstein seems to touch on the same effect when he argues that the poem demonstrates ‘a powerful tension or ambivalence, a double perspective that indicates [Lyndsay] was simultaneously *attached* to the traditional chivalric values embodied by his friend and *self-reproachful* for maintaining attachments he knew to be moribund.’⁴³ Goldstein is exploring the poem from a psychoanalytic perspective that locates the antagonism to the celebration of chivalric spectacle in a personal and emotional anxiety. But it might equally be a more ideological tension that Lyndsay reveals here. The *First Book of Discipline of the Reformed Kirk*, published only some ten years after the poem was written, also expresses suspicion of funeral display and urges that ‘the dead be conveyed to the place of buriall with some honest company of the kirk [...] without all kind of ceremony heretofore used’.⁴⁴ While neither Meldrum nor Lyndsay appear to be advocating such an abandoning of ceremonial, the poem does seem to resist the theatricalized spirituality of traditional Catholic ritual practice. Meldrum himself, while insisting on ‘the use of feastis funerall’ (l. 196) and reverently accepting ‘my crysme, with the holie sacrament’ (l. 245), pointedly bans all priests from his funeral procession ‘without he be of Venus professioun’ (l. 152). The funeral spectacle remains an important act of honour and community, but within what Goldstein terms ‘Lyndsay’s fantasy of a desacralised world’. Ceremony displays shared social reverence without any longer embodying a sacramental spirituality.

Fuller evidence survives of Lyndsay’s practical involvement in organizing more celebratory spectacle. He seems to have had key roles in the design and production of the entries welcoming James V’s two French brides, Madeleine de Valois and Marie de Guise, to Scotland. In January 1537 Lyndsay left the royal party in France immediately after James’s marriage to Madeleine, his early homecoming very probably connected with his oversight of plans for the spectacular reception for the new queen. Preparations were far advanced when the royal couple landed at Leith on 19 May, and immediately letters were sent out to the sheriffs of Edinburgh and other towns for ‘ye conventioun of the baronis to the quenis grace entran in Edinburgh and coronatioune’.⁴⁵

⁴³ R. James Goldstein, “‘With Mirth My Corps 3e Sal Convoy’: *Squyer Meldrum* and the Work of Mourning”, in *Langage Cleir Illuminynate: Scottish Poetry from Barbour to Drummond, 1375–1630*, ed. by Nicola Royan (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), pp. 145–63 (p. 148).

⁴⁴ *The First Book of Discipline [of the Church of Scotland]*, ed. by James K. Cameron (Edinburgh: St Andrew Press, 1972), p. 200.

⁴⁵ *LHTA* VI, 313.

However, Madeleine's serious illness and death at Holyrood a few weeks later prevented the celebrations. Practical arrangements for this aborted entry have left little trace in surviving records, but the 'Deploratioun' Lyndsay wrote on Madeleine's death shows such an intimate familiarity with its organizational detail that it is hard to believe that he was not a central director. He records the people of Edinburgh 'labouring for thare lyvis | To mak triumphe'.⁴⁶ Scaffolds were built and painted for 'disagysit folkis' (l. 110). Fountains would have run with wine, the craft guilds would have paraded in green, the burgesses in scarlet, the lords in 'purpure, blak and brown' (l. 122). The 'loud minstrels' would have accompanied the procession while heralds and macers controlled the crowd and Madeleine would have proceeded under a canopy of gold borne by burgesses to hear 'ornate oratouris | Makand hir hienes salutatioun' (l. 162). The poem is one of a number of French and Scottish lamentations for the death of the young queen, but Lyndsay's particular focus almost turns his poem into an elegy for the cancelled entry itself, the spectacular theatrical ceremonial that never came to performance.⁴⁷ The procession would have publicly enacted the honour due to Madeleine, just as the French had honoured James with the royal entry into Paris; the poem records that honour almost like the published narratives that were increasingly coming to accompany such royal spectacles.

The impression the poem creates, of Lindsay's close involvement in the production of the spectacle, is convincingly supported by the records of preparation (which this time do survive) for the entry of Marie de Guise into Edinburgh barely a year later. Extracts from the burgh council records of July 1538 confirm that the arrangements for pageants at six locations through the city should 'be done with avyse of the said Daid Lindsay anent all ordour and furnesing', and that he should also, along with two other respected figures at court, Sir Adam Otterburn and Sir James Foulis, advise on the speech of welcome to be delivered in French. The details echo the 'Deploratioun' remarkably closely: we find mention not only of scaffolds and performers at the six stations, but of 'the craftis [. . .] in thair honest aray', the burgesses in red 'Fransche clayth', the chief dignitaries in 'purpouir [. . .] tanny, and [. . .] blak veluott' gowns.⁴⁸ Pall bearers in velvet were arranged to carry the canopy over the queen and an oration 'to welcum the Quenis grace', composed with Lyndsay's advice, would be delivered by Maister Henry Lauder. It sounds very

⁴⁶ David Lyndsay, *The Deploratioun of the Deith of Quene Magdalene*, in *Selected Poems*, ed. by Hadley Williams, pp. 101–08 (ll. 101–02).

⁴⁷ See Sarah Carpenter, 'David Lindsay and James V: Court Literature as Current Event', in *Vernacular Literature and Current Event in France, England and Scotland on the Eve of the Reformation*, ed. by J. and R. Britnell (London: Ashgate, 2000), pp. 135–52 (pp. 143–48).

⁴⁸ *Extracts from the Records of the Burgh of Edinburgh*, ed. by James D. Marwick, 4 vols (Edinburgh: Scottish Burgh Records Society, 1869–82), II, 89–91.

much as if the previous year's preparations were being effectively reactivated. Further evidence of Lindsay's role comes from Pitscottie's account of the welcoming pageantry in St Andrews where Marie first arrived on 16 June. Pitscottie may even have had some of his information direct from Lindsay, whom he cites as one of his authorities. He claims that the Queen was received by 'ane triumphant frais be Schir Dawid Lyndsay of the Mont, lyoun harrot' in which a cloud descending from the gate opened to reveal an angel handing her 'the keyis of haill Scotland' and delivering a speech 'maid be the said Schir Dawid Lyndsay into the quens grace instructioun qhilk teichit hir to serue her god, obey hir husband, and keep hir body clene according to godis will and commandement'.⁴⁹

Lyndsay was clearly very actively involved in the mounting and orchestration of these large-scale, multimedia, outdoor promenade performances of funeral and entry. In organizational terms this would provide invaluable experience for the conception of the Cupar and Edinburgh productions of the *Thrie Estaitis*: similarly large-scale, outdoor, built on scaffold and promenade action, music, ceremonial and spectacle, and complex central direction. But as with chivalric tournament, Lindsay's drama seems rather less responsive to, or less influenced by, the performance modes of late medieval funeral and entry pageantry than his experience and role as herald might imply. He adopts the mechanics of performance but appears to keep the values of such spectacle separate from his drama. In fact, even in his management of public pageantry itself, he appears somewhat resistant to the symbolic or ritual charge such events traditionally carried.

The nearest Lyndsay came to writing the kind of celebratory account of spectacle associated with heraldic literature was in the 'Deploratioun'. This is a lament for an entry that never was, and the poem is apparently designed in part to reassure the French of the honour planned for their princess. It may well have contributed to this effect. A contemporary French chronicler relating Madeleine's death records, in words that almost seem to echo the poem: 'n'est a doubter qu'on n'ait faict noubles et pompeuses entrées à la Roynne sa femme' [there is no doubt that a noble and magnificent entry would have been mounted for the queen his wife].⁵⁰ But the close similarity between the 'Deploratioun' and the burgh council records for Marie de Guise's reception emphasizes how focused Lindsay's elegy is on the organization of the magnificent spectacle rather than on its expressive content. While he mentions the pageants, he shows no interest in their subjects or in the scheme of imagery or

⁴⁹ Robert Lindsay of Pitscottie, *The Historie and Cronicles of Scotland*, 3 vols, Scottish Text Society, 42 (Edinburgh: Blackwood 1899), I, 379.

⁵⁰ *Cronique*, ed. by Guiffrey, p. 216.

representation designed to greet the queen. Gordon Kipling has demonstrated how accounts of royal entries are generally eager to record the rich subtlety with which the devisers of sixteenth-century entry pageantry designed their mimetic allegories.⁵¹ Lyndsay concentrates on an overall display of vibrant magnificence rather than on any pattern of ideas or images. His predecessor Dunbar makes an interesting comparison here. Dunbar's *The Thrissil and the Rois* celebrates a very similar royal wedding and entry into Edinburgh; but this poem develops the heraldic imagery of thistle and rose in Margaret Tudor's 1503 entry pageantry into a powerfully expressive allegory of dynastic power, national identity, and courtly love.⁵² According to Pitscottie's account of the St Andrews entry, Lindsay's wedding compositions were significantly more direct, discursive and exhortatory. The traditional visual pageantry of angel and keys formed simply a backdrop for 'certane wriasons and exortations' of explicit and literal instruction to the new queen. As in the shift in emphasis from Roman Catholic to Protestant devotional practice, for Lyndsay words begin to take precedence over images, spectacles or ceremonies as the vehicle for meaning.

The *Thrie Estaitis* appears to confirm this preference. Richly spectacular as it is, the play does not develop its ideas through the kind of complex imagery or formal allegorical schema generally associated with entry pageantry and other forms of ceremonial. The *Thrie Estaitis* certainly shows no anxiety over an enjoyment of theatrical display. It is visually striking, and confidently creates vivid set-pieces and special effects designed for large-scale, outdoor performance, which may well reflect Lyndsay's organizational experience with this mode of staging. The impressively magnificent entrance of the crowned, winged Divine Correction, or the elaborate scene of the hanging of the Vices towards the end of the play, demonstrate the same kind of pleasure in the power of theatrical effect and mechanical spectacle. The complex sequence in which Thift, Dissait and Falset are drawn up on the gallows towards the end of the play offers what is almost a reverse version of the 'triumphant frais' of St Andrews in which an angel was let down from heaven in a cloud. The printed text, although clearly published for readers rather than producers or performers, does not just outline the spectacle of this episode but indicates how it was achieved. Stage directions note that while Thift and Dissait may be represented by dummies for the moment of execution, Falset, who continues to speak after

⁵¹ Gordon Kipling, *Enter the King: Theatre, Liturgy, and Ritual in the Medieval Civic Triumph* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).

⁵² See Priscilla Bawcutt, 'Dunbar's Use of the Symbolic Lion and Thistle', *Cosmos*, 2 (1986), 83–97; Sarah Carpenter, "'Gely wyth tharmys of Scotland England": Word, Image and Performance at the Marriage of James IV and Margaret Tudor', in *Fresche Fontaynes*, ed. by Janet Hadley Williams and Derrick McClure (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2013), pp. 165–77.

the rope is put around his neck, is hanged in person: 'Heir sall he be heisit up, and not his figure, and an craw or ane ke salbe castin up, as it war his saull'.⁵³ The text shows an interest in the mechanics of spectacle, and an awareness of the craft of representation. However, on stage the meaning of this episode is not articulated symbolically, but moralized practically in speeches from the Vices. Their words from the scaffold comically undercut the gravity of the spectacle while directly implicating local figures, probably familiar to the audience, in the corrupt behaviour they represent. Theatrically spectacular, the image of execution itself becomes more literal than emblematic. Although the play is conceived allegorically, it generally employs an allegory of social and type personification rather than of image and symbol.

Although there are many such striking theatrical effects in the *Thrie Estaitis*, there is only one point where Lindsay appears to draw directly on his own experience of formal ceremonial. This is in the procession to the parliament that opens the second act. As Lyon King, Lyndsay would have been familiar with, and probably a crucial participant in, parliamentary ritual. Although there is little direct evidence of Scottish practice until late in the sixteenth century, it seems likely that by Lyndsay's time the Lyon King would have held a significant place in the procession to parliament, assisted in the ordering of rank as parliament sat, and may have 'fenced' the court and proclaimed the final legislation as it was ratified by the king.⁵⁴ The suggestion that the character Diligence, who performs many of these functions in the play, reflects or was even played by Lyndsay himself rests partly on the recognition of Diligence's overlap with the role of the Lord Lyon. The parliament that is held in the second part of the *Thrie Estaitis* is summoned, fenced and ratified with correct ceremonial procedure; this provides a powerful framework of authority and validation for the satirically outspoken and combative encounters within the session. Lyndsay even adopts the formality of the ceremonial to enforce a crucial allegorical point. Just before the official proclamation of the laws that concludes the parliament, John the Commonweal — representing the well-being of the realm of Scotland — is incorporated into the centre of decision-making by investing him in parliamentary robes: 'Heir sal thai claith Johne the Common-weil gorgeouslie and set him doun amang them in the Parliament' (ll. 3802–03). The image is a vividly resonant stage exploitation of ceremonial procedure; but even here its force is less emblematic than literal. Innes of Learney has investigated the ceremonial clothing worn by those attending the

⁵³ ll. 4271–72. The Bannatyne manuscript of this section of the play has a similar but less explicit stage direction that does not mention the mechanism of the dummies: see *Works*, ed. by Hamer, II, 374.

⁵⁴ See Thomas Innes of Learney, 'The Scottish Parliament: Its Symbolism and its Ceremonial', *Juridical Review*, 44 (1932), 87–124.

early Scottish parliaments.⁵⁵ John's gorgeous robe signals the status to be accorded by the Estates to the prosperity of the nation; but it appears to reflect actual ceremonial practice, rather than being simply a metaphor to express symbolic truth.

The parliament is the one episode of the play where Lyndsay does make a serious transfer from ceremonial to theatrical practice. However, he does so by enacting existing ceremonial conventions rather than by developing a mode of drama that is itself ceremonial or by drawing on the power and process of ritual. Even here, the pageantry is not taken wholly seriously, but parodied and challenged for satiric purpose. At the opening of the second part of the play as the parliament is summoned, the Three Estates disrupt and challenge the serious import of the spectacle by their ludicrous travesty of the procession to the session. The audience is released from serious assent to the theatrical representation of the machinery of state by a strikingly inverted procession: 'Heir sall the Thrie Estaitis cum fra the palyeoun gangand backward, led be thair vyces' (ll. 2322–23). The tone is set, and the audience is given a comic distance and alienation from the reverence such ceremony is normally designed to inspire. The parliament called by King Humanitie at the prompting of Divine Correction functions in the play as a serious and thoughtful engagement with the processes of how a nation may reform; but it does not require a reverential and potentially disempowering acceptance of its ceremonial procedure. It will not be accidental that John the Commonweal, responding to the summons of complainants to the parliament, bursts from the audience onto the stage with rough and comic irreverence which disrupts any notion of official dignity: 'Out of my gait! For Gods saik, let me ga! [. . .] *Heir sall Johne loup the stank, or els fall in it*' (ll. 2424–37).

Overall, we might argue that in spite of his professional involvement in spectacle, Lyndsay — at least by this stage of his career — shows some of the reformer's scepticism of ceremony and spectacle as semantic vehicles. This would be entirely congruent with the views on sacred imagery he expresses in *Ane Dialog betwix Experience and ane Courteour*, contemporary with the *Thrie Estaitis*. He accepts the traditional educative role of images 'quhilk of vnleirnit bene the buikis', but he argues vehemently against any more iconic value:

In sic fyguris quhat fauour can ze find?
With mouth, and eiris, & eine thoct they be maid,
All men may se, thay ar dum, deif, and blynd.⁵⁶

As playwright, he uses both allegorical images and ceremonial very powerfully in the *Thrie Estaitis*. But they seem designed to invite contemporary interpretation

⁵⁵ 'The Scottish Parliament', pp. 113–14, n. 3.

⁵⁶ *Ane Dialog*, l. 2327; ll. 2490–92.

and debate rather than traditional assent; they are used to explore critical ideas rather than to express emotive or iconic truths.

What might we learn from this survey of Lyndsay's personal theatrical experience? It apparently enables him to move effortlessly between courtly indoor performance and the demands of large scale outdoor theatre, drawing the intimate modes of one into the flamboyantly demonstrative practices of the other. He draws on and integrates elite and popular dramatic practices. In the field of ceremonial and heraldic performance Lyndsay seems interestingly transitional in his theatrical thinking, in a manner analogous to his religious position. He was clearly responsive to spectacle, and inventive, energetic, creative and authoritative in staging it both inside and outside formal drama. But in various works he also shows suspicions of the gap between public ceremonial and individual integrity, of potential hypocrisy, and of the capacity of image and emblem to deceive. In his religious thinking Lyndsay seems to have remained committed to the central sacraments and tenets of Roman Catholic faith; but he was eloquently sceptical of the pretension, hypocrisy, and empty ceremonial, as well as the ethical abuses he identified in the church. He was a powerful voice for reform, adopted as a beacon by the Reformed Kirk that was established so shortly after his death; yet to the surprise of near contemporaries as well as later generations, he seems not to have provoked significant criticism or attack by the Roman Catholic authorities of his own time. He demonstrates to us the complexity of the range of religious opinion out of which the Scottish Reformation grew. Lyndsay's theatrical practice shares both the power and the ambivalence of this religious position. He was committed to and expert in the production of courtly pageantry; but in his own dramatic writing he shows himself sceptical, if not of spectacle itself then at least of unexamined and unchallenged spectacle as a serious semantic or theatrical tool. Like his religious and political views, the theatrical mode of his drama is finely balanced between spectacle and argument, between traditional stability and reforming challenge.