

SECTION A**General notes on *The 3 Estaites*, by Alan Spence****Setting**

- There are 30 scenes in the Alan Spence version of the play but the action is continuous.
- Before them comes *The Proclamation*, intended to be performed in the weeks before the production as a self-contained 'trailer' for the play.
- The setting is non-specific. It might be the actual venue, or just 'Scotland' generally.
- The period. The play retains many of the topical references of Lindsay's original, set in the mid-16th century. But there are also contemporary references – traffic lights, Billy Connolly, etc. – which jolt the audience into recognising the play's relevance to the 21st century.

Set, props, lighting, sound, costume

- The set is almost irrelevant. The director may simply make use of the background provided by the venue, whether it is a village hall or a public park.
- Some furniture is necessary – a throne, the stocks, some seats and benches. It is up to the director to choose the style of these. S/he may want to create a 16th century feel, or prefer to emphasise the 21st century relevance.
- The props, too, will help to set the period. They could, like the play's language, cheerfully plunder the styles of six centuries.
- Some props will help to establish class, making an important point about the lavish life styles of the clergy compared with the abject poverty of the common people.
- Lighting could make up for a lack of scenery, particularly in scenes where it will create mood and atmosphere – the seduction scenes, the domestic interiors and the hanging scene, for example.
- The play lends itself to open-air, daytime production. In this case, no artificial lighting will be possible.
- Sound. Some music is required. This might best be provided live rather than on tape or disc.
- The director must make a decision about the period of the costumes, too. The contrast between the poor characters and the flamboyantly self-indulgent wealthy may be indicated most easily by using 16th century costume. On the other hand, modern costume can help to emphasise the play's relevance. As with the props, the production

might choose an eclectic mix from various centuries to illuminate some of the play's themes.

- The hanging of Falsehood and Deceit presents an interesting problem for the stage crew.

Language

- The language is exciting: basically, it is Lindsay's 16th century Scots, but Spence has introduced frequent modern Scots expressions and rhythms. This has two advantages: it gives the play a lively, contemporary feel and it removes the obscurity of some of Lindsay's language.
- Characters often use mild religious oaths – by the Rood, by the Trinity, so Christ me save, etc. – which were common in Lindsay's time but are no longer in use. Their retention gives a period flavour but also reminds the audience of one of the basic themes of the play – religion.
- The verse is irregular, inconsistent even, but the rhythm keeps the dialogue lively and vigorous.
- The rhyme schemes vary and are again often inconsistent. Rhyme, particularly the rhyming couplet, is very often used for comic effect – the equivalent of ending a joke with 'Boom, boom!' '*And Hercules? I'd break his bones. I'd even tackle Vinnie Jones!*'
- Latin phrases are sometimes used to indicate that a character is learned, as in Verity's opening line.
- Sometimes, a Latin phrase is used for comic effect by a character who does not know its meaning or who wants to impress.

Comedy, wit and humour

- This is a predominantly comic play, though serious issues – like religion, tolerance, social inequality – are dealt with.
- Much comedy arises from the use of dialect. The comic characters all speak in a broad modern-sounding Scots dialect. The serious characters, though still speaking in Scots, retain more of the historical language and generally do not use contemporary words and references.
- The relationships between characters are a constant source of comedy: the quarrels between husband and wife; the impertinence of the lower classes towards their 'betters'; the constant deceit practised by almost everyone on almost everyone else.
- No one style of comedy predominates. There are elements of satire, farce, knockabout, puns, word-play, irony and pantomime.
- The play's original title was *Ane Pleasant Satyre of the Thrie Estaites* and Lindsay used satire, often very bitterly, to attack the evils that he saw rife in the society of his day – the corrupt clergy; hypocrisy at all levels; poverty; sexual indulgence; deceit.

- There is physical, visual humour in the unfrocking of the clergy to reveal their exotic clothing beneath their robes, and in the hanging of the vices.
- Much of the humour depends on mildly shocking the audience with gentle vulgarity, both sexual and cloacal. It even involves the audience directly:

*And if you need to have a slash,
Intae the bogs now ye must dash
Tae let it rip and mak a splash.*

- There is a comedic contrast between the sexual language of the court and that of the common people.

- Lady Sensuality waxes poetic about love:

*To Queen Venus, celestial majesty,
I give glory, honour, laud and reverence,
Who granted me such bounteous blissful beauty
That princes in my person take pleasance.*

- Whereas Mrs Soutar is much more down-to-earth:

*I swear it's mair than forty days
Since ever he cleiked up my claes.
And last time we started to screw,
That foul Soutar began to spew.*

Acting style/techniques

- The play calls for a whole range of acting techniques:
 - the broad playing of the knockabout comedy;
 - sincere presentation of genuine feeling;
 - mock fighting;
 - love scenes;
 - solemn philosophical argument;
 - religious teaching;
 - songs performed within the context of a scene;
 - direct sharing of jokes with the audience.

Actor/audience relationships

- The actors sometimes speak directly to the audience.
- The audience are sometimes made to feel part of the action:

*'And now I do exhort you, leave your seat,
Since you have heard the first part of our play.
Go tak a drink and get a bite to eat –
Tarry not long, it is late in the day.'*

- The characters sometimes speak their thoughts aloud.
- Audience laughter in a play helps to shape the flow of the action.

Stage directions

- The writer leaves many decisions about staging to the director and designer.
- Action is sometimes implied by the text rather than spelt out in stage directions.
- The writer seldom indicates emotion or mood or how a line may be spoken. He leaves this to the actor's interpretation of the text.

Historical and social context of the play

- No earlier Scottish play survives than Sir David Lindsay's original version of this one. It pre-dates Shakespeare's plays by 50 years.
- In Lindsay's time there were no professional theatre companies.
 - Medieval theatrical entertainment often took the form of Mystery plays, performed by members of Trade Guilds.
 - These were performed in the open-air, in daylight, and usually had many episodes, each presented by a different group of actors.
 - These Mystery plays enacted bible stories.
 - Later forms (sometimes called Miracle plays) told the story of a saint's life.
 - Later still came the Morality plays.
 - A Morality play showed personified abstract good and bad qualities, such as virtues and vices, struggling for possession of man's soul.
 - Although all the Mystery play forms had a serious purpose – religious and moral teaching – they all included scenes of low comedy, to hold the attention of the uneducated masses.
 - Lindsay's *Satyre of the Thrie Estaites* was a form of Morality play.
 - It was probably performed by amateur actors, including perhaps members of the court as well as Trade Guildsmen experienced in Mysteries. Professional entertainers, such as musicians, singers and comedians may have been involved, too.
 - It is likely that no women took part; female parts were probably taken by men in drag.
 - The Soutar/Taylor scenes reflect the broad comedy element of the Mystery plays.
- Lindsay was a member of the Court and the play was performed in front of the King and Queen. Yet it contains a powerful attack on the political and religious Establishment.
- The country was bitterly divided over the question of religion. The Reformation created a new Protestant Church, separate from the Roman Catholic Church. Lindsay ferociously attacks the hypocrisy and cruelty of the Catholic clergy but he seems to be proposing a

thorough reforming of that church rather than supporting a move to a new one.

- The gap between the wealthy and the poor was enormous. Oppression of the poor was common. There was no form of social support for the needy, elderly, infirm or jobless. Lindsay, though a member of a highly privileged class, speaks out strongly for the poor and helpless.
- Lindsay's original production in 1554 lasted nine hours (including intervals). Spence's version is very much shorter.
- The mixture of elegant debate and coarse humour in the play reflects a desire to appeal to both sides of the 16th century social divide.

Relevance to Scottish society today

- The play is all about Scotland and Scottish society. It was the social and religious conditions of the 16th century that inspired the play but sadly much of Lindsay's satire is still relevant today.
 - The poverty of the common people of Scotland.
 - The difference between the moral standards preached by those in authority and the immorality of their own behaviour.
 - Oppression of the poor.
 - Injustice.
 - Ignorance.
 - The prevalence of dishonesty – conmen, cheats, liars, deceivers, criminals, false prophets.

Target audience

- Scots, of all ages and classes.
- Those with an interest in history.
- Those with an interest in religion.
- Those with an interest in social justice.

Structure of the play

An overview

- The play progresses chronologically, more or less in real time.
- The play is divided into 30 scenes, but the action flows smoothly from one to the next.
- Most of the characters are on-stage throughout, even when they don't take part in the action. The main exceptions are the Soutar/Taylor families who appear only in a couple of scenes and Folly who is only in the last scene.
- The structure of the play is quite different from later plays: themes and issues tend not to run right through the play but are limited to specific sequences.
- Characters are only a short step forward from the abstract figures of medieval morality plays and pageants. There is seldom much development of character as the plot progresses.
- The characters' names indicate that they represent a quality, a virtue or a vice in mankind.
- The exception is again the Soutar/Taylor families. In the original these names indicate trades (cobbler and tailor) and the characters simply represent the class of craftsmen. Spence has personalised them by turning the jobs into names.

The Proclamation

(Pages 3–9)

- Intended to be performed as a 'trailer', some weeks in advance of the production.
- Apart from Diligence, the Herald, none of the characters appear in the play itself.
- Diligence establishes the role which he will sustain in the play – as a kind of Narrator, speaking directly to the audience.
- None of the serious themes of the play are introduced.
- This is low comedy, broad and vulgar, intended to catch the attention of a potential audience.
- It foreshadows the comedy of the Soutars and Taylors.

Part One

Scene 1

(Pages 13–15)

A prologue

- Brings most of the cast on-stage.
- Diligence sums up what will happen in the serious themes of the play.
- Diligence breaks the solemn mood with a little modern reference to mobile phones and photography.

Scenes 2 and 3

(Pages 15–23)

Begins action and introduces storyline

- We meet the King and his three courtiers.
- The King is not tempted by news of Dame Sensuality's imminent arrival.
- Sensuality and her three handmaidens declare (and sing) their philosophy – *carpe diem*.

Introduces characters

- The King appears to have a genuine desire to lead a pure life.
- His courtiers work hard to convince him that 'lechery is no sin'. Their argument is based mostly on the fact that many of those in religious orders practise it with enthusiasm.
- Sensuality delights in her own attractions. Her handmaidens preach the joys of sex.

Introduces themes and issues

- Sexual licence – one of the main themes of the play.
- The notorious sexual freedom that the church hierarchy allows itself.
- King Humanity's basic goodness.

Scenes 4–7

(Pages 23–30)

Develops action and storyline

- The King feels desire for Sensuality and sends his courtiers to fetch her.
- She is eager to ensnare him.
- As a side issue, Wantonness picks up Hameliness. Sexual desire is not the prerogative of any one class.

Develops characters and relationships

- The weakness of Humanity when faced with temptation.
- The readiness of Sensuality to take the King.
- The readiness of Hameliness to take Wantonness.
- Solace is jealous.
- The King is anxious, because of his lack of experience.
- Sensuality is quite poetic in wooing the King.
- As usual, the lower class characters are more open and blunt about things.

Develops themes and issues

- Sexuality
 - The King knows he should take a moral stance, but desire is too strong.
 - Sensuality has no scruples and no embarrassment about her sexuality.
 - The lustful behaviour of prelates, bishops, nuns, prioresses and friars justifies misbehaviour of laymen.
 - Lustful behaviour among the clergy diminishes the authority of the church by bringing it into disrepute.
- Hypocrisy
 - The churchmen personify hypocrisy by their behaviour.
 - There is nothing hypocritical about the behaviour of anyone else in these scenes. They are open about their attitude to sexual freedom.
- False Counsel
 - His courtiers are unscrupulous in finding arguments to persuade the King to abandon his moral stance.

Scene 8*(Pages 31–32)****Develops action and storyline***

- The entry of Guid Counsel introduces the opposition, the good guys. Or in this case, the good woman. It is her plan to re-establish her place in the hearts and minds of the Scots and so save the King.

Scenes 9–12*(Pages 32–45)****Develops action and storyline***

- Reinforcements for the bad guys arrive, in the form of the three Vices.
- To aid their plans they disguise themselves as virtues.
- They quickly ingratiate themselves with the King.

- They repel Guid Counsel, whom they recognise as a threat to their influence over the King.

Develops characters and relationships

- Each Vice demonstrates his particular skill on the King.
- The King orders the Vices to bring Guid Counsel to him. They swear they will do so, but immediately plot amongst themselves to keep her from the King.
- Guid Counsel, temporarily defeated will exercise patience.
- Sensuality and her minions strengthen their hold over the men in another song, this time extolling love rather than mere sex.

Develops themes and issues

- Sexuality
 - The King and all three courtiers have been enjoying sexual dalliance.
- Hypocrisy
 - The Vices claim that Guid Counsel is a criminal.
 - The women’s song praises love, though their only real interest is sex.
- Corruption
 - The King takes the Vices at their face value, giving them jobs at his Court.

Scene 13

(Pages 45–48)

Develops action and storyline

- Reinforcements now for the virtuous, in the form of Verity.
- The Vices realise that they must again keep her from the King.
- They enlist the aid of the Spiritual Estate.

Develops characters and relationships

- Each Vice has his own method of dealing with the Spiritual estate.
- Verity’s simple goodness is no protection against the corruption of the church.

Develops themes and issues

- Hypocrisy
 - The Vices easily persuade the Spiritual estate that Verity is a heretic.
- Corruption
 - The Bishop pays Deceit for his treatment of Verity.
- Injustice
 - Verity is put in the stocks, though innocent.

Scenes 14–15*(Pages 49–57)****Develops action and storyline***

- More reinforcements for the virtuous, now in the form of Chastity.
- She is roughly rejected by the Prioress who admits that her allegiance is to Sensuality.
- In turn the Bishop, Parson, Merchant and Temporality reject her.
- She is welcomed by two new characters – Soutar and Taylor.
- Their wives beat them and drive off Chastity, in a scene of knockabout comedy.
- Chastity now approaches the King but he accepts Sensuality's advice to get rid of her.
- The Vices put Chastity into the stocks alongside Verity.

Develops characters and relationships

- Only the craftsmen are willing to entertain Chastity.
- They are over-ruled by their wives.
- The relationship within these marriages is of total domination by the wives. The men might claim with some truth that they are victims of sexual, verbal and physical abuse.
- Sensuality offers the King an ultimatum – banish Chastity or she will leave him.
- King Humanity is completely under Sensuality's spell.

Develops themes and issues

- Sexuality
 - The Prioress and Bishop, despite their vows of Chastity prefer to follow Sensuality.
 - The Soutar and Taylor wives complain about their husbands' failure to satisfy them sexually.
 - In strong contrast with the last few scenes, the Soutar/Taylor episode is full of basic humour – violence and crude language. It provides a welcome injection of broad humour after the complaints of Guid Counsel, Verity and Chastity.
 - The overt sexual drive in the play comes mostly from women: Sensuality and her handmaidens, the Prioress and the Soutar/Taylor wives.
- Hypocrisy
 - The Merchant and Temporality reject Chastity on the grounds that they are married.
 - Prioress, Bishop and Parson each recommend that Chastity move on to another, lower level in the religious hierarchy. Her

experience of the lowest level – the nuns – is that they are as false to their vows as their superiors.

- Injustice
 - Chastity is put in the stocks though innocent.

Scenes 16–20

(Pages 57–70)

Develops action and storyline

- Divine Correction's Varlet announces the arrival of his master, bringing retribution.
- The Vices are so scared that they flee – to hide amongst the Merchants, Craftsmen and Spirituality.
- Flattery settles himself comfortably among the Spiritual Estate where he expects to thrive.
- Falsehood and Deceit steal the King's treasure chest but fall out over the division of the spoils.
- Divine Correction proclaims that he will judge all wrongdoers, even kings, if necessary.
- He frees Verity and Chastity and banishes Sensuality.
- The King promises to reject all sin and obey Divine Correction.
- Divine Correction asks the King to call a parliament of the Thrie Estaites.

Develops characters and relationships

- Each Vice identifies his own natural home – Flattery with the Spirituality, Deceit with the Merchants and Falsehood with the Temporality (the Craftsmen).
- Given the opportunity, Falsehood and Deceit become thieves and immediately fall out, fighting violently.
- Divine Correction has authority that no one dares question.
- Guid Counsel, Verity and Chastity form a natural alliance under Divine Correction's lead. Just as the sexual drive of the play comes from women, so does much of the impetus for good.
- King Humanity, freed from Sensuality's influence, recognises his duty.
- Wantonness, Chill-Oot and Solace repent – but blame the Spirituality for leading them astray by being such a bad example.
- Divine Correction is no puritan. He lists legitimate pastimes for the King to enjoy instead of sex.

Develops themes and issues

- Sexuality
 - Though on her way to banishment, Sensuality dallies with members of the Spirituality.

- **Hypocrisy**
 - **The Spirituality** accept sensuality's banishment but plan to see her again.
 - **Flattery** makes himself comfortable among the Spirituality.
 - **The courtiers** blame others for their promotion of Sensuality with the King.
- **Corruption**
 - **Two of the Vices** readily take to crime but quarrel bitterly over the spoils.

Part Two

Scenes 21–23

(Pages 73–81)

Develops action and storyline

- The Poor Man's entry changes the emphasis of the play, introducing a more political theme – the oppression of the poor.
- The oppression in this case has been by the church.
- Flattery, now disguised as a Pardoner, pretends to divorce the Soutars.
- He sells the Poor Man a useless Pardon.

Develops characters and relationships

- The Poor Man is a victim of state and church.
- Though naïvely accepting Flattery's pardon at first, he gets a violent revenge when he sees through the scam.
- Soutar seeks a divorce from Flattery on the grounds of his wife's spitefulness and sexual demands.
- Mrs Soutar seeks a divorce on the grounds of her husband's lack of sexuality.
- The Poor Man has a natural reverence for the Pardoner but soon sees through him.

Develops themes and issues

- Sexuality
 - The Soutar complains of his wife's excessive sexual appetite.
 - His wife complains of his lack of sexual appetite.
- Hypocrisy
 - The Soutar maligns his wife behind her back but claims to admire her to her face.
- Corruption
 - Flattery sells fake divorces, false relics and meaningless pardons.
- Oppression
 - The Poor Man's story of the church's treatment of him.
- Injustice
 - Diligence warns the Poor Man that the law won't support him against the church, even though his cause is good.

Scene 24-25*(Pages 82-87)****Develops action and storyline***

- The Thrie Estaites enter, backwards, each led by the appropriate Vice.
- Their backward progress indicates that they have, metaphorically, lost their ability to choose the right way. They no longer walk forward on the moral path.
- The Bishop, as spokesman for the Estaites, refuses to accept King Humanity's direction.
- Jane the Common-weil, representing the ordinary men and women of Scotland, is called to give evidence.
- She condemns the folly of the Thrie Estaites in allowing themselves to be misled by the Vices.
- Divine Correction gives orders that the Vices should be put in the stocks.
- Deceit and Falsehood are put in, but Flattery avoids the punishment by hiding among the Spirituality.

Develops characters and relationships

- King Humanity is now determined to put things right in his kingdom.
- The Bishop shows no remorse, urging the King to postpone the day of reckoning.
- Jane's complaint is instantly dealt with by Divine Correction.

Develops themes and issues

- Sexuality
 - Jane accuses Spirituality of 'gross carnality'.
- Hypocrisy
 - The Bishop argues that wrongful behaviour is acceptable because it has gone on for 'mony a year'.
- Corruption
 - Jane's testimony lists the misdemeanours of the Thrie Estaites: sexual self-indulgence, cheating, theft, etc.
- Oppression
 - The poor, represented by Jane, are kept down because the merchantmen and tradesmen profit by deceiving their customers and lying to them.
- Injustice
 - Although this state of affairs has gone on for years, nothing has been done by either state or church to put matters right.
- False Counsel
 - The Bishop advises the King not to enforce his reforms because, he claims, the people won't stand for it.
 - Jane, representing the people, denies his claim.

Scene 26–28*(Pages 88–102)****Develops action and storyline***

- The crux of the play. The Debate allows both sides to put their arguments.
- Jane and the Poor Man give evidence.
- Divine Correction orders the merchants and craftsmen to abandon their illegal and unfair practices. They repent and embrace Jane.
- The churchmen argue that they are exempt from temporal punishment.
- Jane elaborates on the crimes of the church.
- Temporality and the Merchants over-rule Spirituality on a democratic vote. This is a new concept since the church has traditionally claimed to be above the law and to be able to impose its will even against a majority.
- Jane declares her belief in God, Christ and the teachings of scripture.
- Crucially, she also states her belief in the sanctity of the Church – but not in false bishops and priests. She is arguing for a reformed Catholic Church rather than for a completely new organisation.
- Flattery is divested of his habit and revealed in his true character.
- The Prioress is shown to have the silk dress of a loose woman beneath her habit.
- The prelates robes are shown to be hiding clown's attire.
- Jane is given fine new garments and a seat in Parliament. The ordinary people are being given a voice in governing their country.

Develops characters and relationships

- Jane proves herself a powerful advocate.
- Her complaints are against both church and state laws. She eloquently describes what it is like to be poor and oppressed.
- The craftsmen and the merchants are at first reluctant to accept change unless the church does also.
- The Bishop is unrepentant, claiming exemption from state laws.
- When the church refuses to yield, the other two Estaites turn against Spirituality and claim the right to impose a democratic decision on the church.
- The Poor Man, encouraged by Jane, argues his case well against the Bishop.
- The Bishop is ignorant of scripture.
- Prioress has no vocation. She would rather be married. The play is making the point that corruption in the church is due to the fact that so many joined the priesthood for the wrong reasons. They lack true spirituality.

- The Bishop's parting shot is to say that the real fools are those who promoted worthless priests to high office.

Develops themes and issues

- Sexuality
 - Churchmen are sexually self-indulgent.
- Hypocrisy
 - The bishops enjoy material wealth and pleasures.
 - The Bishop sees no need to preach or to be familiar with the bible.
 - The Bishop demands that Jane be burned at the stake.
- Corruption
 - Many are paid well though doing no work – beggars, gamblers, spongers and friars, for example.
 - Petty thieves are hanged but great tyrants escape the law by bribery.
- Oppression
 - The poor are forced to pay huge rents or lose their land.
 - The Bishops exact death duties from the very poor.
- Injustice
 - The Bishop threatens both the Poor Man and Jane, though knowing that they are speaking the truth.

Scene 29–30

(Pages 102–110)

Develops action and storyline

- Falsehood and Deceit are hanged. Flattery escapes a similar fate, by helping to hang them.
- Folly, making his first appearance almost at the end of the play, preaches a mock sermon.
- He proves that all men are fools – even princes who shed men's blood for worldly success.

Develops characters and relationships

- Falsehood warns the craftsmen that can't survive without him.
- Deceit warns the merchants that they won't thrive without him.
- Flattery is less easily seen through than the other vices. He lives on, to develop his skills elsewhere.
- Folly's sermon strikes home.
 - Merchants, even when behaving legitimately, take foolish risks.
 - Craftsmen may be betrayed by their own self-deceit.
 - Kings selfishly put their subjects at risk for their own glory.
- The King is made to feel uncomfortable by Folly's words.

Develops themes and issues

- Sexuality
 - Folly warns the craftsmen against their sexuality.
- Hypocrisy
 - Flattery pretends to join the judges and kills his fellow-vices to ensure his own escape.

Areas of study for *The 3 Estaites*

For this play, the most appropriate area of study is Social, Political and Religious Dimensions.

Social, Political and Religious Dimensions

- **Social background and conditions.**
 - Huge divide between the rich and the poor.
 - The church is more likely to take advantage of the poor than to help them.
 - Both church and state impose taxes on the poor.
 - Many of the priesthood are corrupt.
 - The poor have no voice in government.
 - Many merchants and tradesmen are dishonest.
 - The King has absolute power.
- **Nationalism.**
 - Any mention of England is derogatory.
 - Scotland has trade ties with other nations.
- **Political theatre as entertainment.**
 - The themes of the play are political and religious.
 - Even in the broadest comic scenes the play is making a point about social conditions.
 - The play attacks injustice, oppression and corruption, often using humour as a weapon.
- **Distribution of wealth.**
 - The great wealth of the religious hierarchy is contrasted with the extreme poverty of the lower classes.
 - The middle classes – merchants and craftsmen – pursue wealth by dishonest or risky means.
 - The poorest subjects scarcely have clothes fit to wear or food fit to eat.
- **Relationship between the individual and the establishment.**
 - The ordinary citizen has few rights.
 - The individual is at the mercy of both state and church.
 - The law tends to support the Establishment against the individual.
 - Punishment is inflicted without proof of guilt.
 - The church is so corrupt that pardons may be bought.
 - The church sells false relics to increase its wealth.
 - Rulers are too busy with their own affairs to notice the sufferings of the poor.

- **Sectarianism.**
 - The church is constantly held up to ridicule.
 - Jane makes the point that it is corrupt clergy who are to blame and not the church itself.
 - There is no support for a puritanical way of life.
- **Devices used to communicate social, political and religious messages.**
 - Contrast in costume between rich and poor.
 - Jane's account of church taxes destroying family life.
 - The locking into the stocks of innocent people.
 - The Thrie Estaites walking backwards.
 - Jane being given a seat in parliament.
 - Folly's sermon.
 - Jane's creed.
 - The clergy's gaudy under-dressing.
 - The Bishop's ignorance of scripture.
 - The Prioress's account of how she was forced to enter the church.
 - The Vices adopting disguises.

In this play, there are issues that are relevant also to the area Use of history, nostalgia and popular tradition.

Use of history, nostalgia and popular tradition

- **Historical accuracy.**
 - Spence's play is based on Lindsay's which was an account of contemporary life.
 - Spence uses deliberate anachronisms for comic effect – credit cards, Vinnie Jones, etc.
 - Some anachronisms point up the parallels between 16th- and 21st-century problems.
- **Devices used to create a sense of period.**
 - The language.
 - The costume.
 - References to the political and religious structures of society.
 - The status of merchants and craftsmen as part of the Establishment.
 - The temporal authority of the church.
 - The absolute power of the King.
 - The music.
- **Growth and decline of industry.**
 - In pre-industrial Scotland, the emphasis is on agriculture.

- The poor crofter is suffering from over-taxation.
 - A new feu system is putting crofting life at risk.
 - The only manual workers outside agriculture are the craftsmen like the tailor and cobbler.
- The sectarian divide.
 - There is not yet a well-established divide between a Catholic and a Protestant church.
 - There is strong condemnation of the corruption of the Catholic church.
 - There is a hint of the growth of Puritanism, but there is no support for it in the play.
 - The church refuses to accept the bible in English.
- Distribution of wealth.
 - The powerful are extremely wealthy.
 - The underprivileged are extremely poor.
- Use of period song and dance.
 - The songs belong entirely to the sensual characters.
 - They are used to help seduce the King.
- Variety, pantomime and farce.
 - Direct address to the audience.
 - Slapstick.
 - The Soutar and Taylor scenes.
- Satire
 - The entire play is satirical in intent.
 - The main targets of the satire are
 - Man's moral weakness.
 - Hypocrisy.
 - Corruption.
 - Misrule.
 - Some examples of particular aspects of satire are
 - The arguments of the Bishop.
 - The false Pardoner's stock-in-trade.
 - The gaudy clothes beneath the holy habits.
- Celebrations, rituals, social gatherings.
 - Much of Part Two has the ritual procedures of a trial.
 - The audience are treated, by Diligence, as if they were at a fair.
 - The backward entry of the Thrie Estaites mocks processional ritual.

In this play, there are some issues that are relevant also to the area
Issues of gender.

Issues of gender

- **Relationships.**
 - The Soutars are sexually incompatible.
 - Soutar and Taylor are bullied and physically abused by their wives.
 - These marriages – the only ones in the play – are miserable.
 - All the other relationships between the sexes are entirely sexual:
 - The elegant seduction of the King by Dame Sensuality.
 - The blatant affairs of the clergy.
 - The convenient coming together of the courtiers and Sensuality's handmaidens.
- **Women and power.**
 - Guid Counsel has real authority.
 - Guid Counsel, Verity and Chastity eventually become heads of the church.
 - Dame Sensuality exercises power over men through her sexuality.
 - Mrs Soutar and Mrs Taylor exercise power in their households by the sharpness of their tongues and the strength of their arms.
 - The Prioress is in a position of authority but she misuses it because she is not committed to her supposed calling.
- **Men and power.**
 - King Humanity is an absolute ruler.
 - He misuses this power when under the influence of Dame Sensuality.
 - His courtiers misuse the power he delegates to them, putting Verity and Chastity into the stocks without trial.
 - The Vices gain power by falsely assuming the appearance of authority figures.
 - Divine Correction, as God's representative, has total authority.
- **Sexual development of characters.**
 - King Humanity, young and innocent in sexual matters, falls an easy victim to Dame Sensuality.
 - He rejects her when shown the error of his ways.
 - The Soutars' marriage is ending in divorce. Each blames the other; he accuses his wife of demanding too much sex; she complains of his inability to perform.
 - For most of the other characters in the play sex is just an appetite to be satisfied casually when necessary.

- Oppression/suffering.
 - Soutar and Taylor are verbally and physically abused by their wives.
 - There is no example in the play of a woman abused by a man.

Current productions and interests

1. **A specific production of *The 3 Estaites*.**
(*This section is relevant if you have seen a production of this play.*)

Setting and props

- How did the Company cope with the problem of the multi-purpose set?
- Did this match Alan Spence's intentions?
- How did the setting(s) and use of props add to your understanding and enjoyment of the play?
- Were the setting, décor and props appropriate?

Lighting, sound

- Was the production in the open-air?
- If so, was it in daylight?
- If not, what use was made of artificial lighting?
- How effective was the use of sound, other than music?
- What use did the production make of music?
- How effective was their choice of music?
- Did the lighting, sound effects and music enhance the mood and feeling of the play?

Costume

- Did the company use costumes appropriate to the characters in the play?
- Which costumes in particular helped to emphasise character?
- Did the costumes match the period of the play?
- Were there any deliberate anachronisms in the costume?
- Did the costumes have a Scottish feel?
- How did the costumes help suggest the social class of the characters?
- Did the company cope well with the under-dressing of the clergy?
- How much change of costume was used when characters disguised themselves?
- Was this effective?
- If actors played more than one part, did they have a change of costume?
- Was this effective?

Language

- Were the Scottish local accents convincing and effective?
- Did all the characters need to have accents? If so, did they have convincing ones?
- How did the performers use language and accents to bring out character?
- Did the production use voice and accents to distinguish between social classes?
- Did you have difficulty in penetrating the Scottish accents and vocabulary?
- Did the 16th century origins of the play make the language difficult to understand?
- Did you find the mixture of 16th and 21st century language acceptable?

Comedy, wit and humour

- Did the Company correctly identify and establish the comic elements of the play?
- Did they use different *styles* of comedy for different scenes or characters?
- How effective was their use of comedy?
- Did they at any point play for comedy *inappropriately*?
- Did the director invent good comic business?

Acting style/techniques

- What acting style(s) did the actors adopt?
- Was this appropriate for *The 3 Estaites*?
- Did the actors' interpretation of their characters show a clear development over the course of the play?
- Was their interpretation always in keeping with the writer's intentions?
- If actors played more than one role, what techniques did they use to differentiate between them?

Actor/audience relationships

- What techniques did the actors use to involve the audience?
- Were the actors always successful in involving the audience?
- Did the actors appear to respond to audience reactions? If so, in what ways? Was this appropriate? Was it effective?
- Were there times when the audience appeared to lose concentration? If so, why did this happen?
- What would you say was the overall impact on the audience?
- Did you feel that the company had correctly identified Alan Spence's dramatic message?

- How successfully did they put it across?
- Did any members of the audience appear to be shocked by the occasional use of vulgar language?

Relevance to Scottish society

- What relevance did this particular production of *The 3 Estaites* have to a modern Scottish public?
- In your view, was this greater or less than Alan Spence intended?
- Did the production make use of techniques borrowed from Scottish popular entertainment – music hall, pantomime or the variety stage?
- If so, were the techniques appropriately used?
- Did the production make wide use of ritual or other traditional activities?
- If so, were the techniques appropriately used?
- Did the production correctly identify the social background of the characters? Did they show them as being from different backgrounds? What techniques were used to put this across to the audience?
- How did the Company create a sense of being in Scotland?

Target audience

- Did the Company manage to attract the appropriate audience for the play?
- How had they used their marketing and publicity to ensure that the appropriate people came to see the play?
- Was their acting style appropriate to their audience?

2. The work of Alan Spence

(This section is relevant if you have studied other works by this playwright.)

- Is this play in a similar style to his others?
- Does it raise the same questions and deal with the same issues?
- Has the writer created characters similar to those in his other plays?
- Is the play aimed at the same target audience?
- In what specific ways does it differ from his other work?
- What specific contribution does this play, and the writer's work in general, make to Scottish theatre?
- How does this play fit in to the whole picture of the writer's output?
- As you read the play, how far are you made aware of the influence of Lindsay's original play?
- Does the play reflect the other areas studied in Contemporary Scottish Theatre – Social, Political and Religious Dimensions; Use of History, Nostalgia and Popular Traditions; Issues of Gender?

3. A current theme or trend in Contemporary Scottish Theatre
(This section is relevant if you have read or seen a range of plays by different Scottish writers.)

- Do the issues raised in *The 3 Estaites* echo those familiar in the works of other Scottish playwrights of today?
- Are there issues which seem to belong more specifically to the 16th century?
- Is the style of the play similar to that of other contemporary Scottish plays?
- What trends do you identify in style, origin and theme in contemporary Scottish theatre that are exemplified in *The 3 Estaites*?

Examination of a key scene

Examine Scene 26. Pages 88–97.

Interpretation

- Temporality and the Merchants intend to discover the truth.
- Jane's introduction of the Poor Man as a witness strengthens her case by giving a concrete example of the ills she is speaking about.
- The great detail in her list of idle men emphasises the seriousness of her charges.
- There is humour in her list, which helps to hold the audience's attention.
- She attacks the inequality of the justice system.
- Temporality and the Merchants at first refuse to accept Correction's instructions unless Spirituality accepts also.
- The Bishop refuses to recognise temporal punishment.
- Temporality and the Merchants then accept and embrace Jane.
- Jane turns her attack on to the Bishop's tax on the poor people.
- A poor man might lose all his possessions to pay death duty to the church while the bishops luxuriate in wealth and licentiousness.
- Temporality and the Merchants are determined to reform the tenancy laws and over-rule Spirituality's objection. The introduction of democratic voting.
- The Parson accuses Jane of heresy and asks for her to be burned at the stake.
- In response Jane proves she is no heretic with a moving summary of her beliefs.
- She believes not only in God, Christ and the holy scriptures, she also believes in the sanctity of the church. It is not the church that she is attacking but the corruption of its clergy.

Characterisation

- Jane's litany of complaints is lengthy but spiced with humour.
- How does her mood change for the speech beginning '*My God! On mair and mair again!*'?
- What are Divine Correction's emotions in the first part of this scene?
- Is the Bishop at all in awe of Divine Correction?
- How does he feel towards Jane?
- Does he genuinely believe that he does not need to preach or to read the scriptures?
- What is it that turns the Bishop, Prioress and Parson so bitterly against Jane that they demand her burning?
- What are Jane's emotions as she delivers her creed?
- How have Jane's emotions changed throughout the scene?

Audience reaction

- How will the audience react to Jane's 'idle men' speech?
- Will they agree with Temporality that all three Estaites should obey or none?
- How will they feel about the Bishop in this scene?
- How will they feel about the Poor Man?
- How will they react to the Prioress?
- How will they feel about the Merchant by the end of the scene?
- Are they likely to have some sneaking liking for Flattery?
- How will they react to Jane's 'I believe' speech?

SECTION B**Acting roles*****King Humanity***

Humanity is one of the few characters who appear throughout the play. He appears at first as a devout and well-meaning character, praying for God's help in ruling his people and in living a moral life. His courtiers regard his devotion as dreary and seek to cheer him up. He tries to reject their offer of Dame Sensuality. However, he is overcome with desire for her as soon as he hears her song. He is innocent in the ways of love-making.

Their first encounter is quite poetic. Sensuality's description of her own attractions elicits '*o peerless perfect beauty. Welcome to me, thou who are sweeter than amber*' from him and he takes her off to his chamber. His lack of experience seems not to have been a hindrance for when we next meet him he is full of the joys of life. More seriously, though, he seems to have lost his powers of judgement since he welcomes the three Vices as '*some men of good*' and gives them jobs in his court. He carelessly accepts his courtier's self-interested advice to ignore Guid Counsel, preferring to lounge amongst the ladies rather than listen to her more sober advice. When Chastity tries to see him, he allows Sensuality to have her banished.

Divine Correction throws Sensuality out of the court. The King protests but his earthly powers are no match for Correction's. He accepts advice from both Correction and Guid Counsel. He orders the calling of a Parliament of the Thrie Estaites. He has very quickly recovered his good sense after the banishment of Sensuality.

In Part Two, he takes the lead in promising reform and orders the hanging of the Vices. He even gives Folly permission to speak about Kings. He is made to feel uncomfortable by the truth of Folly's accusations against him but he laughs it off.

How would *you* interpret the character of King Humanity?

- Would you make him a totally sympathetic character?
- How would you prevent him seeming colourless?
- Roughly what age do you think he should be?
- Would you expect the audience to be on his side?

- The part is written in Scots but how broad should he be?
- What kind of voice should he have?
- How would you use your body to illustrate your interpretation of his character?
- How differently would you play him in Part Two?

Dame Sensuality

She is an important character because of her effect on the King in Part One. She doesn't appear in Part Two. Her first speech is an enthusiastic description of herself, the perfection of her body and the delights of her love-making. The song she sings with her handmaidens is a frank invitation to love.

Her first speech to the King is like a sensual prayer to a divinity of sex and the second song becomes a hymn to love. She has him so far under her control that she is able to get rid of Chastity.

She has a brief moment of real fury directed against Chill-Oot, but when Divine Correction arrives she accepts banishment with remarkable aplomb: '*As good life comes as goes.*' There are plenty more fish, even royal ones, in the sea.

How would *you* interpret the character of Sensuality?

- Is her open delight in her own appearance and abilities an attractive characteristic?
- What sort of voice would you use for her two long speeches, rejoicing in her abilities?
- How would you make these two speeches different?
- What sort of body language and mannerisms would you adopt for this character?
- How would you like to perform the songs?
- How would you make them different?
- The outburst of anger against Chill-Oot seems out of character. Is it?
- How does she feel when Correction sends her away?
- Why does she show no anger against Correction?
- Why does she not ask the King to keep her with him?

Jane the Common-Weil

Although she appears only late on in the play, Jane is a central character. She represents the ordinary people of Scotland but she is at the same time a powerful advocate of their cause. She is dressed in rags, because the people have been ignored, bled dry by taxation, offered no sympathy or support by church or state and taken advantage of by the merchants and craftsmen.

She powerfully calls for the arrest of the Vices and then argues her case in Parliament. Her list of the idle folk who are her enemy is comprehensive but given with humour; her argument in favour of fairer justice for the poor is convincing. As a result the merchants and craftsmen are won over and embrace her.

She then turns her attention to the ills of the church – the taxes which can ruin a poor family; the wealth of the clergy; the sexual self-indulgence.

When accused of heresy, she gives a moving account of her beliefs. They prove that she is a true Christian and not a heretic. Divine Correction rewards her by having her dressed in fine clothes and given a place in Parliament.

How would *you* interpret the character of Jane?

- Is she a totally sympathetic character?
- How do you reconcile her piety with her rougher side – ‘*The Fiend will shut your lying gob*’?
- How do you see her character changing and developing through the play?
- What is her mood as she describes the cottar losing his cows?
- Is she lacking in humour?
- What emotion does she feel in her speech on page 95?
- How would you deliver her ‘*I believe in God*’ speech?
- What is the mood of her speech beginning, ‘*I believe too in the sanctity of the Church*’?
- How would you show the audience how Jane feels as she is dressed in her gorgeous clothes?
- What, if anything, has Spence gained by changing Lindsay’s male John the Commonweal into a female?

Flattery

He is a rogue, but there is something likeable about him. He bursts on stage with a fast-moving speech giving a lively and down-to-earth description of his recent adventures. He takes the lead amongst the three Vices, suggesting their disguises.

He is unscrupulous in getting rid of Guid Counsel. He cleverly persuades Spirituality that Verity is a heretic because she has a New Testament in English, and happily obeys Sensuality’s command to get rid of Chastity. He knows the game is – temporarily – up when he hears that Divine Correction is on the way. He hides himself away amongst the Spirituality.

When he re-appears in Part Two, it is in the guise of a Pardoner. His opening speech, a market trader's pitch for trade, is like his first appearance in Part One – lively, funny and presumptuous. He divorces the Soutars with rumbustious delight. We feel that the Soutars deserve the treatment they get from Flattery, but his attempt to con the Poor Man is much more reprehensible. Fortunately, the Poor Man is able to give him a beating, but Flattery probably escapes with the cash. He again joins the Spirituality, backing up the Bishop in his attack on Jane. He has nothing to say when divested of his habit but quickly devises a scheme to escape the gallows – he will help to hang his fellow Vices. His last speech shows him quite undaunted, cheerfully preparing for a new (but unimproved) life abroad, with all his old vivacity and charm.

How would *you* interpret the character of Flattery?

- Is he a sympathetic character?
- Would you play him as lacking in any feelings for other people?
- How does he feel when his habit is stripped off him?
- Would you play him differently when he is being the friar, Devotion?
- Would you adopt further changes when he becomes the Pardoner?
- How would you make sure that the audience don't become confused and think you are playing different roles?
- What vocal and physical characteristics would you adopt to suggest his ingratiating manner?
- What is the mood of his final speech?

Falsehood

He revels in his wickedness and, like Flattery, is always full of good ideas for practising it. The Vices adopt their false names at his suggestion. He is however less intelligent than Flattery and inclined to trap himself in his own duplicity: he can't remember his own false name once he has adopted it. When they are forced to flee, he chooses to ally himself with the craftsmen. He steals the King's chest and quarrels with Deceit over sharing its contents. He is not such a good fighter as Deceit and comes off badly. On the gallows he warns the craftsmen that they will never survive without Falsehood and dies in good spirits – '*Falsehood never made a better end!*

How would *you* interpret the character of Falsehood?

- Is he a sympathetic character?
- Would you play him as lacking in any feelings for other people?
- How does he feel when Deceit tries to claim too much of the stolen treasure?
- Would you play him differently when he is being Sanity?
- How would you make sure that the audience don't become confused

and think you are playing a different role?

- What vocal and physical characteristics would you adopt to suggest his personality?
- What is the mood of his final speeches, on the gallows?

Deceit

He is more a conman than a crook. He boasts of the fact that he doesn't steal, but his financial dealings may be fully as dishonest as theft. When the opportunity arises he is quick to drop these claimed principles and steal the King's chest. He boasts too of his superior dress; he regards himself as a cut above Falsehood because he chooses to work with the Merchants, a class above the Craftsmen.

How would *you* interpret the character of Deceit?

- Is he a sympathetic character?
- Would you play him as lacking in any feelings for other people?
- Would you play him differently when he is being Discretion?
- How would you make sure that the audience don't become confused and think you are playing a different role?
- What vocal and physical characteristics would you adopt to suggest his superior manner?
- What is his mood throughout his last scene?

Soutar

This isn't a big part but his scenes do provide the audience with their broadest comedy. He begins by showing sympathy for Chastity. For the rest of the scene he is the silent victim of his wife's abuse. According to her he is a poor – and infrequent – lover. In his second scene he applies to the Pardoner for a divorce. He gives a scurrilous description of his wife; she smells, she nags and she's sex-mad. When she appears he hastily denies saying anything against her. Fortunately, she too is after a divorce and they not only pay Flattery for the privilege, they also, with fairly good grace, carry out his crude ritual.

How would *you* interpret the character of Soutar?

- Is he a sympathetic character?
- Would you play him as lacking in any feelings for other people?
- How does he feel when his drinking session with Chastity is interrupted?
- How does he feel about his wife, during this first scene?
- Since he has no lines, how would you indicate to the audience how he is feeling when his wife insults and beats him?
- Why doesn't he fight back, if only verbally, in this first scene with her?

- What vocal and physical characteristics would you adopt to suggest his character?
- How would you deliver the speech beginning 'A quick devil'?
- How differently would you deliver his next speech?

Mrs Soutar

She is a woman vulgar in her speech and quick to use force on others. She feels deprived of her marital rights in bed and despises Chastity. In her second scene she has a fine line in invective directed against her husband. She seeks divorce on the grounds of Soutar's lack of sexual drive.

How would *you* interpret the character of Mrs Soutar?

- Is she a sympathetic character?
- Would you play her as lacking in any feelings for other people?
- How does she feel when she sees her husband with Chastity?
- What vocal and physical characteristics would you adopt to suggest her abrasive manner?
- What kind of voice would you adopt for her?
- What body language would you use to suggest her belligerence?
- Would you hope to win any support from the audience?

Cottar

Here is your archetypal Glasgow lager-lout. His first thought is to get himself a few pints, and his second to get away from his nagging wife. He is thoroughly unpleasant to his wife, but when drunk enough, has enough husbandly feelings to want to keep her safe from other men. (His motives are, of course, jealousy and possessiveness rather than concern for her.) He is naïve (or drunk) enough to be easily taken in by his wife and The Fool.

How would *you* interpret the character of Cottar?

- Has he any redeeming characteristics?
- How will the audience feel about him at first?
- How will the audience feel about him when he is cuckolded?
- How drunk would you want to play him before he goes to sleep?
- How drunk would you play him after he wakes up?
- How would you play his last speech?

Mrs Cottar

From her opening lines we see that she is a loud-mouthed, nagging wife, threatening even to hit her poor husband. She may, of course, have some justification for nagging him. She is only too eager to accept The Fool's offer of sexual pleasure (though she is drunk at the time). She slyly fools her husband into blaming himself for mislaying the key of the chastity belt.

How would *you* interpret the character of Mrs Cottar?

- How aggressive should she be at the opening of the scene?
- Do you expect the audience to feel any sympathy for her at the start?
- How would you expect the audience to react when she goes off with The Fool?
- Would the audience's attitude to her change over the course of the scene?
- How drunk would you play her before The Fool's entry?
- How do you think she would react when her duped husband says he is sorry that he suspected her and calls her the best wife in Fife?

Chastity

Her first speech is resigned, as she feels spurned by everyone. To Diligence, she is openly contemptuous of the Prioress who has taken vows of chastity but lives by sensual pleasure. Nevertheless, she tries again to win her round. The Prioress rejects her, and passes her on to the Bishop. He too rejects her and passes her on to the Parson. He rejects her and advises her to try the nuns. But Chastity has experience of living, briefly, with the nuns who soon drove her away.

Recognising the hopelessness of her cause where the clergy are concerned, she turns her attention to the merchants and craftsmen. They reject her on the grounds that their wives wouldn't allow them to entertain Chastity. However, Soutar and Taylor offer to take her side and sit her down for a wee drink with them. This displeases their wives who drive her away since, as Mrs Soutar says, '*never I loved Chastity all my days*'.

Chastity moves on to try to approach the King but Sensuality has too strong a hold on him and Flattery is ordered to put her in the stocks beside Verity. (True to himself, he can't resist giving Chastity a sly compliment even as he locks her into the stocks – '*Into the stocks your bonnie foot mak fast.*' She is freed by Divine Correction as soon as he arrives. She reveals to the King the true identities of the Vices.

She takes no part in the Debate but afterwards reports the Prioress to Divine Correction. As a result she is shown in her true colours and driven away with the rest of the corrupt clergy. Chastity, Verity and Guid Counsel take their places.

How would *you* interpret the character of Chastity?

- Would you play her as a very sober character?
- Is she sad all the time?
- How does she feel when Soutar and Taylor invite her to share their drink?
- How would you make sure that the audience don't find her prissy?
- What vocal and physical characteristics would you adopt to suggest her character?
- What is her mood when she takes the place of the corrupt clergy?

Guid Counsel

Guid Counsel's first speech, one of the longest in the play, states her case: because she has been banished from Scotland for many years, the country has fallen into evil ways. She hopes that in time she may be able to change things. Her attempt to get to the King is thwarted by the Vices. She retreats until the arrival of Divine Correction gives her new hope. He grants her request that Chastity and Verity should be released from the stocks. After Sensuality has been banished, Guid Counsel is able to stay by the King's side and offer him advice on how to succeed as a ruler. At the Debate she attacks the Bishop for his ignorance of the scriptures and reveals the true nature of the Prioress and of Flattery. She gets Jane a '*bright new goon*'.

How would *you* interpret the character of Guid Counsel?

- Will the audience find her off-putting, a 'goody-goody' character?
- How would you deliver her long opening speech?
- Would you play her as lacking in humour?
- What vocal and physical characteristics would you adopt to suggest her character?
- How does her character develop throughout the play?
- What, if anything, has Spence gained by changing Guid Counsel from the grey-bearded old man of Lindsay's original into a woman?
- How old do you think she should she be?

Wantonness

A smooth, persuasive liar. There is something attractive about him all the same. He is perhaps amoral rather than immoral. He takes advantage of the King's interest in Sensuality to make some money for himself. He is confident of his own sexuality, offering the King advice on how to

handle women and cheekily offering to demonstrate on Sensuality how the King should proceed with her. He loses no time in getting off the mark with Hameliness. He smoothly makes excuses for himself to Correction. He has little part to play in the action of Part Two, since the King has freed himself from the domination of Sensuality.

How would *you* interpret the character of Wantonness?

- He is a rogue, of course, but is he a likeable one?
- How does his character develop over the course of the play?
- What kind of voice and accent would be suitable for him?
- Would you want to establish any particular physical characteristics for Wantonness?
- Do you think he becomes a less interesting character in Part Two?

Chill-Oot

He is, naturally, the most laid-back of the courtiers, playing a less influential role than Wantonness. He tends to comment on the action rather than push it forward.

How would *you* interpret the character of Chill-Oot?

- He is a rogue, of course, but is he a likeable one?
- How does his character develop over the course of the play?
- What kind of voice and accent would be suitable for him?
- Would you want to establish any particular physical characteristics for Chill-Oot?
- Do you think he becomes a less interesting character in Part Two?

Solace

A devotee of drink, sex and merriment. He is keen that others should share his pleasures. He is perhaps less wicked than the other courtiers and wins Correction's support for his less sinful delights – singing, dancing, chess, gambling and story-telling. In fact, as long as he keeps off sex, all will be well.

How would *you* interpret the character of Solace?

- He is a rogue, of course, but is he a likeable one?
- How does his character develop over the course of the play?
- What kind of voice and accent would be suitable for him?
- Would you want to establish any particular physical characteristics for Solace?
- Do you think he becomes a less interesting character in Part Two?

Diligence

Diligence plays a double role in the play. He is both the narrator figure, interacting with the audience, and a character within some of the scenes. He is usually stern and commanding but he does unbend when addressing the audience directly, revealing a more human side – he intends to be first at the bar at the end of the show, for example. The last speech in Part One exemplifies his dual role well: he begins as official spokesman of the King, calling all members of Parliament to assemble; then he changes persona in order to address the audience directly, announcing that it is time for the Interval; within this role, he changes again, unbending further, jokily advising the patrons to go to the toilet. The change of verse pattern admirably catches these changes in mood. The final eight lines have a rollicking pace reminiscent of Flattery himself.

How would *you* interpret the character of Diligence?

- Is he a sympathetic character?
- How should he be played in the scene with the Poor Man?
- Would you play him differently when addressing the audience and when playing a more formal role – in the last scene, for example, with Folly?
- What is the spirit and tone of his first speech, in the Proclamation?
- What vocal and physical characteristics would you adopt to suggest his authority?
- What is the mood of his final speech?

Temporality

He is the spokesman for the craftsmen, one of the three Estaites. Falsehood has been able to hide amongst the craftsmen and the entrance of the Estaites, walking backwards, in Part Two shows symbolically how far they have drifted from the true path of honesty. However, with some courage Temporality takes a stand against Spirituality, swearing obedience to the King and accepting Correction's retribution. He opens the Debate with a powerful statement in favour of supporting the laws. He tries to ensure that Spirituality will go along with the other two Estaites in obeying Correction but when the Bishop rejects this suggestion he immediately drops it and again declares his allegiance to the King. He argues that two Estaites can out-vote one, establishing a new concept of power – the democratic principle.

How would *you* interpret the character of Temporality?

- Will the audience find him a distant, rather inhuman character?
- Would you play him as lacking in humour?
- What vocal and physical characteristics would you adopt to suggest his character?

- How does his character develop during Part Two?
- How far does he seem a character in his own right, rather than just the representative voice of a group of people?
- As the voice of the craftsmen, who harboured Falsehood, does he seem too good to be true?
- Would you suggest this in your interpretation?
- If so, what techniques would you use to do it?

Divine Correction

Power, authority and retribution. Correction is the most powerful character in the play; he has total control over life and death. No-one may question his judgement. And yet he accepts the need to have a Parliament called before he does anything. He is quick to right an obvious wrong when he sees Verity and Chastity in the stocks, ordering them to be removed '*tenderly*'. In spite of his name, he is not himself divine; rather, he brings with him the power of God. His purpose is to reform the King and through him the Estaites and the people. He is not puritanical; he accepts that Kings may '*seek solace/With mirth and lawful merriness*'. He metes out punishment to the wicked – the hanging of the two Vices; but he also rewards the good – ordering Jane to be richly dressed; and he forgives the penitent – Temporality and the Merchant.

How would *you* interpret the character of Correction?

- Will the audience find him a distant, rather inhuman character?
- Would you play him as lacking in humour?
- What vocal and physical characteristics would you adopt to suggest his character?
- Does his character develop over the course of the play? If so, how?
- How far does he seem a character in his own right, rather than just an inhuman voice?
- Would you try to make him seem more human in your playing? If so, how?

Bishop

He is an unctuous hypocrite. His very first speech is in oily praise of the King but we soon see that he does not mean a word of it. He will not listen to criticism of his way of life, demanding that the Parliament be postponed rather than impose penalties on such as he. He claims further that the church is above temporal law and can't be punished by the state. Jane's account of his selfish cruelty in the treatment of the cottar ought to shame him but he responds by threatening his victim with worse punishments. He does not preach, claiming that it is not part of his duties; he is ignorant of the scriptures; he is sexually active in

spite of his vows of chastity; he threatens to burn Jane as a witch, on no legitimate grounds. When faced with retribution, he sadly recognises that from now on he will have to earn his living, instead of enjoying a luxurious life-style at the expense of the poor.

How would *you* interpret the character of the Bishop?

- What vocal and physical characteristics would you adopt to suggest his character?
- Will the audience find him an unsympathetic character?
- What redeeming characteristics can you find in him?
- How does he feel as he listens to Jane's account of his treatment of the cottar?
- How does he feel during his last speech?
- Does he show any recognition of his own wrongdoing?

Folly

In one short scene he has to establish his identity and his purpose. At first, with his cheery chatter and his mention of goods he has to sell, he seems like another of the conman characters of the play. However, his goods are not really for sale; he will be awarding them to various individuals whom he proves to be as foolish as himself. He is – like many of the rogues in the play – both likeable and cheerful. He quickly establishes a rapport with the audience, with his local and topical jokes. As a fool himself, he can recognise folly in others – the audience, the Estaites, Good Counsel and even the King himself. He is like a jester – allowed to make fun of anyone regardless of their position in society, and even to criticise his master with impunity.

How would *you* interpret the character of Folly?

- What vocal and physical characteristics would you adopt to suggest his character?
- Is he a wholly sympathetic character?
- *Is* he a fool? Or does the nature of Folly in him represent something else altogether?
- Would you play him as unsympathetic towards other people?
- In which areas of his speeches would he be most serious?
- What is the mood of his final speech?

Recommended acting pieces

The Proclamation

Page reference: 4–8

Opening line: *'I'll be there, pal, by God's grace...'*

Closing line: *'That we lie doon and tak some rest.'*

Casting: 1 male and 1 female

Characters: Cottar and Mrs Cottar (plus Finlay and The Fool read in)

Approximate length: 6 minutes

Comments: The scene offers an opportunity for broad, pantomimic playing. Mrs Cottar is a loud, vulgar, brawling role for an actress with self-confidence and a bravura style. The Fool is a sharp-witted chancer and Cottar a slower-thinking foil to him. As well as the pantomime style, the actors need to have a sense of comic timing and strong characterisation.

Part One, Scenes 2 and 4

Page references: 15–21 and 23–25 (Omit first line of Scene 4.)

Casting: 4 male

Characters: Humanity, Wantonness, Chill-Oot and Solace

Approximate length: 8 minutes

Comments: The two scenes may conveniently be run together, if the first line of Scene 4 is omitted. The long speeches are a test of an actor's ability to introduce variety of pace and expression. The three courtiers need careful characterisation to distinguish them and Humanity must be played with youthful vigour to avoid seeming too bland. Reaction between the actors is particularly important in order to prevent the scene breaking down into a series of monologues. One or more of the courtiers could be played by actresses, perhaps?

Part One, Scenes 5–7
Page reference: 26–30
Casting: 3 male and 1 female
Characters: Humanity, Sensuality, Wantonness, Solace (plus Hameliness read in)
Approximate length: 6 minutes
Comments: The three scenes are really a continuous episode. Humanity shows himself to have a more complex character than might be thought at first, confessing to feelings of insecurity. Wantonness's cheerful self-confidence provides a contrast and Solace supplies an irreverent counterpoint. It is, above all, an opportunity for Sensuality to show a range of emotions – many of them false – and to dominate the stage with her speech of joyful self-congratulation.

Part One, Scene 9
Page reference: 32–38
Casting: 3 male
Characters: Flattery, Falsehood and Deceit
Approximate length: 9 minutes
Comments: The three Vices are delightfully wicked. The actors must make them attractive to the audience as well as indicating their duplicity. They can, of course, enjoy themselves thoroughly by making the most of some splendid opportunities. Flattery's opening speech is a fast, merry rant. Deceit has both a direct address to the audience and a fine line in sly plotting. Falsehood is slower on the uptake and gets his laughs by being a bit thick. Together the three of them spark ideas off each other and it is essential that the actors achieve a sense of teamwork. There should be, too, an underlying feeling of excitement; these characters really enjoy their work.

Part Two, Scene 26**Page reference:** 88–97**Casting:** 3 male and 2 female**Characters:** Temporality, Guid Counsel, Jane, Correction, Bishop (plus six small parts read in)**Approximate length:** 13 minutes

Comments: A long scene which is the centrepiece of the whole play. It should be played like a Trial, with Humanity as Judge and several advocates for each side. The Bishop puts up a spirited, though ultimately unsuccessful, defence. He is a thoroughly unattractive character – self-satisfied, ignorant and spiteful. Jane is a splendid role – passionate, angry, moving and dignified. She encompasses both the spirited common touch (*‘The Fiend will shut your lying gob’*) and the spiritually uplifting (her *‘I believe ...’* speech). Correction has dignity and power. Temporality has confidence and determination. Guid Counsel has a calm serenity. With eleven speaking parts, it is a demanding scene and the five principals each have an opportunity to display a range of emotions and an ability to keep up the pace of the scene.

Part Two, Scene 30**Page reference:** 105–110**Casting:** 2 male**Characters:** Folly, Diligence (plus Humanity read in)**Approximate length:** 8 minutes

Comments: Folly has a smooth tongue and a cheeky irreverence that are well contrasted with Diligence’s stern manner. It is like an encounter between a market trader and a policeman. Yet Folly must put over, in the guise of good-humoured joking, some serious points about society. It is a role requiring a sense of comedy, quick but understandable delivery and a bright personality.