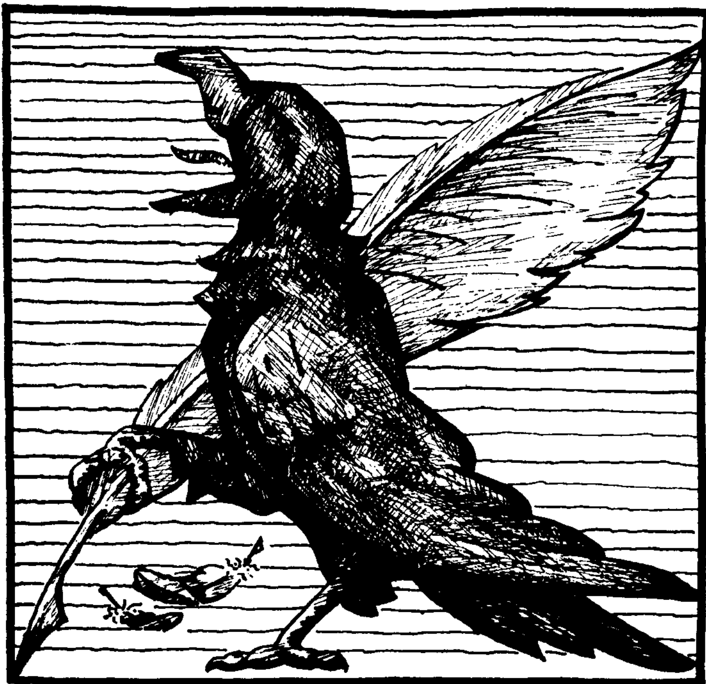
THE VPSTART·CROW



1989 Volume IX

A SHAKESPEARE JOURNAL

THE • VPSTART • CROW

Funded by Drury College
With Financial Assistance from
Clemson University

Editor
James R. Andreas
Clemson University

Founding Editor
William E. Bennett
The University of Tennessee at Martin

Associate Editors
Michael Cohen
Murray State University
Herbert Coursen
Bowdoin College
Marjorie Garber
Harvard University
Charles Frey
The University of Washington
Walter Haden
The University of Tennessee at Martin
Wayne Holmes
Drury College
Richard Levin
The University of California, Davis
Richard Mears
Drury College
John McDaniel
Middle Tennessee State University
Peter Pauls
The University of Winnipeg
Paul Ramsey
The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga
Norman Sanders
The University of Tennessee at Knoxville
Stratford-on-Avon

Published at The University of Tennessee at Martin
Copyright ©1990 Drury College
All Rights Reserved

About anyone so great as Shakespeare, it is probable that we can never be right; and if we can never be right, it is better that we should from time to time change our way of being wrong.

— T.S. Eliot

What we have to do is to be forever curiously testing new opinions and courting new impressions.

— Walter Pater

The problems (of the arts) are always indefinite, the results are always debatable, and the final approval always uncertain.

— Paul Valery

Essays chosen for publication do not necessarily represent opinions of the editor, associate editors, or schools with which any contributor is associated. The published essays represent a diversity of approaches and opinions which we hope will stimulate interest and further scholarship.

Subscription Information

Two issues — $12

Institutions and Libraries, same rate as individuals — $12 two issues

Submission of Manuscripts

Essays submitted for publication should not exceed fifteen to twenty double-spaced typed pages, including notes. Follow journal format which is traditional MLA style with slight variations. Quotations should be single spaced in typescript. When submitting manuscripts, send two copies—the original and one xeroxed copy. Allow six months for readers. If at all possible, along with hard copy, please also submit IBM floppy disk in text-file format with left margin set at zero. Mail to James Andreas, Editor, *Upstart Crow*, Department of English, Clemson University, Clemson, South Carolina 29634-1503.

Contents

The Ashbourne Portrait of Shakespeare iv
by Peter Cummings

Notes Toward a Production of *The Two Gentleman of Verona* 1
by Kenneth C. Bennett

Shakespeare and Ritual: The Example of *As You Like It*........... 9
by Susan Baker

Twin Relationships in Shakespeare 24
by John Mercer

Mercutio as Mercury: Trickster and Shadow 40
by Thomas Browne

'Tis monstrous': Dramaturgy and Irony in *Othello* 52
by Edward and Karen Jacobs

Controlling Cupid in Shakespeare's Last Romances 63
by Maurice Hunt

Autolycus, Cloten, Caliban & Co.: "Comic" Figures and
Audience Response in Shakespeare's Last Plays 77
by Richard Knowles

Finding Place for a Faultless Lyric:
Verbal Virtuosity in *The Winter's Tale* 96
by A. Lynne Magnusson

Glouchester and Harry Hunks 107
by Robert F. Willson, Jr.

A Many-Faceted Jewel: Prospero's Masque 112
by Robert W. Witt

The 1989 Alabama Shakespeare Festival and the
1988 *Hamlet* 118
by Craig Barrow

The Ashbourne Portrait of Shakespeare
by Peter Cummings

It is mostly dark around him.
The points of light are his hands,
the book he reads, the skull
upon which he leans, and a face
gone pale and gentle and sublime.

At first one misses his baldness.
The distracted eyes in turn distract
one's eyes from the hairline, risen now
at the divisive age of forty-seven
straight above his temples. The body,
like the biography, is hardly there—
as though only head, hands, and will
to learn in the presence of death
will tell all we need to know.

Now I must be careful:
the fingers are long and slender,
and they appear to hold the small book
with smooth intelligence. Many wish
to know what book it is;
a ribbon-bound edition of the sonnets?
More careful: the hollows of his eyes
are like the skull's hollows, the ruffle collar
like a cloud beneath his head,
the untied ribbon around the book
like time his language loosens
to leave the reader free.

Healthy man, tonight my imperfections
are upon me like vultures at their prey.
I am aging without resistance,
my mirth is gone, I am all October rain,
cold unfertile presager of snow.
If I could have some portion
of your self-destroying sight,

I could move again like I was young.
How fine to have belief again, and fine
just once to shed my character
as you did yours as weekly work
and leave it to the actors,
forever on the stage.

Hobart and William Smith Colleges

Notes Toward a Production of *The Two Gentleman of Verona*

by Kenneth C. Bennett

Every age is constantly engaged in defining itself in relation to the past, justifying or criticizing its actions on the basis of what has gone before; and producing Shakespeare must be viewed as a part of this larger process. At the end of the nineteenth century, William Poel founded the Elizabethan Stage Society in an effort to produce authentic Shakespeare, a move that can now be seen as part of the general scientific urge of the late nineteenth century, and a consequence of the impact of historical research of a rigorous, scholarly nature. This late Victorian impulse to be true to the Elizabethan age has continued into the present time, especially in university theater, but efforts to produce Shakespeare as it was originally played have largely given way to translations of Shakespeare into other eras, everything from the Regency to modern dress, perhaps in an effort to show the "relevance" of the bard, but often, it seems, simply for the sake of novelty—an escape from doublet-and-hose productions.

I have no quarrel with such productions—quite the contrary—yet it seems to me that the pleasures of the period piece may indeed be used to reinforce the meaning of the play as well as merely to decorate it. *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* has had a sketchy stage history, to say the least, and it has seldom met with much favor. In our century, Harley Granville-Barker agreed to direct it (he also played the role of Speed) at the Royal Court Theatre for J. E. Vedrenne, but he did so only on the condition that he could revive *Candida*. As a result, few impressions were made though apparently the production "was smoothed along gracefully."[1] Since then, there have been productions of *The Two Gentleman of Verona* as a Renaissance masque with "a mistily shining set of filigreed pillars" (at the Bristol Old Vic in 1951-52, directed by Denis Carey) and as a Byronic bit of romanticism in a Regency setting at the London Old Vic, 1956-57, directed by Michael Langham;[2] more recently, there has been a rock version (at the Phoenix in London), and Joseph Papp's musical version for the New York Shakespeare Festival in 1971. This last has a special interest here because it shows how far an attempt to make Shakespeare our contemporary can go.

Papp's production won the New York Critic's Circle Award and a

Tony Award for the best musical in 1972, and it was even exported to Toronto the following year. Since it was a part of the public Shakespeare presented in New York's Theater in the Park, it was seen by many over a considerable period of time and may have constituted much of the audience's first experience with Shakespearean drama. (Even more sophisticated audiences would rarely have exposure to any other performances of this particular play.) But what sort of experience did this audience have? Relying on the tradition of *West Side Story*, the adapters, John Guare and Mel Shapiro, made Milan New York and Verona San Juan. According to them, the ethnic mixture of the cast was responsible for the concept that developed as they worked: "We saw that the play was not only for the city, it was about the city, about going to the city, about traveling from Verona to Milan."[3] And the score reflected the ghetto setting; according to *Rolling Stone*, it sounded like walking down a street in El Barrio with a different radio blaring in every window.[4] The show opens with Thurio singing "Love in Bloom," probably to show how square he is. Sir Eglamour is a Chinese baritone and a Chinese dragon eventually drives him off stage. The lines throughout are a pastiche of the adapters and Shakespeare. "Who is Silvia?" is retained, but it yields, ignominiously, to lyrics like:

> Now love has driven me sane
> Am I healthy? Am I happy? Yes
> Gone is all the angst and crappiness
> The big shock is the shock of happiness
> Love love love love love love, love, love, love
>
> I was into all perversions
> Now love has driven me straight
> Homo! necro! just diversions
> Now love has driven me straight[5]

The question that arises is not one of effectiveness, for clearly the musical version was a popular and a critical success; the question is, what does it do for our understanding of Shakespeare? The answer, inevitably, must be, not very much. But for this reason must we simply return to doublet-and-hose productions? Hardly. The answer lies in picking more carefully the type of transposition so that the basic qualities of Shakespeare's drama are not lost, but actually brought out more clearly. This can be achieved by enlightened selection of period and style. Rather than choosing the period because of its visual appeal, it should be chosen because of its bearing on Shakespeare's themes. That is why, if I were producing Shakespeare, I would also choose New

York as the setting, but I would place the play in the 1920's.

Why? *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* is essentially a pleasantly artificial comedy in which the male protagonists conform to romantic conventions but lack both common sense and, in the case of Proteus, common honesty. Ironically, at the end of the play Proteus exclaims, "Were man but constant, he were perfect" (V. iv. 109-10). Lip service is here paid to the romantic ideal, but by this time the audience is fully aware that Proteus is not only inconstant in love, but a liar and a faithless friend to Valentine as well. Not that Proteus is wholly corrupt or that the play is purely satirical; it *is* romantic, basically, and Proteus is redeemable, but the conventions of romance on which it is based are at least being twitted by Shakespeare, it not disparaged. There is a fine mixture of serious adherence to the tradition of romance and glorious fooling at its expense. But this mixture is perplexing to modern audiences not brought up on the plays of John Lyly or the romances of Lodge and Sidney. Moreover, all modern readers have difficulty distinguishing exactly when Shakespeare is being serious and when he is mocking the mode he has adopted. Shakespeare's contemporaries knew the current attitudes towards romance, saw values that they themselves held or were about to relinquish, and, most important of all, caught Shakespeare's tone from the production itself. Modern audiences have neither the literary and social background of Shakespeare's time nor the immediacy of the Elizabethan theatrical experience. They are, however, much more aware of the paradoxes of the twenties, which still exert a magnetic glamor on us at the same time that they openly reveal absurdities (never dreamt of as such) of behavior and taste, and a shallowness of values in certain social circles.

The brittle parts of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* are similar to the harshly artificial aspects of America in the roaring twenties, the era of bathtub gin and ballyhoo: while this aspect was only a limited part of American life at that time, it has remained a popular image, an image inescapable for anyone who has seen it, for example, through the eyes of F. Scott Fitzgerald. In this respect accuracy of historical detail concerning the twenties and even accuracy of concept do not matter—quite the contrary. What does matter is that the play be produced in a manner faithful to our dream of the twenties. All of our associations cluster around things like flappers, cloches, the Charleston, college men in Valentino hairdos or raccoon coats and the like. We can assume that the romantic conventions in Shakespeare's time, the traditions descending from the code of courtly love and romance, held a similar attraction for his audience. Just as the graphic image of a fashion model

in the twenties would today evoke both a nostalgic charm and an amusement that our parents or grandparents ever could have been like that—or that *anyone* could have been like that—so an Elizabethan might react to characters that fall in love at first sight or friends who pledge eternal fidelity. The exotic quality of Italy, no matter how vague its location (Shakespeare and/or his editors didn't think it important to be consistent in the details of the geography), was still as important to the minds of Shakespeare's contemporaries as other aspects of romance—the brotherhood of outlaws in the forest, the disguise of a woman in man's dress, and the sudden banishment of the lover from his mistress' presence after a threatened elopement is discovered by an angry father. Surely, for Shakespeare's audience these elements of the play were nothing new, or if they were—say, to an inexperienced playgoer—they must have savored of an antique charm, the world as it once might have been. Similarly, today it is not how the twenties actually were, but the way in which we perceive them that is important, particularly, say, in the consumption of popular films like *Some Like It Hot* and *Rag Time*.

What is even more important is the connecting link with our own times: while we are most conscious of the corruption in politics and business and the failure of social causes in our time, we see them too clearly and take them all too seriously to make them matters of romantic comedy, but when they are transposed and sublimated to an earlier age we can take a more objective view of them—and even laugh. The twenties now *look* innocent by comparison with the sixties and seventies, but of course they were not, and the resonances created when we see our own artificialities and corruptions reduced to the smaller scale of an earlier era are both revealing and comic. Particularly pathetic, for example, are the ladies' plights in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*; transported to the twenties, Julia becomes one of the new women seeking equality who is doomed to fail because society is not quite ready for her. She must accept Proteus, one of the original male chauvinist pigs; she will have to wait for reincarnation in the seventies and even then her efforts to change social values may meet with ultimate defeat. But, a production linking Shakespeare and the twenties and the nineties will show unmistakably the buried parallels between the treatment of women in the three different periods. (It must be noted that Shakespeare may have been more sympathetic to Proteus than we are today, but he paints Julia as the most attractive character in the play, and Silvia is intellectually superior to the weak-witted Valentine.)

Let us look at the play itself in this light and discover further thematic parallels. The opening conversation between Valentine and Proteus may take place in a cocktail lounge or speakeasy of Boston in the 1920's. The young men are bound by romantic conventions just as young upper class Bostonians were bound by Victorian idealism, despite overt attempts by many to throw off the deeply ingrained notions of self-sacrifice and duty. Valentine and Proteus appear comic in their protestations of unfailing friendship although they obviously mean them—at the time. By setting this scene in the twenties, the effectiveness of Shakespeare's dual themes, his mixed mode of comedy and seriousness, is underscored for the audience who will appreciate an ambivalence of action just close enough to contemporary affairs to make connections and just far enough away to preserve distance.

Similarly, the treatment of the servants is singularly appropriate to an early twentieth-century setting when servants were retained by the upper classes but were rapidly disappearing from middle-class homes. The servants are pert, independent and yet faithful—only Panthino seems conventionally dull, and he may be portrayed as the doddering family retainer. Speed is the smart young sluggard who does not hesitate to exchange quibbles with his master Valentine and chafe a bit in harness; one imagines him young but quicker in word than in deed. If he is the last of the pages in the Lyly tradition, he might well be the last of the bright young men to go into service in the twenties when so many were going into factories instead. Lucetta is the knowing aide, probably older than her mistress, who can be played as a motherly Irish type; she realizes that Julia really wants Proteus' letter and contrives to drop it for her mistress' benefit. It has been often noted that the Speed and Launce scenes are parodies of the activities of their masters, and indeed that makes very good sense in a situation where the activities of the masters and mistresses are extreme, based on an intense reaction to an outgoing code. Launce is the exception among the servants, but not because he parodies his master better: he has about him a genuineness which serves as foil to the artificialities of the rest of the characters. And his dog Crab provides an even firmer base of reality by which to judge the others, including Launce himself, who looks foolish when he accuses Crab of sour looks and evil behavior. Launce can be cast as the family chauffeur and should look as scruffy as Speed looks neat and spiffy. (Shakespeare, of course, is not suggesting that the servant class is on the way out, but he is showing that servants more than occasionally can demonstrate superiority to their masters; and that is sufficient here.)

While the first act of our hypothetical version is set on Beacon Hill,

the scenes in Milan with the Duke, beginning in Act II, can be set in New York with the Duke wearing mayoral clothing and a chain of office. The set may depict either a New York penthouse or, better, Gracie Mansion, as a closer parallel to the Italian court. Sir Thurio, accordingly, becomes a tycoon whom the mayor hopes to reward with Silvia's hand, probably for favors rendered. The sets and costumes and stage business can all suggest a world of power and wealth which is based on pre-World War I premises. Although under attack by new social forces, it exerts power enough to banish the youth who attempts to interfere with the marriage arrangements made by the older generation. Valentine's love for Silvia, the one genuine emotion he feels, threatens to upset the arrangement. However, romantic convention dictates that he should triumph at the end—despite the fact that his claim on Silvia is only slightly better than Thurio's where true merit—and intelligence—are concerned.

In Act III the noose on the ideals of love and friendship tightens when Proteus betrays Valentine by revealing his intended elopement to the Duke. Proteus is, in a sense, a victim of romantic love, but he is also giving in to self-interest, shunning the Victorian ideal of self-sacrifice and the Elizabethan ideal of true friendship. Silvia is also the victim when Valentine is banished, and the blocking characters seem to be gaining the upper hand over the younger generation. She is more intelligent than Valentine and, ironically one feels, is forced to accept him in lieu of better; she can, indeed, readily tell that Proteus is a false friend and Thurio the Duke's tool. Silvia then can be depicted as an "advanced" or "liberated" woman of the twenties, but only moderately so. She would probably wear a cloche and a chemise with bugle beads, and she would certainly smoke—but in other respects she would be a proper aristocrat, forced to conform by her position.

One may note in passing a nicely ironic touch in the second scene of the third act; in keeping with the general theme of the establishment asserting its dominance over the young, the Duke gives his open approval to Proteus' scheme to win Silvia for Thurio with sonnets, luring her back from her true love, Valentine. Thus for the ruler poetry becomes a means of entrapment; art is viewed as a means to power. Surely this conforms to Shakespeare's general depiction of insensitive rulers and is appropriate to a big-city mayor of the twenties.

In Act IV Valentine joins the outlaws in his banishment, and since the original story is full of incongruities (Speed welcomes Launce to "Padua"; the Duke's court becomes "the Emperor's": the trip from Verona to Milan is overland but Valentine departs by ship) a twenties

setting in New York could easily substitute Central Park for the forest and for the outlaws, outlandish mafia thugs. These should be suitably overdressed in tuxedos and ape the manners of the upper class. Valentine's lie to them (that he has murdered a man) becomes credible as a slick, skin-saving move. They may not believe him, but they take his lies as a sign of manhood. (They themselves talk of killing a man as a "small fault" and heinous acts are "petty crimes" in IV. i. 31, 52.) Because Valentine is "beautified with goodly shape" (IV. i. 55-6) and is a "linguist," they make him their leader, a splendid front man for a Cosa Nostra operation. We also note how this action further reinforces the Duke's subversive notion of using the power of words to trap the unwitting.

The second scene of this act in which Silvia receives her famous serenade from Proteus can be set on the steps of Gracie Mansion, and Proteus can appear in raccoon coat, waving collegiate colors, and bearing a guitar. Julia, dressed perhaps like Speed, watches with the Host, who has become a caretaker. The conventional musical setting is sentimental enough to be suitable in context, better for the twenties, in fact, than for the Elizabethan era.

The street scenes (e.g., IV. iv. 4) can be performed at the front of the stage with a simple painted drop depicting store fronts of the time, but if expense is not to be spared, it would be best to have V. i. take place in front of a rear view projection of St. Patrick's Cathedral, since Silvia is to decamp with Sir Eglamour from Friar Patrick's cell. Sir Eglamour, incidentally, may be portrayed as a pale, effete, rather ineffectual chap in knickerbockers. (Since he has sworn chastity after his wife's death, he can hardly be anything but rather square in relation to the rest.) This will enhance the dramatic logic of his flight when he is confronted with the mafia outlaws.

The close of the play should have the pace of a Mack Sennett comedy, a pace suggested by Shakespeare's own rapid disposal of the characters, and the swift and perplexing transfer of Silvia from Valentine to Proteus and back. If this is handled with dexterity and suitably stylized business, it will take on a certain high irony; but the romance must not be completely undercut—there must be enough sense of romantic logic to carry the plot to a plausible conclusion (though it can never be totally credible, it can *seem* inevitable). Julia and Silvia will not fail to be the most sympathetic of the major characters; Julia's swoon and Silvia's silence (Proteus himself enunciates the doctrine of true love's silence earlier in the play) are played against the melodramatic magnanimity and abject penitence of the men. In the twenties

we could see women making abortive moves towards real freedom and we can see in Shakespeare how this is, in a way, prefigured by Julia's efforts on her own behalf. But just as the hopes of the feminists of the early part of the century were shattered by the crash, the depression, and the pendulum swing of popular sentiment, so in Shakespeare's original, the woman making a move towards independence suffers a Pyrrhic victory—Julia is awarded Proteus. And to cap the climax, the mafia outlaws are reinstated at the request of Valentine, who suddenly becomes an accepted member of the establishment. The Duke, with a wave of his hand, pardons them, and instructs Valentine to dispose of them according to their deserts, thus insinuating a subtle irony into the last line, "One feast, one house, one mutual happiness." Thus has the mafia been neatly incorporated into the establishment. Surely the typical mood of reconciliation and harmony prevails in Shakespeare, but it is not without satiric edge; if the aftertaste of the play is not bitter, it is at least not pure honey.

Lake Forest College

Notes

[1]John C. Trewin, *Shakespeare on The English Stage, 1900-1964* (London: Varrie and Rockliff, 1964), p. 31.

[2]Trewin, pp. 223, 227.

[3]John Guare and Mel Shapiro, adapters, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (New York: Holt, 1973), p. 5.

[4]Guare and Shapiro, p. 6.

[5]Guare and Shapiro, p. 83.

Shakespeare and Ritual: The Example of *As You Like It*

by Susan Baker

Old theories die hard. Old evolutionary theories seem not to die at all, at least in the case of those propounded by the Cambridge classicists more than a half-century ago. The emergence of drama from ritual makes a good story, whether one of civilization's triumphing over primitive irrationality or one of drama's energies arising from its origins in primitive vitality. Perhaps sheer narrative charm keeps such notions alive for critics long after most scholars have discarded them for lack of supporting evidence. A recent essay by Richard F. Hardin summarizes the persistence of evolutionary theories and other problems with uses of the term *ritual* in literary criticism over the past few decades.[1] In turn, he commends and recommends attention to the work of more up-to-date anthropologists, particularly Victor Turner. And indeed several important Shakespearean studies draw upon Turner's descriptions of rites of passage.[2] Yet I believe we need to rethink altogether the relationships between ritual and drama, particularly Shakespearean drama.

Even the best instances of literary criticism's borrowings from anthropological theories of ritual continue to risk being burdened by the covert premise that as drama imitates life, critics can explain its representations by reference to studies of "real life" phenomena. The assumption persists that drama is somehow validated by our discoveries that it replicates patterns social scientists have identified empirically. Dramatic criticism is in this way doubly distanced: drama itself is predicated, if you will, on life-as-it-is-lived, and criticism of the drama is thus validated by references to studies of "real life," as if anthropologists were engaged in an endeavor closer to reality than our own. We are still uncomfortable with our painted chairs.

Now that resemblances between ritual and Shakespearean drama are well-documented, it is time to consider possible explanations for these resemblances. Indeed, it is vital to do so, since any explanatory system invites reification and oversimplification. Only by careful attention to the assumptions implicit in comparing drama with ritual can critics avoid making one subservient, making one a pale imitation of the other. Of course, the evolutionary theories prevalent earlier in this century accounted for resemblances by ascribing origins; let us

dispose quickly of the genetic argument.

Ritual and drama are related activities. Both manifest the human ability and need to construct symbolic configurations for ordering and organizing experience. More specifically, both present performed symbol systems: public, communal, enacted. The temptation to derive one from the other is nearly irresistible. But logically and temporally, drama would have to be prior to ritual. Certainly, the first performance of any ritual-to-be must be drama rather than ritual because it cannot be *repeating* anything, a necessary condition for an activity to be called *ritual* in any rigorous sense of the term. (It cannot simply be called *life* or *random event* either, because a clearly demarcated realm of the non-ordinary, non-workingday, is another necessary condition for ritual.) Only on a second performance does a proto-ritual begin to qualify as ritual. So every ritual turns out to be a repetition of an originating drama. This is to say that the existence of any ritual demonstrates the prior existence of drama as a human possibility. If a ritual imitates an originating drama, it must be less "real" than that drama, a step further removed from whatever reality may be. (Turner, in fact, draws upon his understanding of drama to develop his theories of ritual.) In practice, of course, we can simply acknowledge that ritual and drama often tell the same stories, orchestrate the same sorts of experiences. As analogues, then, ritual and drama are mutually illuminating, aside from any assumptions about origins or priorities. To treat ritual and drama as analogues, however, still assumes some justifying connection between them, and I propose the following relationship.

Victor Turner has continued the work begun by Arnold Van Gennep in demonstrating that rituals, like plays, are complex symbolic structures that can be analyzed as such, and that, again like plays, apparently diverse rituals can be shown to share a generic structure.[3] Indeed, certain symbols and symbolic manipulations cluster together in widespread rituals with related purposes, much as certain kinds of symbolic configurations insistently recur in various articulations of any given literary genre. Evidently, particular patterns are logically appropriate to particular purposes or concerns—whether those of ritual or art. Given this inevitable connection between pattern and purpose, the striking correspondences between Shakespeare's characters in Arden and neophytes undergoing a rite of passage suggest that a play such as *As You Like It* shares an underlying motive (in Kenneth Burke's sense) with initiatory rituals.[4] Change—in individuals, in their cultures, in their institutions—is a fact of human life. That such change be

significant (rather than random) and beneficent (rather than destructive) is surely a deep human desire. Both the fact and the desire are reflected in the symbolic clusters which human beings have developed to commemorate and to facilitate important changes. I suggest that we can posit a "transformative mode" that informs many human activities, including at least some rituals and some works of art—wherever the motive of transformation is central.

I hope to demonstrate that this motive adequately accounts for the remarkable parallels between *As You Like It* and ritual without resorting to attenuated assumptions about Shakespeare's relation to particular rites and without claiming any necessary historical or genetic relationships between drama and ritual. Moreover, I shall argue that the play itself is transforming, that—like a rite of passage—it engenders as well as imitates transformation. Rites of passage exist primarily for their immediate participants; the central enactors of a ritual are those transformed by it. But plays are performed by actors *for* audiences. To the extent that a ritual and a play incarnate homologous structures, the role or function played singly by a neophyte, say, is divided between the characters *in* and the audience *of* a play. One can therefore expect the audience of *As You Like It* to be transformed by their experience of the play.[5] My purpose here is to define the precise nature of this "transformation" and the artistic strategies that engender it.

As I have suggested, the broadest term for the motive shared by rites of passage and Shakespeare's green-world comedies is *transformation*. The ritual and artistic assumption seems to be that when something is transformed into something else, there exists a moment betwixt and between, a moment of formlessness, a brief return to undifferentiated—uncategorized—primordial matter. Liminality and the sojourn in the green world, then, symbolically represent and elaborate this moment, largely through the suspension or blurring of customary boundaries. At a lower level of abstraction, preparation for a new role involves shedding qualities and attitudes appropriate to the old and growing those appropriate to the new, with a moment of spiritual and psychological nakedness in between. In practice, whether ritual or dramatic, this shedding is less than total. One temporarily discards old habits of categorical perception in order to reclaim them, sheared of inappropriate accretions, with a refreshed sense of their validity and significance. The process is one of regeneration rather than replacement.

Turner's work on ritual has been so influential that it will be useful

here to foreground those aspects that are pertinent to this essay. As noted earlier, Turner, drawing on Van Gennep, describes a generic structure for rites of passage. Such rites include three movements: separation, margin (*limen* or threshold), aggregation. Turner has concentrated on the liminal phase—an instance, by the way, where the "marginal" is "central." According to Turner, liminality is constituted as an anti-structural interlude within a necessarily structured social order; this interval of anti-structure can create a sense of *communitas* (or flow) and allows for a return to a regenerated society (*societas*).[6] His studies provide subtly elaborate descriptions and analyses of both liminality itself and its transforming role in society. One might call Turner the structuralist of anti-structure. For this paper, I will rely on his characterization of liminality as a ritually circumscribed time and place in which a society's customary categories for perceiving and ordering experience are temporarily suspended. Among the boundaries liminality typically denies are those between highborn/lowborn, male/female, human/animal, living/dead.

As numerous critics have noted, the tripartite structure of Shakespeare's green-world plays resembles the generic pattern of rites of passage. The portrayed green world corresponds structurally to ritual's marginal phase, and, indeed, it abounds with instances of blurred distinctions. Both its place and displacing parallel those of liminality. Status reversal, dissolution of hierarchies, (boys playing) girls playing boys (playing girls), mergers of man and beast (most literally in the figure of Bottom), distortions of temporality, even characters who straddle the border between life and death—all are among Shakespeare's favorite images and plot devices. (It is too seldom noted that these and similar categorical disruptions pervade all the plays, not just those with explicit green worlds.) Clearly, liminality—or something very like it—often appears in the plays. I will argue, however, that typically Shakespearean artistic strategies can be called *liminal* as well; that is, they operate to disrupt the customary categories we bring to the plays and thus create liminal responses in us.

Let us look at *As You Like It*, a play whose characters obviously undergo liminal experiences. Neophytes undergoing an initiation rite transcend their society's categories, such as those of sex and class. Sex distinctions are blurred so that one may be "treated or symbolically represented as neither or both male and female" (*Symbols*, p. 98). Consider Rosalind playing Ganymede playing Rosalind. Liminality negates variations in rank and degree; within a group of neophytes, all are equal. In the forest, Duke Senior calls his men "co-mates and

brothers in exile" (II. i. 1), and Rosalind—disguised as the shepherd Ganymede—can flippantly tell him that her parentage is as good as his (III. iv. 32-33). (The confusion in I. i., about which girl is the current princess, and about how many princesses there are, may be accidental, but it also foreshadows the casteless society of Arden.) The best emblem of this equality is the litany in Act V:

> *Silvius.* It is to be all made of sighs and tears; And so am I for Phebe.
> *Phebe.* And I for Ganymede.
> *Orlando.* And I for Rosalind.
> *Rosalind.* And I for no woman.
>
> (V. ii. 79-83)

And so on. Here the individuality of the characters is masked by the similarity of their speeches. Moreover, liminality also denies the boundaries of life and death; neophytes are symbolically represented as neither living nor dead, or both living and dead. Even this most extreme blurring of categories is echoed in *As You Like It*: several of the characters exist, as it were, on the border between life and death, since they are under sentence of death should they return to the court. Moreover, Rosalind tells Orlando to "die by attorney" (IV. i. 85), which would be both to die and not to die.

Turner points out that "people can 'be themselves,' it is often said, when they are not acting institutionalized roles" (*Symbols*, p. 107). So, too, the merging and blurring of categories in Arden, the suspension of society's fixed and rigid roles, can be seen as propaedeutic to the self-discovery that takes place there, especially for Rosalind. But, at least in some primitive societies that perform elaborate initiation rites, the "arcane knowledge or *gnosis* obtained in the liminal period is felt to change the inmost nature of the neophyte.... It is not a mere acquisition of knowledge, but a change in being" (*Symbols*, p. 102). Such a profound change occurs in both Duke Frederick and Oliver when they come into the green world, and Oliver can say of the man rescued by Orlando, "'Twas I; but 'tis not I" (IV. iii. 136). The sojourn in Arden does function as an initiation for the courtly characters. When they leave Arden, their lives in "this working-day world" will begin again, but their social roles will be new ones. So it is not surprising to find the playwright creating patterns similar to those which otherwise diverse cultures use in their rites of passage. The play, after all, culminates in multiple marriages: Rosalind and Orlando's chances for a sane and joyful married life have been enhanced by what they have experienced

in the Forest; Oliver's conversion has made him worthy of Celia; Touchstone has chosen a sacramentally sanctioned wedding with Audrey, who will change her social as well as her marital status (though one may wonder whether she has been adequately prepared for her new role). Duke Senior resumes rather than assumes the role of ruler, and in the final scene he steps out from the crowd of spectators to certify the other characters' futures and authorize the beginning of the marriage ceremony. Although there is no reason to doubt that he (unlike Prospero) was a good ruler before his exile, there exists a suggestion that his stay with his "co-mates" in Arden, with its "sermons in stone," has taught him something of what Lear learns in anguish on the storm-beaten heath.

As a mythic and metaphoric rendering of a psychological process, the green world is a realm isolated from a surrounding "working-day world," in which a person may sojourn for a limited time, freed from many constraints of his usual environment. The green world has its own trials (more often tests than hardships), but they function to provide an examination, a clarification, and sometimes an alteration of qualities so as to prepare one for return to the everyday world. The psychological matrix of the green world can be called liminal, partly because of its marginal and transitional status, but more importantly because it operates through dislocation, disorientation, and disruption of customary structures to create refreshed, revitalized, and regenerated perceptions of reality.

As manifestations of the human propensity for symbolic activity, ritual and drama share motives and symbols appropriate to those motives. But ritual and drama differ in their primary targets. The neophyte is the object of a rite of passage, the one whose transformation is its immediate purpose.[7] Although *As You Like It* portrays characters undergoing a ritually educational transformation, the play exists not for them but for the audience. I have outlined the ways *As You Like It* presents characters whose experience resembles ritual in structure; I would now like to turn to the related issue of how the play's strategies create a similar experience for its audience.

In *As You Like It*, Shakespeare both presents and represents liminal experience. We are separated from our everyday lives when we enter the theater (whether the actual one of performance or the imaginative one of reading a play), and we return to those lives when the play is finished. For the audience, then, the entire play can be a liminal occasion. Responding to *As You Like It*, we share vicariously the characters' experiences; their liminality becomes ours. Equally

important, however, the play's strategies—including its details of language, its treatment of metaphoric conventions, and its attitude toward its own genre—work to interrupt the audience's unconsidered categorical habits. In this sense, one can appropriately call Shakespeare's strategies and the play's effects *liminal*.

The minimal signifying unit of a Shakespearean script is the single word, so it is logical enough to begin this discussion of categorical disruption by examining Shakespeare's treatment of specific words. Words, of course, designate categories of phenomena, and thus to disrupt connection between signifier and signified is to suspend a word's categorical force, to frustrate its referentiality. As Sigurd Burckhardt argues, "the nature and primary function of the most important poetic devices—especially rhyme, meter, and metaphor—is the release of words in some measure from their bondage to meaning."[8] This divestive process can be seen as a movement away from a conceptual, intellectual response and toward a more physiological perception of sound as sonic, recurrent and rhythmic. For example, a single word repeated again and again—*keep, keep, keep, keep, keep, keep, keep, keep*—loses its referential meaning, and becomes only a collection of phonemes. (Psychologists have called this referential stripping by repetition the "banana effect.") This estrangement of words from their ordinary, prosaic signifying function leads us to surrender—temporarily—our customary attachments to thematically foregrounded words. Brief examples from *As You Like It* should suffice to confirm Shakespeare's divestive or liminal use of poetic techniques.

In the opening scene, Orlando continually plays on words, yet this wordplay is not very funny. Rather, his punning responses reveal his obsession:

> My brother Jaques he keeps at school, and report speaks goldenly of his profit. For my part, he keeps me rustically at home or, to speak more properly, stays me here at home unkept: for call you that keeping for a gentleman of my birth that differs not from the stalling of an ox?[9]
>
> (I. i. 4-9)

Each additional inflection of the word keep moves toward increasingly precise definition; but at the same time, the forms of *keep* begin to lose their particular meanings as they become primarily vehicles for Orlando's anger and frustration. The obverse of this process can be seen when Oliver asks Orlando, "Now, sir, what make you here?" (a sentence in which the individual words carry about as much content as

those in our "How do you do?"). Orlando replies, "Nothing. I am not taught to make anything" (I. i. 26-27). Here, Orlando jolts the formulaic *make* into a concrete meaning relevant to his unhappy situation. Although these two strategies of punning might seem to work in opposite directions—one divesting meaning, the other investing it—both serve to increase our awareness of words *qua* words, to remind us how fragile the link between signifier and signified can be. No longer secure in categorical referentiality, we must attend to the categorizing medium itself.[10]

If punning is the characteristic dissociative device of the first scene, repetition predominates in the second. For example:

> *Rosalind.* Nay, now thou goest from *Fortune's* office to *Nature's*. *Fortune* reigns in gifts of the world, not in the lineaments of *Nature*.
> *Enter [Touchstone] the Clown.*
> *Celia.* No; when *Nature* hath made a fair creature, may she not by *Fortune* fall into the fire? Though *Nature* hath given us wit to flout at *Fortune*, hath not *Fortune* sent in this fool to cut off the argument?
> *Rosalind:* Indeed, there is *Fortune* too hard for *Nature* when *Fortune* makes *Nature's* natural the cutter-off of *Nature's* wit.
> *Celia.* Peradventure this is not *Fortune's* work neither, but *Nature's*, who perceiveth our *natural* wits too dull to reason of such goddesses and hath sent this *natural* for our whetstone of the wits.
> (I. ii. 38-52; italics mine)

This dizzying repartee, as it rings a series of changes on *Fortune* and *Nature*, is a sophisticated version of the banana effect; by the time Touchstone interrupts, we have become (not quite consciously) detached from our immediate associations with these two key words. This temporary stripping of meaning from *Fortune* and *Nature* would seem to free us to absorb the delicate calibrations these terms undergo through the play. They will not remain referentially empty for long, but as the phonemes again attract significance in our minds, we are likely to be alert to the intractable complexity of the conceptual bundles they strive to subsume under two categorical names.

While pertinent to the play's themes, many of the memorable scenes in *As You Like It* are irrelevant to the plot. The recurrent pattern is to show the characters confronting incongruities in customary modes of structuring and categorizing experience. (Much of the play's lighthearted humor derives from the audience's being alerted to

these incongruities, but the cumulative effect may be called liminal.) Sometimes the inadequacies of conventional categories or structures are addressed directly, as in Touchstone's and Corin's exchange on the relative merits of court and country (III. ii. 11-81) or in Rosalind's disquisition on the relativity of perceptions of time (III. ii. 293-316). Sometimes a customary structure is persuasively outlined, only to be undercut; numerous critics have noted this technique when Jaques' speech cataloging the seven ages of man is followed by the entrance of Orlando bearing Adam on his back. And sometimes sheer exaggeration points up a confusion in categories: when Jaques anthropomorphizes imaginary deer or Touchstone accuses Corin of playing bawd to his sheep, they blur our habitual boundary between *animal* and *human* as categories of being.

While these and similar incidents participate in the play's determined juggling of customary categories, more central are the episodes in which the characters confront and expose conventional modes of thinking and talking about romantic love—the sojourn in Arden is, after all, a prelude to the several marriages. Not surprisingly in this consciously artful play, the scrutinized attitudes toward romantic love are those represented by literary metaphors, and Shakespeare makes us consider the nature of those metaphors.

The ability to think metaphorically is humanly useful as well as pleasurable. To reify metaphors, however, to invest them with an independent ontological status, is always limiting, and sometimes dangerously stultifying. As Rosalie Colie has shown, artists can reawaken us to the metaphorical nature of a given figure or convention by creating *personae* who treat it literally. This technique, which Colie calls *unmetaphoring*, "makes us reconsider the function of figurative language, of the idioms developed to answer to needs of communication, of attempts to contain and to transcend different categories of experience."[11] Clearly, the process of unmetaphoring in art resembles that of disrupting categories in liminality. Both categories and metaphors link entities that share one or more qualities but differ in others. Both mental constructs emphasize similarities, but processes like unmetaphoring in art and categorical disruption in liminality create an awareness of difference, of those points where correspondence ceases. Thus, when we reaffirm likenesses in a return to metaphor and category—we cannot live sanely without them—it is with a refreshed sense of resemblances. (Sometimes, of course, such significant dissimilarities are exposed that a customary association must be discarded or redefined.) Both these processes potentially modify, clarify, and regen-

erate modes of thinking.

A typical unmetaphoring occurs when Rosalind deliberately misinterprets Phebe's painfully conventional letter to Ganymede, taking it literally and thus exposing the folly of treating the highly stylized Petrarchan idiom as if it were a literal model for lovers rather than a very elaborate, very conventional sequence of metaphors. Similarly, Rosalind treats Petrarchan conventions quite literally when she pretends to disbelieve Orlando. She claims he bears none of the marks which distinguish one in love:

> Then your hose should be ungartered, your bonnet unbanded, your sleeve unbuttoned, your shoe untied, and everything about you demonstrating a careless desolation. But you are no such man; you are rather point-device in your accouterments, as loving yourself than seeming the lover of any other.
> (III. ii. 357-62)

Rosalind's playful exercise in measuring Orlando's love according to traditional attributes leads her to assert that he is not in love. Since we (and Rosalind) know that Orlando does indeed love her, the conventions which lead to a denial that his love exists are called into question. Even by Ganymede's standards, however, Rosalind's feigned disbelief is unfair to Orlando. He may not look like a Petrarchan lover, but he does his best to act like one. In fact, we believe that Orlando is in love largely because Shakespeare has him behave in ways conventional to the category of literary or stage lover: Orlando is tongue-tied around Rosalind, but talks obsessively about her with Ganymede; he writes inept sentimental poems and hangs them on trees; in his own way he pines for Rosalind, feeling bittersweet about his reformed brother's happiness in love because it intensifies his own disappointment. The playwright on one hand is using the artistic shorthand of conventions to denote Orlando's love to the audience, while on the other he is forcing us to question and reconsider a whole set of these same conventions. This complex mingling of perspectives finally encourages us *not* to reject the traditional languages of love, but rather to perceive their status as metaphors. In this quite typical instance, the attempt to define one-who-loves according to appearance fails, but in recognizing this inadequacy we are reawakened to the metaphoric process by which disorder in dress comes to represent the unsettling, disorienting, disordering effects of love. The worn-out metaphor is only temporarily disclaimed so that it can take on a new vitality. It is not so much Petrarchism that is subverted here, but rather our thoughtless response

to it.

Petrarchism represents only one set of conventional poses challenged in *As You Like It.* Rosalind's "die by attorney" speech depends upon Ganymede's treatment of myths—metaphoric embodiments of psychological states—as if they provided naturalistic tales of "real" people. The effect of "Men have died from time to time and worms have eaten them, but not for love" (IV. i. 96-98) is much less cynical in context than one might expect. Ganymede responds from a realistic point of view to the stories of Troilus and Leander, but the literal-minded insistence that men do not die for love surely reminds us that these old stories are mythic and metaphoric. Only a powerful force demands so extravagant a metaphor as this.

Touchstone, too, sounds cynical, and indeed his reminiscences of Jane Smile effectively deflate Silvius' overblown love rhetoric (II. iv. 20-51). But the clown's condescension toward Audrey is as exaggerated as the hero's idolizing of Rosalind; a deliberate degrading of one's love and one's beloved involves as conventional a pose as the exaltation of them. Touchstone's repeated equations of men and beasts evoke thoroughly traditional metaphors for the physical side of love. Moreover, his statements about love and marriage are belied by his actions—he enters a binding marriage with Audrey even though she apparently would settle for a few words from the hedge priest. Clearly, this fact undercuts the attitudes the clown expresses. Touchstone's metaphors are no more, and no less, valid than Orlando's. And both are subject to liminal suspension.

Given all that I have said so far, it should not be surprising that the sharpest challenge in the play is to its own generic base. The outlines of *As You Like It*'s interrogation of pastoral are too well-known to need reiteration here, but a brief sketch of the play's self-reflexive pastoralism will be useful in considering what happens when the audience is urged to attend consciously to this complex of conventions.[12] As the play unmetaphors pastoral and blurs the boundaries between orders of experience, the effect on the audience is liminal.

First of all, the opening scene of the play immediately prepares the audience for a fairy tale; Shakespeare certifies and reinforces this reaction by having Celia echo the audience's feelings: "I could match this beginning with an old tale" (I. ii. 107). We know at once that this play will present a second world that will not even pretend to be a naturalistic imitation. The dramatist can begin to call our attention to the metaphoric nature of poetic traditions simply by placing before us characters who, played by flesh and blood actors, become literal

embodiments of conventional figures carrying out conventional roles. (Think of Silvius and Phebe, for example.) By presenting an enacted world of the court juxtaposed against an enacted world of the forest, the dramatist can "set the stage" for challenging pastoral conventions. Moreover, editors since the eighteenth century, cued by the play's words, have set the first scene of *As You Like It* in an orchard or garden and the second outdoors on the palace grounds. The entire second world that is this play can be seen as a green world; here, what Frye would call the "red and white world of history" is itself set within a fairy-tale green world.

Within the *play's* second world (i.e., Arden) Shakespeare juxtaposes several kinds of rustics. The courtly figures are visitors in the Forest of Arden; their actions and reactions call various pastoral assumptions into question. For example, the Duke's awareness that he and his men are essentially intruders who kill the native deer points up the anthropocentric obsession of most pastoral inflections, as does Touchstone's foolery about Corin's playing bawd to his sheep. Jaques' anthropomorphizing of the weeping deer is especially amusing if we recall the tradition of the pastoral elegy. When Corin asks Touchstone how he likes a shepherd's life, the clown's answer specifically encourages the audience to question the usual valuations assigned court and country in pastoral:

> In respect that it is solitary, I like it very well; but in respect that it is private, it is a very vile life. Now in respect it is in the fields, it pleaseth me well; but in respect it is not in the court, it is tedious. As it is a spare life, look you, it fits my humor well; but as there is no more plenty in it, it goes much against my stomach.
>
> (III. ii. 11-20)

This passage humorously points to the double-edged nature of the idealized pastoral sojourn. And the play forestalls any easy conclusions about the pastoral world by presenting multiple kinds of shepherds: Rosalind and Celia, who pretend to be a shepherd and his sister; Silvius and Phebe, who are entirely artificial, literary pastoral lovers; Corin, who has been described as "the only shepherd who knows anything about sheep"[13] and as the traditional wise shepherd of the moral eclogue.[14] Corin does seem a "realistic" counterpoint to Silvius—but only until we see William. Poor dull William must be the most "realistic" character in the play; his answers to Touchstone are roughly as interesting as most everyday conversations would be if reproduced

on stage. And they reveal Corin for what he is—a convincing dramatic representation of a shepherd. Indeed, the juxtaposition of Corin and William enlivens our perceptions of the moral eclogue's conventional nature much as Silvius and Phebe alert us to the metaphorical status of the love eclogue.

While I have sketched only a brief outline of the devices by which Shakespeare sharpens his audience's perceptions of pastoral conventions, it should be sufficient to indicate the degree to which the play calls attention to its fictive status and disrupts our conventional perceptions of its conventions. All of Shakespeare's plays contain self-reflexive moments, but in experiencing *As You Like It* (and other green world plays), we are continually moved not just between fictive and actual worlds, but among multiple fictive worlds as well. The effect of this giddy disorienting is essentially liminal in that it disrupts our customary perceptions of the boundaries between categories of existence, encourages us to reconsider these perceptions, boundaries, and categories, and finally reaffirms them in Rosalind's epilogue which expels us from the green world and situates us firmly as theatergoers. We return to the working-day world, taking with us a refreshed sense of the reality of art.

My argument, then, is that *As You Like It* resembles a generic rite of passage because both are informed by the motive of *transformation*. The play's shape is analogous to that of all rites of passage, moving its characters into and out of a liminal-like green world. Moreover, the play becomes such a green world for its audience, which shares the experiences of the characters and undergoes distinct but analogous experiences of its own.

While the play's strategies are illuminated by this comparison with rites of passage, it is vital to remember that *As You Like It* is drama; it is neither ritual nor derived from ritual. So it seems appropriate to conclude by identifying some crucial differences between ritual and dramatic articulations of the transformative mode. During the liminal phase of a rite of passage, the neophyte's customary categories for perceiving reality are disrupted, clarified, and reclaimed. Shakespeare's characters undergo an analogous process in Arden, and indeed their conventional perceptions of romantic love are challenged and reaffirmed. Shakespeare's audience, however, while experiencing vicariously the transformation of the characters, experiences in addition a disruption and ultimate sharpening of its perceptions about the nature of art's metaphoric relationship to experience. Moreover, for neophytes the most important rituals are obligatory, one-time occur-

rences; they need not understand a ritual's significance for it to effect its primary purpose of marking transition. So too with Shakespeare's characters in *As You Like It*: they learn by going where they have to go; the transformed characters must leave Arden; Audrey will be as officially married as Rosalind. Shakespeare's audience, however, must choose to experience the play, may choose to return to it time and again, and will discover with each increase in understanding a corresponding increase in enjoyment. Unlike a tribal neophyte or a fictive character, we can invoke this green world at will; its power to transform us is never exhausted, but rather is enhanced each time that we surrender to it.

University of Nevada, Reno

Notes

[1]*PMLA*, 98 (1983), 846-62.

[2]C. L. Barber suggests that "Shakespeare's mature plays show people in passage from one stage of life to another, succeeding in comedies, failing in tragedies." "The Family in Shakespeare's Development," in *Representing Shakespeare: New Psychoanalytic Essays*, Murray M. Schwartz and Coppélia Kahn, eds., (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1980), p. 197. Three major studies draw directly on Turner. In *Coming of Age in Shakespeare* (London and New York: Methuen, 1981), Marjorie Garber details the presentation of characters at moments of passage. Edward Berry relates the prevalence of such moments in Shakespeare's plays to family practices in Renaissance England, *Shakespeare's Comic Rites* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1984). And David Bevington stresses the disruption of hierarchy during liminality, *Action is Eloquence: Shakespeare's Language of Gesture* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1984).

[3]*The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual* (Ithaca and London: Cornell Univ. Press, 1967); hereafter, citations will be given in the text. I find Turner's early work on the symbology of ritual more directly relevant to literature than his later work which emphasizes effects of ritual on the community. That is, I am more interested in the parallel ways ritual and drama manipulate symbols than in the ways drama can imitate ritual-like experience.

[4]I am using *motive* in Burke's sense, where it implies a complete symbolic situation (act, scene, agent, agency, purpose) assumed to be recognizable in a literary work, although not necessarily consciously active in the artist's creation of that work. See the introduction to Burke's *A Grammar of Motives* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969), pp. xv-xxiii, and his "Poetics in Particular, Language in General," in *Language as Symbolic Action: Essays on Life, Literature, and Method* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1968), pp. 25-43.

[5]For a discussion of literature as therapeutic, as literally altering personality, see Marshall W. Alcorn, Jr., and Mark Bracher, "Literature, Psychoanalysis, and the Re-Formation of the Self: A New Direction for Reader-Response Theory," *PMLA*, 100 (1985) 342-54.

[6]See for example, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co., 1969).

[7]This assertion perhaps oversimplifies an audience's role in ritual. Certainly, an initiation rite demands participants other than the neophyte, and they can be perceived as altered by the ritual—at the very least in their relationship to the neophyte. But in no sense does a play exist for the sake of its characters, so the distinction made here is necessary.

[8]"The Poet as Fool and Priest," *ELH*, 23 (1956), 380.

[9]References are to *As You Like It*, Ralph M. Sargent, ed., in the Pelican edition, Alfred Harbage, general ed., *William Shakespeare: The Complete Works*, rev. ed. (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1969). Hereafter, citations will be given in the text.

[10]Adena Rosmarin draws upon E. H. Gombrich to make a similar point, "Hermeneutics versus Erotics: Shakespeare's Sonnets and Interpretive History," *PMLA*, 100 (1985), 29-30.

[11]*"My Echoing Song": Andrew Marvell's Poetry of Criticism* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1970), p. 173. Clearly, "unmetaphoring" resembles that effect of art the Russian Formalists call "defamiliarization," or, as it is more elegantly translated, "estrangement." As I understand the terms, however, "defamiliarization" generally relates directly to reality, "unmetaphoring" to metaphoric representations of reality.

[12]Some of the most interesting work on *As You Like It* emphasizes this self-reflexive quality of the play. See for example, Albert R. Cirillo, "*As You Like It*: Pastoralism Gone Awry," *ELH*, 90 (1975), 885-93. In an effort to minimize duplication, I have sketched only the outline of Shakespeare's treatment of pastoral necessary to my central concern.

[13]Harold Jenkins, "*As You Like It*," *Shakespeare Survey*, 8 (1955), 47.

[14]Helen Gardener, "*As You Like It*," in *More Talking of Shakespeare*, John Garrett, ed. (London: Longmans, Green and Company, Ltd., 1959), p. 17.

Twin Relationships in Shakespeare

by John M. Mercer

Shakespeare fills his plays with multiple parallels, foils, and doubles. In particular, he is fascinated with twins. For example, he describes pairs of close childhood friends as if they were twins: Leontes and Polixenes in their innocence "were as twinn'd lambs that did frisk i' th' sun" (*WT*. I. i. 68),[1] and Helena and Hermia, despite their contrasting appearance,

> . . . grew together,
> Like to a double cherry, seeming parted,
> But yet an union in partition,
> Two lovely berries moulded on one stem
> (*MND*. III. ii. 208-11)

Furthermore, Shakespeare uses various forms of the word *twin* metaphorically thirteen times in the canon, as when Mistress Page calls her letter from Falstaff the "twin-brother" of Mistress Ford's (*Wiv*. II. i. 72) and when Timon refers to the sun and moon as "[t]winn'd brothers of one womb" (*Tim*. IV. iii. 3).

Most importantly, Shakespeare includes three sets of biological twins as characters in the plays. *The Comedy of Errors* contains two sets: Antipholus of Ephesus and Antipholus of Syracuse, "the one so like the other" at birth that they "could not be distinguish'd but by names" (I. i. 51-52); and "the calendars of their nativity" (V. i. 405), the Dromio brothers, "twins both alike" (I. i. 55) who, even as adults, have identical birthmarks, moles, and warts (III. ii. 142-44). Viola and Sebastian, the opposite-sex twins of *Twelfth Night*, are identified only as brother and sister until Sebastian enters and mentions that he and Viola were "both born in an hour" (II. i. 19). In the recognition scene at the end of the play, Antonio marvels that the two halves of an apple are "not more twin / Than these two creatures" (V. i. 223-24).

Shakespeare's two plays involving twins stand at opposite ends of his career as a comic dramatist: *The Comedy of Errors*, his first comedy, and *Twelfth Night*, his last festive comedy. Nevertheless, Shakespeare's treatment of the twin relationships is remarkably consistent in the course of the relationship (what happens between the siblings), the quality of the relationship (its emotion and realism), and the function of the relationship (the dramatic purpose it serves in the play as a whole).

In particular, the twins in both plays function as a comic device that gives the plots impetus, humorous complication, and resolution. The differences that do exist between the twin relationships in the two plays reveal Shakespeare's development as a playwright from *The Comedy of Errors* to *Twelfth Night*.

Before turning to the plays themselves, however, we should note three external factors that help to account for Shakespeare's use of twins as characters. First, the sources for his plays about twins reflect a long tradition of twins in mythology and literature.[2] Plautus' *Menaechmi* supplies the main plot of *The Comedy of Errors* and thus the prototypes of the Antipholus brothers. Another play by Plautus, the *Amphitruo*, in which each of two gods impersonates a mortal, features no siblings but two pairs of look-alikes, including a pair of slaves, prototypes of the Dromio brothers. Following a later tradition that changes one of the Plautine twins into a girl, Barnaby Riche's tale "Apolonius and Silla" and the other analogous sources for *Twelfth Night* provide Shakespeare with his Viola and Sebastian.[3]

A second possible explanation for Shakespeare's interest in using twins is that he was the father of the opposite-sex twins, Hamnet and Judith. These siblings were between seven and nine years old when Shakespeare wrote *The Comedy of Errors* sometime between 1592 and 1594. Furthermore, Judith was seventeen—about the age Viola seems to be[4] and, like Viola at the beginning of the play, bereft of her twin brother, Hamnet having died in 1596—when the first recorded performance of *Twelfth Night* took place at Candlemas, 1602. Perhaps it is a coincidence—and perhaps it is not—that Hamnet and Judith had been baptized at Candlemas, 1585.[5]

Thirdly, Shakespeare may have written about twins to please his original audiences. The first recorded, though not necessarily the first actual, performances of both *The Comedy of Errors* and *Twelfth Night* were at the Inns of Court.[6] As W. Nicholas Knight has explained, the lawyers at the Inns were fascinated by twin-like characters, presumably because of the legal implications of mistaken identity, and fostered a long tradition of plays involving such characters. Non-Shakespearean representatives of this tradition—such as Norton and Sackville's *Gorboduc*, Gascoigne's *Supposes*, and Marston's *What You Will*—rely on siblings or other paired characters for disguise and mistaken identity. But Knight calls all of these characters "twins," failing to note that Shakespeare alone presented biological twins at the Inns.[7] An alternative and less likely theory concerning *Twelfth Night* also supports the idea that Shakespeare used twins to please his first

audience. Leslie Hotson argues that this play was first performed at court on Twelfth Night, 1601, to honor the state visit of Don Virginio Orsino, Duke of Bracciano, who was the father of ten-year-old opposite-sex twins.[8]

Whatever the circumstances that encouraged Shakespeare to use biological twins in *The Comedy of Errors* and *Twelfth Night*, he makes their relationships essentially the same. In both plays, first of all, the course of the twin relationships is concurrent with the overall movement of the main plots. The similarity between the two plots has been recognized ever since the first recorded performance of *Twelfth Night*. John Manningham writes in his diary: "At our feast wee had a play called 'Twelve Night, or What You Will', much like The *Commedy of Errores*, or *Menechmi* in Plautus. . . ."[9] Manningham does not go on to discuss the specific similarities between the two Shakespearean plays, but rather summarizes the Malvolio subplot of *Twelfth Night*, which evidently interests him more. Later critics have also tended to assert that the two plots are similar without saying much more than that both concern "twins and the errors of identity caused by shipwreck and encounters in a strange town."[10] The following summary identifies the common elements in the course of the relationships of the three sets of twins in the two plays. The material in brackets is true only of the Antipholus brothers and of Viola and Sebastian but not of the Dromio brothers, whose actions do not parallel their masters' in every situation:

> Before the play begins, twins have been separated in a shipwreck, and neither twin knows for certain whether the other is alive. One twin, a brother, who has survived by being tied to a mast, comes by chance to a coastal town where his sibling has already settled. [A friend who is involved in commerce and familiar with the town (First Merchant of Ephesus in *Err.* Antonio in *TN*) gives him money and, unable to accompany him, agrees to meet him in the town at a particular place and time later that day. This twin expresses his intention to see the sights of the town and his grief at being separated from his sibling.] Because the twins look alike and because one of them has assumed some aspect of the other's identity [Antipholus and Dromio of Syracuse having been given their brothers' names and Viola having disguised herself as Sebastian], various townspeople mistake each twin for the other and expect each to have knowledge of their encounters with the other. The visiting brother becomes romantically linked to a woman [Antipholus of Syracuse to Luciana, Dromio of Syracuse to Luce, Sebastian to Olivia] who thinks he is his twin, [and he gets in trouble when he is asked to pay

> money that his twin is supposed to have]. It never occurs to the visiting brother that he is being mistaken for his twin until the two are reunited in a final recognition scene, [by the end of which each has found a mate].

Out of all the stories that Shakespeare could have told about the course of a relationship between twins, this is his one twin story. The twins' experiences in the two plays are thus similar in a remarkable number of details, and the experiences of Sebastian in particular coincide with those in *The Comedy of Errors.* We cannot explain these similarities simply by the fact that the main sources for the two plays, Plautus and Riche, derive from the same broad tradition of twin lore; the stories about twins in these sources, it turns out, are not so much alike as are Shakespeare's stories. L. G. Salingar has painstakingly shown that in *Twelfth Night* Shakespeare follows Riche's "Apolonius and Silla" for the most part but "deliberately [reverts] to Plautus for Sebastian, sometimes drawing on his own elaborations in *The Comedy of Errors* but mainly going back directly to the original."[11] By revising Riche in the direction of Plautus and *The Comedy of Errors*, Shakespeare makes the course of the twin relationships in his two plays correspond much more closely than they would otherwise. He also keeps the twin story in *Twelfth Night* from being overwhelmed by the love interest inherent in the introduction of a female twin. Riche's story, for example, stresses the love story by having Silla (Viola) fall in love with Apolonius (Orsino) at the beginning of the play, follow him to Constantinople (Illyria), and suffer shipwreck alone, without her brother Silvio (Sebastian).[12] Shakespeare, on the other hand, in both of his plays about twins, keeps the siblings together until their shipwreck and introduces one twin mourning the other, not seeking a lover.

Some of Shakespeare's innovations in *Twelfth Night* make the experiences of Viola and Sebastian more plausible than those of the twins in *The Comedy of Errors.* Whereas the visiting brother in Shakespeare's first play and in Riche announces that he is searching for his twin but never realizes that he is being mistaken for him or her, Sebastian, whose "determinate voyage is mere extravagancy" (II. i. 11-12), believes that his sister is dead and thus does not expect to see her.[13] Viola's immediate recognition that Antonio is mistaking her for her brother (III. iv. 375-76) is also more plausible than the Antipholus brothers' ignorance.

Although there are many other such subtle differences between the stories about the twins in the two Shakespearean plays, the main difference, of course, is that the plot of *Twelfth Night*, while retaining

the integrity of Shakespeare's twin story, accommodates many other strands. These include the love triangle of Orsino, Olivia, and Viola, which is created partly by Viola's imitation of her twin and is solved by Sebastian's appearance, and the Malvolio subplot, which intertwines with the twin story when Sir Andrew, mistaking Sebastian for Viola-Cesario, reluctantly challenges him to a duel and later accuses Viola of assault. Whereas the twin story that the two plays have in common covers most of the skeleton of the plot of *The Comedy of Errors*, it does not begin to describe the richness of the plot in which Viola and Sebastian are involved.[14]

Turning from the course to the quality of Shakespeare's twin relationships, we find again an essential similarity between the two plays but an increased sophistication in *Twelfth Night* over *The Comedy of Errors*. Because the three sets of twins do not meet on stage until the end of their plays, we must infer the quality of their relationships from scattered statements and actions throughout the plays and from the nature of their reunions at the end. Although the twins in *The Comedy of Errors* have been separated since infancy and have had no opportunity to develop a relationship, Antipholus of Syracuse has a strong innate affinity for his twin. Egeon reports that his son "[a]t eighteen years became inquisitive / After his brother; and importun'd me" to let him take his servant and go "in the quest of him" (I. i. 125-29). After seven years of unsuccessful searching, Antipholus is greatly discouraged but still doggedly committed to his quest, as he reveals in soliloquy in his first scene:

> He that commends me to mine own content,
> Commends me to the thing I cannot get:
> I to the world am like a drop of water,
> That in the ocean seeks another drop,
> Who, falling there to find his fellow forth
> (Unseen, inquisitive), confounds himself.
> So I, to find a mother and a brother,
> In quest of them (unhappy), ah, lose myself.
>
> (I. iii. 33-40)

This imagery is repeated elsewhere in the play, as when Adriana uses the union of a "drop of water" with the rest of "the breaking gulf" to describe the indivisible union of husband and wife (II. ii. 125-29). Here, in comparing his search for his brother to the search of one drop of ocean water for another, Antipholus suggests that he sees his twin as another self. Guazzo's statement about brothers as other selves in the Elizabethan translation of his influential conduct book applies even

more to twin brothers: "This neerenesse which ought to be between brothers, is likewise implyed in the name of brother, which in latine signifieth as it were another, to give us to understand, that a brother to a brother is as another hymselfe. . . ."[15] Shakespeare shows that he sees twinship as the closest of all relationships when he has Othello, angry at Roderigo and Cassio's brawl, say that he will punish whoever is responsible, "[t]hough he had twinn'd with me, both at a birth" (II. iii. 212).

Shakespeare's blurring of distinctions between the Antipholus twins adds to our seeing them as two parts of one self. As infants the Antipholus brothers "could not be distinguish'd but by names" (I. i. 52), but soon even that distinction disappeared because Egeon renamed the son in his custody after the one he had lost (I. i. 127-28). Egeon also confuses us about the birth order of the twins, another common means of differentiation, when he first says that his wife took the "latter-born" infant (I. i. 78) but a few lines later calls the one that he took "[m]y youngest boy" (I. i. 124). Although a recent critic has attempted to resolve this apparent inconsistency,[16] I prefer to see it either as a deliberate means of confusing the distinction between the twins or as a felicitous mistake. A similar situation occurs at the end of the play when the Dromio twins, unable to determine who is the elder, use this uncertainty to confirm that they are equal (V. i. 421-26).

In *Twelfth Night* both Viola and Sebastian, who have been apart for only a short time, express deep grief at being separated, probably, they fear, by death. In her first scene, when Viola hears that she has come to "Illyria," she immediately thinks of her twin—"My brother he is in Elysium. / Perchance he is not drowned"—and sighs, "O my poor brother!" (I. ii. 4-6). Later, when Antonio mistakes Viola for Sebastian and calls her by his name, her hopes soar:

> Prove true, imagination, O, prove true,
> That I, dear brother, be now ta'en for you!
>
> (III. iv. 375-76)

In the ensuing speech she reveals perhaps the greatest tribute to her affection for her twin: she has kept him alive through her disguise. She explains,

> . . . I my brother know
> Yet living in my glass; even such and so
> In favor was my brother, and he went
> Still in this fashion, color, ornament,
> For him I imitate.
>
> (III. iv. 379-83)

Viola, like Lear with the dead Cordelia, feels that, if only her loved one is alive, "Tempests are kind and salt waves fresh in love" (*TN.* III. iv. 383-84).

Sebastian, similarly, in his first scene mourns the death of his sister, saying that he wishes that they had died together as they were born together (II. i. 18-21). Although he is reluctant to admit Viola's physical beauty—as if he fears the incest that mythology attributes to opposite-sex twins[17]—he insists that "she bore a mind that envy could not but call fair" (II. i. 25-29). He further reveals his grief when he says, "She is drown'd already . . . with salt water, though I seem to drown her remembrance again with more" (II. i. 30-32).

As the other self of Antipholus of Syracuse is his twin brother of Ephesus, so, as Juliet Dusinberre points out, "Viola's other self is not the man she loves, but her brother."[18] The difference is that Viola and Sebastian, like opposite-sex twins in mythology, form an androgynous whole that encompasses the "complete human possibility" in one.[19] Because of having participated in this relationship, both twins seem to be aware also of their androgyny as individuals. In her speech after receiving Olivia's ring from Malvolio, Viola says,

> What will become of this? *As I am man,*
> My state is desperate for my master's love;
> *As I am woman* (now alas the day!),
> What thriftless sighs shall poor Olivia breathe!
> (II. ii. 36-39; my italics)

This passage, besides pointing out the humorous tangles that Viola's disguise has caused, subtly suggests Viola's awareness that, even without the disguise, "I am man" and "I am woman" at the same time. Sebastian reveals a similar understanding when he tells Olivia, "You are betroth'd both to a maid and man" (V. i. 263). Thus, in the relationship between Viola and Sebastian, Shakespeare creates a more complicated sort of complementary bonding than in *The Comedy of Errors*, this time based in part on the twins' sexual difference and their potential androgyny.

Although Shakespeare seems to characterize the twins in the two plays as having strong emotional ties, he also severely undercuts this closeness in many ways. The playwright's use of these extremes may possibly reflect his desire to portray the paradoxical closeness and distance within such relationships[20] or, more likely, his unconcern with portraying true-to-life twin relationships. Of course, Shakespeare does not present any sibling relationship—or any other character or rela-

tionship—simply as a copy of real life; but art and life are especially far apart with Shakespeare's twins.

Although, as we have seen, Antipholus of Syracuse expresses strong fraternal feelings, he is the only one of the four twins in the play to do so; and, after his initial speech, he never once thinks of his twin, despite the fact that he has been desperately searching for him for seven years. Even when Adriana addresses him as her husband in the market (II. ii) and when all the townspeople "salute me / As if I were their well-acquainted friend, / And every one doth call me by my name" (IV. iii. 1-3), he attributes the situation to bad dreams (II. ii. 182-84) or to "Lapland sorcerers" (IV. iii. 11) and never realizes the seemingly obvious fact that he is being mistaken for his brother. Shakespeare, however, is interested in proliferating "errors" here and not in presenting realistic human relationships.

The supposed affection between Viola and Sebastian is also, perhaps, undercut by his failure to recognize that he is being mistaken for her. Shakespeare gives him the excuses, though, that he believes Viola is dead (II. i. 21-23) and that he has no reason to expect that his sister, a woman, is masquerading as himself. Although Viola greatly mourns her brother in her first scene and hopes against hope that he has been spared, eight lines later she comments wistfully, "Orsino! I have heard my father name him. He was a bachelor then" (I. ii. 28-29), hinting to the audience that she may turn her attention to finding a husband. But here again the behavior of the characters is easier to accept in *Twelfth Night* than in *The Comedy of Errors*. Shakespeare immediately provides us with a foil to Viola through the Captain's description of another young woman, Olivia, whose brother has been dead for almost a year, "for whose dear love, / They say, she hath abjur'd the company / And sight of men" (I. ii. 39-41). In contrast to Olivia's theatrical solitude, Viola's sudden interest in Orsino seems desirable and healthy—and thus not so much of an unrealistic shift in attention.

Aside from the passages cited above, the twins in the two plays do not refer to each other at all, and the complicating situations depend not on any emotional relationship between the twins but simply on the mistaken identity created by their presence. Even the long anticipated reunions, though they certainly reveal something of the emotional closeness that we would expect, are on the whole stylized and unemotional. In the recognition scene in *The Comedy of Errors*, where many family relationships are reestablished, neither of the Antipholus brothers has a single line to say to the other. Although Marianne Novy

says that Shakespeare deliberately creates this silence to depict what she sees as an Elizabethan "ideal of emotional control,"[21] the scene as a whole suggests that he is not interested in emotional realism. The actions of the actors, however—their facial expressions and the degree of their physical affection—will determine whether or not an audience perceives the twins as having an affectionate reunion. Antipholus of Syracuse seems to understand that physical affection is expected; but he transfers the responsibility to the Dromios, telling his servant to "[e]mbrace thy brother there, rejoice with him" (V. i. 414)—acts that evidently have not yet taken place. The closing exchange between the servants is more emotional, recalling the theme of a twin as another self. Dromio of Ephesus marvels, "Methinks you are my glass, and not my brother: / I see by you I am a sweet-fac'd youth" (V. i. 418-19). After the two debate who is the elder and thus should exit first, the Ephesian twin solves the problem:

> ... Nay then thus:
> We came into the world like brother and brother,
> And now let's go hand in hand, not one before another.
> (V. i. 424-26)

This reunion, which comes at the very end of the play, may seem pleasantly stylized, gently humorous, or genuinely affectionate, again depending on the performance of the actors.

Although, as we have seen, the relationship between Viola and Sebastian is more realistic than that between the twins in *The Comedy of Errors*, the emotional content of their reunion similarly undercuts our expectations. The most moving lines are Sebastian's:

> Were you a woman ...,
> I should my tears let fall upon your cheek
> And say, "Thrice welcome, drowned Viola!"
> (V. i. 239-41)

But these words are not a cue for action; we witness no such physical display. Rather, the twins immediately continue a ritualized test to determine their identities:

> *Viola:* My father had a mole upon his brow.
> *Sebastian:* And so had mine.
> (V. i. 242-43)

After they formally compare notes on another such bit of information,

Viola concludes by insisting that Sebastian not embrace her until she dons her "maiden weeds" (V. i. 249-55). The reunion clearly belongs to the realm of fairy tales rather than of actual human relationships.[22]

Whereas the Dromios' exiting "hand in hand, not one before another" (V. i. 426) marks the end of the play, Viola and Sebastian's reunion is upstaged by the problem of Malvolio and by the twins' imminent marriages to Orsino and Olivia. These marriages, however, heighten rather than devalue the twins' relationship which seems incomplete by itself.[23] Although they cannot have with each other the sexual union that the mythology of opposite-sex twins would grant them, they can anticipate consummation with their mates. Similarly, the matching of Antipholus of Syracuse with Luciana gives more finality to his reunion with his twin.

The course and quality of the twin relationships are related to the twins' specific dramatic functions. The fact that the course of the relationship is also the course of the overall plot in both plays, for example, is important in fulfilling the first dramatic function, the setting up of a quest that will provide the broad plot structure for the play. The affinity between the twins is important, furthermore, in motivating this quest. Antipholus of Syracuse states the nature of his quest at the beginning of the play: "So I, to find a mother and a brother, / In quest of them (unhappy), ah, lose myself" (I. ii. 39-40). Although he mentions both his brother and his mother here, the quest is primarily for his twin because he originally left home, as his father explains, to go "in the quest" of his brother (I. i. 124-31) and because the main plot of the play concerns his being mistaken for and eventually finding his brother. Although Viola and Sebastian do not know each other to be alive, their play is built on a similar quest, beginning with the grief of separation and ending with the joy of reunion.

This first function of twinship in Shakespeare, however, could have been fulfilled by many other kinds of relationships, as in *Pericles*, where the protagonist is in quest of his daughter Marina, and *As You Like It*, where the lovers Orlando and Rosalind seek each other after their brief introduction. Other functions of twin relationships, however, depend on the unique ability of twins to provide mistaken identity through physical likeness and do not depend at all on any emotional relationship between them. In fact, their physical and emotional distance allows the errors of mistaken identity to continue and to receive primary attention.

The exact physical identity that Shakespeare attributes to his

twins, of course, does not come from the experience of real life, in which identical twins, who are necessarily of the same sex, may cause some confusion and in which opposite-sex twins look no more alike than any other brother and sister. Rather, the playwright relies on the literary convention that all twins—even boy-girl twins, once the obvious trappings of gender are modified—look exactly alike.[24] Shakespeare's use of this device in the two plays is illustrated by comments made by the Duke of Ephesus and the Duke of Illyria, respectively, as they see the twins side by side for the first time. Solinus, the Duke of Ephesus, declares,

> One of these men [the Antipholus brothers] is genius to the
> other:
> And so of these [the Dromios], which is the natural man,
> And which the spirit? Who deciphers them?
>
> (V. i. 333-35)

Orsino, similarly, sees in Viola and Sebastian

> One face, one voice, one habit, and two persons,
> A natural perspective, that is and is not!
>
> (V. i. 216-17)

Shakespeare knows all along, of course, that this exact likeness "is not"; rather, it is a dramatic device that generates wonder and amazement in the characters and amusement in the audience. Well aware that the actors in fact do not look alike, the audience takes delight in the artificiality of the convention. Thus the extreme attempts of some recent directors and producers to make the twins look exactly alike undercuts a potential source of humor. In the 1979 RSC production of *Twelfth Night* at Stratford-upon-Avon, for example, an inexperienced, ineffective actor was chosen to play Sebastian, evidently because of his physical likeness to the actress playing Viola; and in the 1983 BBC television production of *The Comedy of Errors*, the twins in each pair were portrayed by the same actor and thus were indeed identical. In this latter production, the audience, occasionally confused along with the characters, lost both the sense of the convention's artificiality and the objectivity to appreciate fully the humor of the "errors."

Thus we come to the most important function of mistaken identity throughout the plays: the creation of highly comical situations. In fact, most of our amusement and laughter in the two plays—except in the subplot of *Twelfth Night*—derives from the situational irony of the confusion over the twins' identities and the dramatic irony of our

recognizing this confusion when the characters do not. An analysis of the comedy of mistaken identity in the plays shows the increased sophistication of *The Comedy of Errors* over its sources and that of *Twelfth Night* over *The Comedy of Errors.*

In Plautus's *Menaechmi* the situation is relatively simple: townspeople mistake a visiting twin for his brother and then expect each brother to remember their previous encounters with the other twin. Shakespeare uses this scenario many times in *The Comedy of Errors*, as when Angelo gives the gold chain to Antipholus of Syracuse, whom he thinks is Antipholus of Ephesus; later he demands payment from the Ephesian twin, who denies having received the chain; and finally sees the Syracusan twin wearing the chain which he denies that he denied he received. Shakespeare complicates the already hilarious confusion of the *Menaechmi* by introducing from the *Amphitruo* a set of slave twins and making each of them subject to one of the other twins. The playwright, however, does not use the Dromios merely to proliferate the same kind of mistaken identity as that of their masters by the townspeople. In fact, with the notable exception that fat Luce mistakes the Syracusan servant for her Ephesian fiance, the townspeople have no mistaken confrontations with the Dromios. Rather, the servants constantly mistake the two masters and are mistaken by them, thus creating a different kind of comic situation. In the play's supremely comical first scene of mistaken identity, for example, both the Syracusan master and the Ephesian slave think they are talking to someone else, and each denies knowledge of what the other knows should be most on his mind: Dromio's responsibility for the thousand marks and Antipholus' promise to eat dinner with his wife (I. ii. 41-94). At other times, the scenes of mistaken identity between the Antipholus and Dromio twins follow the same complicated pattern as that between the Antipholus twins and the townspeople. For example, when Dromio of Syracuse tells Antipholus of Ephesus that a ship is ready, the master expects to receive rope but, failing to receive it, asks for bail money instead; then the Syracusan servant gives the money to the other Antipholus, and the Ephesian servant finally brings rope to his master, who now expects the money.

The mistaken identity of twins also creates much of the comedy in the main plot of *Twelfth Night*, but in a somewhat less farcical way. The obvious differences in the nature of mistaken identity in the two plays concern intention and gender: Viola disguises herself deliberately and assumes the identity of the opposite sex. As we have already seen, at the end of Act III she reveals that the boy she impersonates is not just

"Cesario" but her twin brother:

> ... even such and so
> In favor was my brother, and he went
> Still in this fashion, color, ornament,
> For him I imitate.
>
> (III. iv. 380-83)

In *The Comedy of Errors*, on the other hand, both sets of twins, by miraculous coincidence, are dressed and groomed in exactly the same way on the day of their reunion. But the mistaken identity in *Twelfth Night* is not necessarily more comical for being more realistic. Some of the comedy in both plays, as stated above, depends on our recognizing the preposterousness of the convention that adult twins look and speak exactly alike—when we clearly observe, both in life and in the theater, that they do not.

The use of opposite-sex twins and thus cross-gender confusion in *Twelfth Night*, however, creates a kind of humor not possible in *The Comedy of Errors*. The comedy of the main plot in the entire first half of *Twelfth Night* depends on a confusion not between individuals, as in Shakespeare's first play, but between genders, with both Olivia and Orsino becoming involved in a potentially romantic same-sex relationship with Viola-Cesario without understanding the situation.[25] The first such comic confusion begins when Olivia reveals that she has fallen in love with Cesario and sends Malvolio after him with a ring. Viola's long soliloquy, climaxing this first hilarious turn of events in the main plot, traces her awareness from denial ("Fortune forbid my outside have not charm'd her!" [II. ii. 18]) to recognition ("She loves me sure"; "I am the man!" [ll. 22, 25]) to sympathy ("Poor lady, she were better love a dream" [l. 26]) to anxiety ("How will this fadge?" [l. 33]). The comedy of disguise and mistaken identity here is analogous in some ways to that in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* when Titania is "enamor'd of an ass" (*MND.* IV. i. 77) or, in Viola's words, "love[s] a dream" (*TN.* II. ii. 26). Viola sees herself as a "poor monster" (l. 34), a no more likely lover for Olivia than Bottom is for the Queen of the Fairies. Much of the rest of *Twelfth Night*, of course, exploits the humor of Olivia's being in love with a woman.

This comic device of mistaken same-sex love is used in a different way in the relationship between Orsino and Cesario, especially in their long confessional conversation at the Duke's palace in II. iv. Here Shakespeare has Orsino emphasize his belief that he is talking to a young man by repeatedly calling Cesario "boy" (ll. 15, 24, 32) and

drawing generalizations, though conflicting ones, about the supposedly clear-cut differences between men and women. Viola-Cesario, on the other hand, cryptically reveals her love for Orsino at every opportunity. When Orsino asks "what kind of woman" Cesario has loved, the servant replies, "Of your complexion" (l. 26); when Orsino argues that women cannot love deeply, Cesario becomes dangerously forward in saying that "were I a woman, / I should [love] your lordship" (ll. 107-08). Furthermore, after Viola reveals her true identity at the end of the play, Orsino recalls, "Boy, thou hast said to me a thousand times / Thou never shouldst love woman like to me" (V. i. 267-68). Just as it is broadly comical that Olivia unwittingly falls in love with a woman, so it is gently humorous throughout the play that Orsino does not realize that his servant "boy" is trying to win his love.

Although it happens that Viola disguises herself as her brother and not just as any young man, the comedy of mistaken same-sex relationships in *Twelfth Night* does not depend on her actually having a sibling. A similar kind of humor occurs in *As You Like It* when Orlando pays court to "Ganymede," unaware that the youth is in fact in love with him. The comedy of mistaken identity in the second half of *Twelfth Night*, however, like that in *The Comedy of Errors*, depends on one twin's being mistaken for another and being held responsible for his actions. Such errors are not as extensively wrought as in the earlier play, partly because of the absence of a second set of twins. The three incidents of mistaken identity that do occur, however, all converge against Viola in the last scene, when Antonio again condemns Cesario for ingratitude, Olivia accuses him of infidelity, and Sir Andrew declares him to be "the very devil incardinate" (V. i. 181-82) for his attack on Sir Toby and him. Antonio's accusation results from his mistaking Viola-Cesario for Sebastian, and Sir Andrew's and Olivia's charges stem from their first having mistaken Sebastian for Viola-Cesario and now mistaking Viola-Cesario for Sebastian.

Thus we have seen so far that, in each of Shakespeare's plays about twins, twinship sets up a quest that is the framework of the plot and also allows the mistaken identity that creates much of the comic complication. Ironically, the confusion of mistaken identity also functions to bring a happy resolution to the plots. In many other comedies, as is well known, Shakespeare creates an alternative world where the "briers" of "this working-day world" (*AYL* I. iii. 12) can be resolved through a happy chaos. The confusion in this other setting often depends partly on disguise and mistaken identity, as in the forests of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *As*

You Like It. But in *The Comedy of Errors* and *Twelfth Night* Shakespeare needs no alternative world; the confusion of twinship alone is enough to create a corrective environment. Thus out of the errors of mistaken identity twin brothers and their parents can be reunited, a father's life can be saved, and an unmarried brother can find a wife. Similarly, in *Twelfth Night*, through the disguise of Viola and the utterly confusing appearance of Sebastian, the affections of Olivia and Orsino can be reformed and the absurd triangle of love among Orsino, Olivia, and Viola can be broken, each character finding a suitable mate.[26] In both plays, twinship makes possible, in Coppélia Kahn's words, the "benign confusion that catalyzes reunion, rebirth, and fulfillment."[27]

Thus Shakespeare's fascination with twinship manifests itself in recognizable and repeated patterns. Although his treatment of twins in *Twelfth Night* is more sophisticated than in *The Comedy of Errors*, the twins in the two plays are remarkably similar in the course, quality, and function of their relationships. Both plays tell essentially the same story of the siblings' separation, mistaken identity, and reunion. The twins profess especially strong feelings for each other, but at the same time they display a paradoxical distance that keeps their relationships from seeming realistic. Finally, the twins' functions are the same: their quest for reunion provides the overall structure, and their mistaken identity creates much of the humor and brings about the resolution of the two plays.

Northeastern Oklahoma State University

Notes

[1]All references to Shakespeare are to *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. G. Blakemore Evans et al. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974).

[2]Carolyn G. Heilbrun, *Toward a Recognition of Androgyny* (New York: Knopf, 1973), pp. 34-41, discusses the mythic and literary tradition involving opposite-sex twins.

[3]Geoffrey Bullough, *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, I (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul; New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1957), 7; II (1958), 270.

[4]Derek Brewer, *Symbolic Stories* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer; Totowa, N.J.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1980), p. 117.

[5]For the preceding facts I am indebted to Bullough, II, 270; the inference is mine.

[6]*Err.* was performed at Gray's Inn, December 28, 1594; *TN* at the Middle Temple, February 2, 1602 (Bullough, I, 3; II, 269).

[7]W. Nicholas Knight, "Comic Twins at the Inns of Court," *Publications of the Missouri Philological Association*, 4 (1979), 74-81.

[8]*The First Night of Twelfth Night* (New York: Macmillan, 1954), p. 40.

[9]Quoted in Bullough, II, 269.

[10]Bullough II, p. 270.

[11]"The Design of *Twelfth Night*," *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 9 (1958), 128; also see the appendix, pp. 137-39, for detailed evidence.

[12]I have relied in part on Kittredge's summary of "Apolonius and Silla" in *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*, ed. Irving Ribner and George Lyman Kittredge (Lexington, Mass.: Xerox, 1971), p. 394.

[13]Kenneth Muir, *The Sources of Shakespeare's Plays* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1978), p. 139, mentions this issue in showing that *Twelfth Night* is more realistic than the source, *Gl'Ingannati*.

[14]I have ignored the frame story of Err. in Acts I and V, which involves the parents of the twins. Barbara Freedman, "Egeon's Debt: Self-Division and Self-Redemption in *The Comedy of Errors*," *ELR*, 10 (1980), 360-83, discusses the effectiveness of this frame and its integration with the main plot.

[15]Stefano Guazzo, *The Civile Conversation of M. Steeven Guazzo*, trans. George Pettie (1581; rpt. London: Constable; New York: Knopf, 1925), II, pp. 87-88. I have been unable to determine the basis for Guazzo's belief that Latin *frater* signifies "another." Sir Edward Sullivan, Introd., *The Civile Conversation of M. Steeven Guazzo*, I, xxxviii-xcii ("George Pettie and Shakespeare"), argues that Shakespeare was greatly influenced by Guazzo's book and borrowed from it for many plays.

[16]Patricia Parker, "Elder and Younger: The Opening Scene of *The Comedy of Errors*," *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 34 (1983), 325-27.

[17]Heilbrun, *Androgyny*, p. 38, explains that in mythology opposite-sex twins have sexual union inside or outside the womb.

[18]*Shakespeare and the Nature of Women* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1975), p. 266.

[19]Heilbrun, *Androgyny*, p. 34. For a fuller discussion of the androgyny of Viola and Sebastian, see *Androgyny*, pp. 36-37; Carolyn G. Heilbrun, "A Course of Mistaken Identity," *Columbia Forum*, 7 (Summer, 1964), 38-40; Robert Kimbrough, "Androgyny Seen Through Shakespeare's Disguise," *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 33 (1982), 29-32; and William W. E. Slights, " 'Maid and Man' in *Twelfth Night*," *JEGP*, 80 (1981), 327-48. The rest of this paragraph is informed by these studies.

[20]See Marianne Novy, "Shakespeare and Emotional Distance in the Elizabethan Family," *Theatre Journal*, 33 (1981), 316-26, whose views would support this hypothesis.

[21]Novy, p. 321.

[22]Barton, p. 407.

[23]Slights, p. 346.

[24]See Heilbrun, "Mistaken Identity," p. 38; and Heilbrun, *Androgyny*, pp. 34-41.

[25]Brewer, p. 118, discusses the inappropriateness of Olivia's and Orsino's attraction to Viola but does not mention the humor it evokes.

[26]John J. W. Weaver, "The Other Twin: Sebastian's Relationship to Viola and the Theme of *Twelfth Night*," in *Essays in Honor of Esmond Linworth Marilla*, ed. Thomas A. Kirby and William J. Olive (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1970), p. 97.

[27]*Man's Estate: Masculine Identity in Shakespeare* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1981), pp. 199-200.

Mercutio as Mercury: Trickster and Shadow

by Thomas Browne

Romeo leaps over the orchard wall on his way to Juliet, and Mercutio, the mock magician, "conjures" with a series of extravagantly bawdy jokes. But when he doesn't get an answer out of his friend, Mercutio gives up: "Romeo, good night. I'll to my truckle bed."[1]

This is one of those archetypal moments of adolescence: after going to the big dance in the highest hopes, the young men who failed to find their Juliets now gather on a street corner, resigned to going home alone, and they are envious of one of their group who may have been successful. Mercutio strikes what very well may be a rueful note, for, as far as we can tell, he has nothing to look forward to but his "truckle bed," the bed of a child. Romeo's leaping over that garden wall is a rite of passage, an initiation, that Mercutio may envy. In spite of his elaborate joking about sex, nothing in the play indicates to us that Mercutio has any experience of the world. In fact, Romeo seems to be growing up faster than Mercutio.

But a long tradition of critical comment has regarded Mercutio as not at all the adolescent. One is struck in particular by how many major figures—Dryden, Dr. Johnson, Coleridge, Dowden, as well as many important critics of our century—have admired Mercutio for his sophistication. His charm is easy to see. But sophistication? Why have critics so often treated Mercutio as the older brother, the wise advisor of Romeo, when in fact it is Romeo who seems to be the one who is maturing, passing Mercutio and Benvolio by? Since Dryden described him as an example of the "refinement of wit" of the Elizabethan gentleman,[2] critics have found various kinds of perfection in him. Thus Dr. Johnson spoke admiringly of his "wit, gaiety and courage."[3] Coleridge described him as "the perfect gentleman;"[4] H.B. Charlton speaks of his "worldly savoir-faire." Norman Holland pictures him as "almost an older brother" to Romeo;[5] Granville-Barker, who also sees him as older than Romeo, finds a "wholesome self-sufficiency" in him.[6] John Hankins detects in Mercutio "a unique blend of critical acumen, delicate fancy and obscene levity."[7] Alfred Harbage finds "a hard vein of common sense."[8] But where is this "acumen" and "common sense"? Wasn't it Mercutio's insensitivity to what was happening around him, his lack of understanding, his willful need to fight Tybalt, that got him killed—and Romeo and Juliet, too, in the long run?

I think that, instead of seeing Mercutio as mature, it's more likely that Shakespeare saw in him something closer to childishness, or at least adolescence.[9] He owes a large part of his character, I believe, to Shakespeare's conception of the youthful trickster figure, Mercury. It is true, of course, that Mercury was not only trickster, but messenger, god of eloquence, god of merchants, even god of wisdom in some of his manifestations. But the connection between Mercury and the trickster has been carefully established by several authorities, including Karl Jung, Karl Kerenyi, Paul Radin and Norman O. Brown.[10] When we review the Elizabethan conceptions of Mercury as the trickster figure, we will find many suggestions that the youthfulness of Mercury especially struck the mythologists. He is a boy or an adolescent in many of his appearances on the stage as well as in many references to him in the mythological handbooks and in the lore of astrology and alchemy.

If it can be established that this trickster Mercury influenced Shakespeare in his treatment of Mercutio, then the next step is to ask whether the twentieth century's recognition that the trickster figure is a manifestation of the Jungian "shadow" is important in looking at Shakespeare's play. The connection between shadow and trickster figure has been established by Jung in several of his essays; for example, in "on the Psychology of the Trickster-Figure" he speaks of the trickster as "a sort of second personality, of a puerile and inferior character," and adds, "I have, I think, found a suitable designation for this character-component when I call it the shadow."[11] Paul Radin, author of the standard book on the trickster, says that each of us

> In the career of Trickster sees his own instinctual and irrational self, unanchored, undirected, helpless, purposeless, knowing neither love, loyalty nor pity. Isolated, he cannot grow nor mature. He can do nothing with the two fundamental appetites, hunger and sex.[12]

What did the Elizabethan playgoers bring to the theater that would prepare them to see the Mercutio that I see, the "puerile" trickster figure as Romeo's shadow? Certainly the audience was more aware than we are of the traditional roles and characteristics of Mercury, or the Hermes of Greek mythology. They lived with his image, whereas we see only the winged messenger on the cover of the phone book. A variety of references to Mercury—in the plays of Shakespeare's day, in the mythologies, in the astrological treatises, and in the alchemical discussions—can suggest to us what Shakespeare and his audience

thought of him.

In several of the plays we can find Mercury in the role of childish trickster. In the learned Ben Jonson's *Cynthia's Revels* we find Mercury playing the role of a witty page—a "crack," or young boy, as he's called.[13] In one of Jonson's masques, *Mercury Vindicated*, Mercury is tiny, as we'll see in discussing the alchemists. In the old play of *Locrine* the clownish boy, Strumbo, is identified with Mercury.[14] In Lyly's *The Woman in the Moon*, Mercury is the instructor of Pandora in trickery.[15] Thomas Heywood's *Love's Mistress, or the Queen's Masque* presents the story of Cupid and Psyche with the "young Mercury" befriending Psyche and angering Venus as a result of his trickery.[16] In Heywood's dialogue, "Mercury and Maia," Mercury complains to his mother that he's tired of serving as Jupiter's servant, tired of having to get up early "to sweep the house / Where all the gods must banquet and carouse...." But Maia warns him, "thou art young, ... hazard not stripes of him that sways above."[17]

The same view of Mercury is found in the many mythological handbooks of the day. Abraham Fraunce's *Countess of Pembroke's Ivy Church* is a typical example. Here Mercury is "Jove's pretty page, fine filcher Mercury," and the "crafty and cunning master Mercury." Fraunce's treatment emphasizes the shifting nature of Mercury as he "worketh divers influences in men's minds," making them everything from thieves to advisors to princes.[18] Barnaby Googe, translating Palingenius in *The Zodiac of Life*, describes Mercury as the "swiftly fleeting restless imp of Jove."[19] Both Fraunce and Googe suggest Mercury's youthfulness. But several handbooks are more specific in this respect. Natalis Comes, for instance, describes Mercury as a *juvenem formosum*, a handsome youth.[20] Richard Lynch's compendium, *The Fountain of Ancient Fiction*, tells us "The ancients depictured his forme in the likenesse and shape of a young man without beard." Lynch tells us too that Apuleius pictures Mercury as "a verie youth, hardly attained to full virilitie."[21]

Like the mythologers, the astrologers must have been an important influence on Shakespeare's conception of Mercury. The father of astrology, Ptolemy, assigns the years *before* sexual development to Mercury, whose influence is supplanted by that of Venus at puberty.[22] And the Renaissance writer, Giraldi, charting the planets' changing influences through a lifetime, assigns the periods of the *juvenis et adolescens* to Mercury's influence.[23]

Ben Jonson's *Alchemist*, providing a good transition from astrology to alchemy, shows us how the popular imagination conceived of

Mercury as diminutive. When Face and Subtle, alchemists who will use astrology or anything else to bamboozle their clients, are trying to persuade Drugger that they can make him a successful businessman, they find evidence of his business acumen by pretending to read his hand. His little finger, the mercurial finger, dominates, and thus he will be a roaring success at business—Drugger, the least Mercurial of persons![24]

For the serious alchemist, it was the shape-shifting quicksilver that offered promise of wealth, wisdom, or whatever, if only Mercury could be transformed. But however the alchemists sought the trickster in the alembic, the boy Mercurius never came forth to turn quicksilver to gold. Only in Ben Jonson's masque, *Mercurie Vindicated from the Alchemists at Court*, do we see the child manifest himself, and then it is only to flee from the alchemists, who chase him about the stage fruitlessly, while he mocks them, in the best trickster fashion. He even calls out to the audience to help:

> One tender-hearted creature, or other, save Mercury, and free him. Ne're an olde gentle-woman i' the house, that has a wrinkle about her, to hide me in? I could run into a serving-woman's pocket now; her glove, any little hole.[25]

The bawdiness of Jonson's diminutive trickster would be right at home in Mercutio's Queen Mab speech!

Carl Jung's interest in the alchemist's world as a reflection of psychological truth is especially important here, since his seminal idea of the "shadow," and the relation of shadow to trickster, is, I believe, one key to understanding *Romeo and Juliet*. Jung comments on the figure of Mercurius as the alchemists saw him: "a real trickster who drove the alchemists to despair" (XIII. 203). As Jung discusses the many-sided nature of Mercurius, whom he calls *duplex* and *versipellis*, he also points out the traditional role of Mercurius as a child or youth (XIII. 217). Several illustrations in *Psychology and Alchemy* show the young Mercury, including one in which he is sealed inside the "hermetic" vessel (XII. 238, 251, 324). The boy is dangerous: "fairytale and alchemy both show Mercurius in a predominantly unfavourable light," Jung says, and speaks of his "dark and dubious quality" (XIII. 241). He is a creature of lower life: "The texts remind us again and again that Mercurius is found in the 'dungheaps' " (XIII. 232). The trickster, Jung says, is "an absolutely undifferentiated psyche that has hardly left the animal level" (I. 260).

Although Jungian critics have not discussed Mercutio as an

example of Jung's shadow/trickster, Falstaff has been seen as Prince Hal's shadow by Edith Kern, in a recent article in *The Upstart Crow* (1984), and Alex Aronson, in *Psyche and Symbol in Shakespeare*, says:

> Falstaff, Shakespeare's most accomplished trickster figure, is . . . the "shadow" thrown by the Prince's persona, his unconscious projected outward and assuming the most obvious archetypal shape.[26]

An even more obvious archetypal shape, I believe, can be found in Mercutio, since he adds the element of youthful irresponsibility to the pattern. The contrast between Romeo and Mercutio is not, I must admit, as thoroughly developed as that between Falstaff and the Prince. But when we look carefully at *Romeo and Juliet*, we can see evidence that the figure we are looking for in Mercutio, the trickster/shadow, is there.

As we meet the young men on the way to the ball in Act I, we might get a first impression from Mercutio's language that he and Romeo are, in fact, interchangeable, rather than contrasting figures. When Romeo bemoans the fact that his soul of lead "stakes me to the ground," Mercutio pronounces,

> You are a lover, borrow cupid's wings
> And soar with them above a common bound.
>
> (I. iv. 17-18)

He sounds for a moment as if he too could sentimentalize over Rosaline with extravagant phrases. But this is the end of the Petrarchan images for Mercutio, and next he engages in a series of typically bawdy remarks emphasizing erection and detumescence. As Norman Holland says, "Raising up seems to represent for Mercutio a child's ithyphallic notion of virility."[27] Thus Mercutio jokes about sinking in love, of oppressing love, of weighing the woman down, of pricking love, beating it down all in a half-dozen lines. This is the substance of the "eloquence" that Mercutio has inherited from his patron saint, Mercury, who is, after all, at least as well remembered for his ithyphallic statues, or "herms," as he is for his fostering of eloquence.

But after all this bold talk of sex, Mercutio asks for a visor to hide his face and his "deformities." Is this just another joke, or is he in fact unsure of himself as he goes to the ball? Nothing in the play suggests to us that he is romantically, or sexually, involved with a woman. He "jests at scars who never felt a wound," and not only has he never been wounded, but he perhaps has had no real experience of sex beyond talking about it with the boys.

Then Mercutio is prompted to his Queen Mab speech about the power of dreams. How right it is that the trickster Mercutio should show such affection for the trickster Queen Mab! Jung remarks that the trickster as shadow "frequently appears in the phenomenology of dreams as a well-defined figure" (I. 270). Mercutio's speech has prompted a great deal of discussion among critics who find it surprising, at the least, and perhaps "out of character." But the dream is perfectly explicable in terms of Mercutio's character: what we see is a childish indecisiveness. Why, as the young men are on their way to the ball and the chance for sexual experience (not romance—Mercutio would pooh-pooh that, of course), does Mercutio choose to go into a long-winded recital that certainly strikes us as a set piece, not completely spontaneous, no matter how witty and extemporary Mercutio may be? Is he hanging back because he is, in fact, unsure of himself, this young man whom so many seem to think of as a lady-killer right out of Restoration comedy? The Queen Mab speech is not particularly bawdy, in spite of references to Mab's visiting lovers and pressing the maids. It is as if the Mercutio we've been introduced to, the bawdy expert on sex, is no longer before us. It's Benvolio who seems to understand what is going on as Mercutio is telling us that dreams are as inconstant as the wind:

> This wind you talk of blows us from ourselves:
> Supper is done, and we shall come too late.
>
> (I. iv. 97-98)

What happens to Mercutio at the ball we don't know; our attention is riveted on the perfection of Romeo and Juliet's beautiful meeting in the "good gentle pilgrim" sonnet. After the ball Romeo presumably goes to the Capulet home, and he is followed by Mercutio and Benvolio. When the two come onstage, it's Benvolio, not Mercutio, who is really searching for Romeo. Note that Mercutio has less enthusiasm for the chase:

> Ben. Romeo! My cousin Romeo! Romeo!
> Mer. He is wise,
> And on my life hath stol'n him home to bed.
>
> (II. i. 1-3)

Mercutio is thinking of his own "truckle bed." But Benvolio knows where Romeo has gone: "He ran this way and leapt this orchard wall." Thus we see that Romeo is actively avoiding his friends, hiding from them; as Benvolio says a few lines later, "he hath hid himself among

these trees / To be consorted with the humorous night. / Blind is his love, and best befits the dark." They have no idea that Romeo is on the way to high adventure, the highest adventure in all of the literature of love. While Mercutio does his bawdy conjuring, Romeo bides his time, and then goes to Juliet's balcony. John Vivyan makes a perceptive comment about the opposition between Mercutio and Romeo, pointing to Mercutio's reference to the medlar-tree, with its connotations of the female genitalia:

> Witty, smutty—and immeasurably wide of the mark. Romeo is not under a medlar-tree; but in a few moments he will be under Juliet's balcony.... Not even Shakespeare could have contrived antitheses more arresting than the medlar-tree and Juliet's balcony, the poperin pear and love's pilgrim, who has come to the shrine of his own heart's saint—a place so beautiful that we know it must be holy.[28]

In Vivyan's allegoric interpretation, Mercutio is "the man of earth," opposed to Romeo as "man of spirit," and Romeo's growth is to a higher level of love on the Platonic scale as he transcends the values of Mercutio.

The next morning Mercutio and Benvolio are busy looking for Romeo. And they seem totally unaware of what has happened. Again Mercutio mocks the high-flown romantic love that he thinks is victimizing Romeo, tormented by the "pale-hearted wench, Rosaline" and the "blind bow-boy." When Romeo comes along, Mercutio jokes about Romeo without his roe, "minus his manhood,... as if he were a depleted rake fresh from the bawdy house," as the New Cambridge Shakespeare editor, G. Blakemore Evans, puts it (p. 107). Does Mercutio really think that Romeo is merely mooning after Rosaline, or does he suspect that his friend has found some real sexual involvement? At any rate, what follows is the wit-cracking, logic-chopping passage that is such a deadly bore—those single-soled jests, sorely short on substance. Where we might expect Romeo to tell Mercutio, and Benvolio, about Juliet, he is content to go along with Mercutio's tired jokes. Is it fair to speculate that perhaps Romeo doesn't tell Mercutio about Juliet because he fears Mercutio will mock her as he mocks Rosaline? But not all readers find the single-soled jests so disappointing. Granville-Barker says,

> When their battle of wits is ended—a breathless bandying of words that is like a sharp set at tennis—suddenly, it would seem, [Mercutio] throws an affectionate arm round the younger man's shoulder.

Then Granville-Barker quotes with approval the passage in which this supposedly older Mercutio praises the Romeo who now is like himself: "Why, is not this better now than groaning for love? Now art thou sociable, now art thou Romeo, now art thou what thou art. . ." (II. iv. 72). For Granville-Barker, Mercutio's remark expresses "Mercutio's creed in a careless sentence! At all costs be the thing you are."[29]

This is the thing that Mercutio is, but is this truly Romeo? The real Romeo is the person who has gone beyond standing around in the street making elaborate jokes to kill time. And even here we find that when Mercutio tries out more bawdy jokes, talking of driveling love that "is like a great natural that runs lolling up and down to hide his bauble in a hole," it is Benvolio who answers him with another bawdy wisecrack. Now Romeo is silent, except to close the byplay with "Here's goodly gear," which may, it must be admitted, be part of the string of bawdy puns, if Evans is right in saying that Romeo's "gear" refers to sexual organs (p. 110). But it is more likely that Romeo is introducing us to the nurse, goodly gear indeed, as she appears onstage.

If it *is* the old Romeo in this scene, we see him only for a moment. With the nurse, his new life reasserts itself, though Mercutio is completely unaware of what is going on, showing here, as he does whenever he appears onstage, a remarkable lack of empathy with Romeo. Is there something that keeps him from responding to the real force of Romeo's new life? As Jung says, "It is practically impossible to get a man who is afraid of his own femininity to understand what is meant by the *anima*" (I. 271). Note that the only woman Mercutio talks to in the play is the Nurse, hardly an *anima* figure, and his treatment of her might strike us as very cruel, were she not so able to take care of herself when it comes to the bawdy side of life.

It is significant that, with all the indecent suggestions between the Nurse and Mercutio and, later, between the Nurse and Peter, Romeo avoids the bawdy completely. Perhaps it is the image of Juliet in his mind that keeps him apart from the wisecracking. It is true that another bawdy joke has been imagined in Romeo's comment to the Nurse that Mercutio loves to hear himself talk, "and will speak more in a minute than he will stand to in a month" (Evans, 112). If this is in fact a bawdy joke about Mercutio's lack of sexual prowess—his inability to stand to—it would indicate that this new Romeo feels superior to Mercutio, confident as he is of Juliet's love.

Of all his appearances, the duel scene, of course, shows us Mercutio most clearly, and here the conflict between him and Romeo is obvious. For it is Mercutio who is directly responsible for the tragedy,

as many readers have noticed. Mercutio is spoiling for a fight. And even though Romeo must sense how wrong Mercutio has been to insist on the fight, he cannot free himself from the violent and childish side of himself that, like Mercutio, will seek out death rather than love.

Benvolio sees the truth. Playing the straight man for Mercutio's caricature of him as the wrathful man spoiling for a fight (obviously a projection of Mercutio's own character), Benvolio says, "And I were so apt to quarrel as thou art, any man should buy the fee-simple of my life for an hour and a quarter" (III. i. 26). In other words, Benvolio sees that Mercutio, always irresponsible, is living on the edge; in fact, Benvolio is prophetic, for within "an hour and a quarter" Mercutio will be dead, never having experienced a life more complex than his adolescent aggressiveness and bawdiness.

This young man who is so loved by so many commentators has to be blamed for what happens. Harold Goddard exemplifies this view at its best when he says that the cause of the quarrel Shakespeare "places squarely in the temperament and character of Mercutio."[30] Goddard points out that he is the one whose sword is out before Tybalt's: "Here's that shall make you dance," he says to Tybalt, and either puts his hand to the hilt or actually draws the sword. In Zefferelli's film, Mercutio makes the sword stand before him like a phallus, the sword becoming Mercutio's toy, the trickster's toy so common among other tricksters, those fools whose swords are of lath. But Mercutio's is real enough, and he is ready to fight, when Romeo comes along, and Romeo amazes Mercutio by refusing to fight: "O calm, dishonorable, vile submission," he says to Romeo. And he forces Tybalt to fight—not that Tybalt is hesitant.

But what is it that drives Mercutio here? Is it only that "vile submission" of his friend? How much "real concern" (Harbage's phrase)[31] does Mercutio have for Romeo? Note that he says to Tybalt as he prepares to fight him, "Come, sir, your 'passado'." He thus refers back to the earlier conversation he had with Benvolio about Tybalt's new-fangled style of fighting. Here he seems to want to test his weapon against Tybalt's new toy.

At any rate, he blames Romeo for his wound. He knows he is dying. We can't blame him completely for his failure to face facts. But at the same time there is something childish about his petulant cry, "why the devil came you between us? I was hurt under your arm." He has no real reason to complain about Romeo here, or about both houses. He has brought the plague on himself.

But Romeo cannot see this. He sees only that Juliet's "beauty hath

made me effeminate, and in my temper softened valour's steel!" The sword, the dangerous toy, has been bent, detumescent, and his "reputation stained," as he puts it. And so he kills Tybalt.

And then he blames fortune for what has happened: "O, I am fortune's fool." Jung comments on how often we blame jinxes or "accidents" for what is really our own doing:

> The so-called civilized man has forgotten the trickster. He remembers him only figuratively and metaphorically, when, irritated by his own ineptitude, he speaks of fate playing tricks on him or of things being bewitched. He never suspects that his own hidden and apparently harmless shadow has qualities whose dangerousness exceeds his wildest dreams.
>
> (I. 267)

Romeo can't outgrow that part of himself which is so dangerous, that part which in fact has taken over the role of determining his life, so that he betrays Juliet when he kills Tybalt—and thus precipitates the play's tragic catharsis. Jung says that "the one standing closest behind the shadow is the *anima*" (I. 270). His explanation of the remark is puzzling, as Jung can be, but he points to the opposition between shadow and *anima* and their paradoxical closeness to one another: sexuality and spirit, child and adult, hate and love, Mercutio and Juliet, poised on either side of Romeo. And it is Mercutio who wins out.

Some would blame the stars for the deaths of the lovers. My emphasis on the role of Mercutio in the play and what he symbolizes in Romeo add weight, I believe, to the argument that, in spite of all the perfunctory references to stars and fortune, it is finally a tragedy of character. The play puts its weight on the inner struggle of Romeo who tries to walk—so unsuccessfully—on the balance line between opposing forces. Though he fails, he fails nobly, having tried valiantly to live by the rule of love in a world that holds violence more important. The young lovers at the end have a kind of dignity in their deaths that we may not recognize because it is easy for us to feel superior to youthful error. It is true that after Tybalt's death and the news of his banishment, Romeo strikes every reader as childish, "blubbering and weeping" at the Friar's cell. But we should remember the resolution in his words when he learns of Juliet's supposed death, "Well, Juliet, I will lie with thee tonight," and the nobleness as well as the pathos of his words in the tomb, "My love, my wife." In the Friar's cell, "blubbering and weeping," he attempts suicide, and we find it melodramatic. At the end, when he kills himself, we find it tragic.[32]

One of Jung's comments suggests clearly the source of tragedy in that what life requires of us is so difficult to achieve: how do we reconcile that puerile trickster within us, that Mercurial shadow, with our higher self, our Juliet? How do we reach that integration?

> The unity of our psychic nature lies in the middle, just as the living unity of the waterfall appears in the dynamic connection between above and below.
>
> (I. 269)

University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire

Notes

[1]William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, ed. G. Blakemore Evans, The New Cambridge Shakespeare (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984). Subsequent quotations from *Romeo and Juliet* are from this edition.

[2]A useful summary of criticism on Mercutio is found in Herbert MacArthur, "Romeo's Loquacious Friend," *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 10 (1959), 35-44.

[3]MacArthur, p. 35.

[4]MacArthur, p. 38.

[5]MacArthur, p. 43.

[6]*The Shakespearian Imagination* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1964), p. 82.

[7]*Prefaces to Shakespeare*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947), p. 336.

[8]*Complete Pelican Shakespeare* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1969), p. 856.

[9]Marjorie Kolb Cox, in the *Psychoanalytic Review*, analyzes "Adolescent Processes in *Romeo and Juliet*," pointing out that "when Romeo finds the true object of his love, he must leave Mercutio along with his primary loyalty to the preadolescent male peer group" (63 [1976], pp. 379-92). The feminist critic, Coppélia Kahn, also sees the limitations in Mercutio, who embodies a part of the masculine world that "promotes masculinity at the price of life." ("Coming of Age in Verona," in *The Woman's Part*, ed. Lenz, Greene and Neely [Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1980]).

[10]See Edith Kern, *The Absolute Comic* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), chapter four, "The Absolute Comic and the Trickster Figure."

[11]*The Collected Works of C.G. Jung* (New York: Bollingen Foundation, [1959-63] I, p. 262. Subsequent references to Jung's work will be from the Bollingen edition.

[12]*The World of Primitive Man* (London: Abelard-Schuman, 1953), p. 339.

[13]*Works*, ed. C.H. Herford and Percy and Evelyn Simpson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925-53), IV, II. i. 4-9.

[14]Ed. Jane Gooch (New York: Garland English Text Series, 1981), IV. iii.

[15]*Complete Works* ed. R.W. Bond (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1902), IV, IV. i. 4-11.

[16]*Dramatic Works* (London: John Pearson, 1874), IV, pp. 216-18.

[17]*Dramatic Works* I, p. 98.

[18]Ed. Gerald Snare (Northridge: California State University, 1975), pp. 96-97.

[19]Ed. R. Tuve (New York: Scholars Facsimiles, 1947), p. 186.

[20]*Mythologiae*, (Venice [1567], Garland Reprint, New York, 1967), p. 134.

[21](London [1599] Garland Reprint, New York, 1976), Qii.

[22]*Tetrabiblos*, trans. W.G. Waddell (Harvard: Loeb Classical Library, 1940), p. 443.

[23]*De Deis Gentium* (Basel [1548] Garland Reprint, New York, 1976).

[24]*Works* V, I. iii. 49.

[25]*Works* VII, 11. 30-34.

[26](Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1972), p. 55.

[27]"Mercutio, Mine Own Son, the Dentist," in *Essays on Shakespeare*, ed. G. Ross Smith (University Park: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1965), p. 11.

[28]*Shakespeare and the Rose of Love* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1960), pp. 157-58.

[29]*Prefaces to Shakespeare*, p. 336.

[30]*The Meaning of Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), I, p. 125.

[31]*William Shakespeare: a Reader's Guide*, p. 151.

[32]For a recent statement of this view of Act V see G. Blakemore Evans' introductory essay to the New Cambridge *Romeo and Juliet*, cited above. The essay by John Vivyan in *Shakespeare and the Rose of Love* is also helpful on this point.

" 'Tis monstrous': Dramaturgy and Irony in *Othello*

by Edward C. and Karen R. Jacobs

Othello, of all Shakespeare tragedies, makes the most intensive use of dramatic irony.[1] From the opening scene to Desdemona's murder, our emotions are assaulted by the viciousness of Iago as he works upon the passions of Othello and manipulates him into jealousy, then insanity, murder, and suicide. Early in the play—II. iii. 200—there occurs a single, striking line spoken by Othello that sets up a carefully orchestrated leitmotif that resounds throughout the play,[2] enforcing upon us what Coleridge long ago noted: Iago is essentially evil. Do what we will with psychological constructs, the cloak of imperfect humanity—Iago's wounded pride and jealousy—merely covers a monster.[3]

In Act II. iii, after Iago has duped Cassio into brawling with Montano, Othello appears, enraged: "What is the matter here?" he questions repeatedly (ll. 146, 176; cf. 152, 171, 192-93). Getting no answer, he is very nearly ready to kill. Turning to Iago, he asks a final time:

> 'Tis monstrous. Iago, who began 't?
>
> (l. 200)

This question may be the most ironic line of the play. Here Othello pronounces, almost, the answer to the question he has been asking. Only a few pauses—breaths of air signaling the workings of his brain—separate Othello from his eventual destruction. Had Othello spoken what an astute listener seems to hear him say, " 'Tis monstrous Iago who began 't," all things might have been well.[4]

Did Shakespeare intend to fashion such a deliberately ironic line for our enjoyment, or was it a happy artistic accident? External and internal evidence argue for such deliberate irony. First there is a convincing parallel from *King Lear*. In Act II. i., Edmund, having urged Edgar, his brother, to flee their father, draws his own sword, pretends to battle Edgar in the dark, stabs himself to draw blood, and cries "Father, father!— / Stop, stop! No help?" (ll. 35-36). Gloucester then enters, hurries to Edmund's aid, and cries out three times at the sight of blood

> Now, Edmund, where's the villain?
> . . . But where is he?

Where is the villain, Edmund?

(37, 40-41)

This moment of staged crisis parallels so closely that of Othello's at II. iii that it is difficult to deny the intentionality of the dramaturgical device. Shakespeare's tactics seem thus: Have a villain—Iago/Edmund—contrive through the use of a fight scene occurring at night to cast from favor a person who is close to the hero (Othello) or to some other noble person (Gloucester). The one cast from favor (Cassio/Edgar) must figure prominently in the tragic end to the play. Let the fight scene conclude by having the hero or noble person enter hurriedly after the fight and demand "What's going on? Who has started all this uproar?" At the same time that the hero asks this question, let him direct it principally to the villain to create dramatic irony. Moreover, during the repeated questioning, let the hero call on the villain by name so that the audience can enjoy even more the situational irony wherein the hero not only asks the question in the presence of the villain but also answers it by naming the villain. Thus we hear:

Where is the villain, Edmund?

. . . .

'Tis monstrous. Iago, who began 't?[5]

In *King Lear*, Shakespeare extends that ironic moment so that we can savor the irony. As Shakespeare stages the questioning, he has Gloucester speak Edmund's name first and deliberately avoids juxtaposing the two concepts "Edmund/villain," though of course, we, the audience, have paired them. Then, a few seconds later Shakespeare has Gloucester ask the question a second time, but omits any reference to Edmund; we again automatically supply the name "Edmund" in our minds as both the antecedent of "he" and the answer to the question. Finally, in a second or so of acting time, Shakespeare has Gloucester verbally juxtapose what we have already done twice in our minds when he asks: "Where is the villain, Edmund?"

As for the internal evidence, analysis of *Othello's* use of the words "monstrous" and "monster" reveals that Shakespeare uses these words thirteen times, ten times for deliberate, sometimes tortuous, ironical effects upon his audience, and three times straightforwardly. But because these three occurrences are interwoven into the larger ironic pattern, they, too, viewed from the broader perspective, function ironically. Moreover, as we examine this ironic pattern, we ought to be aware of a further subtle ironic dimension of these words that the

learned theatergoers of Shakespeare's time could certainly enjoy, and that is the Latin roots of "monster" and "monstrous." Shakespeare, raised on "small Latine & lesse Greeke," certainly knew the common verbs *monere* and *monstrare*: to remind, to warn, to instruct (*monere*); to show, to point out, to teach, to inform (*monstrare*). It is through Othello's and Iago's use of "monster/monstrous" nine times in conversations with each other, together with such use once each by Emilia, Desdemona, Montano, and a Gentlemen, that Shakespeare's characters ironically instruct us, point out to us, warn us of the diabolical nature of Iago.[6]

The first use of the word "monstrous," a non-ironic use, functions proleptically and occurs in I. iii. 396, the final couplet ending the act. Iago, searching for a scheme to destroy Othello, cries:

> I have't! It is engend'red! Hell and night
> Must bring this monstrous birth to the world's light.

Here Iago, if we yet doubt it, categorically identifies himself with the powers of Evil: "Hell and night." He calls upon their help to realize the "monstrous birth" of his plan.[7] We who have already seen or read this play can recall and anticipate, with grim amusement, a line soon to be spoken by the angry Othello: " 'Tis monstrous. Iago, who began 't?"[8]

This couplet's antithetical rhyme—"night/light"—perfectly encapsulates the play's entire conflict: the war of Evil and its agents hell, night, and the "monstrous" planner, Iago, against "the world's light," Desdemona, the center of Othello's universe. Act I fittingly begins in the night. We hear the fiendish talk of Iago gulling Roderigo: "Make after him [Othello], poison his delight. . . . Plague him with flies" (I. i. 68-71). Then we hear Brabantio madly calling for light—"Strike on the tinder, ho! . . . Light, I say! Light!" (I. i. 139-43)—after he hears from out of the darkness Iago's taunt: "an old black ram / Is tupping your white ewe" (I. i. 88-89). It is in the night of Act II. iii that Iago gives "monstrous birth" to his plan. Having plied Cassio with drink, he tricks him into fighting. And it is in the night of Act V. ii that Othello quite possibly damns himself to hell. For here, in slaying Desdemona, he puts out his "world's light." "Chaos" for him "is come again." Significantly, once Emilia has discovered and revealed Iago's evil, Shakespeare puts these words into Montano's mouth: "O monstrous act!" to which Emilia replies in a hauntingly liturgical refrain: "Villainy, villainy, villainy!" (V. ii. 190).[9] These two non-ironic occurrences of the word "monstrous," the first at the outset by Iago, the last at the end by Montano, function as a precise and subtle antiphonal chant framing the monstrous planner and his

plan, echoing against each other in the night, anticipating, on the one hand, and reemphasizing, on the other, the many ironic uses of "monstrous" and "monster" in Acts II through IV.

A final, and third, non-ironic use of "monstrous" occurs in Act II. i. 13. Here again the word anticipates Othello's first ironic use of the word in II. iii. 200: "'Tis monstrous. Iago, who began 't?" and other later ironic uses of "monstrous" and "monster." Act I has closed with Iago's fateful couplet. Act II. i begins with that ominous storm that Knight and others have commented on so well.[10] The place is a seaport in Cyprus; the time, early morning; a great storm is raging. Men look seaward, fearfully hoping for a glimpse of Othello's ship. One says:

> The chidden billow seems to pelt the clouds;
> The wind-shak'd surge, with high and monstrous main,
> Seems to cast water on the burning Bear
> And quench the Guards of th' ever-fixed pole.
>
> (II. i. 12-15)

Quite clearly Shakespeare's repetition of the word "monstrous" in the context of this tempest, so soon after Iago's use of it only fourteen lines before, is deliberate. It previews the coming "monstrous main" of Othello's passions that will drown his North Star, "th' ever-fixed pole" of his universe, Desdemona. That anger and frustration we hear clearly in Othello's voice a short time later, after Cassio's brawl, when Othello threatens "My blood begins my safer guides to rule," (II. i. 188) and turns to "monstrous. Iago" to ask "who began 't?"

It is instructive to note, as we examine the ironic uses of "monstrous" and "monster," that nine of ten follow the initial ironic use of "monstrous" in Othello's question to Iago and that all nine occur in Acts III (seven uses) and IV (two uses), the crucial acts wherein the "monstrous birth" of Iago's plan reaches its maturity. Shakespeare thereby sustains and slowly heightens through carefully varied repetition the subtle irony of Othello's question as well as the overall ironic pattern woven by these words. Shakespeare's audiences cannot miss the implications of the irony: Iago is indeed a monstrous villain.

"Ha! I like not that." These words by Iago to Othello at III. iii. 35 begin Othello's downfall. Both men have seen Cassio slipping from Desdemona's side in the garden. Iago has his chance. He seizes it, rapidly assaulting Othello's mind with innuendoes against Cassio and Desdemona. Othello, unused to such guerrilla warfare, tries to halt the unsuspected enemy's advance. "What dost thou think?" he demands from Iago. Iago, "Think, my lord?" Othello replies:

> . . .Think, my lord?
> By heaven, he echoes me,
> As if there were some monster in his thought
> Too hideous to be shown.
>
> (III. iii. 104-08)

The irony is impressive. It is not only Iago who echoes Othello, but Othello who also echoes Iago and himself. Othello neatly recalls for us Iago's words at the end of Act I—"Hell and night / Must bring this monstrous birth to the world's light," and his own words to Iago at II. iii. 300: " 'Tis monstrous. Iago. . . ." Here again in III. iii, Othello pronounces a truth to us, and to himself, as he did at II. iii. 200. Unfortunately for him the truth is couched in the subjunctive, a mode foreign to Othello's forthright nature.

Later in Act III. iii, as Iago's verbal assault continues and as Othello is rapidly going down, Othello makes a final, but futile, counterattack in the only way that he knows—through threats of violence to Iago: "If thou dost slander her and torture me, / Never pray more; abandon all remorse" (III. iii. 368-69). Iago, acting shocked and dismayed, proclaims his innocence theatrically to God, calls himself a fool for being so honest, and castigates the world:

> O monstrous world! Take note, take note, O world,
> To be direct and honest is not safe.
>
> (III. iii. 377-78)

Coming from Iago, the irony darts about us from several directions at once: the obvious links of "O monstrous world" with "monstrous birth" and "monstrous Iago" needs no further comment; the ploy of the evil man putting on the mask of innocence is also obvious. But the surprising turn wherein Iago, under the guise of hurt innocence, reveals to Othello one of Othello's essential flaws that makes him susceptible to evil men like Iago, who truly people a "monstrous world"—such an oblique assault leaves the audience reeling and stunned. Iago instructs Othello, "To be direct and honest is not safe." It is exactly such qualities, Iago knows, that comprise Othello's nature. Earlier Iago has told us: "The Moor is of a free and open nature. . . . / The Moor . . . Is of a constant, loving, noble nature" (I. iii. 391; II. i. 282-83). Such a man is an easy mark in a "monstrous world."

The other occurrences of "monster" in Act IV. i also demonstrate Shakespeare's unobtrusive development of this motif through skillfully varied repetition. Having regained consciousness and gotten to his feet after having been driven into an epileptic fit by Iago's words, Othello is

asked: "How is it, General? Have you not hurt your head?" (IV. i. 59). Othello accuses Iago of mocking him as a horned man, a cuckold, but Iago quickly assures him otherwise. The very thought of being cuckolded is a horror for Othello which prompts him to reflect:

> A horned man's a monster and a beast.

To which Iago rejoins:

> There's many a beast then in a populous city,
> And many a civil monster.
>
> (IV. 1. 62-64)

Here Shakespeare's tactic of having his real monster—"monstrous. Iago"—"lip" the word "monster" to Othello not only taunts Othello, but also the audience who suffers as much, or more, from Iago's verbal assaults because of our superior knowledge and empathy. A further twist to the irony lies in the fact that Othello's words, "A horned man's a monster and a beast," apply to Iago as well as to himself. For Iago's actions have stemmed, in part, from jealous suspicions that Emilia has cuckolded him by sleeping with Othello and Cassio. So once again, here, as earlier in " 'Tis monstrous. Iago, who began 't?" and in "he echoes me, / As if there were some monster in his thought," Othello ironically defines very well what Iago really is.

The ultimate ironic twist, however, resides in Iago's reply which defines perfectly for us what Iago is: "a beast then in a populous city... a civil monster." Can any oxymoron other than "a civil monster" better explain our abhorrence of Iago? Monsters—military, political, intellectual—we have had with us, and they have been horrible enough. But Iago, the "civil monster," excites a greater horror; for it is he whom we are defenseless against. It is he who professes love for us, but who secretly envies us, hates us, works for our damnation. Civility masks barbarity.

Ironically, but appropriately so, Shakespeare also allows Emilia, unawarely, to reveal her husband's true nature. Earlier in the play, before Iago defines himself so precisely as a "civil monster," Emilia, speaking to Desdemona about jealousy, uses a striking metaphor of incest and monster-birth: " 'Tis a monster / Begot upon itself, born on itself" (III. iv. 156-57). Emilia exactly describes Iago's suspicions about her. Nothing more tangible for Iago than mere suspicion has prompted Iago to jealousy (II. i. 289,301).[11] Incestuously so, Iago has "begot" his own suspicions upon himself and, in doing so, has given birth to his

new self—his monster-self. To reinforce this ironic revelation spoken by Emilia, Desdemona replies: "Heaven keep that monster from Othello's mind!" (III. iv. 158). Her brief prayer strikes us as pathetically futile, having watched the state of jealous frenzy that Iago has brought Othello to in III. iii.

Emilia's incest-monster metaphor here at III. iv. 156-57 is also meant to remind us clearly of Iago's use of his monster-birth metaphor at the close of Act I where he describes his inchoate plans of destruction: "Hell and night / Must bring this monstrous birth to the world's light." Likewise, Emilia's metaphor underscores Othello's first and only ironic juxtaposition of the words "monstrous. Iago" at II. iii. 200. And finally, it hearkens back to yet another important monster metaphor at III. iii. 165-67 that bears comment. Having aroused Othello's jealousy of Desdemona, Iago taunts Othello under the guise of advice:

> O, beware, my lord, of jealousy!
> It is the green-ey'd monster, which doth mock
> The meat it feeds on.

"Green-ey'd" is a traditional image of jealousy. But the image of a "green-ey'd monster" stresses well the physical and spiritual deformity of a man tormented by jealousy, of a man who has, as Emilia says, incestuous-like "begot upon [him]self, born on [him]self" his monstrous nature out of jealousy.

And here again, as in previous passages discussed (III. iii. 377-78 and IV. i. 62-64), we discover that Iago's words are fraught with an irony that is multidimensional. First, on an obvious level, the evil man is giving what appears to be, and in fact is, good advice to his supposed friend, but hated enemy. Next, the evil man, delighting in his superior intellect, covertly confesses to his "friend" that he also is a "green'-ey'd monster" who enjoys tormenting his "friend," and that his friend is merely "meat" for his evil delights. But there is yet another dimension of irony implicit in this passage—a final turn of the screw—which Iago, himself, may not be aware of, but which certainly we speculate about: in destroying Othello, Iago is also destroying himself. The "meat" cannot last forever. Once consumed, what does "the green-ey'd monster" feed on? "The green'ey'd monster"—to borrow from Sonnet 73—shall be "consum'd with that which it was nourish'd by" (l. 12). The final irony is the obvious truth: jealousy is self-destructive. As we have seen, then, Shakespeare has had all his major characters (Othello, Desdemona, Emilia, and Iago) except one (Cassio) and two of his minor

characters employ these words "monstrous" and/or "monster," from the play's beginning to its end. There can be little doubt of Shakespeare's intention: he wants us to perceive the ironic pattern that begins to emerge clearly at II. iii. 200 with " 'Tis monstrous. Iago, who began 't" and continues to reverberate through the play.

Louisiana Tech University

Appendix

A Sequential List of the Uses of
"monster" and "monstrous" in *Othello*.

I. iii. 395-96.	*Iago*:	I have't! It is engend'red! Hell and night Must bring this monstrous birth to the world's light.
II. i. 12-15.	*Gent*:	The chidden billow seems to pelt the clouds; The wind-shak'd surge, with high and monstrous main, Seems to cast water on the burning Bear And quench the Guards of th' ever-fixed pole.
II. iii. 200.	*Oth*:	'Tis monstrous. Iago, who began 't?
III. iii. 106-08.	*Oth*:	By heaven, he echoes me, As if there were some monster in his thought Too hideous to be shown.
III. iii. 165-67.	*Iago*:	O, beware, my lord, of jealousy! It is the green-ey'd monster, which doth mock The meat it feeds on.
III. iii. 377-78.	*Iago*:	O monstrous world! Take note, take note, O world, To be direct and honest is not safe.
III. iii. 427.	*Oth*:	O monstrous! monstrous!
III. iv. 154-58.	*Emil*:	But jealous souls will not be answer'd so. They are not ever jealous for the cause, But jealous for they are jealous. 'Tis a monster Begot upon itself, born on itself.
	Des:	Heaven keep that monster from Othello's mind!
IV. i. 62-64.	*Oth*:	A horned man's a monster and a beast.
	Iago:	There's many a beast then in a populous city, And many a civil monster.
V. ii. 190.	*Mont*:	O monstrous act!
	Emil:	Villainy, villainy, villainy!

Notes

[1]Bertrand Evans, *Shakespeare's Tragic Practice* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), pp. 116-19; and Jane Adamson, *Othello as Tragedy: Some Problems of Judgment and Feeling* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1980), pp. 66-67.

[2]References to *Othello* are from George Lyman Kittredge and Irving Ribner's *The Complete Works of Shakespeare* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1971), pp. 1153-1201.

[3]Coleridge's remarks ignited a controversy that continues still. See *Shakespearean Criticism . . .* , ed. Thomas M. Raysor (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1960), I, 44. Lamb agreed with Coleridge (*The Works of Charles and Mary Lamb. . .* , ed. E. B. Lucas [1903; rpt. New York: AMS Press, 1968], II, 134), but Hazlitt did not (*Characters of Shakespeare's Plays* [1916; rpt. London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1970], pp. 41-42). Important twentieth century followers of Coleridge include Lytton Strachey, *Characters and Commentaries* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Co., 1933), pp. 295-96; Elmer Edgar Stoll, *Shakespeare and Other Masters* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1940), p. 231; George Wilson Knight, *The Wheel of Fire*, 4th ed. (London: Methuen, 1949), pp. 97, 114; S. L. Bethell, "Shakespeare's Imagery: The Diabolic Images in *Othello*," *Shakespeare Survey*, 5 (1952), 71; Paul N. Siegel, "The Damnation of Othello," *PMLA* 68 (1953), 1068-78; Harold S. Wilson, *On the Design of Shakespearian Tragedy* (Univ. of Toronto Press, 1957), p. 53; Irving Ribner (*Patterns in Shakespearian Tragedy* (1960; rpt. London: Methuen, 1971), pp. 94, 99; Kenneth Muir, *Shakespeare Tragic Sequence* (London: Hutchinson and Co., 1972), p. 105. Important dissenting views are cited in Robert B. Heilman's *Magic in the Web* (Lexington: Univ. of Kentucky Press, 1956), p. 248, n. 38; and in Marvin Rosenberg's *The Masks of Othello* (1961; rpt. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1971), pp. 166-84. Stanley E. Hyman's *Iago: Some Approaches to the Illusion of His Motivation* (New York: Atheneum, 1970) is a useful compendium of differing views.

Recent critical views of the 1970's and 80's continue to debate Iago's nature. On the one hand, there are critics such as Arthur Kirsch and A. G. Gonzalez who are essentially Coleridgean in view. "Iago," Kirsch says, "is not simply a projection of Othello's own disposition to vice. . . . He is not a Vice but, as he himself repeatedly announces and everyone else in the play eventually recognizes, a 'hellish villain.' He is the eternal tempter" (*Shakespeare and the Experience of Love* [Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1981], p. 35). Gonzalez holds Iago "to be a Lucifer or negative God in "The Infection and Spread of Evil: Some Major Patterns of Imagery and Language in *Othello*," *South Atlantic Review* 50 (1985), p. 43. Bertrand Evans stops short of attributing absolute evil to Iago, but his use of such negatives as "fiendish," "mad," "evil," and "amoral" clearly relates Iago to Coleridge's view (*Shakespeare's Tragic Practice* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979], pp. 115-46). A. D. Nutall also states that Iago, "and not Othello, proves to be the true outsider of the play, for he is foreign to humanity itself. . . . Iago . . . comes from the far side of chaos" (*A New Mimesis: Shakespeare and the Representation of Reality* [London: Methuen, 1983], p. 135). On the other hand, the views of John Bayley and Howard Felperin are more in line with the earlier anti-Coleridgean critics who view Iago's motivations as having more naturalistic explanations. For Bayley, Iago is "the person known at some time in every community" (p. 217). "Iago's hatred . . . is completely realistic in terms of . . . human experience" (*Shakespeare and Tragedy* [London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981], p. 208). Felperin, while granting that Iago has his roots in the medieval Vice tradition, asserts that Iago's "behavior . . . transcend[s] mere conventionality and archieve[s] a thoroughly convincing naturalism" (*Shakespearean Representation: Mimesis and Modernity in Elizabethan Tragedy* [Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1977], p. 75).

Arguing in this manner, also, are Carol T. Neely and Richard P. Wheeler. For Neely, Iago is the supreme cynic and misogynist who becomes a victim of his own manipulations ("Women and Men in *Othello*: 'What should such a fool / Do with so good a woman?' " in *The Woman's Part: Feminist Criticism of Shakespeare*, ed. C. R. S. Lenz, G. Greene, and C. T. Neely [Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1980], pp. 217-18). For Wheeler, Iago is "a scapegoat for Othello's guilt" ("'. . . And my loud crying still:' The *Sonnets, The Merchant of Venice*, and *Othello*" in *Shakespeare's "Rough Magic": Renaissance Essays in Honor of C. L. Barber*, eds. Peter Erickson and Coppélia Kahn [Newark, N. J.: Univ. of Delaware Press, 1985], p. 205). One of the most closely reasoned, persuasive works of the '80's to argue against a Coleridgean view of Iago is Jane Adamson's *Othello as Tragedy: Some Problems of Judgment and Feeling* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1980). Yet Adamson, too, sees Iago as a "monster" (p. 96), and, at times, she sounds very much like a Coleridgean when she comments about "Iago's absolute unlovingness, absolute unforgivingness" (p. 99) and concludes: "Iago . . . seems so far gone that it is hard indeed for us to acknowledge his membership in our own species, our own human 'tribe' " (p. 100). Our view follows Coleridge's—with some qualifications. Following Heilman (*Magic in the Web*), we view Iago as a Satanic figure, but not merely an allegorical one. As Heilman emphasizes, and as Adamson likewise argues, Iago is an intricately complex flesh and blood monster.

[4]Both *A New Variorum Edition: Shakespeare, Othello*, ed. H. H. Furness (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1914), p. 142, and *The Norton Facsimile: The First Folio of Shakespeare*, ed. Charlton Hinman (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1968), p. 828, use a colon after the word "monstrous" and print "Iago" in italics. G. R. Elliott (*Flaming Minister*, [1953; rpt. New York: AMS Press, 1965], p. 87) punctuates by adding a dash after the period: " 'Tis monstrous.—Iago, who began 't?" Elliott's unusual double stop effectively breaks up the juxtaposing of the two concepts of "monstrous" and "Iago," whereas, the colon is a bit more ambiguous in its function: Does it break or join "monstrous" and "Iago"? *A New Variorum*, citing earlier critics, points out that the word "monstrous" had trisyllabic pronunciation during Shakespeare's time (pp. 142-43). An intriguing speculation comes to mind: Could not an actor, deliberately or not, have overridden, ever so slightly, the caesura after "monstrous" as he voiced the third syllable and, thus, have created a slight enjambment that would stress the irony created through juxtaposition?

[5]John Money, a Shakespearean actor, calls our attention to the nuances of another similarly ironic line at V. ii. 1. Othello, entering Desdemona's bedchamber, says to himself: "It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul." Money comments: "This first line is ambiguous as well as ironic. The weighty ironic repetition mocks itself. But there is ambiguity, too, in Othello's appeal to his own soul to justify 'the cause'. For there is a sense in which his soul is 'the cause', and this sense is pointed by the final placing of the words in the line" ("Othello's 'It is the cause. . . : An Analysis," *Shakespeare Survey* 6 [1953], 95).

[6]Critics have ignored the ironic dimensions of this word pattern, though a few have called attention to occasional use(s) of these words to make a point about some other matter. Bethell and Heilman, as well as Wolfgang Clemen (*The Development of Shakespeare's Imagery*, 2nd ed. [London: Methuen, 1977]), pass over these words. Caroline Spurgeon cites several uses, but says nothing more (*Shakespeare's Imagery and What It Tells Us* [New York: Macmillan, 1936], p. 335). Mikhail M. Morozov notes several uses of the word "monster," stressing that the word helps to typify Iago as a demonic figure ("The Individualization of Shakespeare's Characters Through Imagery," *Shake-*

speare Survey 2 [1949], 88, 90). G. R. Elliott pays more attention to these words in his scene by scene analysis but does not comment on the complex ironic patterns (*Flaming Minister* [1953; rpt. New York: AMS Press, 1965]). More recently, Leslie Y. Rabkin and Jeffrey Brown's "Some Monster in his Thought: Sadism and Tragedy in *Othello*," *Literature and Psychology*, 23 (1973), 59-67, concerns itself with a psychological reading of Iago and Othello, concentrating on the sadistic elements of their natures. Likewise, D. R. Godfrey's suggestive title "Shakespeare and the Green-Eyed Monster" studies the emotional pattern of jealousy as it afflicts Othello but does nothing with the "monster" references in the play (*Neophilologus*, 56 [1972], 207-20). Two essays that do explore Shakespeare's use of the "monstrous" neglect *Othello* entirely. One deals with *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *King Lear* (James Black, "The Monster in Shakespeare's Landscape," in *The Elizabethan Theatre VIII*, ed. G.R. Hibbard [Port Credit: P. D. Meany, 1982], pp. 51-68). The other deals with *Richard III*, in *Le Monstruex dans la Litterature et la Pensée Anglaises*, ed. Nadia J. Rigaud (Aix-en-Provence: Cedex Université de Provence, 1985), pp. 43-52. And A. G. Gonzalez's recent study of major image patterns in *Othello* (sickness, light and dark, religious, demonic, and animal) omits any mention of our subject. G. L. Brook's *The Language of Shakespeare* (London: André Deutsch, 1976) ignores *Othello* and cites Shakespeare's use of the word "monstrous" as an intensive adverb in other plays (p. 87). Only Jane Adamson and Michael Long speak at any length about Shakespeare's use of these words. Long's comments center on Shakespeare's use of the word "monster" as an "image of a hideous birth" symbolizing that Venetian culture "is a thin skin of elegance . . . stretched over a world of raging motion and energy" (*The Unnatural Scene: A Study in Shakespearean Tragedy* [London: Methuen, 1976], pp. 47-48). Adamson's comments (pp. 50-52) focus mainly on the foreshadowing use of "monstrous" in the closing lines of Act I and opening lines of Act II. No critic, to our knowledge, has commented on the key line at II. iii. 200, or explored the ironic pattern put into use by its mention.

[7]Bethell (p. 73), Heilman (p. 70), Adamson (p. 50), and Gonzalez (p. 28), to name only a few, have commented upon the importance of this closing couplet.

[8]Coleridge's comments regarding I. iii. 292-93 apply equally well here at I. iii. 396. "In real life how do we look back to little speeches, either as presentimental [of], or most contrasted with, an affecting event. Shakespeare, as secure of being read over and over, of becoming a family friend, how he provides this for *his readers*, and leaves it to them" (I. 44).

[9]Gonzalez ("The Infection and Spread of Evil. . . ," pp. 42-43) notes the possibility of liturgical echoes at III. iv. 472 and V. i. 84. (Although Gonzalez fails to indicate the edition cited, the first reference is obviously an error that should read III. iii. 472. As Gonzalez quotes it, the phrasing of this first reference does not fully agree with Kittredge and Ribner, but it is found in several other editions, e.g. Riverside, Signet Classic, and New Cambridge.)

[10]Knight, p. 109; Adamson, pp. 50-52.

[11]Carol T. Neely, *The Woman's Part* (p. 219), provides, a brief but careful reassessment of Emilia.

Controlling Cupid in Shakespeare's Last Romances

by Maurice Hunt

Florizel and Perdita's efforts to control Cupid in *The Winter's Tale* gain meaning from a preliminary study of Prospero's attempts to restrain, even eliminate the god of love's power over Ferdinand and Miranda. For most playgoers, Shakespeare in *The Tempest* memorably defines the particular nature of the threat posed by Cupid for young lovers. While commentators occasionally note the explicit omission of Venus and Cupid from the cast of deities performing the Masque of Ceres, they do not as a rule describe the dramatic ramifications of this banishment. More important, a similar campaign to restrict Cupid's power in *The Winter's Tale* remains essentially unexplored by critics. Analysis of Prospero's manipulation of Eros clearly identifies the dramatic value of the motif introduced, in a less obvious but more complex fashion, during the sheep-shearing festival of *The Winter's Tale*. Unlike Ferdinand and Miranda, Florizel and Perdita control Cupid during their courtship without the benefit of a magician's aid, realizing in essence the unaccomplished aim of Prospero's aborted Masque of Ceres. How they do so reveals some unremarked affinities between the two most popular of Shakespeare's last romances.

Ceres and Iris' dialogue concerning Cupid's whereabouts during the performance of Prospero's masque testifies to the threat of erotic love for its design. "Tell me, heavenly bow," Ceres asks,

> If Venus or her son, as thou dost know,
> Do now attend the queen? Since they did plot
> The means that dusky Dis my daughter got,
> Her and the blind boy's scandal'd company
> I have forsworn.[1]
>
> (IV. i. 86-91)

"Of her society / Be not afraid," the rainbow goddess replies:

> . . . I met her deity
> Cutting the clouds towards Paphos, and her son
> Dove-drawn with her. Here thought they to have done
> Some wanton charm upon this man and maid,
> Whose vows are, that no bed-right shall be paid
> Till Hymen's torch be lighted: but in vain;

Mars' hot minion is return'd again;
Her waspish-headed son has broke his arrows,
Swears he will shoot no more, but play with sparrows,
And be a boy right out.

(IV. i. 91-101)

Since Prospero devised the script for spirits playing roles in the masque, we assume that Ceres and Iris' negative attitude toward erotic love represents the magician's.[2] Peter Lindenbaum notes that:

> "The conditions of the visionary realm Prospero's Juno and Ceres conjure up are . . . those of Spenser's Garden of Adonis, itself a source of fecundity and an ideal realm devoted to love, but love without the pain that ordinarily accompanies it in the rest of Book III of the *Faerie Queene* and in our world; in that Garden, as here in Prospero's masque, Cupid has been deprived of his arrows and hence of his power both to raise unruly passions and to hurt."[3]

As a betrothal masque, Prospero's entertainment builds toward the father's wish for chaste fertility for Ferdinand and Miranda. In keeping with the aesthetic principles of this subgenre, the chaste Naiads of Spring join with the sunburned sicklemen of August, characters suggestive of fecundity, in a ritualistic dance expressive of the melding of these contrary values.[4] Prospero intends his spirits to reach out and draw Ferdinand and Miranda into this dance, where they would symbolically participate in (and thus acquire) a mixed virtue providential for wedlock.[5] Presumably Prospero's banishment of erotic love from the masque insures the purity of Chastity's blending with Fecundity.[6]

Prospero's banishment of Cupid in Act IV of *The Tempest* agrees with his skepticism concerning romantic love voiced elsewhere in the play. The magician's distrust of Eros surfaces early in the dramatic action. Fearful "lest too light winning" make Miranda (the "prize") "light," Prospero, adopting the role of *senex iratus*, imposes an arbitrary obstacle (a bizarre task of logbearing) upon Ferdinand in order to refine his passion for Miranda.[7] The mage's wary attitude toward romantic love becomes overtly skeptical in his aside—"Poor worm, thou art infected! / This visitation shows it" (III. i. 31-32)—which is spoken as he watches Ferdinand and Miranda's courtship from a distance. In fact, the word "visitation" implies that Prospero identifies erotic love with the plague. When Prospero overhears Ferdinand profess a refined love for Miranda, he exclaims,

... Fair encounter
Of two most rare affections! Heaven rain grace
On that which breeds between 'em!

(III. i. 74-76)

Yet when he straightaway overhears his daughter bluntly, painfully declare herself Ferdinand's wife, marrying herself to him by a handfast, Prospero's mood turns wintry:

So glad of this as they I cannot be,
Who are surpris'd with all; but my rejoicing
At nothing can be more. I'll to my book;
For yet, ere supper-time, must I perform
Much business appertaining.

(III. i. 92-96)

Prospero fears Cupid's power to accelerate the lovers' courtship so that passion quickly overthrows reason. In his patronizing attitude toward the young couple's näive surprise at the swiftness of their wooing, Prospero does not appear to be making a positive statement in his utterance "but my rejoicing at nothing can be more." Regarded in light of his immediate reference to his favorite pastime of reading, his term "nothing" seems to allude to this art, specifically the liberal arts upon which his magic depends. Throughout his career, Shakespeare used the word "nothing" often as a paradoxical synonym for either art or the product of the imagination.[8] In this approach to Prospero's speech, the magician implicitly endorses the cultivation of the liberal arts within oneself as an alternative to the trajectory of blind passion. After all, the tragic widow Dido, made so much of in Act II of the play, represents a humanist warning against the potentially self-destructive passion for a handsome stranger—a warning that the literary Prospero, fond of classical values, may have encountered by reading the *Aeneid*.[9]

Ferdinand and Miranda's neglect of the sanctifying ceremonies of romantic love, which acts as a brake upon headlong passion, accounts for Prospero's calculated negative attitude toward their courtship. In *Measure for Measure* Claudio and Juliet discover to their grief that private marriage by handfast affords neither the social recognition nor the protection offered by a church wedding. Prospero warns Ferdinand:

If thou dost break her virgin-knot before
All sanctimonious ceremonies may
With full and holy rite be minist'red,
No sweet aspersion shall the heavens let fall
To make this contract grow; but barren hate,

Sour-ey'd disdain and discord shall bestrew
The union of your bed with weeds so loathly
That you shall hate it both: therefore take heed,
As Hymen's lamps shall light you.

(IV. i. 15-23)

Ferdinand eloquently pledges prenuptial chastity, but Prospero almost immediately must interrupt the young man's amorous dallying:

Look thou be true; do not give dalliance
Too much the rein: the strongest oaths are straw
To th' fire i'th' blood. Be more abstemious,
Or else, good night your vow!

(IV. i. 51-54)

The exclamation mark signals Prospero's mounting frustration with the difference between Ferdinand's chaste words and his passionate trifling. Ferdinand's willful behavior justifies Prospero's warning; Cupid proves to be a recalcitrant inmate of even the noblest young man. Upon hearing his future son-in-law's renewed pledge of purity, Prospero mutters only skeptical "Well" (IV. i. 56) before introducing the artistic entertainment promised to the young couple.

Still, Prospero's fantastic wish never gets fulfilled; the magician's abrupt recollection of Caliban's plot against his life and the need to thwart the conspirators force him to break off the Masque of Ceres before its climax. Having to deal with Caliban drives Prospero to admit what he would deny—passion (specifically lust). Caliban mainly represents the lust that knows no civilized restraint; if Prospero had not stopped him, Caliban would have raped Miranda and peopled the isle with copies of his ugly likeness. Robert Grudin has judged that Caliban's "lechery and destructiveness call to mind the syndrome of Venus and Mars and the insistent presence of exactly those elements which Prospero would have banished from his masque and his world."[10] Prospero's reluctant accommodation of Caliban and all that he stands for during the play's conclusion amounts to Shakespeare's negative comment on the desire to banish Cupid not only from courtship but from social intercourse generally.[11] In the sense that lust is a perversion of erotic love, Caliban compels Prospero to acknowledge this thing of darkness—blind Cupid. It is significant that Shakespeare in the masque casts Iris' testimony in these terms:

Her waspish-headed son has broke his arrows,
Swears he will shoot no more, but play with sparrows,
And be a boy right out.

Disarmed and thus seemingly harmless, the boy Cupid still plays with sparrows, birds emblematic during the Renaissance of lechery.[12] Apparently a trace of lust can never be completely purged from erotic love. Prospero finds a place for Caliban within himself in his final vision of humanity, developed under Ariel's tutelage at the beginning of Act V (lines 1-32). By admitting (in fact feeling) Caliban's—Cupid's—legacy of passion, he discovers through logical deduction his long-denied bond with Gonzalo and his race, including Antonio.[13] Prospero's salvatory admission of the Caliban within and without himself constitutes Cupid's subtle triumph in *The Tempest*.

In light of our subject, the place to look for Cupid's presence in *The Winter's Tale* involves the episode analogous to the Masque of Ceres. During the masque-like shepherds' entertainment of the great pastoral scene (IV. iv), Florizel, disguised as the swain Doricles, tells Perdita, anxious about their difference in social rank, that she should "Apprehend / Nothing but jollity":

> ... The gods themselves,
> Humbling their deities to love, have taken
> The shapes of beasts upon them: Jupiter
> Became a bull, and bellow'd; the green Neptune
> A ram, and bleated; and the fire-rob'd god,
> Golden Apollo, a poor humble swain,
> As I seem now. Their transformations
> Were never for a piece of beauty rarer,
> Nor in a way so chaste, since my desires
> Run not before mine honour nor my lusts
> Burn hotter than my faith.
>
> (IV. iv. 24-35)

Florizel begins by ominously citing familiar tales of the gods' lusts for mortals as a rationale for his rustic disguise. Were his explanation to trail off at verse 32 rather than continuing, auditors would be justified in regarding the Prince as an aristocrat stung by Cupid's arrow for "a piece of beauty"—a country girl to be enjoyed, then most likely cast aside. But in the latter part of his speech, we hear a comforting assurance that the god of love has been controlled. Florizel's virtuous protest that he does not intend to violate Perdita's chastity, that neither his passions exceed his honor nor his lust his faith, anticipates Ferdinand's exclamation of a similar sort. And yet, like Miranda's suitor, Florizel harbors a Caliban within himself; even though he argues that his lusts do not "burn hotter" than his faith, he admits that lusts burn for Perdita.[14]

Whereas Florizel appears to have controlled Cupid, Perdita remains intent upon absolutely banishing the god from her sheep-shearing festival. As the Roman goddess Flora, Perdita chastely avoids giving her guests flowers symbolic of sensual desire. She offers disguised Polixenes and Camillo the flowers of old age, rosemary and rue, even though Florizel's father, regardless of the exact nature of his costume, must be in his mid- to late-forties.[15] Thus he qualifies for the flowers that Perdita neglects—carnations and streaked gillyflowers, blooms symbolic of mankind's late summer or early autumn (Polixenes' time of life).[16] As their name connotes, carnations are flowers of the flesh, of the red blood coursing though the veins of a man or woman "not yet on summer's death nor on the birth / Of trembling winter," of the man or woman, in short, still capable of feeling Cupid's dart. Nonetheless Perdita firmly rejects the artificial grafting necessary to grow gillyflowers and carnations, which she calls "Nature's bastards."[17] Of carnations her "rustic garden's barren" (IV. iv. 84); in the reverberation of the last word of this utterance, Cupid's banishment from Perdita's festival appears definitive.

Such a judgment, however, would be premature. The unconscious sexual innuendo of Perdita's remark—"I'll not put / The dibble in earth to set one slip of them" (IV. iv. 99-100)—fleetingly recalls Eros. Eager to extend courtesy to her guests, apologetic Perdita substitutes for the non-existent hybrids the flowers of middle summer—"hot lavender, mints, savory, marjoram, / The marigold." So unintentionally provocative are Perdita's gestures in offering flowers of middle summer that Cupid virtually bursts upon the scene. Sensually aroused by breath-taking Flora, Camillo pays Perdita a gallant compliment: "I should leave grazing, were I of your flock, / And only live by gazing" (IV. iv. 109-10). Aware of Camillo's flirtation, Perdita, however, warns him that his wintry age precludes courting May. Were he to do so, she maintains that "you'd be so lean that blasts of January / Would blow you through and through" (IV. iv. 111-12).

Nonetheless, Perdita cannot forever repress the healthy sensuality hinted at by Camillo. Her yearning for the flowers of spring, expressive of a welcome for her lover, thinly veils the maiden's longing for "dusky Dis," his seizure and rape—acts which would end the long adolescence of barren chastity:

> . . . O Proserpina,
> For the flowers now that, frighted, thou let'st fall
> From Dis's waggon! daffodils,
> That come before the swallow dares, and take

The winds of March with beauty; violets, dim
But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes
Or Cytherea's breath; pale primroses,
That die unmarried, ere they can behold
Bright Phoebus in his strength (a malady
Most incident to maids); bold oxlips and
The crown imperial; lilies of all kinds,
The flower-de-luce being one. O, these I lack,
To make you garlands of; and my sweet friend,
To strew him o'er and o'er![18]

(IV. iv. 116-29)

Cupid's plotting "the means that dusky Dis" used to rape Ceres' daughter, Proserpina, links *The Winter's Tale* to vestiges of the myth appearing in the masque of *The Tempest*.[19] Cupid reveals himself in Perdita's erotic longing for Florizel's abduction of her, a natural desire simultaneously expressed and denied by her catalog of flowers (its language reeks with sensuality; yet—to her conscious mind—it is only a list of flowers carried by Proserpina). Perdita shields herself from the knowledge of how intensely she wishes to seize the day before "Bright Phoebus" bathes in the western sea—before, that is, Florizel loses his strength. "Dusky Dis" and the underworld of denied passion return in Perdita's speech, just as they more spectacularly do in Prospero's memory of Caliban during the purged Masque of Ceres. But whereas the return of passion disrupted Prospero's "rare vision," in *The Winter's Tale*, erotic love blends with chastity symbolically, visually in the dance of Florizel and Perdita—a perfected image never achieved in *The Tempest*.

Carefully Shakespeare creates an idealized context insuring the vision of perfection in the dance. Critics have often remarked that Florizel's haunting poetry, beginning with "what you do / Still betters what is done," concerns the paradoxical union of motion and stasis, or more generally of mutability and eternity.[20] Captured by the image of a still-moving wave of the sea (of a sea-swell moving but never appearing to break a static shape), Perdita's epiphany recalls Aphrodite's birth from flecks of foam—an apt allusion, since we, hearing Florizel's inspired poetry, feel that the Prince is attaining a depth of love hitherto unplumbed. Such an evocation of the goddess of love accords with the mixture of reverence and erotic desire heard in Florizel's most memorable speech. The symbolic blending of contrary values, which never occurs in the truncated Masque of Ceres, becomes a reality in the vision of the dance of shepherds and shepherdesses, a group that includes Florizel and Perdita.[21] Florizel's panegyric prepares viewers to

see this dance as the ultimate communicator of Love and Chastity wonderfully mingled.

Just prior to the dance, Chastity asserts itself in the restrained morality of Perdita and Florizel's dialogue:

> *Pericles* ... O Doricles,
> Your praises are too large: but that your youth,
> And the true blood which peeps fairly through't,
> Do plainly give you out an unstain'd shepherd,
> With wisdom I might fear, my Doricles,
> You woo'd me the false way.
> *Florizel* ... I think you have
> As little skill to fear as I have purpose
> To put you to't. But come; our dance, I pray.
> Your hand, my Perdita: so turtles pair
> That never mean to part.
>
> (IV. iv. 146-55)

Perdita's twice referring to Florizel as Doricles (whereas he calls her by her actual name) testifies to the sublime pitch of Florizel's pastoral poetry; ironically, she was the lover who could not accept the illusion of role playing while he encouraged the loss of self in it. Cupid then asserts himself in Perdita's blushes over a suggestive, whispered remark. "He tells her something," Camillo says, "that makes her blood look out: good sooth, she is / The queen of curds and cream" (IV. iv. 159-61). Having been evoked, Eros and Chastity mystically join in the ravishing vision of dancing Florizel and Perdita, idealized by their pastoral roles into the fine humanity of a brave new world.[22] The young lovers of *The Winter's Tale* successfully control and employ a Cupid resistant to exile. Through their special dance, they create a *discordia concors* of complementary values denied to Ferdinand and Miranda.[23]

Serious efforts to control and harmonize Cupid in *The Winter's Tale* gain worth from the offsetting foil of Autolycus' comic role in the festival.[24] Among his many traits, Autolycus' sensuality claims a major place in his character. "The red blood" that "reigns in the winter's pale" reveals itself in the rogue's first song upon entering the play's world; birds' chants, by Autolycus' account, "are summer songs for me and my aunts, / While we lie tumbling in the hay" (IV. iii. 11-12). Evidently Autolycus' libido rages as strongly as his "pugging tooth," qualifying him in one important respect to be regarded as Caliban's precursor. With "die and drab [whore]," he sank to his "caparison"—rags. Still, in at least one character's estimate, Autolycus has banished Cupid from his art; according to the Old Shepherd's Servant, Autolycus "has the

prettiest love-songs for maids, so without bawdry (which is strange)..." (IV. iv. 194-96). But as the Servant continues, he comically reveals a näivete concerning the innuendoes of ballad refrains— "with such delicate burdens of dildoes and fadings, jump her and thump her; and where some stretch-mouthed rascal would, as it were, mean mischief and break a foul gap into the matter, he makes the maid to answer " 'Whoop, do me no harm, good man' " (IV. iv. 196-201). Cupid flourishes in the Clown's allusions to male sexual organs, orgasms, and erotic play. Autolycus' "Whoop, do me no harm, good man" most likely constituted the refrain of a popular Jacobean ballad (Pafford, p. 102), a verse acting as foil to Perdita's chaste fears concerning Florizel's intentions in wooing her.

Not surprisingly, Perdita distrusts Autolycus' art. Upon his entry, she tells the Clown, "Forewarn him, that he use no scurrilous words in's tunes" (IV. iv. 215-16). "You have of these pedlars that have more in them than you'd think, sister" (IV. iv. 217-18), the Clown retorts. Perdita concludes by stressing her cherished chastity of mind: "Ay, good brother, or go about to think" (IV. iv. 219). And yet, as was the case in Perdita's flower-welcome, Cupid materializes even though he has been apparently banished. As an artifact, Autolycus' song of greeting mixes purity and Eros:

> Lawn as white as driven snow,
> Cypress black as e'er was crow,
> Gloves as sweet as damask roses,
> Masks for faces and for noses.
>
> (IV. iv. 220-23)

Autolycus' first verse creates the sensation of spotlessness. This impression coexists with the suggestive overtones of the third and especially the fourth lines, which concern the paraphernalia of Cupid. This intermingling of the chaste and the profane persists throughout the remainder of the pastoral scene, particularly in the talk of the Clown, Autolycus, Mopsa, and Dorcas. In this respect, the pastoral scene's middle part accentuates through comedy the achievement of Diana and Cupid's melding in the young lovers' dance.

Nonetheless the antimasque-like dance of twelve Saltiers, "all men of hair" (IV. iv. 327), which concludes this section of the pastoral scene, strikes a disturbing note. Pafford notes that "Shakespeare probably intended *Saltiers* to suggest the dancers' two chief attributes—they are clad as *satyrs* and they are skilled *jumpers*" (p. 109). For Renaissance playgoers and readers alike, satyrs usually represented the bestial in

mankind, specifically lechery expressed in their goatish look. According to the Servant, "the wenches say [the dance] is a gallimaufry of gambols, because they are not in't" (IV. iv. 328-30). Even though Cupid savagely goads the satyrs, the absence of women in their dance makes symbolic fruition impossible. The satyrs' dance of *The Winter's Tale* lacks the breeding contraries signified by April's Naiads and August's reapers in *The Tempest*. Unlike that of Florizel and Perdita, their dance fails because the "other" necessary for creation is missing.

The barren art of the satyrs' dance provides a transition in the play by suggesting the sterility of Florizel and Perdita's future as lovers once Polixenes discovers himself and angrily bans a country girl from his son's company. Tricked by Camillo into sailing for Sicilia, the romantic runaways, Florizel and Perdita, are initially strangers to Leontes; consequently, he can find Perdita attractive even though she is his daughter. Cupid emerges when Perdita arouses sexual desire in dry Leontes, long penitent for his role in Hermione's imagined death. When Leontes learns that Florizel has stolen from Bohemia with a shepherdess, he answers Florizel's plea that he mollify vengeful Polixenes with words of physical desire. "At your request, / My father will grant precious things as trifles" (V. i. 220-21), Florizel claims. "Would he do so," Leontes replies, "I'd beg your precious mistress, / Which he counts but a trifle" (V. i. 222-23). Paulina then verifies Cupid's presence:

> ... Sir, my liege,
> Your eye hath too much youth in't; not a month
> 'Fore your queen died, she was more worth such gazes
> Than what you look on now.
>
> (V. i. 223-26)

"I thought of her, / Even in these looks I made" (V. i. 226-27), Leontes protests.[25] Despite the threat of incest, Perdita, like Proserpina, brings the promise of spring to the depressed winter king. Leontes' honest remark concerning Hermione suggests that he is prepared to transport Cupid into the play's final scene, which focuses upon the ravishing resurrection of his Queen.

"O, thus she stood," Leontes exclaims upon seeing Hermione's "statue," "even with such life of majesty, warm life, / As now it coldly stands, when first I woo'd her!" (V. iii. 34-36). Eager to court Hermione again, Leontes announces, "Let no man mock me, / For I will kiss her" (V. iii. 79-80). Descending upon Paulina's command from her pedestal, revived Hermione becomes the eligible lover once more. "Nay, present your hand," Paulina scolds Leontes, giving him his cue for action:

"When she was young you woo'd her; now, in age, / Is she become the suitor?" (V. iii. 107-09). Cupid triumphs in Hermione and Leontes' embrace, a dramatic tableau rectifying Leontes' banishment of the god of love in Act I of the play.

There, Cupid has fled from Leontes' marriage. The god's absence can be detected in the jealous King's loveless portrayal of his remembered courtship of Hermione:

> . . . Why, that was when
> Three crabbed months had sour'd themselves to death,
> Ere I could make thee open thy white hand,
> And clap thyself my love; then didst thou utter,
> "I am yours for ever."
>
> (I. ii. 101-05)

In his sweaty imaginings of Hermione and Polixenes' sexual affair, Leontes thrusts Cupid into a relationship in which the god in fact plays no role. The lively yet chaste friendship of Leontes' wife and boyhood friend consists of innocence. After sixteen years of spiritual mortification, Leontes has become capable of married chastity. When self-denying, nun-like Hermione and sexually aroused Leontes embrace at the play's conclusion, Chastity and Eros definitively blend in Sicilia. In the final analysis, Apollo, the ruling god of *The Winter's Tale*, controls Cupid when he determines mortal events to end in Leontes and Hermione's wonderful embrace. That embrace would not be meaningful without Leontes' reborn desire—a gift of Perdita. Without Apollo's working through selfish desires like Camillo's wish to see his homeland before death, Perdita would never have presented herself to Leontes' eyes. The chaste love of Florizel and Perdita never succumbs to barrenness because Apollo protects it, using it indirectly to create purified love in the older generation. As will be the case in *The Tempest*, the conflicted protagonist employs previously banished Cupid (passion) to forge a personally redemptive moment. The pattern of Cupid's seeming exile and eventual triumph that has been identified with *The Tempest* forms a complex part of the artistry of *The Winter's Tale*.

Baylor University

Notes

[1]Quotations from *The Tempest* and *The Winter's Tale* are taken from the New Arden editions of the plays, edited by Frank Kermode (London: Methuen, 1962) and J. H. P. Pafford (London: Methuen, 1963) respectively.

[2]See Gary Schmidgall, *Shakespeare and the Courtly Aesthetic* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1981), p. 206.

[3]"Prospero's Anger," *The Massachusetts Review*, 25 (1984), 164. In David Bergeron's view, Venus and Cupid (wanton love) are absent from the masque because "the emphasis here falls on familial love and an implicit political future with royal progeny" (*Shakespeare's Romances and the Royal Family* [Lawrence: Univ. Press of Kansas, 1985], p. 198.)

[4]The aesthetic principles have been explained by John C. Meagher, *Method and Meaning in Jonson's Masques* (Notre Dame, Ind.: Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 1966), pp. 87-106.

[5]Meagher, pp. 104, 140-43. Also see Stephen Orgel, *The Jonsonian Masque* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1965), pp. 141, 177-83; and Catherine M. Shaw, "*The Tempest* and *Hymenaei*," *Cahiers Elisabethains*, 26 (1984), 33-34.

[6]Meagher notes that in the Jonsonian masque earthly Cupid is usually consigned to the disruptive antimasque, while heavenly Cupid plays a chaste role in the later masque proper (p. 131). *Love's Triumph Through Callipolis* (1630) illustrates this strategy. In other entertainments such as *The Haddington Masque* (1608) and *Lovers Made Men* (1617) Cupid appears in the masque itself, controlled by the heavenly Venus and Mercury from disrupting the final blending of virtues (pp. 133-35). For the distinction between the earthly and heavenly Cupids (*amore cupiditas* vs. *amor caritas*), see Erwin Panofsky, *Studies in Iconology: Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance* (1939; rpt. New York: Harper & Row, 1962), pp. 95-128. It should be noted that Shakespeare's specific allusions to Cupid in his last romances are to *amor cupiditas*. Other readings of Prospero's masque are given by Glynne Wickham, "Masque and Antimasque in *The Tempest*," *Essays and Studies*, 28 (1975), 1-14; and by Karol Berger, "Prospero's Art," *Shakespeare Studies*, 10 (1977), 230-232.

[7]For Prospero as the conventional love-denying *senex iratus*, see David Brailow, "Prospero's 'Old Brain': The Old Man as Metaphor in *The Tempest*," *Shakespeare Studies*, 14 (1981), 290.

[8]Paul A. Jorgensen, "Much Ado About *Nothing*," *Redeeming Shakespeare's Words* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1962), pp. 37-40.

[9]In *Not Wisely But Too Well: Shakespeare's Love Tragedies* (San Marino, California: The Huntington Library, 1957), Franklin M. Dickey documents the Humanists' use of Christian Platonism to discredit romantic love in comparison with reason's apprehension of the heavenly Venus (pp. 19-40).

[10]"Prospero's Masque and the Structure of *The Tempest*," *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 71 (1972), 406.

[11]See Ernest B. Gilman, "'All eyes': Prospero's Inverted Masque," *Renaissance Quarterly*, 33 (1980), 222.

[12]For the alleged lustfulness of sparrows, see the citations supporting proverb S715 in Morris Tilley, *A Dictionary of The Proverbs in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 1950), p. 623. Also see *Measure for Measure*, III. ii. 185.

[13]An account of this comic *anagnorisis* is given by David Horowitz, *Shakespeare: An Existential View* (London: Tavistock, 1965), p. 87; and by D'Orsay W. Pearson, "'Unless I Be

Reliev'd by Prayer': *The Tempest* in Perspective," *Shakespeare Studies*, 7 (1974), 271-73.

[14]For an alternative gloss of Florizel's speech, see Fitzroy Pyle, "*The Winter's Tale*": *A Commentary on the Structure* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), p. 82.

[15]See F. W. Bateson, "How Old Was Leontes?" *Essays and Studies*, 31 (1978), 65-74; and Maurice Hunt, "The Three Seasons of Mankind: Age, Nature, and Art in *The Winter's Tale*," *Iowa State Journal of Research*, 58 (1984), 300-02.

[16]The standard account of the symbolic values of Perdita's flowers for the ages of mankind remains William O. Scott, "Seasons and Flowers in *The Winter's Tale*," *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 14 (1963), 411-17. But also see Richard W. Hillman, "The 'Gillyvors' Exchange in *The Winter's Tale*," *English Studies in Canada*, 5 (1979), 16-23.

[17]See, for example, Harold S. Wilson, "'Nature and Art' in *Winter's Tale* IV. iv. 86ff.," *Shakespeare Association Bulletin*, 18 (1943), 114-20; Edward W. Tayler, *Nature and Art in Renaissance Literature* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1964), pp. 133-38; and Peter Lindenbaum, "Time, Sexual Love, and the Uses of Pastoral in *The Winter's Tale*," *Modern Language Quarterly*, 33 (1972), 13-14.

[18]The sexuality resonating in this speech of Perdita's has been described by, among others, S. L. Bethell, "*The Winter's Tale*": *A Study* (London: Staples, 1947), p. 97; and by M. M. Mahood, *Shakespeare's Wordplay* (London: Methuen, 1957), p. 159.

[19]For an explanation of how the Pluto/ Proserpina/ Ceres myth provides a subtext for *The Winter's Tale*, see F. David Hoeniger, "The Meaning of *The Winter's Tale*," *University of Toronto Quarterly*, 20 (1950), 20-24.

[20]See Murray Krieger, "The Ekphrastic Principle and the Still Movement of Poetry; or *Laokoon* Revisited," *The Play and Place of Criticism* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1967), pp. 105-28.

[21]Charles Frey describes this pastoral dance as "a prime emblem of circular order and delight" in *Shakespeare's Vast Romance: A Study of* The Winter's Tale (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1980), p. 153.

[22]In "The Mythical Structure of *All's Well That Ends Well*," *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 14 (1973), David Bergeron demonstrates that Shakespeare shared the interest of Elizabethan artists in emblematically blending Eros and Chastity (pp. 561-65). For representative infoldings of Diana and Venus, see *The Faerie Queene*, proems to Books III and IV, Book III, canto vi; *Arcadia*, Book II, chapt. 21 (1590 text); and Edgar Wind, *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1958), pp. 73-74.

[23]The centrality of *discordia concors* to Renaissance culture is generally explained by Rosalie L. Colie, *Paradoxia Epidemica: The Renaissance Tradition of Paradox* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1966), esp. pp. 300-28. The symbolic blending of discordant qualities in the dance is described by Sir Thomas Elyot, *Book Named the Governor* (London: Dent, 1962), pp. 74-88. According to Elyot, dance incorporates "wonderful figures, or, as the Greeks do call them, *ideae*" (p. 74). The sixteenth-century humanist believes that virtues appropriate to marriage might be known from the dance: Severity, for example, might be understood from seeing male fierceness joined with female mildness, Magnanimity from the union of audacity with timorosity, Sapience from the desire for knowledge with sure remembrance, and so on (pp. 76-88). For the sources of Elyot's ideas, consult John M. Major, "The Moralization of the Dance of Elyot's *Governor*," *Studies in the Renaissance*, 5 (1958), 27-36. Ben Jonson later gave the kind of symbolic value claimed for the dance of *The Winter's Tale* (and the aborted dance of *The Tempest*) to the revels of *Pleasure Reconcil'd to Vertue* (1618). See Orgel, pp. 176-180.

[24]Autolycus' relationship to the main characters of *The Winter's Tale* has been

generally described by Lee S. Cox, "The Role of Autolycus in *The Winter's Tale*," *SEL: 1500-1900*, 9 (1969), 283-301. Rather than acting as foil to the serious values of the pastoral scene, Autolycus' role is usually construed as a parody of them. See, for example, Mary L. Livingston, "The Natural Art of *The Winter's Tale*," *Modern Language Quarterly*, 30 (1969), 346-51; Joan Hartwig, *Shakespeare's Tragicomic Vision* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1972), pp. 117-20; and Frey, pp. 146, 148.

[25]A similar reading of this dialogue is given by Pyle, pp. 108-09.

Autolycus, Cloten, Caliban & Co.: "Comic" Figures and Audience Response in Shakespeare's Last Plays

by Richard Paul Knowles

Clowns, rogues, and comic villains enjoyed a special relationship with audiences throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and throughout his career as a dramatist Shakespeare exploited this relationship in bridging the gap between the stage and the real world. It is with some surprise, then, that we come to *Pericles* and *Cymbeline* and discover that they are devoid of major comic parts: Shakespeare in these plays seems to have abandoned the use of a clown as sardonic, satiric, or shrewd commentator, to manipulate our response in other ways.[1] In fact, none of the comic figures in the last plays bear significant resemblance to any of Shakespeare's earlier clowns, and it is interesting that most attempts to classify Shakespeare's comic "types" break down when applied with any rigor to the last plays: Frye's "eiron" and "alazon", Maynard Mack's "dry" and "sly", and even the usual distinction between the "Kemp" clown and the "Armin" fool, are all difficult to sustain when used with reference to these plays.[2] Autolycus, who is a very special case and will be examined as such, is the only figure in the last plays remotely classifiable as an *eiron*, or sly clown, and the only comic character for whom anyone could claim extended detachment. The fishermen of *Pericles*, and *Cymbeline's* jailer, are given speeches that are reminiscent of some of Shakespeare's earlier wise rustics and witty servants, but these are small parts, and the speakers, particularly the jailer, are distanced from the audience by our superior knowledge of events: we know who Pericles is, and have seen Posthumus' vision.

While we have a superior knowledge of events, however, these clowns have an awareness that is superior to ours of a controlling force ordering those events, and their purpose seems to be to point us towards such an awareness—that is, to shift attention above themselves—rather than to establish a familiarity between the comic figures and the audience: few earlier Shakespearean clowns could have concluded a monologue with a wish that "we were all of one mind, and one mind good," as few could have spoken against their "present profit." Even the fishermen in *Pericles* have it in them to theorize about the larger pattern of events (II. i. 28ff);[3] and the rustics in *The Winter's Tale*

are, in a more subtle and better-known scene, entrusted with both reversing the play's motion, and pointing out the pattern in the play and in nature of which they are the instruments: "Now bless thyself: thou met'st with things dying, I with things new-born" (III. iii. 113).

If it is true that we are superior in knowledge of events to the comic figures in the last plays in a way that we were not with respect to the sly, *eiron* figures of the earlier comedies, it is equally true that we feel a moral superiority to many of these comic figures that we did not feel towards the dry, alazon figures of those plays. In fact, the last plays contain an array of not-of-the-nicest clown-knave characters who are totally bereft of self-knowledge. The earliest of these figures are the brothel inmates at Myteline in *Pericles*, in whom we find the rankest sexuality in the most diseased atmosphere since *Measure for Measure*, all used as a background for Marina's threatened virtue. The bawds are given many funny lines—"what have we to do with Diana?"—but they have little of our dramatic sympathy, and the comparison with *Measure for Measure* is in this respect instructive. In the earlier play Lucio, with his "knowledge" of the Duke and of human nature, can be read and played as a kind of choric guide through the play—as indeed he was in Robin Phillips' distinguished production at Stratford, Ontario, in 1975-76; and the irrepressible Pompey Bum certainly achieves dramatic sympathy in the face of the repressed sexuality of Angelo and Isabella: "Does your worship mean to geld and splay all the youth of the city?" In contrast to this assertion of irrepressible lust as an unavoidable aspect of human nature, the brothel scenes in *Pericles* present a conscious deviation, as even the inmates themselves are aware of "the sore terms we stand upon with the gods" (IV. ii. 34). Virtue, in the person of Marina, does conquer, and the gentlemen of the city set out (in an admittedly comic scene, that suggests a parallel with the repentance of Autolycus) to "hear the vestals sing" (IV. v. 7). What is more significant for our present purposes than the triumph of virtue, is the fact that the brothel inmates do not provide reductive comic parallels to the romance plots; in fact, like the earlier fishermen, and in spite of their "profession" (as Marina puns on the word), "the bawds of this play make a habit of stepping outside their roles and commenting on them from the moral perspective of the play as a whole:"[4]

> *Bawd.* Come, other sorts offend as well as we.
> *Pand.* As well as we! ay, and better too; we offend worse.
> Neither is our profession any trade, it's no calling.
> (IV. ii. 36-38)

As a result, we are not "kept down to earth" by a consciousness of our basic common denominators, as we are in all of the earlier romantic comedies, but our sympathies are free to soar with the romance plot.

* * *

The Tempest at first glance appears to have a more conventional group of comic characters than the other plays under consideration, but again we find that the clowns engage little sustained dramatic sympathy. Stephano as drunken reveler clearly belongs to the same tradition as Falstaff and Sir Toby Belch, but, as Wilson Knight points out, he is "of a low type socially," and lacks "natural dignity."[5] Trinculo, in the capacity of court jester, is similarly a successor to Touchstone and Feste, and the comparison again makes clear a striking descent in dignity and quality. In fact, in both of these roles there is a marked unpleasantness that is unparalleled in earlier Shakespearean clowns, as Stephano assumes the role of an avaricious, drunken and self-important petty tyrant, while Trinculo cringes and cowers before what he knows to be a fool and a bully.[6] More significant, however, than their vicious and weak characteristics, is the fact that we are allowed neither to laugh nor to sympathize with this brace of foolish Neapolitans. Just as Stephano is never allowed a fully sympathetic and comically reductive "cakes and ale" speech, so Trinculo is never allowed to come into contact with his "betters", or to deliver any of the type of set speeches or wise commentaries that were the stocks-in-trade of his professional predecessors. There is no other Shakespearean comedy, in fact, in which so little contact occurs between the clowns and their main-plot counterparts, and this lack of contact prevents any opportunity for comic deflation. So careful was Shakespeare to prevent any identification with these comic figures that, as John Russell Brown points out, they are given no long individual speeches after their first entries, but have "much shorter and more varied interchanges than usual in such roles in Shakespeare's plays."[7]

Associated with Stephano and Trinculo through most of the play is Caliban, who is only marginally a comic figure, and who is much more complex than his companions in terms of audience response. As a "natural" he is largely free from the satire that is directed against the social vices of Stephano and Trinculo, and his at least partially justified complaints against Prospero, together with his appreciation of the natural beauties of the isle, elicit a certain amount of audience sympathy and even dramatic involvement that is denied the other two.

Nevertheless, in his role as a comic figure, his absurd prostration before the drunkard, and his absurdly misplaced songs of freedom, prevent any real identification, and even his appreciation of the qualities of the isle is not far removed from that of Bremo, the wild man in the anonymous turn-of-the-century romance *Mucedorus*, particularly when Bremo woos the heroine with promises of service.[8] This parallel suggests, too, the possibility that Caliban's striking speeches on the beauties of his island may not have been as startling for a Renaissance audience as they are for us, since such an appreciation of nature may have been an expected part of the conventional stage "wildman.".

Caliban's more important function is as a symbolic representation of a part of Prospero's nature. His curses would be hard to distinguish from those of his master, and in fact Prospero opens the proceedings with insults before Caliban even appears:

> *Pros.* Thou poisonous slave, got by the devil himself
> Upon thy wicked dam, come forth!
> *(Enter Caliban)*
> *Cal.* As wicked dew as e'er my mother brush'd
> With raven's feather from unwholesome fen
> Drop on you both! A south-west blow on ye,
> And blister you all o'er!
> *Pros.* For this be sure, to-night thou shalt have cramps,
> Side-stitches, that shall pen thy breath up; urchins
> Shall, for that vast of night that they may work,
> All exercise on thee; thou shalt be pinch'd
> As thick as honeycomb, each pinch more stinging
> Than bees that made 'em.
> (I. ii. 319-30)

The only substantial difference between their modes of abuse is that, while Caliban curses ineffectually, Prospero threatens *real* punishment. While Prospero's threats and insults, then, reduce him to Caliban's level, Caliban's curses are at least understandable, since they are his only outlet, and are at times sympathetic, since he braves punishment by uttering them: "his spirits hear me, / And yet I needs must curse." Caliban's proficiency at the curse, moreover, seems to have been learned from Prospero—"the red plague rid you / For learning me your language"—and it may be worth noting that at his finer moments, he also shares some tricks of speech with Miranda, most notably his use of "brave" (II. ii. 118 and V. i. 261). Prospero, of course, claims responsibility at the end of the play for "this thing of darkness," and this allows Shakespeare to acknowledge a part of human nature that is anti-romantic without providing a detached or cynical spectator, except

insofar as Prospero himself fills that role. At the end, in fact, Caliban is ready to "seek for grace" (V. i. 296), and seems to arrive at more self-knowledge than does Antonio or Sebastian.

* * *

In *Cymbeline* and *The Winter's Tale*, Shakespeare uses more prominent comic figures to manipulate our involvement more directly and actively than he does through any of the characters examined so far. Cloten, however, the only comic figure in *Cymbeline* apart from the moralizing jailer, is only marginally comic, although he is much funnier in the theater than in the study. In fact Cloten is by turns several different characters: in his scenes with the two lords, and in his perversion of a beautiful song to woo the romantic heroine, he is reminiscent of Thurio, the foolish gentleman of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*; shortly after the song, he speaks a blank verse passage (II. iii. 66) that echoes Timon; in his attempt to ravish Imogen in the woods and in one remarkable curse on Posthumus—"the south fog rot him"—he resembles Caliban; and in defense of his native country against the Romans he speaks with some of the noble accents of a patriot from a history play, though still coarsely: "we will nothing pay / For wearing our own noses" (III. i. 13-14). While he is essentially a comic villain, then, Cloten is neither the detached nor cynical commentator, nor simply the satiric butt: he is capable, as are all the major characters in *Cymbeline*, of moving us to laughter or to sympathy, but never to the sustained identification that the Renaissance clown *could* command.

As might be expected, however, Cloten provides the play with more than a comic villain, and much of what he provides has to do with our response to the play's hero. The play abounds with parallels between Cloten and Posthumus, but these are much more extensive than has generally been recognized, and they demand a much more complex response than the comic deflation usually effected by such parallels. The play invites us to compare the two characters, opening as it does with a description of the one as incomparable and the other as "too bad for bad report," and there is a wealth of material for comparison:[9] both characters have a filial relationship to Cymbeline, one as his ward, the other his step-son; both first seek Imogen's hand and later vengeance on her; both gamble with Iachimo and lose, Cloten doing so at the dramatist's risk that we notice the need for him to be in two places at once—Cloten's gaming table and Imogen's bedchamber;[10] both boast of the improved abilities of the British since Caesar's conquest, and of the

likelihood of Roman defeat (II. iv. 17-23; III. i. 34-6); and both are characterized by a blunt, dull quality that contrasts on the one hand with Iachimo's quickness of intellect and keenness of observation, and on the other with the fine, noble sensitivity of Imogen and her brothers.

More significant than these are the resemblances between hero and lout in their outside appearance and their behavior towards Imogen. Both characters, through misplaced self-esteem, are incapable of truly appreciating Imogen's worth, at least at the outset, and it is significant that their estimation is expressed in clothing imagery. "How fit his garments serve me!" exclaims Cloten. "Why should his mistress, who was made by him that made the tailor, not be fit too?" (IV. i. 2); and Imogen herself, though mistaking his motivation, accurately describes the attitude of Posthumus to her value: "Poor I am stale, a garment out of fashion. / And for I am richer than to hand by the 'walls, / I must be ripp'd. To pieces with me!" (III. iv. 51-53).

Posthumus and Cloten, moreover, are given strikingly similar speeches in which their wounded vanity moves them to swear vengeance on the heroine (II. v. 8; II. v. 75), and are seen in parallel and juxtaposed scenes (II. iv. and v) which contain many closely related details,[11] to move from love, to vain self-pity, to hate and a desire for revenge that places Posthumus on the level of Cloten at his worst. It is significant, too, that the scene involving Cloten *precedes* the scene with Posthumus, therefore preparing our response to the hero: this is not the usual technique of deflation.

The most obvious point of comparison between Posthumus and Cloten is the physical similarity of their persons. Cloten is given a speech that at once reveals his superficial system of values and makes the necessary physical comparison:

> The lines of my body are as well drawn as his; no less young, more strong, not beneath him in fortunes, beyond him in the advantage of the time, above him in birth, alike conversant in general services, and more remarkable in single oppositions; yet this imperceiverant thing loves him in my despite.
>
> (IV. i. 9-13)

This might, of course, be considered as Cloten's expected brand of vain boasting were it not for that remarkable scene in which Imogen mistakes the "puttock", as she earlier called him, for the "eagle" Posthumus.

The scene in which Cloten dies in Posthumus' clothes, then, represents the climax of a long series of analogs, and knowing the

significance that Shakespeare was capable of placing in a change of clothes, as well as the importance to this play of clothing imagery, we may expect to find this significant. The death of Cloten in the clothes of Posthumus seems, in fact, to represent symbolically the death of the part of Posthumus that is like Cloten, and it looks ahead to the rebirth of the hero in the last act. Posthumus is absent from the stage for all of Acts III and IV, in which the symbolic death occurs, and he never again appears dressed as a British courtier. When he does enter, at the opening of Act V, he is already repentant, in spite of the fact that he still believes that Imogen is guilty, and he is concerned with repudiating the very things that Cloten had earlier relied on (unsuccessfully) to save himself from Guiderius' challenge: his title and his clothes. Cloten had defended himself first with "know'st me not by my clothes?" and then "hear but my name and tremble" (IV. ii. 81, 87). Posthumus decides that he will,

> ... disrobe me
> Of these Italian weeds and suit myself
> As does a Britain peasant ... and thus, unknown,
> Pitied nor hated, to the face of peril
> Myself I'll dedicate. Let me make men know
> More valor in me than my habits show.
> Gods, put the strength o' th' Leonati in me!
> To shame the guise o' th' world, I will begin
> The fashion: less without and more within.
>
> (V. i. 22-33)

Only here, when Posthumus recognizes and rejects the vanity of "outward show," does he live up to the ideal that he represents to the courtiers at the outset, who "wear their faces to the bent / Of the King's looks":

> ... I do not think
> So fair an outward and such stuff within
> Endows a man but he.
>
> (I. i. 22-24)

There is a sense that Posthumus' rebirth is actually *made possible* by the death of Cloten, who functions as a sort of scapegoat. Certainly his death provides a turning point in the play; it precipitates the re-entry into society of Belarius and the princess, thus providing both the margin of victory in battle and the necessary grouping for the comic conclusion. More important than this, Cloten's death as a surrogate Posthumus allows the audience to anticipate the already-desired

conclusion: in art, as in nature, the expulsion of a decayed or corrupt order signals a fresh start, and the ritualistic overtones in the sending-off of Cloten's head to the sea reinforce our desire for and anticipation of the restoration of harmony and the renewal of life.

* * *

In *Cymbeline*, then, Shakespeare uses the only major comic character to reinforce rather than deflate the main-plot action, by shaping our response to the hero in anticipatory scenes which involve the comic figure and include close parallels to those involving the hero. In *The Winter's Tale* Shakespeare creates a comic figure in Autolycus that takes a still more active part in engaging our imaginations with the process that the play figures forth, and he once again makes important use of clothing imagery and symbolism.

Autolycus has had a strange history: always successful in the theater, and universally admired there, he has until recently been virtually ignored in scholarly literature.[12] His origins, however, *have* been traced back to the medieval vice figure, and more precisely to the hybrid vice-clever servant of the English romantic comedies of the last half of the sixteenth century:

> Autolycus may be more sophisticated in every way than Conditions in *Common Conditions* or Shift in *Clyomon and Clamydes*, but he performs the same essential function within his romantic play that they do in theirs: by sowing confusion in pursuit of self-interest he ultimately promotes the interest and felicity of the principals.[13]

What is more interesting about Autolycus' relationship to the vice figures in these and other plays, moralities, and Roman comedies, as well as dramatic romances, is that the vice figure was always both an intimate of the audience, whom he often addressed directly, *and* a manipulator of the plot. Could Shakespeare have seen in this "type" an opportunity to carry this dual function further and, by avoiding the tendency of low-life characters to deflate the romantic transformation, to use Autolycus to shift the audience's identification to that very process? There is some indication that this might be the case in a comparison, which I have not seen made before, between the role of Autolycus, "litter'd under Mercury," and the role of Mercury himself, who plays the part of a vice-like tricky servant to Jupiter in that curious turn-of-the-century romance, *The Birth of Hercules*,[14] which itself owes

much to Shakespeare's *The Comedy of Errors.* It is always surprising to see Shakespeare late in his career turn for inspiration to so creaking an old-fashioned play as this one, even if it was to revenge himself for its wholesale ransacking of the plot of his earliest comedy; but it seems too much of a coincidence that in *Cymbeline* he echoes the tone and trappings (including a "true" dream) of Jupiter's thunderous entrance in that play; and in *Henry VIII* he echoes the concluding reconciliation through a glorious conclusion, brought about at least partly through the stratagems of a literally mercurial vice figure with divine sanction and a penchant for disguises.

The classical heritage of Autolycus—mainly Ovid's *Metamorphoses* XI. 298-317—is of course figurative: he was named after a son of Mercury because he was "litter'd" under Mercury; and he has followed the profession of his namesake. This could be reason enough for Shakespeare's choice of name for the rogue, and Ernest Schanzer points out that Autolycus also exhibits other traits appropriate to his name: "sprightliness, volatility, a ready wit, a love of music, and an aptitude for commerce."[15] It is unusual, nevertheless, for Shakespeare to break with his practice of giving English names to his low-life characters, regardless of nationality, and one would expect to find better reasons than these for the departure—particularly since the other names introduced into the play are culled from Plutarch, where "Autolycus" does not occur. The suggestion of a divine heritage for the rogue may not, then, be entirely inconsequential, and this suspicion is strengthened by the fact that Ovid involves Apollo, the presiding deity of *The Winter's Tale*, as well as Mercury, in the conception of the Greek Autolycus.

However this may be, there are repeated suggestions that Autolycus is an agent of some superior power, even though against his will: the clowns declare that they are "bless'd in this man," who "was provided to do us good" (IV. iv. 827-9), and they prove to be right; Autolycus finds himself doing good in spite of himself, as Fortune provides "gold and the means to do my master good" (IV. iv. 833), and "the gods ... connive at us" (IV. iv. 676); his interference brings about a match that Leontes regards as heaven directed (V. iii. 150); and the parallel movements of the two halves of the play place him in the position, as Joan Hartwig says, of "a kind of 'fallen Apollo'."[16] Indeed, these suggestions are so strong that at least one critic, Bertrand Evans, suspects "his very mortality:"

> If not a rogue seeming to be a god, he must be a god seeming to be a rogue: such, at least, is the suggestion, made boldly

> enough to give authority for the solution of the problem, without being so outright as to invite disbelief.[17]

Evans, indeed, sees Autolycus as "a shrewd improvement upon [*Cymbeline's*] Jupiter," one who "insinuates into our minds the comforting idea of a controlling force," and his suggestion is supported by the fact that both appear for the first time toward the end of the action, and that both are thoroughly unnecessary to the playwright as far as the actual working-out of the plot is concerned. Both are present to assure the audience of the presence of a higher power controlling the events of the play.

Why, if Shakespeare wanted to "insinuate" the idea of a controlling force, did he choose a rogue? Autolycus, after all, is a not-altogether-harmless thief, liar, and cheat, sharing many of the vices of the comic figures of the other romances, including Trinculo's cowardice (IV. iii. 105), Stephano's tendency to bully his "inferiors" (IV. iv. 768ff), and even a hint—in the red-blooded doxies and "aunts" of his first song—of their sexual standards. It is true that all of this is qualified by his good humor and liveliness, but it is nevertheless there, and it makes of Autolycus a strange instrument of providence. Autolycus is also, however, a player of parts, a musician, and a ballad-monger. This, Apollo's part in his heritage, is what separates him from the early vice figures—including the Mercury of *The Birth of Hercules*—and from any of Shakespeare's earlier comic figures.

Is it possible that the controlling force for which Autolycus is agent is less a providential and more an artistic one? Autolycus, like Shakespeare, is the purveyor of outrageous tales of birth and transformation, and Shakespeare insists on the comparison. In the sheep-shearing scene Shakespeare provides us with a grotesque reflection of our universal human need for wondrous tales, marvels, and myths, as well as the need to believe in them.

> *Clown*. What hast here? Ballads?
>
> *Mopsa*. Pray now buy some. I love a ballad in print, a-life, for then we are sure they are true.
>
> *Autolycus*. Here's one to a very doleful tune, how a userer's wife was brought to bed of twenty money-bags at a burthen, and how she long'd to eat adders' heads, and toads carbonado'd.
>
> *Mop*. Is it true, think you?
>
> *Aut*. Very true, and but a month old.
>
> *Dorcas*. Bless me from marrying a userer!
>
> *Aut*. Here's the midwive's name to it, one Mistress Tale-

> porter, and five or six honest wives that were present. Why should I carry lies abroad?
>
> *Mop.* Pray you now buy it.
>
> *Clo.* Come on, lay it by; and let's first see moe ballads. We'll buy the other things anon.
>
> *Aut.* Here's another ballad, of a fish that appear'd upon the coast on We'n'sday the fourscore of April, forty thousand fadom above water, and sung this ballad against the hard hearts of maids. It was thought she was a woman, and was turn'd into a cold fish for she would not exchange flesh with one that lov'd her. The ballad is very pitiful, and as true.
>
> *Dor.* It is true too, think you?
>
> *Aut.* Five justices' hands at it, and witnesses more than my pack will hold.
>
> (IV. iv. 259-84)

The ballads, too, though manifestly absurd, contain a certain degree of truth-through-falsehood, and some degree of belief—"bless me from marrying a userer"—might prove beneficial. As Joan Hartwig says, ballads, like oracles, "affirm their audience's need for assurance that truth may be found within the poetic lie,"[18] and this applies to plays as well. It has frequently been noticed that Shakespeare draws attention to the ballad-like nature of the "old tale" that he himself is telling, and most frequently does so in the scene which *narrates* the discovery of Perdita: "Such a deal of wonder is broken out within this hour that ballad-makers cannot be able to express it" (V. ii. 23-25). It is made clear, moreover, that these events, which are so like the incredible ballads of our "fallen Apollo" in this half of the play, are the fulfillment of the equally unbelievable oracle of Apollo in the first half:

> *Paulina.* Is't not the tenor of his oracle,
> That King Leontes shall not have an heir
> Till his lost child be found? Which that it shall,
> Is all as monstrous to our human reason
> As my Antigonus to break his grave,
> And come again to me.
>
> (V. i. 38-43)

The restoration of Perdita to Leontes, however "monstrous to our human reason," is an event that we have known to be possible; we have witnessed, even anticipated, its working-out through the machinations of the playwright and of Autolycus. Autolycus has nothing to do with the final (and major) revelation of the plot, which is orchestrated by Paulina; nevertheless, his role contributes dramatically to the audience's response to this scene, and Paulina, once again, points out the

scene's relationship to his ballads in now-familiar terms:

> ... That she is living,
> Were it but told you, should be hooted at
> Like an old tale; but it appears she lives.
>
> (V. iii. 115-17)

The difference between the two revelations, apart from the fact that the first *is* "but told" to us, is that the second not only goes against what the characters of the play feel to be probable, it presents what they and we know to be impossible. The mechanics of this scene are outside the scope of this article, but part of the reason that it works (and it invariably does, in the theater), is that Shakespeare prepares us not only to suspend disbelief, but to participate actively in the conclusion on a creative level by engaging our imaginative belief: "it is requir'd / You do awake your faith." By doing so we "make possible things not so held" (I. ii. 139).

What has Autolycus to do with this? We have seen that in his ballads and their similarity to events surrounding Perdita's reappearance, we are prepared to find truth in the seemingly impossible; but this is only part of his function. We have also seen that his presence indicates the existence of a controlling force, one which, I have suggested, may be related to Autolycus' propensity for play-acting. If he is not alone in this respect—Polixenes, Camillo, Florizel, Perdita, and even Hermione perform roles other than their own—he is more frequently disguised than anyone else, and more variously. In fact, when we first see him addressing another character, he is playing the role of his own victim in words that draw attention to his apparel—the first of many outfits in which we are to encounter him: "O help me, help me! Pluck but off these rags; and then, death, death!" (IV. iii. 52-53).[19] This may suggest to anyone familiar with Shakespeare's typical use of clothing imagery that something more significant is going on than the comic gulling of a clown, particularly since this scene, with its references to the "loathsomeness" of the "detestable" rags of a thief, is followed immediately by Florizel's references to the "unusual weeds" of Perdita, which "to each part ... do give a life" (IV. iv. 1).

Florizel's suggestion in this opening speech that Perdita's costume gives her new life—adds to nature—is carried further in her own speech:

> Methinks I play as I have seen them do
> In Whitsun pastorals. Sure this robe of mine
> Does change my disposition.
>
> (IV. iv. 133-35)

The suggestion that her acting the part of royalty initiates a transformation is also, unknown to Perdita, a suggestion that her "unreal" playacting mirrors a larger reality: we know that she *is* a princess, and the art that mends nature, *is* nature (IV. iv. 97). Just as a false tale may reveal truths, so the assumption of a disguise in the playing of a (false) part may help to reveal or enlarge upon a true nature.

The clowns later reinforce this connection between clothes and the revelation of true identity when they enter in their newly acquired finery: "See you these clothes? Say you see them not and think me still no gentleman born" (V. ii. 130-31). When Autolycus acknowledges, "I know you are now, sir, a gentleman born," he draws attention to the parallels between this scene and the rebirth of Perdita to her proper condition; and the insistence upon, and repetition of, "gentleman born" drives home the point beyond the social comedy of the gag itself. Like the rebirth of Perdita, the transformation of the already goodhearted and merciful rustics is in fact an enlargement of their true natures: "we must be gentle, now we are gentlemen."

Returning to the scene of Autolycus' first encounter with the clown, we find a new suggestion in his claim that one Autolycus has robbed him of his money and apparel, "and these detestable things put upon me." This encounter follows a solo passage in which we learn that the rogue once "wore three pile" in Prince Florizel's service, and we begin to feel that, in spite of his name, Autolycus may have usurped a roguery he was never born to, and may indeed, in a sense, have robbed Autolycus. A coward to whom "beating and hanging are terrors," and who protests (perhaps too much) to "sleep out the thought" of the life to come, Autolycus may, in his plea to the clown, be asking the good Samaritan for help in removing "the habiliments of his sinful life."[20]

In the subsequent scene we see Autolycus undergo an enforced change of clothes, from which he is made to benefit. The exchange of garments with Florizel has often puzzled critics and costume designers, since what to the prince is a shepherd's costume, is courtier's apparel to the rogue and clowns (though the problem is solved by seeing it as the type of costume that a prince might wear in a masque of shepherds). There is, moreover, no need for the exchange as far as the fortunes of Florizel go, and the confusion therefore seems pointless. It is pointless, however, only in terms of the plot: for the prince, the exchange is symbolic, as we see him steal away from the court in the garb of a thief, allowing us to see something of Autolycus in Florizel as we had seen Cloten in Posthumus; for Autolycus, this exchange is a turning point.

In *Cymbeline* Cloten's assumption of Posthumus' clothes was the

climax to a long series of associations between the hero and the comic figure, and the latter's symbolic death in the clothes of his main-plot counterpart represented a turning point for the hero, and anticipated his spiritual rebirth; in this play, Autolycus' assumption of Florizel's clothes is also a climactic moment, but here it represents a turning point in the spiritual life of the comic figure himself, initiating a movement in the subplot that parallels directly the regenerative movement of the main plot, anticipating and supporting an otherwise incredible comic conclusion.

When Camillo addresses the trembling peddler, Autolycus pleads, "I am a poor fellow, sir," and Camillo's reply is interesting:

> Why be so still; here's nobody will steal that from thee. Yet for the outside of thy poverty we must make an exchange; therefore discase thee instantly (thou must think there's a necessity in't) and change garments with this gentleman.
> (IV. iv. 631-34)

The reference to the outside of his poverty suggests a corresponding inner poverty that may, too, be removable, particularly since he changes garments with a "gentleman." Unless it be to draw a parallel between this and the scene in which the new-clad rustics become "gentlemen born," I can see no reason for this reference to Florizel as a "gentleman": if he is still to be disguised, he is a swain, if not, a prince. Also interesting is the use of "discase"—employed by Shakespeare only here and in *The Tempest* (V. i. 85)—which means not only to undress but also to "unmask", and carries implications of enfranchisement.[21]

The suspicion that Autolycus' enforced change of clothes may signal a change in character (or rather a release of potential quality) is to some degree strengthened immediately afterwards, when he expresses concern over the shepherd's intention of visiting Polixenes: "I know not what impediment this complaint may be to the flight of my master" (IV. iv. 709). His reasons for not informing the king of Florizel's flight are, moreover, ambiguous: "If I thought it were a piece of honesty to acquaint the king withal, I would not do't" (IV. iv. 697). Much virtue in "if." In any case, his concern over constancy to his profession at this stage sounds strangely like an excuse for doing what he has already decided upon: to help his "master", putting himself back into service. For the first time in the play he acts from an honest, if not an entirely disinterested motive—it is only afterwards that gold presents itself as a "double occasion," and when it does, he admits his former good intentions: "If I had a mind to be honest, I see Fortune would not suffer

me: she drops booties in my mouth" (IV. iv. 831). His last speech shows, moreover, that while he hopes for advancement from his interference and it would seem to be honest advancement in the form of service), he also is aware that he is risking disfavor, and even expresses some awareness of "shame": "let him call me rogue for being so far officious, for I am proof against that title, and what shame else belongs to 't" (IV. iv. 839).

From this point on in the play Autolycus is strangely subdued, and I think this is in part attributable to his change of clothes and character. He is largely silent throughout the scene with the gentlemen, and after it he refers to the "dash" and his "former" life (V. ii. 113). His obvious disappointment at not having succeeded in performing what he clearly thought of as a good deed, is not well concealed by a manifestly rationalizing speech: "tis all one to me; for had I been the finder-out of this secret it would not have relish'd among my other discredits" (V. ii. 121-22).

When the rustics enter, then, we are perhaps prepared to see Autolycus in a new relationship with them, and we do. He neither mocks their malapropisms and absurdities, nor attempts to lord it over them:

> *Autolycus*. I humbly beseech you, sir, to pardon me all the faults I have committed to your worship, and to give me your good report to the Prince my master.
> *Shepherd*. Prithee, son, do; for we must be gentle, now we are gentlemen.
> *Clown*. Thou wilt amend thy life?
> *Autolycus*. Ay, and it like your good worship.
> (V. ii. 149-55)

There is a stage tradition—condemned by Wilson Knight as "deplorable"[22]—that Autolycus in this scene busily picks the pockets of the rustics, but this would seem to negate a large part of Autolycus' development, and is unsupported by the text. Nor can I agree with Knight's reading, however, that Autolycus loses "dramatic dignity" by "bowing and scraping to his former gull." On the contrary, he responds to the clown's courtesy with considerable dignity, humility, and, it would seem, honesty:

> *Clown*. I'll swear to the Prince thou art a tall fellow of thy hands, and that thou wilt not be drunk; but I know thou art no tall fellow of thy hands, and that thou wilt be drunk; but I'll swear it, and I would thou wouldst be a tall fellow of thy

hands.

Autolycus. I will prove so, sir, to my power.

(V. ii. 163-68)

However unlikely it may have seemed that the rogue, like Caliban, should "seek for grace," "yet it is true," and the strangeness of it does not render it beyond the power of belief.

This brings us to the earlier question again, of what Autolycus has to do with the statue scene. The scene between Autolycus and the clown, in fact, parallels the statue scene, and prepares us for it by illustrating the power of belief and will to "make possible things not so held." In the statue scene, Leontes thinks he knows that Hermione is dead, but when Paulina hints that his "fancy / May think anon it moves," he concurs: "the fixture of her eye hath motion in it." She says, "it is requir'd you do awake your faith," and the statue slowly comes alive. Leontes' faith, then—his belief in the seemingly impossible—turns a statue into a woman; similarly the faith of a "gentleman born" swearing on behalf of his friend to the truth of something he thinks he knows is false—"I know thou art no tall fellow of thy hands"—transforms the rogue into a true man.

These parallels, however, are not merely the usual parallels of a deflating comic subplot in Shakespeare, as is witnessed by the fact that the "transformation" of Autolycus comes *before* the transformation of the statue. The last two scenes of the play present three revelations to the audience in ascending order of incredibility (in terms of what the audience knows), and in so doing they teach us the power of belief in the transforming power of art that is in harmony with nature. The final and most miraculous revelation, then, occurs because it is in harmony with the natural process of death and rebirth, and because we as audience have identified our belief, will, and faith with the process of the play toward rebirth and transformation.

The discovery of Perdita is prefigured in her own disguise as queen of the feast, and it comes about through the agency of a professional player of parts and another practiced stage manager, Camillo. Her discovery is fully anticipated by the audience, however wondrous it may seem to the characters on the stage, since we are granted superior awareness. The return to grace of Autolycus, however, brought about through an enforced change of clothes and the faith of the clown, is only partially anticipated, since we have seen more of his development than the clown has, but still must engage our faith to a considerable degree. As the clown knows nothing of Autolycus' beginning transformation, so Leontes knows nothing of Hermione's preservation. Here,

however, we the audience share fully in his ignorance, and, like him, we must awaken our faith. We must engage our creative imaginations with the transforming power of art to "mend nature," to reveal and enlarge truth, even though that truth may be "monstrous to our human reason."

Autolycus' role, then, is a complex one: in his association with the artist, through his connection with Apollo and his peddling of ballads, he prepares the audience to find truth in the seemingly impossible; in his relationship to Mercury and Apollo, his "inspired" plot manipulation, and his bringing into the play of spring, he insinuates the sense of a controlling force or natural order; and in his redemption through the power of belief and will (the clown's) and of "art" (his change of clothes), he prepares the audience's will and expectation for the final scene. There is nothing here of the comic, deflating quality of the traditional comic figure, as is evidenced by his subdued tone in his final scene with the clowns, and the total absence of reference to him in the play's last scene. There is no need to omit him pointedly as Jaques or Malvolio is omitted, or to include him as Touchstone is included: he has played his final scene earlier, and has served his purpose.

In all of these plays, then, Shakespeare avoids the use of traditional deflationary comic figures or subplots, and uses his comic figures, to a greater or lesser degree, to reinforce the audience's anticipation of and belief in the working-out of the play's plots. Shakespeare had hitherto used comedy with great success to disarm our skepticism, but never before had he attempted to employ the natural affinity between the comic figure and the audience to reinforce our belief, and to help engage our creative imaginations with the play's design.

University of Guelph

Notes

[1]These include among other things, theophanies, character-artists, and direct address. Each of these is the subject of an article published or in preparation by the present writer. See " 'The More Delay'd, Delighted': Theophanies in the Last Plays," *Shakespeare Studies*, 15 (1982), 269-280; and " 'Wishes Fall Out As They're Will'd: Artist, Audience, and *Pericles*' Gower," *English Studies in Canada*, 91 (1983), 14-24.

[2]See Northrop Frye, "Characterization in Shakespearean Comedy," *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 4 (1953), 271-277; Frye, *A Natural Perspective* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1965), pp. 92-112; Maynard Mack, "Engagement and Detachment in Shakespeare's Plays," *Essays on Shakespeare and Elizabethan Drama in Honor of Hardin Craig*, ed.

Richard Hosley (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1962), pp. 288-290. See also Frye, *A Natural Perspective*, pp. 97 & 111 on the shift in the character of the *idiotes* figure in the romances from clown to villain.

[3]All references to Shakespeare are to *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. G. Blakemore Evans et at (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974).

[4]Howard Felperin, *Shakespearean Romance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), pp. 160-161.

[5]*The Crown of Life* (London: Oxford University Press, 1947), p. 217.

[6]Knight, pp. 217-220, points out these vices in a more extended analysis. See also John Russell Brown, "Laughter in the Last Plays," *Stratford-upon-Avon Studies 8: Later Shakespeare* (London: Edward Arnold, 1966), pp. 123-124.

[7]*Shakespeare: The Tempest* (London: Edward Arnold, 1969), p. 38.

[8]Compare *Mucedorus*, *Dodsley's Collection of Old Plays*, vol. 7, 4th ed., ed. W. Carew Hazlitt, pp. 241-2, with Caliban's speeches to Miranda and to Stephano (I. ii. 336-8; II. ii. 167-72).

[9]Homer D. Swander, "Cymbeline: Religious Idea and Dramatic Design," *Pacific Coast Studies in Shakespeare*, ed. Waldo F. McNeir & Thelma N. Greenfield (Eugene: University of Oregon Books, 1966), pp. 248-262; and James Edward Siemon, "Noble Virtue in *Cymbeline*," *Shakespeare Survey*, 29 (1976), 51-62; list many of these parallels. I am indebted to these articles throughout my discussion of Cloten. Joan Hartwig in "Cloten, Autolycus, and Caliban: Bearers of Parodic Burdens," *Shakespeare's Romances Reconsidered* ed. Carol McGinnis Kay & Harry E. Jacobs (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1978), pp. 91-112, also notices parallels, but sees the roles of these comic figures as parodic, moderating the romantic idealisms of the main characters, and providing comic balance. She does, however, conclude that in Cloten "Shakespeare takes the technique of parodic parallel further than he has in earlier plays. What started out as parody ends as identification," after which "it is possible for Posthumus to be reborn out of the visibly present corpse of his counter-person," p. 97. A revised version of her article, which omits the discussion of Autolycus, appears in her book, *Shakespeare's Analogical Scene* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983).

[10]See Siemon, p. 58.

[11]See Siemon, p. 58. Seimon also notices, p. 59, that Posthumus' plan to kill Imogen, if we accept the sword as a phallic symbol, is closely related to Cloten's plan to rape her.

[12]For a record of Autolycus, and other aspects of the play on stage, see Dennis Bartholomeusz, *The Winter's Tale in Performance in England and America, 1611-1976* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982). Autolycus' history in criticism to ca. 1970 is summarized in two of the best, though conflicting, accounts of the character I have seen: R. A. Foakes, *Shakespeare: The Dark Comedies to the Last Plays* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971), pp. 136-141; and Lee Sheridan Cox, "The Role of Autolycus in *The Winter's Tale*," *Studies in English Literature*, 9 (1969), 283-301. My discussion follows closely that of Cox, though to a different end. Roy Battenhouse, "Theme and Structure in *The Winter's Tale*," *Shakespeare Survey*, 33 (1980), 130-133, also follows Cox in offering a serious, non-parodic view of Autolycus' repentance, but comes to yet another conclusion.

[13]Felperin, p. 217.

[14]*The Birth of Hercules*, Malone Society Reprints #24 (London: Oxford University Press, 1911). For *Cymbeline* and *Henry VIII* parallels, see 11. 2490-2530, pp. 88-90.

[15]Introduction to *The Winter's Tale*, *New Penguin Shakespeare* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1969), p. 20.

[16]*Shakespeare's Tragicomic Vision* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1972), p. 117.

[17]*Shakespeare's Comedies* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960), p. 309.

[18]*Shakespeare's Tragicomic Vision*, p. 120. Mary L. Livingstone, "The Natural Art of *The Winter's Tale*," *Modern Language Quarterly*, 30 (1969), 240-255, also discusses the relationship between Autolycus' ballads and the art of the play.

[19]I am indebted for this suggestion to Cox, p. 289, and the following paragraphs owe much to his discussion, though we examine the material for different purposes.

[20]Cox, p. 291.

[21]Onion, *Shakespeare Glossary*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958), pp. 59 & 30.

[22]*The Crown of Life*, p. 113n.

Finding Place for a Faultless Lyric: Verbal Virtuosity in *The Winter's Tale*

by A. Lynne Magnusson

> He is no longer interested, one often feels, in what happens or who says what, so long as he can find place for a faultless lyric, or a new, unimagined rhythmical effect, or a grand and mystical speech.[1]

No passage can provide a better test case for the charge of idle virtuosity which Lytton Strachey levels against Shakespeare's later work than Florizel's love compliment to Perdita:

> ... What you do,
> Still betters what is done. When you speak, sweet,
> I'd have you do it ever: when you sing,
> I'd have you buy and sell so, so give alms,
> Pray so, and, for the ord'ring your affairs,
> To sing them too: when you do dance, I wish you
> A wave o' th' sea, that you might ever do
> Nothing but that, move still, still so,
> And own no other function. Each your doing,
> So singular in each particular,
> Crowns what you are doing, in the present deeds,
> That all your acts are queens.[2]

After the conventional debate on art and nature in the same scene, this declaration is probably the most excerpted piece in *The Winter's Tale* and the most liable to comment on its excellence in isolation from the dramatic setting. It stands gracefully on its own, with its unusual rhythmical surprises and its careful aesthetic closure, among the finest instances of the Renaissance lyric mode. To test and refute Strachey's charges, one must discover in what the virtuosity of the lyric consists and how it is responsive to the larger dramatic context of the play.

But first one wants to question Strachey's assumptions, shared by a number of other commentators who have been troubled by the stylistic virtuosity of the late plays. The mere and exclusive interest in "what happens" is the historian's focus and not the artist's. Other commentators have objected to verbal cleverness and technical experiment in the late plays on slightly different grounds from Strachey's. In "The Mature Comedies," Frank Kermode argues that the "mature comedies" (*Twelfth Night* and *As You Like It*) are superior to the late romances (particu-

larly *Cymbeline* and *The Tempest*) because in the former Shakespeare is engrossed in his themes while in the latter Shakespeare is preoccupied with "master-problems" in style and dramaturgy. Kermode does not suggest that Shakespeare is unconcerned with making his medium and his form the vehicle of his meaning in the "mature comedies." But he does insist that *Twelfth Night* is a play "about self-knowledge or the possibility of it in a world where Fortune domineers and appetite confuses," and that the dramatist makes use of the theatrical devices of disguise and confused identity and the verbal devices of paradox and tautology to the virtually exclusive end of substantiating his theme.[3] One must be cautious about judging a poem or a play by its "foreconceit," and cautious about dismissing verbal cleverness in art, as Kermode does in this essay, as mere trickery. This may seem self-evident, and yet many discussions of the late plays have been exclusively concerned with the weightiness of their themes. At any rate, the testimony of many poets should be enough to remind us that "ideas" sometimes come as rhythms, phrases, concrete bits of language, stanzaic forms rather than as discursive propositions; the poet's preoccupation with form and technique is not ground for condemnation. The quest for "a faultless lyric" and then the "find[ing] place" for it may be a more adequate artistic method than Strachey suggests. No one knows how Shakespeare composed his plays, whether from beginning to end, from foreconceit to theatrical realization, or from "a new unimagined rhythmical effect" to a discovery of context and meaning for it. But an exploration of what constitutes the virtuosity of Florizel's lyric, and an examination of how it finds a place in the drama, are good starting-points for the discovery of the play's "aboutness."

An initial glance at the context of the lyric may serve to anticipate the argument that Shakespeare is, despite Strachey, interested in "who says what" and "in what happens"—that is, in the decorum and the integrity of the play. It also, surprisingly, indicates that the virtuosity of love verse is itself a matter debated within the play. Florizel's verse stands in an immediate context that gently but repeatedly deprecates verbal, and specifically lyrical, virtuosity. Perdita, for whom the praise is meant, seems to distrust fine words as much as the "scurrilous words" she fears from the peddler.[4] Both to this declaration and to the more extravagant oath before the contract Polixenes forestalls (IV. iv. 371-84), her answer separates the feeling from the words, trusting the affection, but mistrusting its expressions:

... O Doricles,
Your praises are too large: but that your youth,

And the true blood which peeps fairly through't,
Do plainly give you out an unstain'd shepherd,
With wisdom I might fear, my Doricles,
You woo'd me the false way.

(IV. iv. 146-51)

Shakespeare does not resist a double irony, Doricles plainly not being "an unstain'd shepherd." Polixenes also mocks Florizel's enthusiastic excesses in a genial way, though his criticism is aimed at a method of praise different in kind, as we shall see, from that already quoted:

Florizel. ... O hear me breathe my life
Before this ancient Sir, who, it should seem,
Hath sometime lov'd. I take thy hand, this hand,
As soft as dove's down and as white as it,
Or Ethiopian's tooth, or the fann'd snow that's bolted
By th' northern blasts twice o'er.
Polixenes. ... What follows this?
How prettily the young swain seems to wash
The hand was fair before! I have put you out.

(IV. iv. 361-69)

By having Polixenes call attention to Florizel's lyric style, Shakespeare directs the listener's attention to style, and implies that one must respond not only to what is said, but to how it is said, to understand his meaning. The romantic hyperbole of the lover's stance—"O hear me breathe my life"—is drawn back into balance by the simple emphatic repetition, "I take thy hand, this hand," which witnesses his absorption in the person of his beloved. But Polixenes' commentary provides footnotes on what follows. Polixenes unmetaphors Florizel's conventional similes (no less graceful here for being well-worn), literalizing their intention, exposing their frailty of rhetorical method. To this explicit mockery is added that implicit in the surrounding action. Autolycus has pressed the young countrymen to buy trinkets for their ladies, to deck them with a few exotic touches of art—"Bugle-bracelet, necklace amber, / Perfume for a lady's chamber" (IV. iv. 224-25)—so as to hold their affections. The Clown buys for both Mopsa and Dorcas in sign of his divided attentions, and Polixenes advises Florizel to follow the country example, as he himself had done in his youth. Florizel protests that his faith is more firmly founded on treasures "pack'd and lock'd / Up in my heart" (IV. iv. 359-60). Yet while he does not ransack the "pedlar's silken treasury," Polixenes' unmetaphoring points clearly to how Shakespeare undercuts the professed uniqueness in Florizel's wooing: the young prince ransacks Petrarch and *Tottel's Miscellany* for

yet more exotic touches of art[5]

Autolycus' wares serve as a parodic analog of Florizel's words, so that subordinated to the rare delight in verbal virtuosity that the wooing scene affords is always the undercurrent that words, too, can be cheats. Moreover, Autolycus' own mastery of fine phrases warns against too ready confidence that words will render legitimately the object they represent. His language adorns his cheap trinkets as Florizel's costumes and words have his "lowly maid, / Most goddess-like prank'd up:"

> *Servant.* ... why, he sings 'em over as they were gods or goddesses; you would think a smock were a she-angel, he so chants to the sleeve-hand and the work about the square on't.
>
> (IV. iv. 209-13)

Autolycus' method of inflating his wares, when he enters cataloging them in a ballad, is precisely what amuses Polixenes in Florizel's love utterance; he washes, dyes, and sweetens his trifles with far-fetched comparisons:

> Lawn as white as driven snow
> Cypress black as e'er was crow,
> Gloves as sweet as damask roses,
> ....
> What maids lack from head to heel:
> Come buy of me, come! come buy! come buy!
> Buy, lads, or else your lasses cry.
>
> (IV. iv. 220-22, 229-31)

Autolycus suggests that the decorations will make up for deficiencies in the maidens. Polixenes acknowledges that in Perdita the work needs no addition; her hand is white before the washing. Shakespeare may seem overscrupulous here, rather than unscrupulous as Strachey suggests, in darkening the mirth of the sheep-shearing with so strong a vein of verbal skepticism. Yet this suspicious side-glance at the worth of words as a measure of value, at their arbitrariness and even cheapness as social tender, gains fuller force when one remembers that this theme has been an important concern of the "court" scenes. The scene of Polixenes' prevented leave-taking demonstrates how embroidered and highly ritualized social decorums carry a potential for misunderstanding and alienation, a potential realized when Leontes reads a sinister subtext into Polixenes' decorous compliments. Shakespeare emphasizes how saying well can never guarantee meaning well. The dramatist has made Strachey's question about the validity and sincerity

of verbal virtuosity itself a central question of his play.

In the context of Florizel's lyric, Shakespeare's own deprecation of verbal virtuosity may be regarded, first, as a useful rhetorical strategy: a good rhetorician knows that one can disarm objections by anticipating them. It serves, furthermore, to characterize the speakers involved; in spite of Strachey, Shakespeare shows an interest in "who says what." Moreover, it has serious thematic import, ramifying an idea developed more extensively in the first half of *The Winter's Tale*. Still, one can seldom take a poet's deprecation of verbal virtuosity entirely seriously. Of Shakespeare's plays, *Love's Labour's Lost* is perhaps the most thoroughgoing critique of the abuses of fine language, and yet the virtuoso display of language is itself the occasion for the play, without which it would be a very slight piece indeed.

I return to the lyric first mentioned, to see what technical problems it confronts, what its particular expressiveness consists in, and whether the quality of Florizel's perception can illuminate other related matters in the play. But when one sets out to explain the virtuosity of this widely admired lyric, what immediately impresses is its verbal restraint—the vocabulary is entirely without ostentation. With its high proportion of grammatical function words (most notably, the repeated "do" and "so"), and the remaining words chosen from among the most commonplace in the English language, the very colorlessness of the diction itself seems to make a statement: it is as if the speech in which Perdita detects verbal ostentation is itself a recantation of poetic diction. The only contrast to this entire simplicity in the word choice is provided by the longer Latinate words—"So singular in each particular"—set against the many monosyllables. Of these F. E. Halliday comments that the "brightness of his [Shakespeare's] poetry fades and diminishes into a shadowy abstraction."[6] To object thus to the Latinate abstractions, however, is to overlook how the concentrated Latinity of the phrasing gathers the accents of the line into a vivid metrical surprise, varying and enhancing the music of the verse. Is the *raison d'etre* of the lyric then—as some commentators have suggested—the "new, unimagined rhythmical effect" that Strachey derides? Partly. But it is in dialogue with other love poetry of the time that one locates the real experiment of the lyric.

The poetry of love compliment was, perhaps of all literary genres in Elizabethan England, most tied into conventional postures and themes, so that each new composition would either repeat or respond to the traditional strategies. Shakespeare's own sonnets crown that mode, at least in the sonnet form, and so may provide an apt context for

understanding how Florizel's lyric outdoes the normal means of praise. What every sonnet lover asserts about his beloved is that she is "peerless"; and what threatens in each instance the lyric impulse to catch the moment as its flies and render it eternal is Time's scythe: for "every fair from fair sometime declines."[7] These concerns of the lyric are central concerns of *The Winter's Tale*, where Shakespeare represents two "peerless" women, Hermione and Perdita, and where Time, who makes "stale / The glistering of this present" (IV. i. 13-14), himself presents the action.

Shakespeare, in the sonnets, both characterizes and criticizes the hyperbolic rhetorical means by which poets inflate the woman to make her peerless:

> So is it not with me as with that Muse
> Stirred by a painted beauty to his verse,
> Who heaven itself for ornament doth use
> And every fair with his fair doth rehearse;
> Making a couplement of proud compare
> With sun and moon, with earth and sea's rich gems,
> With April's first-born flowers, and all things rare
> That heaven's air in this huge rondure hems.
>
> (Sonnet 21)

The preferred strategy for asserting peerlessness is comparison, seeking analogs outside the woman for her inward and her outward qualities. Comparison implying likeness and hence belying the unique worth of the object of praise, these analogs are generally combined with an overgoing strategy: not as fair as Helen, but better than Helen, whiter than lilies, "more lovely and more temperate" than a summer's day (Sonnet 18). One variation of the technique, which is employed by Ferdinand in *The Tempest*, is unmetaphored by Paulina, who deems it inadequate to recreate Hermione's worth:

> *Ferdinand.* . . . For several virtues
> Have I liked several women; never any
> With so full soul but some defect in her
> Did quarrel with the noblest grace she owed,
> And put it to the foil. But you, O you,
> So perfect and so peerless, are created
> Of every creature's best.
>
> (*Tmp.* III. i. 42-48)[8]

> *Paulina.* If, one by one, you wedded all the world,
> Or from the all that are took something good,

> To make a perfect woman, she you kill'd
> Would be unparallel'd
>
> (WT. V. i. 13-16)

Extravagant comparison, the mainstay of literary love utterance, is ultimately distracting; in its reference to the "other," it fails to represent the "isness" of the woman:

> Who is it that says most, which can say more
> Than this rich praise, that you alone are you?
>
> (Sonnet 84)

Florizel's lyric is striking and original because his gaze is set intently on Perdita herself. Shakespeare inverts the traditional strategy of far-fetched comparison, turning it inward into self-comparison: "What you do / Still betters what is done." Moreover, this love utterance takes on the challenge of Mutability: Florizel's initial statement, which the remainder of the utterance elaborates, asserts that Perdita, as he sees her, improves, not deteriorates, with the forward movement of time.

The lyric succeeds in reconciling what in reality and in the literary lyric tradition are two mutually exclusive conceptions of time: human longing for changelessness and time's betraying changefulness. The human desire for stasis is marked by repeated adverbs of constancy—"Still . . . ever . . . ever . . . still, still"—contained within wish-clauses: "I'd have you . . . I wish you . . . that you might ever do." Parallel temporal clauses mark the succession and change of human actions through time: "When you speak . . . when you sing . . . when you do dance. . . ." Yet the wishing "evers" do not try to put a stranglehold on the present, because each wish is such as has its fulfillment within the present action; and with each succeeding act the wish adjusts to become that which again has as its end what is "now." A wish for changelessness which appears to look forward to an impossible future is stated in the following lines, if they are read in isolation:

> . . . when you sing,
> I'd have you buy and sell so, so give alms,
> Pray so, and, for the ord'ring your affairs,
> To sing them too;

but implicit in the structure of the meditation, in the context of the succeeding "when" clauses, is the idea that if Perdita were praying, he would wish her to sing so; when she buys, he'd have her do that, too, ever. There is no such tense in English as the "perfect present," where

an action can be both finished and in process, but Shakespeare here expresses the idea which would inform such an impossible tense. According to Hudson, in the *New Variorum Shakespeare*, "Each your doing... / Crowns what you are doing, in the present deeds," "is neither English nor sense,"[9] but it is Shakespeare's finely forged syntax for the "full present" of the lover, where something can be both unfinished and consummated. The progressive aspect—"what you are doing"—often suggests an action reaching towards but not arrived at an end; but the simultaneous nominal forms—"Each your doing," "the present deeds," "your acts"—refer to finished states which "crown" or consummate the process even as it goes on. The temporal framework of the utterance is such that it reconciles process and stasis—"still" movement. The "full present," Florizel's perception of the "isness" in his love, registers his "sound affection" as the vanishing present of Sonnet 129 registers the diseased delusions of lust:

> Enjoyed no sooner but despisèd straight;
> Past reason hunted, and no sooner had,
> Past reason hated as a swallowed bait
> On purpose laid to make the taker mad:
> . . . .
> Before, a joy proposed; behind a dream.

The love lyric is extraordinary even in isolation from its dramatic context. It reacts against the distracting tendency of the Elizabethan sonnet convention to idealize the beloved by making her "other" than she "is." Florizel's utterance discovers Perdita's "queenliness" in her everyday activities: his ideal woman is his actual woman; the "art" of the lyric is "natural." Yet when Shakespeare "find[s] place for [the] faultless lyric" in his dramatic structure, he delicately complicates its significance. Commentators have often noted the powerful dramatic irony of Florizel's concluding statement: "all your acts are queens."[10] If Florizel's utterance discovers Perdita's "actual" (though still metaphoric) queenliness, the audience has the double pleasure of recognizing that Perdita is, or will be, an actual queen. Furthermore, the dramatic context catches up the significance of the lyric's "master-problem" in sonnet-theory in other ways. For Shakespeare's characters literalize and enact the conventional metaphors of the Elizabethan sonnet. Sonneteers habitually dress their ladies up as queens and goddesses, but only with their words; at the beginning of IV. iv, Florizel has literally dressed Perdita up as a goddess:

> These your unusual weeds, to each part of you
> Do give a life: no shepherdess, but Flora
> Peering in April's front
>
> (IV. iv. 1-3)

The master-problem in sonnet-theory is actively debated between the lovers, with Perdita repeatedly expressing her anxiety that the costume he dresses her in distracts attention from the "real me": "me, poor lowly maid, [you have] / Most goddess-like prank'd up" (IV. iv. 9-10). But Shakespeare shows us that to translate a sonnet issue into a theatrical issue is not merely to say the same thing in a different medium. It is to cross-fertilize, to breed new issues and to generate new answers.

Characters in a play have no "isness" apart from what they enact translated into the language of the theater, the sonnet question about "otherness" and "isness" becomes a question about "acting" and "actual." Perdita is reluctant to play-act at being a goddess; for her, to play-act is not to be her actual self, not to be natural. In the scene, Perdita follows her own disposition, arguing with Polixenes against art, spontaneously and naturally distributing flowers to welcome her guests. But as she strews flowers about the stage, she realizes, to her own surprise, that what she does resembles play-acting:

> Come, take your flowers:
> Methinks I play as I have seen them do
> In Whitsun pastorals: sure this robe of mine
> Does change my disposition.
>
> (IV. iv. 132-35)

Florizel's lyric, in its context, responds to her perplexity. For her to play-act is not to be other than herself, but to "real"-ize her own disposition. This observation also reflects back on Leontes' disturbing perception in Act I that the whole court is play-acting: "Go, play, boy, play: thy mother plays, and I / Play too." ("Play," of course, moves through three senses here: child's play, sexual play, and play-acting.)[11] He was right, at least in the sense Erving Goffman explains in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*:

> A status, a position, a social place is not a material thing, to be possessed and then displayed; it is a pattern of appropriate conduct, coherent, embellished, and well articulated. Performed with ease or clumsiness, awareness or not, guile or good faith, it is none the less something that must be enacted and portrayed, something that must be realized.... [O]rdinary social intercourse is itself put together as a scene is put

> together, by the exchange of dramatically inflated actions, counteractions, and terminating replies. . . . [L]ife itself is a dramatically enacted thing.[12]

Shakespeare unearths and exploits the paradoxes implicit in the sonnet convention and in the theatrical convention. Just as the sonnet question cross-cultivates the theater question, so the theater question cross-cultivates the sonnet question. In one sense, Florizel's lyric—with its colorless diction and its rejection of comparisons—is a recantation of verbal virtuosity. But if this were the entire story, Florizel's other love speeches, "poetic" and conventionally artful in their diction, would be suspect. In its context, Florizel's lyric is also—paradoxically—a justification for verbal virtuosity, for it demonstrates how the contrived "otherness" of an art that dresses Perdita up as a goddess or a queen "itself is nature."

Florizel's love speech is echoed in the words of another lover in the play's final scene:

> *Leontes.* . . . What you can make her do,
> I am content to look on: what to speak,
> I am content to hear; for 'tis as easy
> To make her speak as move.
>
> (V. iii. 91-94)

To do, to move, to speak—the furthest reaches of Leontes' desire are the most commonplace actions of a flesh-and-blood woman, Hermione with wrinkles, Hermione as her "isness" is illuminated by the contrived "otherness" of the statue device. The ending of the play, like Florizel's lyric, locates its ideal in the actual. The idea of the lyric is the idea of the play.

University of Waterloo

Notes

[1]Lytton Strachey, "Shakespeare's Final Period" (1906), in *Books and Characters* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1922), p. 60.

[2]William Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale*, ed. J. H. P. Pafford, *Arden Shakespeare* (London: Methuen, 1963), IV. iv. 135-46. All further references to this work appear in the text.

[3]Frank Kermode, "The Mature Comedies," in *Early Shakespeare*, ed. John Russell Brown and Bernard Harris (London: Edward Arnold, 1961), p. 227.

[4]Philip Edwards notes how often Shakespeare's young women express distrust of

their lovers' fine words in "The Declaration of Love," *Shakespeare's Styles: Essays in Honour of Kenneth Muir*, ed. Philip Edwards *et al* (Cambridge: Cambridge U. P., 1980), pp. 39-50.

[5]John Dowland also implies a comparison between peddler's "knacks" and words in his "Fine knacks for ladies," in *Second Book of Songs or Airs* (1600); rpt. in *Poetry of the English Renaissance*, ed. J. William Hebel and Hoyt H. Hudson (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1929), p. 432.

[6]F. E. Halliday, *The Poetry of Shakespeare's Plays* (London: Duckworth, 1954), p. 180.

[7]*Shakespeare's Sonnets*, ed. Douglas Bush, in *The Complete Works*, gen. ed. Alfred Harbage, *Pelican Shakespeare* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1969), pp. 1449-79, Sonnet 18. All further references to this work appear in the text.

[8]William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, ed. Frank Kermode, *Arden Shakespeare* (London: Methuen, 1954).

[9]Quoted in *A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare*, ed. Horace Howard Furness (Lippincott, 1898; rpt. New York: Dover, 1964), p. 201.

[10]See, for example, S. L. Bethell, "*The Winter's Tale*": *A Study* (London: Staples Press, 1947), p. 26.

[11]On Leontes' wordplay, see M. M. Mahood, *Shakespeare's Wordplay* (London: Methuen, 1957), pp. 148-50.

[12]Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1959), pp. 75, 72.

Gloucester and Harry Hunks
by Robert F. Willson, Jr.

A number of sources have demonstrated how intimately connected were the pastimes of bull and bear-baiting and popular dramatic performance in Shakespeare's London. For example, contemporary records show that Phillip Henslowe and Edward Alleyn (beginning in 1594) paid Elizabeth's overseer of "pastymes and sportes" 40 pounds for a yearly license to bait.[1] This fact indicates that some playhouse managers and actor-directors were also regularly occupied with the sport of baiting. In his 1631 revision of Stow's *Annales*, Edmund Howes outlines the mixed schedule of events at the Hope Theater during the 1615 season:

> . . . a Play House for Stage Playes on Mundayes, Wedensdayes, Fridayes, and Satredeayes, and for the baiting of the Beares on Tuesdayes and Thursdayes, the stage being made to take up and down when they please.

From Howes' words we can conclude that at least one playhouse—and possibly others[2]—was constructed with a dual capacity. In the case of the Hope, the stench of animals was still in the building when actors took the stage, an unhappy fact confirmed by the scriviner's line about performing conditions from the induction to Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair* (1614):". . . as dirty as Smithfield, and as stinking every whit" (11. 170-71).

That Elizabethans probably ranked actors and playwrights in the same social class as baiters is suggested by the location of arenas like the Bear Garden, depicted in the Visscher drawing of 1616 as only a short distance from the Globe, in the same Bankside section of Southwark as the theaters. Citizens in search of public entertainment would certainly have taken the ferry boat to the same Paris Garden landing whether they planned to attend plays or bear-baitings.[3] This association of gaming and playing in the Renaissance mind can be readily observed in a drawing by Geraldo Franco of an early 17th century Venetian street scene depicting actors on a stage which is built next to a pit where dogs are shown attacking a chained bull.[4] (Bulls were used more widely because of their numbers; bears were scarce and harder to keep.)

While we cannot prove Shakespeare's involvement in bull or bear-

baiting, we can be sure that he was aware of its popularity and made reference to the sport in his plays. Slender, boasting of his cosmopolitan lifestyle and courage in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, announces that he has "seen Sackerson [a well-known bear] loose twenty times, and have taken him by the chain. . ." (I. i. 306-308).[5] Beside these direct allusions, Shakespeare frequently used baiting language and imagery in his plays. Caroline Spurgeon claimed to find "not a single bear-baiting image except in Shakespeare,"[6] and she cites three notable instances as illustrations:

> Methought he bore him [York] in the thickest
> . . . as a bear, encompassed around with dogs
> Who having pinched a few and made them cry,
> The rest stand all aloof, and bark at him.
> (Richard Gloucester, *Henry VI*. II. i. 13 ff.)

> They have tied me to a stake; I cannot fly,
> But bear-like I must fight the course.
> (Macbeth, *Macbeth*. V. vii. 1-2)

> I am tied to th' stake, and I must stand the course.
> (Gloucester, *King Lear*. III. vii. 56)

Miss Spurgeon points out that in each of these examples Shakespeare sympathizes with the bear, juxtaposing his courage and the "horror" of his opponents.[7]

Of the passages quoted above, Gloucester's line is the only one that is part of a fully developed baiting scene. Such an interlude is not surprising in a play replete with animal imagery and with situations in which the daughters and Cornwall behave like baiting dogs or beasts of prey.[8] Kent, we recall, languishes in the stocks (II. ii.) and is ringed by his enemies—including Oswald—like an animal in chains. Cordelia, Lear, Gloucester, and Edgar are all cast out at various times like tortured animals who are forced to make their way in hostile nature now that their usefullness as performers is over. Indeed, Gloucester's famous pessimistic parallelism "As flies to wanton boys, are we to th' gods, they kill us for their sport" (IV. i. 36-37) seems intended to evoke the baiting motif, especially in the use of the word "sport."

It is in Act III, scene vii, however, that we are meant to feel special pity for Gloucester, not only because of his age but because Cornwall and Regan inflict on him the kind of suffering commonly practiced on bears and bulls. They bind him, pull his beard, and set on him with their tongues and "claws." Although most performances of the play I

have seen stage this scene as taking place in some type of medieval torture chamber—with Gloucester seated in a chair that can be tipped back—the language and action are clearly meant to recall the baiting arena. By adopting this setting, moreover, Shakespeare is able to vivify the corrupt code of "justice" that has taken over in Lear's absence. In III. vi. we see played out the grotesque humor[9] of Lear's "trial" of Goneril and Regan, with the Fool, Kent, and Edgar-Tom as jury. While that scene accentuates the feebleness of Lear's attempt to seek revenge, the baiting of Gloucester vividly documents the animal cruelty of Cornwall and Regan's vengeance. Shakespeare expects his audience to react with particular horror to the torturers' perception of their vile actions as sport. When the First Servant stands up to his master (l. 75ff.) and attempts to put an end to the cruel proceedings, he acts for us as surely as any character in the play.

That Shakespeare aimed to represent the action of III. vii. as a bear-baiting is supported by other kinds of evidence. For example, Edgar (III. vi. 67) used "mastiff" to describe the fiercely canine natures of Goneril and Regan. Mastiffs were the dogs regularly employed in baiting during this period.[10] The actual blinding of Gloucester, effected with the "cruel nails" of Cornwall and Regan, was probably meant to evoke the fate of one of the most famous of the Elizabethan and Jacobean bears, Harry Hunks. E. K. Chambers has shown that references to Hunks occur in works published as early as 1594 (Sir John Davies, *Epigrams*) and as late as 1611 (Henry Peacham, *Coryats Crudities*), indicating that this creature retained his popularity on the Bankside for many years.[11] Thomas Dekker, in *Work for Armourers* (1609), gives us a full account of the circus-like act:

> At length a blind bear was tied to the stake, and instead of baiting him with dogs, a company of creatures that had the shapes of men and faces of Christians (being either colliers, carters, or watermen) took the office of beatles on them and whipped Monsier Hunks till the blood ran down his shoulders.[12]

Dekker describes whipping inflicted by men, of course; there are no dogs engaged in this particular entertainment. But we might conclude that Harry Hunks became the "star" of this show because he had already been blinded by dogs and was thus an ineffective fighter in the regular baiting bouts. These differences aside, the age of the victim and the bloodiness of the scene would surely have signaled to Shakespeare's audience that the treatment of Gloucester paralleled that of

Harry Hunks. Whether or not Shakespeare regarded this sport as fit only for the "common rabble" does not appear to be relevant here; he is not making a moral pronouncement against the torturing of bears.[13] More important, he attempts to illustrate the descent of men and women into the realm of beasts, where cruelty and sadism are commonplace. It is also probable that the sympathy felt by the audience for Gloucester would be enhanced by an identification of his fate with that of a widely-known, admired bear. Given Shakespeare's habit of alluding to events, buildings, and personalities from the Bankside district that housed the Globe, it also seems likely he would lend to his violent and moving scene the kind of topicality sure to enhance his audience's enjoyment of the play.[14]

Although we do not know what became of Harry Hunks after his performing years ended, it may well be that he spent his remaining days in retirement. He had no future as edible meat, unlike the more numerous bulls, and he could not be used for physical chores because of his blindness. The leading away of Gloucester at the close of III. vii. could in itself be prophetic; he, like his animal counterpart, travels the countryside as an object of curiosity and pity. But a bear on the loose was also to be feared, and the vengeance visited on his persecutors, as predicted by Albany in IV. ii. 64-65, comes with the fury of an enraged or "head-lugged" bear.

University of Missouri-Kansas City

Notes

[1]F. E. Halliday, *A Shakespeare Companion* (1952; rpt. Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1964), p. 55. See also E. K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1923), II, 451-53.

[2]Henslowe and Alleyn became partners in a lease for the site of the Fortune Playhouse in 1600; the measurements for this theater were the same as those for the Hope. While no reports of bear-baiting at this site are extant, we do know that both the Theatre and Curtain were used for such activities as fencing and prize-fighting. See Michael Hattaway, *Elizabethan Popular Theatre: Plays in Performance* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982), pp. 12-13.

[3]John Stow, *A Survey of London* (1603; rpt. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1908), I, 54.

[4]Roland Mushat Frye, *Shakespeare's Life and Times: A Pictorial Record* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1967), Pl. 16.

[5]All quotations are from Sylvan Barnet, gen. ed., *The Complete Signet Classic Shakespeare* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1972).

[6]*Shakespeare's Imagery and What It Tells Us* (Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge University Press, 1935), p. 110.

[7]Ibid.

[8]See Wolfgang Clemen, *The Development of Shakespeare's Imagery* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1951), pp. 148-50.

[9]G. Wilson Knight's term to describe the mood of this scene in *The Wheel of Fire* (1930; rpt. London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1968), p. 168.

[10]Martin Holmes, *Elizabethan London* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1969), p. 76.

[11]Chambers, II, 457. Paul Hentzner, a German visitor to the bear-baiting arenas in 1598, describes a similar interlude: "To this entertainment [i.e., the baiting of bulls and bears there often follows that of whipping a blinded bear Harry Hunks], which is performed by five or six men, standing in a circle with whips, which they exercise upon him without any mercy; although he cannot escape from them because of his chain, he nevertheless defends himself vigorously. . . ." Quoted in William B. Rye, ed., *England as Seen by Foreigners* (1865; rpt. New York: Benjamin Blom, Inc., 1967), p. 216.

[12]Quoted in Chambers, II, 457, n.6.

[13]That Shakespeare believed the sport was fitting only for the underworld is argued by D. H. Madden, *The Diary of Master William Silence: A Study of Shakespeare and Elizabethan Sport* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1897), p. 197. Juan Fernandez de Velasco, Constable of Castile, informs us, however, that James I and his courtiers enjoyed watching bear-baiting from the windows of the palace. See Rye, pp. 123-124.

[14]Though critics like J. Stewart, in "The Blinding of Gloster," *RES*, 21 (1945), 264-270, rightly stress the symbolic and cathartic functions of the blinding, they tend to overlook the importance of topical allusion in creating a striking effect. In *Pericles*, for example, the stage direction indicating the presence of severed heads on Antioch's walls (I. i.) would no doubt be recognized as a recreation of the scene on the nearby London Bridge (see Visscher's 1616 drawing). That Gower was buried in Southwark's St. Mary Overy Church and that there was a notorious brothel near the Globe would also not be lost on an audience invited to compare distant and familiar worlds.

A Many-Faceted Jewel: Prospero's Masque
by Robert W. Witt

Although critical estimation of the masque within *The Tempest* has ranged from "an afterthought"[1] and "a trifle"[2] to the full and complete statement of "the dialectic of Shakespearean romance,"[3] no one apparently has noted that it performs every function for which the device of play-within normally was employed. Dramatists of the age frequently relied on the play-within to function as spectacle, action, and comment with certain subdivision in each category,[4] and a careful examination of Prospero's masque reveals that it functions in all of these categories.

The masque obviously provides extra spectacle. The costumes for the goddesses should be gorgeous, and with the song, dance, and special effect it can be resplendent on the stage. Ernest Gilman, in fact, refers to it as Shakespeare's "most elaborate stage spectacle,"[5] and Clifford Davidson suggests that Juno's descent is "unquestionably intended to be one of the most splendid moments in the play."[6] While important as spectacle the device was also used to enhance the mood or setting. The masque certainly heightens the atmosphere of magic and illusion which envelops *The Tempest* and adds to the mood of joy which ends the play. The discordant interruption, moreover, helps emphasize the idea that the island, indeed life itself, is not total paradise. There are discordant elements in the masque as there are discordant elements at the end of the play, the unrepentant Antonio and Sebastian for instance.

As a part of the action the device was sometimes used for the purpose of gulling a character; Ben Jonson frequently employed the device in this way. Ordinarily this function served the purpose of comedy, but Prospero's masque gulls a character on a more serious level. After watching part of the performance, Ferdinand comments:

> Let me live here ever!
> So rare a wond'red father and a wise
> Makes this place Paradise.[7]
>
> (IV. i. 122-124)

The island, however, is not Paradise. It is a place of art and illusion which can be used to alter reality, but it is not a place where man can abide forever. Man must return to reality as the party returns to Milan

at the end of the play. Gulling Ferdinand into accepting a näive view of the island, though, places him more on a level with Miranda, who has such a näive view of reality.

The device was also used to provide complication or to end an action, particularly in the revenge tragedies. The masque in *The Tempest* is, of course, associated with revenge as Prospero remembers the plot of Caliban and interrupts the masque to deal with it and to punish Caliban, Stephano, and Trinculo. More important, however, the masque ends Prospero's action of uniting Ferdinand and Miranda. It is the celebration of their betrothal. In addition to presenting part of the action, the device could foreshadow action. The masque functions in this way to foreshadow the reconciliation which ends the play by presenting a vision of harmony among the goddesses. Sidney Homan suggests, furthermore, that the masque foreshadows the release which all of the characters undergo in some fashion.[8] Ceres is told to leave her labors, fields, forests, and groves, and Cupid, we learn, has abandoned his labors.

Perhaps the most important function the device of play-within performed was to provide comment. It was employed to comment on the theme of the play, characters and events, contemporary drama and audiences, and the illusionary nature of drama itself. Prospero's masque comments on the theme of the play by serving as a mirror to reflect and hence reinforce the theme. It might be said that the theme of all Shakespeare's romances is reconciliation and renewal; certainly that is the theme of *The Tempest*. The masque, as noted, reflects reconciliation through the harmony among the goddesses. Venus and Cupid, the ones responsible for past treachery and intended "wanton charm" here, are under control and of no consequence as Antonio and Sebastian, similarly guilty of past treachery and intended harm here, are under control and of no consequence at the end of the play. The masque reflects renewal in that it celebrates a betrothal. The idea of renewal, furthermore, is explicit in the song and the dance of the reapers and nymphs of the spring rains. The ending, harvest, coupled with the beginning, spring, reflects the play itself which, according to Ernest Gilman, "constantly transforms endings into fresh starts, not only in the career of its characters but in the structure of its plot."[9] And Robert Grudin suggests that the masque reflects Prospero's culminating effort to "redeem or civilize nature by banishing disruptive forces," even though the intrusion of Caliban makes clear that all nature is not redeemable.[10]

As a comment on characters the masque tells us that the love of

Ferdinand and Miranda is "true" or chaste and will remain so, the point of most concern to Prospero, and that their union will be fruitful. It, of course, represents a further display of Prospero's power as a magician and reinforces his desire to order things harmoniously. At the same time, though, it points up Prospero's limitation; he has not been able to "redeem" Caliban. And we see how great a concern Caliban is to Prospero. Perhaps even a darker side of Prospero surfaces in the masque: the need for "both mystification and self-indulgent display, and for the mantle of forbidding providential authority."[11] Robert Egan even suggests that the masque reveals Prospero's moral blindness in that he has banished Venus and Cupid but still predicts a fruitful union for Ferdinand and Miranda.[12] The Renaissance view of chaste love, though, extended to sexual union in marriage; hence the banishment of Venus and Cupid and the prediction of a fruitful union should not be taken as a contradiction.

The masque also provides comment on both contemporary drama and audiences. It naturally invites reflection on the masque form, and Stephen Orgel sees it as "the most important Renaissance commentary on the subject. . . ." As Orgel observes, the court masques were "the expression of the monarch's will, the mirrors of his mind. Shakespeare demonstrates his understanding of this concept by having the creator of the masque also the monarch.[13] To others, however, Shakespeare's purpose is different. Harriet Hawkins takes Prospero literally when he says that his magic is rough and his pageants insubstantial. She maintains that Shakespeare gives Prospero a masque to emphasize these ideas because the masque form is the most ephemeral of all theatrical productions.[14] Along the same line of thought Ernest Gilman sees the purpose of the masque as satirical, an attempt to deflate the extravagance of the form.[15] And Howard Felperin thinks the purpose is to show the inadequacy of older romance forms to contain and comprehend Shakespeare's ideas: the masque falls apart when Prospero remembers Caliban.[16] I tend to agree with Orgel. Shakespeare makes the masque Prospero's most spectacular production and causes it to reflect meaning in many directions. Thus it seems that he intends to convey his admiration rather than contempt for the form.

Dramatists, particularly Ben Jonson, used the play-within as a means of instructing audiences in the way they should receive the play. Ferdinand and Miranda, of course, are the spectators for Prospero's masque, and Ferdinand represents an ideal spectator. He, to borrow Jonson's phrase, both sees and hears the play as his comment after the song indicates:

> This is a most majestic vision, and
> Harmonious charmingly.
>
> (118-119)

He is entertained by the spectacle, but at the same time he understands the meaning of the play. As George Slover observes, we see "Ferdinand's openness to and acceptance of the show and its impact on his way of feeling,"[17] the response of an ideal spectator. As Ferdinand continues to comment, however, Prospero urges him to be silent:

> . . . Hush and be mute,
> Or else our spell is marred.
>
> (126-127)

The members of the audience must be attentive or certainly the "spell" will be destroyed. In other words, the spectators must cooperate with the playwright to create the illusion, not only by being attentive but also by using imagination—an idea given prominence elsewhere in Shakespeare's work, particularly in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Henry V*. Alvin B. Kernan, in fact, sees the intrusion of Caliban as an enactment of the "depressing effect of the lack of imagination on the fragile illusion of theater. . . ."[18] Literalists completely destroy the "spell" of the play.

The device of the play-within paradoxically creates a greater sense of reality through greater illusion. An audience in a theater watches a play in which an audience watches a play—somewhat like the effect of holding a mirror before a mirror. It blurs the distinction between illusion and reality and, if it emphasizes the illusionary nature of drama, it also emphasizes the illusionary nature of life itself. As Alvin Kernan says, "the theater's illusory status . . . becomes finally the source of the play's ability to mirror reality."[19] Prospero directly expresses the idea in the epilogue to the masque. The "insubstantial pageant has completely vanished; the actors "melted into air. . . ." But then the pageant which the audience watches is also insubstantial and will "vanish" once the play ends; indeed "the great globe itself" similarly will vanish—both the Globe theater and the world. Thus what we think of as reality is, after all, an illusion:

> . . . We are such stuff
> As dreams are made on, and our little life
> Is rounded with a sleep.
>
> (156-158)

Commentators divide sharply on the interpretation of these lines as they do on the evaluation of the masque itself. David G. James expresses the two main directions: "Is this 'sleep' a name, a euphemism, for extinction; or is our life a 'dream' from which we shall wake to behold a world of reality incomparably more wonderful than it has entered the heart of man to imagine?"[20] There should be no question. Everything in *The Tempest* suggests renewal, and the analogy between life and a play is no different. Just as Ferdinand and Miranda will "awake" from the dream of the masque to a greater reality at the end of the play, so will the audience for *The Tempest*, and so ultimately will we all awake from the dream of life to a reality incomparably greater. Besides, it is difficult to see something so gorgeous and enlightening as nihilistic despair.

Shakespeare relied frequently on the device of the play-within throughout his career, and it seems appropriate that one of the last plays-within he wrote should be so developed that it performs all the functions for which the device normally was employed. Far from being an afterthought or a trifle, Prospero's masque is a rich sparkling jewel set carefully as the highlight of the crown.

Eastern Kentucky University

Notes

[1]Irwin Smith, "Ariel as Ceres," *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 9 (1958), 430.

[2]Herbert R. Coursen, Jr., "Prospero and the Drama of the Soul," *Shakespeare Studies*, 4 (1968), 324.

[3]Northrup Frye, *A Natural Perspective: The Development of Shakespearean Comedy and Romance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), p. 157.

[4]Information about the function of the play-within is taken primarily from Arthur Brown, "The Play Within a Play: An Elizabethan Dramatic Device," *English Association Essays and Studies*, 13 (1960), 36-48; Dieter Mehl, "Forms and Functions of the Play Within a Play," *Renaissance Drama*, 8 (1965), 41-62; and Robert J. Nelson, *Play Within a Play. The Dramatist's Conception of His Art: Shakespeare to Anouilh* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1958). See also my study of the subject, *Mirror Within a Mirror: Ben Jonson and the Play-Within* (Salzburg: Institut für Englische Sprache und Literatur, 1975). I first became aware of the multi-functions of Prospero's masque while reviewing Shakespeare's use of the device for the introduction to this book.

[5]"'All eyes': Prospero's Inverted Masque," *Renaissance Quarterly*, 33 (1980), 214.

[6]"The Masque Within *The Tempest*," *Notre Dame English Journal*, 10 (1976), 13.

[7]All quotations from *The Tempest* are from the edition in *The Complete Signet Classic Shakespeare*, Sylvan Barnet, gen. ed. (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1972).

[8]*When the Theater Turns to Itself: The Aesthetic Metaphor in Shakespeare* (East Brunswick, N.J.: Bucknell University Press, 1981), p. 209.

[9]Gilmore, p. 228.

[10]"Prospero's Masque and the Structure of *The Tempest*," *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 71 (1972), 405-408.

[11]Gilmore, p. 224.

[12]*Drama Within Drama: Shakespeare's Sense of His Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), pp. 106-107.

[13]*The Illusion of Power* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), p. 44.

[14]*Likenesses of Truth in Elizabethan and Restoration Drama* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), p. 40.

[15]Gilmore, p. 220.

[16]*Shakespearean Romance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), p. 53.

[17]"Magic, Mystery, and Makebelieve: An Analogical Reading of *The Tempest*, *Shakespearean Studies*, 11 (1978), 192. As Karol Berger notes, elsewhere in the play, Antonio and Sebastian represent the spectators who refuse to understand the meaning of the play—"Prospero's Art," *Shakespeare Studies*, 10 (1977), 236.

[18]*The Playwright as Magician: Shakespeare's Image of the Poet in the English Public Theater* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), p. 138.

[19]*The Playwright as Magician*, p. 145.

[20]*The Dream of Prospero* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), pp. 136-137.

The 1989 Alabama Shakespeare Festival and the 1988 *Hamlet*

by Craig Barrow

The Alabama Shakespeare Festival continues to furnish interesting interpretive possibilities of Shakespeare's plays. Last year's production of *Hamlet* in Montgomery, despite a weak Ophelia and Gertrude, established an emotional subtext for Hamlet's responses to the shifting situations and people in his life. The casting of Greg Thornton as a young and fleshy Claudius was the principal move that determined Hamlet's Oedipal longing for and feelings of betrayal by Gertrude, his disgust with and love of Ophelia, and his difficulty in grounding values. Ray Dooley was a brilliant Hamlet, one who could project the quickly changing moods and the thoughtfulness and humor of Shakespeare's most famous character to an audience seeking the magic of that display.

Each of the three Shakespeare productions of 1989 had admirable interpretive goals, but only *Much Ado About Nothing* realized them. *Pericles* suffered from a pieced together text and frequent changes in place, while *Romeo and Juliet* was weakened by Bernadette Wilson, who played Juliet. She conveyed the child who falls in love but not the strength of the person who resists her parents and nurse to pursue it. Fine performances by Betty Leighton as the Nurse and Ray Dooley as Mercutio were nice side dishes, but the main course was not adequate to complement their efforts.

Much Ado About Nothing, which has been set in such diverse cultures as Cuba in the 1930s, Renaissance Spain, and the India of the Raj, was set after the Battle of New Orleans in the War of 1812 by Director Richard Ouzounian. Dogberry and his deputies speak like Southern "good old boys," while Leonato, Antonio, Beatrice, and Hero sound vaguely British and look like planters who have recently come to the United States. Benedick looks and sounds like Jean Lafitte; Don Pedro looks like Andrew Jackson; Claudio appears like some early graduate of V.M.I.; and Don John seems a reincarnation of a joyless Aaron Burr.

Ouzounian has given the following rationale for this seeming eccentricity:

> The play must begin after a war. It needs that feeling of an isolated group of people waiting for the soldiers to return.

> But it can't have been too large, or raucous, or hurtful a war, or else the wounds cannot heal quickly enough to allow for romance and partying.
>
> We must be in a Catholic environment to explain Friar Francis, and we must be in a society where the father still runs the family. The feel of the place must neither be too sophisticated or too näive. And we must also make room in this world for Dogberry, Verges, and their friends.[1]

What fascinates Ouzounian about *Much Ado* is the way Benedick and Beatrice take over audience attention in the play from Hero and Claudio. Hero and Claudio anticipate Desdemona and Othello, even to the ocular proof of infidelity. Claudio's charges in the church of Hero's faithlessness are not as fatal as Othello's hands, but his conscious cruelty in arranging for Hero's public disgrace does take Hero's breath away. Claudio's penance of taking an unseen bride does not seem harsh enough punishment for his faithless judgment. The miracle here is that Hero would still want him as a husband and that Desdemona still loves the Othello who kills her. With such emotional interest, love and jealousy, it is difficult to see at first how Beatrice and Benedick supplant Hero and Claudio. Audiences watch the play shift from tragedy to comedy and romance, and they do so because women's values as defined by Carol Gilligan in *In a Different Voice*—where males establish priorities of judgment and females, relationship—must seem healthier in the context of the play.[2] A feminist critic from many years ago, Barbara Everett, has revealed in *Much Ado* an attack on the male-dominated romantic ideal and a "sense of easy loyalty between young men." These are replaced by what Everett calls a "humane principle, of generous and constant feeling" which comes "principally from the women" in the play.[3] When Benedick asks, "How doth the lady?" (IV. 1. 113)[4] after Hero's collapse in church, Everett believes he has already crossed "the boundaries of a world of masculine domination." At this point Everett believes that the characters of Beatrice and Benedick take over in the play.[5] The world of Claudio and Don Pedro seems sterile by comparison. In the ASF production, the long phallic cigars puffed with such satisfaction by Benedick, Claudio, and Don Pedro early in the play disappear and are replaced by water, laundry, and the washtub, as the irrational faith of women—the faith of Beatrice despite the evidence against Hero—preempts masculine judgment. The post-Battle of New Orleans setting provides Shakespeare's comedy with a realistic context for making choices and determining values, so that the decisions of Benedick and Beatrice and the wisdom of Friar

Francis attain more power, a power uneroded by either laughter or the marriages at the play's end. Ray Dooley was captivating as Benedick, although his Cajun accent was grating at times, and Alison Edwards was an excellent Beatrice in this fine Alabama Shakespeare Festival production.

The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

Notes

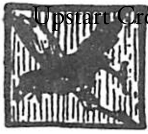
[1]Richard Ouzounian, "Director's Notes," *Festival: The Official Program of the Alabama Shakespeare Festival* (Montgomery: Wells Printing, 1989), pp. 33-34.

[2]Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1982), p. 25.

[3]Barbara Everett, "*Much Ado About Nothing*," *Essays in Shakespearean Criticism*, ed. James L. Calderwood and Harold E. Toliver (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1970), pp. 289-290.

[4]Quotation accords with *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*, eds. Hardin Craig and David Bevington, Third Edition (Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman, 1980).

[5]Barbara Everett, "*Much Ado About Nothing*," pp. 280-281.



THE • VPSTART • CROW

Please enter my subscription for two issues of

THE VPSTART CROW

For two issues, a subscription to both individuals and libraries is $12.00. Send check or money order with subscription. Thank you.

Name ______________________________

Address ______________________________

City, State, Zip ______________________________

Return to:

James Andreas
Editor, *The Upstart Crow*
Clemson University
Clemson, South Carolina 29634-1503