

# SHAKESPEARE COMMEMORATION VOLUME



DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH  
PRESIDENCY COLLEGE, CALCUTTA



# SHAKESPEARE COMMEMORATION VOLUME

Edited by

TARAKNATH SEN

*Professor & Head of the Department of English,  
Presidency College, Calcutta*

PUBLISHED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH,  
PRESIDENCY COLLEGE, CALCUTTA,  
UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE GOVERNMENT OF  
WEST BENGAL

CALCUTTA

1966

*Selling Agents:*

U. N. DHUR & SONS PRIVATE LTD.,  
15 Bankim Chatterjee Street,  
Calcutta 12

Price : Rs. 20 (28 shillings) (\$4.50)

© Department of English, Presidency  
College, Calcutta : 1966

PRINTED IN INDIA  
BY P. K. GHOSH AT EASTEND PRINTERS  
3 DR SURESH SARKAR ROAD, CALCUTTA 14



## Foreword

THIS COMMEMORATION VOLUME was planned by the Department of English, Presidency College, Calcutta, in connexion with the quatercentenary of Shakespeare's birth, and is being published under the auspices of the Government of West Bengal. It has not been possible, unfortunately, to bring it out in time.

The contributors to the Volume, to whom the editor's best thanks are due, are either present or past teachers or former pupils of the Department or both. A special mention must be made of the editor's indebtedness to two of his former pupils and present colleagues, Dr. Sailendra Kumar Sen and Shri Arun Kumar Das-Gupta, without whose assistance it would not have been possible to bring out this Volume.

The personal interest taken by Shri Prabhat Kumar Ghosh, M.A., of Eastend Printers, Calcutta, in seeing the Volume through the press, calls for appreciative acknowledgment. His unfailing helpfulness, often at the cost of great inconvenience to himself and his press, is a major factor that has made this publication possible.

One whose contribution would have graced the pages of this Volume is, alas, no more. The late Professor Somnath Maitra had promised us an English translation of some of Rabindranath Tagore's criticisms of Shakespeare. It was indeed a part of our plan to introduce these valuable criticisms to non-Bengali readers through this Volume. Professor Maitra died before that intention could be fulfilled. *Requiescat in pace.*



## *Contents*

	Page
Foreword ..	iii
Presidency College and Shakespeare ..	vii
The Sonnets of Shakespeare ..	1
— SRIKUMAR BANERJEE	
Shakespeare the Man ..	11
— SUBODH CHANDRA SENGUPTA	
“Macbeth” ..	32
— AMAL BHATTACHARJI	
“The noblest Roman of them all”: Malone and Shakespearian Scholarship ..	64
— SAILENDRA KUMAR SEN	
A Note on “The Tempest”, I. i. 37-44 ..	86
— PRIYATOSH BAGCHI	
“Julius Caesar” and “Henry V” ..	89
— KAJAL BASU (SEN-GUPTA)	
The Phantom of Melancholy: an Essay on “Hamlet” ..	125
— ARUN KUMAR DAS-GUPTA	
Shakespeare’s Temptation Scenes: A Study of Some of the Lesser Ones ..	138
— ASOKE KUMAR MUKHERJI	
Tolstoy and Shakespeare ..	159
— NARAYAN CHANDRA SAHA	
Shakespeare and the Elizabethan Satire Tradition ..	170
— SUJATA CHAUDHURI	
The Pastoral on the Elizabethan Stage and Shakespeare ..	197
— JASODHARA BAGCHI	
Oscar Wilde as a Shakespearean Critic ..	214
— JYOTSNA BHATTACHARJEE	
Shakespeare in Yeats’s “Last Poems” ..	243
— GAYATRI CHAKRAVORTY-SPIVAK	
Shakespeare’s Short Lines ..	285
— TARAKNATH SEN	
The Contributors ..	381



## *Presidency College and Shakespeare*

THE CONNEXION between Presidency College and Shakespeare, ranging over the last 150 years, has been deep and long. The parent institution, the Hindu College (founded on the 20th January, 1817), was the first educational institution in India to introduce Shakespeare as part of a regular curriculum of studies. This was the beginning that led to the phenomenal vogue of Shakespeare in India. Thanks to that beginning, he still continues to be the most widely read western writer in India, and the Shakespeare number of the Sahitya Akademi's *Indian Literature* bears witness to the influence he has exerted over all these years on the different regional literatures of the country. Among those who taught Shakespeare at the Hindu College two names stand out: two teachers of genius: Henry Louis Vivian Derozio and David Lester Richardson. Derozio died young: at the age of 24 in 1831. Richardson came to teach six years later. Among those who happened to listen to his reading of Shakespeare at the Hindu College was no less a person than Lord Macaulay, then legal adviser to the Government of India and chairman of the Committee of Public Instruction, and this was what he wrote to Richardson: "I may forget everything about India, but your reading of Shakespeare, *never*."

Five years after the Senior Department of Hindu College had been separated from the Junior and re-named Presidency College, Richardson came back to India and taught at Presidency College as Professor of English from 1860 to 1861. Since then there has been a long line of distinguished Shakespearean scholars and teachers on the staff of Presidency College. They included men like Charles H. Tawney, John Mann, Henry Rosher James (with his superb gift for reading), J. W. Holme (who edited the *Old Arden As You Like It* in 1914)—all of whom came out from the U. K. in the Indian Educational Service. But at least three of the greatest of the long line were Indians—Harrington Hugh Melville Percival, Manmohan Ghosh, Praphullachandra Ghosh.

A Senior Classic of Cambridge, Professor C. H. Tawney was one of the most scholarly of Englishmen to come out to India. Normally, one of the universities in his own country would have claimed him; but he happened to have weak lungs and was medically advised a change to a warm climate, and so Presidency College came to have him as Professor of English, History and Philosophy from 1864 to 1892. For sixteen of these twenty-eight years he was also Principal of the College, and he

also officiated as Director of Public Instruction on several occasions. He was one of those who built up the great reputation of the English Department of Presidency College, and one of the most distinguished Principals the College has known. Richardson's legacy of outstanding Shakespearean teaching was well maintained and enriched by Tawney. Some idea of the quality of his Shakespearean scholarship may be obtained from his critical edition of *Richard III* (London: Macmillan: 1888). The introduction contains a rather remarkable study of the character of Richard III, rich in what De Quincey called the sympathy of understanding as opposed to the sympathy of approbation. "It is true", writes Tawney, "that Richard's character is not calculated to awaken tragic pity, but it is almost too great to beg for it." The annotations are strewn with glimpses of Tawney's learning, of particular interest for Indian readers being observations like the following: "This superstitious custom is found in many countries. See the note in my translation of the *Kathā Sarit Sāgara*, vol. i, p. 305" (note on V. iii. 180). It may be added in this connexion that, while in Calcutta, Tawney rounded off his classical scholarship by learning Sanskrit, which he learnt well enough to be able to translate into English, with critical introductions and notes, Somadeva's *Kathāsaritsāgara*, the *Kathākōsha*, Merutunga's *Prabandhachintāmanī*, two of Bhartṛhari's *Shatakas*, Bhavabhūti's *Uttara-rāmacharita*, and Kālidāsa's *Mālavikāgnimitra*.

Professor H. M. Percival was one of those great figures that come to the mind at once as one recalls the history of Presidency College and of higher education in Bengal. Born in a Christian family of Chittagong, he was educated at the Dacca and the Presidency College, and at the Universities of London and Edinburgh where he studied a variety of subjects—the Classics, English and French Literature, Philosophy, and the natural sciences. A pupil of Tawney's, he became Professor of English at Presidency College in 1880, and here for thirty-one years continuously he taught generations of students English Literature, History, Political Economy, and Political Philosophy, each up to the post-graduate stage. An inspired and inspiring teacher, the regard in which he was held by his pupils was phenomenal; every bit of it he deserved as man, scholar, and teacher. With his encyclopaedic learning he combined a penetrating critical insight and a command of precise and pointed phrase. While he could teach almost anything with the same mastery and excellence, in Shakespeare he surpassed himself, and generations of students at Presidency College were by him initiated into the beauties and subtleties of Shakespearean drama through an exegesis that was as illuminating as it was original and flashing comments put across with an economy of words that was a lesson by itself (he once wrote to his pupil, Professor

Praphullachandra Ghosh, that all that Bradley had said in *Shakespearean Tragedy* might have been stated more effectively in one-fourth of the space he had taken up). His interpretations and criticisms were absolutely his own; while he knew what the critics and editors had said and done up to his time, he had a healthy independence of them all. These traits of his teaching reappear in those critical editions of Shakespeare's plays he did at the request of his pupils; they were *As You Like It* (Calcutta: Longmans: 1910), *The Merchant of Venice* (London: Oxford University Press: 1912), *The Tempest* (Calcutta: 1928), *Macbeth* (Calcutta, 1929), *Antony and Cleopatra* (University of Calcutta, 1955) (he also left manuscripts, the present whereabouts of which are unknown, of critical editions of *Hamlet* and *King Lear*; all the published ones, unfortunately, are today out of print). Percival's annotations in particular are worth the attention of all serious students of Shakespeare; they are rich in original and incisive comment in telling phrase. He was not only one of the most independent-minded but also one of the most honest of Shakespearean editors—one who never evaded a difficulty. Readers who are baffled by obscurities and tortuosities in the texts of the plays named and obtain no illumination from other editors have only to turn to Percival's editions to find them tackled and cleared up in a masterly fashion. His contribution to the elucidation of textual cruxes in Shakespearean drama was outstanding.

Among famous teachers of Presidency College, there have been but few of such literary eminence as Professor Manmohan Ghosh (Professor of English, 1896-97, 1903-21). Friend and literary associate of several English writers of his time, he has an assured place of his own in the English poetry of the early twentieth century. Steeped in Shakespeare even as a schoolboy, he had *Lear* and *Macbeth* read aloud to him as he lay dying in January, 1924. One of his literary associates, the poet, critic and art-connoisseur, Laurence Binyon, who was with him at St. Paul's School, London, and at Oxford, thus describes (in an Introductory Memoir he wrote for Ghosh's *Songs of Love and Death*, published at Oxford by Basil Blackwell in 1926) how he burst on the seventh form at St. Paul's with a quotation from Shakespeare, startlingly apt in more ways than one:

Mislike me not for my complexion,  
The shadowed livery of the burnished sun!

These words, spoken as if from some spontaneous compulsion in a voice low and thrilled that itself seemed to glow, caused all the class of school-boys to turn their heads. At the back of the room, behind the rest, sat a young Indian with thick hair falling about his forehead, and dark lustrous eyes. It was he who had startled us with his impassioned tones. Where had he come from? How had he mysteri-

ously joined us?...The legendary East seemed suddenly to have projected a fragment of itself into our little world of everyday things and humdrum studies, disturbing it with colour, mystery, romance. No doubt I should not have been moved as I was had not the newcomer spoken the rich lines in a voice that betrayed the capacity to be intoxicated by poetry: and of such capacity I had found no trace in my class-mates. I felt immediate sympathy.

The quotation came in response to a question put by the Sur-Master, Mr. Lupton, who was reading the *Aeneid* with the class, about a "sumptuous, Virgilian" use of the word *livery* in the English classics. The High Master of the school, "a notable and formidable personality famous for his prescience in judging of a boy's future capabilities, would at times, for his own reasons, insert a promising pupil into one of the upper forms without notice, and in the middle of the term". Thus it was that Manmohan's presence in the form had been little noticed till "the Prince of Morocco's appeal vibrated with such intensity of tone through the silent and astonished class room". That a poet so steeped in Shakespeare would make a fine Shakespearean teacher was only to be expected. Of his Shakespearean teaching at Presidency College, let a distinguished pupil of his, Shri Phanibhusan Chakravarti, late Chief Justice, Calcutta High Court, speak. Here is an English translation of Shri Chakravarti's reminiscences, contributed in Bengali to a souvenir volume published in 1964 by the Shakespeare Fourth Centenary Birth Celebration Committee, Calcutta, of Manmohan Ghosh doing *The Tempest* with Honours classes at Presidency College:

He entered the heart of the play to be read, but it was the entry of a loving and like-minded artist into the workshop of another. Himself possessed of poetic powers of a high order, he was not content with approaching a good poem or play from the outside with the mind of a reader. He would enter it with the mind of a creator and explore to the depths the impulse from which it had sprung and the process of its birth. Hence, in reading a play of Shakespeare's with us, he would leave us outside, proceed inside himself, and, from there, would go on discovering to us the play's artistry, its evolution, and its mode of character-delineation. Not that it was only for us that he made these discoveries; often he appeared to be unconscious of the presence of an auditor. With Shakespeare's writing for a cue, he seemed to go on re-creating the play in his own soul. The interpretations of the play's characters, architecture, atmosphere, technique, and style that accompanied the re-creation, were not so much for the enlightenment of others as for his own enjoyment. Yet the interpretations were so poetic and so wonderful that pearls seemed to be dropping from his mouth. Entranced, we experienced *The Tempest* being created anew before us, and heard the artist himself analysing



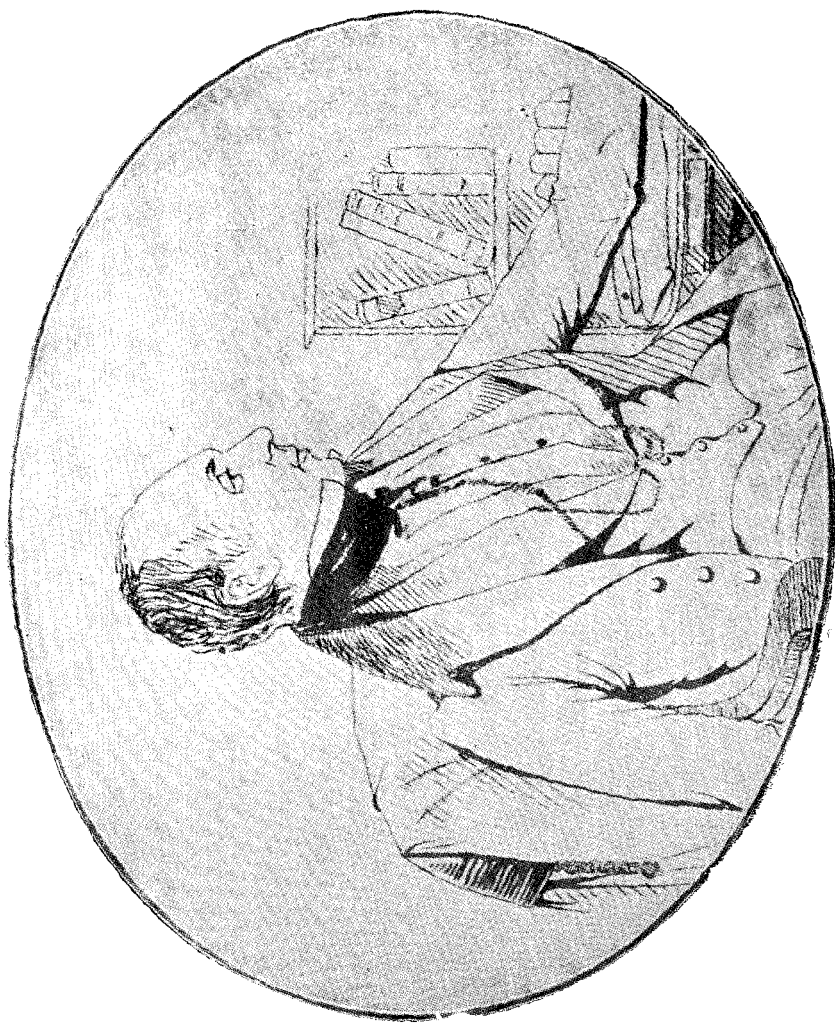
the beauty of what he was creating. We used to be all ears for every word of that analysis. The looks of the analyst spoke of a mind far away on the heights of some great aesthetic experience, and his enraptured absorption cast its spell over us.

Manmohan's teaching of Shakespeare was neither histrionic nor declamatory nor exegetical. What he spoke by way of exegesis was rather like a monologue. But not a disjointed monologue ejaculated at intervals. It was a continuous stream of words welling up in its own joy from the soul of a poet. In his teaching the drama, perhaps, was not experienced as drama, but what was experienced as poetry was without a parallel. There was no mergence of our selves in the characters of the drama, but, just because they were viewed from outside, their own essential identities were not laid over with ours.

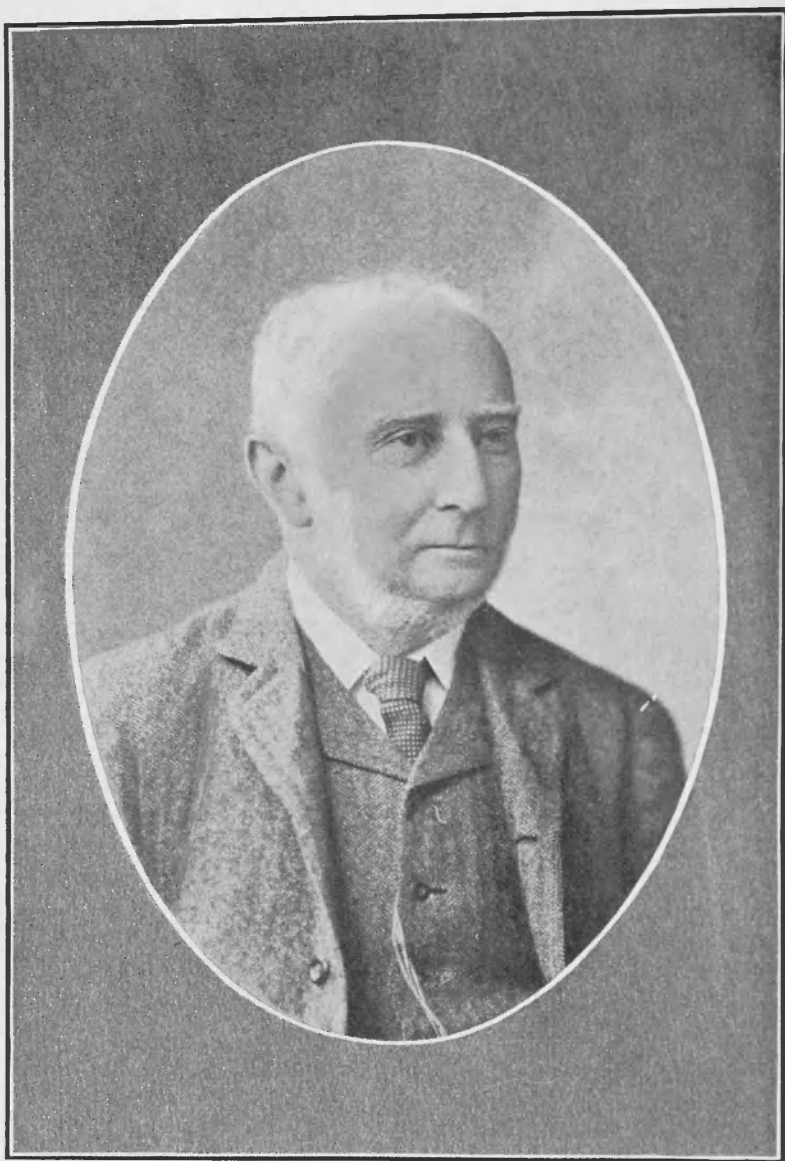
Manmohan Ghosh also did Shakespeare with us in another way—Shakespeare not in fragments but as a whole. Raleigh's *Shakespeare* in the English Men of Letters Series was a prescribed text in our syllabus, and Manmohan read it with us from beginning to end. We were then struck by the closeness of his acquaintance with Shakespeare's work and the depth of knowledge and understanding of the drama that lay behind his judgments of Shakespeare. Each page of the copy of Raleigh's *Shakespeare* I used in my college days is still studded with comments taken down from his lectures. I have read the Shakespearean criticisms of many a critic, old and recent, but I have not yet come across any comparable in excellence of analysis or depth of insight or beauty of style with those gems of criticism I collected from the lectures of Manmohan Ghosh.

Professor Praphullachandra Ghosh, on whom fell full the mantle of Percival, was one of those great teachers who make their profession the passion of their lives. For well over thirty years he was, in a very real sense of the phrase, a towering figure on the teaching staff of Presidency College, and when he retired in 1939, one felt that a whole epoch in the history of Presidency College had definitely come to an end—an epoch of glory, greatness, and power. With an amazing mastery of English, both of phrase and of pronunciation, he combined a magnificent gift for reading. To read Shakespeare with him was a memorable experience. He had a unique power of becoming what he taught, and he lived and made his pupils live the plays of Shakespeare as he read and spoke about them. His richly modulated voice ran with an assured command from one end of the vast Shakespearean gamut to the other, giving to each note its exact due and making it a live experience. The empathy of his response to all the varied and subtle inflexions and nuances of Shakespearean drama—all its fluctuations of mood and tension, of style and rhythm: gay and sombre, placid and tortured, smooth and gnarled, ribald and sublime, tender and strident, tempestuous and serene—was a marvel. Whatever, in fact, the demand Shakespearean drama made

on him, he was up to it—whether it was a man speaking or a woman, a fool or a madman or a villain, a normal or a ‘humorous’ person, a refined soul or a coarse-grained character—whether it was the anguish of an Othello or the hilarities of a Toby, the insouciance of a Falstaff or the solicitude of a Hamlet, the self-effacement of a Desdemona or the monstrous egoism of an Iago, the elemental rage of a Lear or the *suspiria de profundis* of a sleep-walking woman. All this went hand in hand with a brilliance of original exegesis that usually took the form of terse, illuminating comments and showed, on the one hand, a meticulous and far-ranging scholarship and, on the other, an extraordinary fineness of insight and depth of penetration. One who will dive into the pages of his copies of individual plays of Shakespeare—plain texts interleaved with sheets filled with his own annotations—will find them a rich mine of valuable comment and original contributions to the minutiae of Shakespearean scholarship. A most remarkable thing about him was that the austerities of scholarship—the history of a word, a point of contemporary manners, a textual problem, the pursuit of an obscure allusion, exploring source-materials, conventions and traditions—could impassion him as much as the immediate emotional and dramatic impact of a play. Altogether, his teaching of Shakespeare brought to the learner an opulence of satisfaction—sensuous, emotional, intellectual—that was unique of its kind. Presidency College will not see the like of him again.



DAVID LESTER RICHARDSON

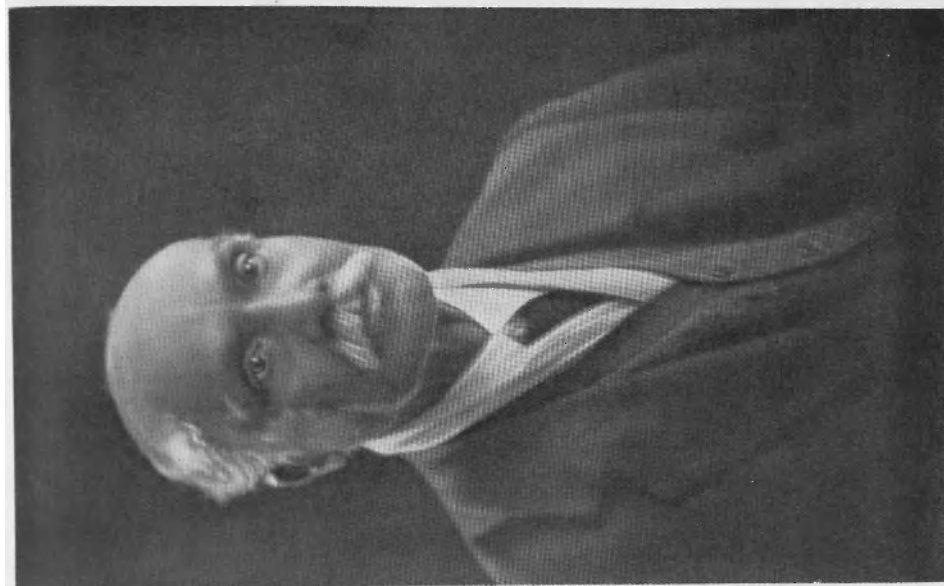


CHARLES H. TAWNEY



প্রফুল্লচন্দ্র গুপ্ত

PRAPHULLACHANDRA GHOSH



HARRINGTON HUGH MELVILLE PERCIVAL



MANMOHAN GHOSH

## *The Sonnets of Shakespeare*

THE PREVALENCE of sonnets alongside the drama in Elizabethan literature presents a somewhat incongruous spectacle of an over-cultivated, formally designed flower-garden bordering on a densely planted, wide-arching and sky-kissing oak forest. A sentimentalized, chivalric love not deeply rooted in reality seems a rather fantastic side-show to a noble spectacle of human life, idealized no doubt and romantic in its transcendence of ordinary limits, but unmistakably real in its heart-throbs and hold upon actual life-experience. That the same writers would try their hands at both these forms with their widely varying art-demands, be tamely conventional and daringly exploratory at one and the same time, is a curious instance of the versatility of talent and diversity of psychological endowment that is the hall-mark of that wonderful age. Our wonder increases when we find that identical motives and sentiments flit pretty frequently from one form to the other, and the same pitch of poetic aspiration is attempted in both. The compact form of the sonnet seems swelling with a high-flighted imagination and a generous flow of emotions painfully arrested within its restricted range, while they soar at large in the freer atmosphere of the drama. The Elizabethan mind had the rare elasticity of shrinking within the severely regulated limits of the sonnet and of expanding itself in drama to embrace the heights and depths of the potentialities of human conduct and yet retaining a strange affinity of spirit between the resulting products of these twin processes. The third major form of poetic expression, the lyric or pure song, though exquisite in its rare inspiration, is heard in brief, intermittent snatches, and has not yet developed its deeper undertones. It has been sucked in by the rapid, obstreperous music of the dramatic action, being heard in its intervals and subtly tuned to its moods and requirements. Such songs as we have in Shakespeare but point the way to the Forest of Arden or the Enchanted Island of Prospero.

The Sonnets of Shakespeare, though an integral part of the Elizabethan sonnet tradition, have a unique interest because of their perpetual provocation of biographical curiosity, and their perpetual challenge to critical ingenuity in the matter of interpretation. They have been used as a sort of glazed-glass-window for affording glimpses of the generally obscure tenor of Shakespeare's private life. It is generally believed that the Sonnet reveals a little of what the drama had blotted out. A part of the face that is hidden under the mask of the myriad dramatic creations

may perhaps shyly peep at us through the small aperture of the Sonnet. The great and impenetrable anonymity of the dramatist may be partially dispelled by the personal clues indirectly provided by the Sonneteer. The very choice of an alternative form of expression by the master dramatist suggests the possibility of a new motive of self-revelation, although it was at the same time a customary tribute to a widely prevalent literary convention of the age. Would not, it was fondly hoped, the great wizard of the stage follow one of his own creations, with whom he is apt to be identified, in laying aside his magic robes and putting on an ordinary civic costume? Would not the great actor, who had impersonated a hundred different characters, for once appear in his own individual role and take on the part of that most enigmatic character of all, William Shakespeare, burgher of Stratford-on-Avon, a hanger-on of the nobility and a frequenter of the obscure by-paths of under-world London life?

Unfortunately the curiosity of investigators took a rather prurient and sophisticated turn, being directed towards transfixing the identity of the various actors in this slightly disreputable drama of infatuated passion. They cast their fine-spun net of speculations wide enough to catch the least little speck of surmised fact. But in the long run the results of their theories cancelled one another, with nothing tangible of certain truth emerging out of all their labours. The identity of the friend and the lady-love as well as Shakespeare's exact relationship with them could not be established on unassailable foundations and facts remained wrapped up in a persisting mist. As the centuries roll on, the biographical interest of the Sonnets consisting in the tracing of exact names and incidents tends to grow more remote and unsatisfying. We are more and more reconciled to the prospect of allowing W. H. to continue as a mystic formula, as all our researches have hitherto availed nothing to unravel the mystery. Let the "dark lady" continue to be as dark as her complexion or her eyes; the shade that hangs round her bids fair to remain impervious to the light of exact knowledge. The personal history of Shakespeare shows little prospect of reconstruction with the help of all the materials thrown up by the burrowing critics. We must be content with the additional light thrown upon the intimate personality of Shakespeare by the more direct transcription of his inner life in the Sonnets, reinforcing the inferential twilight shed by the drama. That chapter of research, involving much inconclusive labour and a Micawberian rummaging and delving in the buried fields of the past in the hope of catching the missing clue which will knit into coherence the stray fragments of our knowledge, must be definitely closed as having reached a dead end.

Poets also have joined in this fascinating speculation, but they have relied on their intuition rather than on patient marshalling of facts and



subtle ingenuity of interpretation. Wordsworth has instinctively felt that Shakespeare unlocked his heart with the key of the Sonnet. Browning has as instinctively asserted the opposite point of view, holding, a psychological casuist as he is, that Shakespeare under pretence of unlocking his heart must have double-locked it with the mystifying impression purposely sought to be created by the Sonnets. So in Browning's mind, the Sonnets throw a deeper midnight shadow upon the twilight reticence of the drama, joining positive misdirection to giving no direction at all. Certainly if Shakespeare cannot be caught in the myriad-faced mirror of the drama, he can hardly be reflected in the droplet of the Sonnet. So it seems that the elusive Shakespeare mocks all our efforts to pin him down, saying in the words of Browning's heroine "Catch me, beloved, Never"!

## II

To write on Shakespeare's Sonnets on the occasion of the quater-centenary of his birth only to affirm that most of the previous approach to the Sonnets as biographical documents has been unfruitful is to incur a similar charge in a more aggravated form. If the old approach has proved negative, we of the present generation must think of a more positive and fruitful line. The old breed of commentators split upon the rock of attempting an exact identification of the persons figuring in the Sonnets and the newer generation in concentrating on the flaws in these fact-finding efforts. The real question should be to investigate whether, personalities and dates apart, the inner conflict related in the Sonnets was a reflection, direct or indirect, of Shakespeare's personal feelings. In other words, the crucial point for determination is whether Shakespeare, in writing the Sonnets, was merely following a current literary fashion with his soul safely tucked away from all contact with his materials, or was he using a prevalent convention for packing into its capacious folds some complication of an inner drama that he could not afford to bring out into the open? Was it a purely fancy-ball dress which he put on or a half-transparent veil that while concealing the features revealed the expression of the face, the tension and bewilderment of the emotions stamped thereon? These are the questions which have to be faced anew, when the spell of Shakespeare's genius is again sought to be revived in a world that seems to have drifted far away from the Shakespearean orbit.

Shakespeare's transcendent genius in its wonderful grip upon the most diverse aspects of life has inevitably stimulated curiosity about the source of his experience and inspiration. The secret of genius is unfathomable, but its relation to contemporary life, the factual bonds that connect it

with earth, can perhaps be traced, if the details of its career can be ascertained. Are all Shakespeare's comic mirth and tragic sublimities the product of pure intuition unrelated to any kind of experience or are his life-reactions, in a highly transmuted and spiritualized form, at the base of his creations? The tempest-tossed ocean of Lear's mind, throwing up rare gems and babbling weeds in indiscriminate confusion, the vivid imaginative conjurations of guilty conscience taking a subtle or violent revenge for outraged nature, abysmal villainy with a Satanic malice against everything innocent and gracious, piercing intelligence probing the inmost roots of motive and action but stricken with a curious paralysis of the will—how did all these searing cosmic visions suggest themselves to the mind of the dramatist? It will not be proper to claim that the whole series of these fathomless secrets of human nature were included within the orbit of his personal experience. But it may be reasonably presumed that something must have occurred to churn the inmost recesses of his heart, to burst through the outer surface of the common experiences of life and unleash explosive forces that rocked and swayed the whole of his nature as with the devastating, if temporary, force of an earthquake. One cannot make oneself a spy of Providence and penetrate into the most closely guarded secrets of humanity without having to pay a price for it. Do the Sonnets serve as a kind of account-book in which one can trace some inventory of the raw materials of experience which were transmuted into the stuff and substance of his tragedies in the wonder-working laboratory of his mind—is the question we have to ask and, if possible, to answer.

### III

Let us first of all consider the subject-matter of the Sonnets. Elizabethan sonnets, based on the model of Petrarch, are usually considered a kind of amatory exercise in which any possible traces of genuine passion that there might be came to be overlaid by a sort of generalized sentiment inherited from the now-decadent chivalric tradition reinforced with touches of resurgent Renaissance Platonism. Wyatt and Surrey and, to a certain extent, Sidney were men in whom the knightly ideal was vital enough to colour their personal lives, and their crossed destiny in the matter of love lent a real and passionate fervour to the outpourings of their heart in the sonnets. They were in essence medieval knights lingering on in the first flush of the Renaissance dawn and practised their arts of love and warfare in a slightly different atmosphere in which the ideals of Knight-errantry were not too incongruously mingled with the new secularism that slowly emerged as the dominant interest of life. Spenser

but for his overmastering sense of beauty and his Platonic philosophy of love definitely harked back to the Middle Ages by presenting the adventures of his knights as allegories of moral truth. He did his best to obscure the modernity of Elizabeth and blunt the edge of contemporary problems by wrapping them round in the thick folds of symbolism and the floating mists of magic and marvel. The *Faery Queene* breathes the atmosphere of *Gawain and the Green Knight* with just a wider perspective and a more self-conscious purpose. In fact, what is Queen Elizabeth but a modern sovereign disguised under the trappings of medievalism, a constitutional monarch still breathing the last enchantment of the chivalric age? Drake and the explorers continue the external feats of the Crusades with a shrewd, practical turn given to the underlying motive. And what is the destruction of the Armada but a continuation of the fight against the Anti-Christ, although so much more was at stake in it than the glory of Christendom vindicated against the heathen?

All this tends to emphasize the truth that the kind of love celebrated in the early sheaf of Elizabethan sonnets was a feeling which had just begun to recede from real life but still possessed abundant vitality and truth to nature to serve as genuine poetic inspiration. The mystic heavens were still within reach of the common earth; the newly awakened Renaissance interest in life could still draw upon the fountain of medieval dreams. The incidents and situations of love which appear so strained and well-nigh impossible to the modern taste were not so unreal as might appear. The twilight of two ages meeting and interpenetrating each other lengthened shadows in which all sentiments and feelings appear grotesquely distorted and exaggerated. The use of far-fetched images and hyperbolic expressions, the violent jerks and turns given to language in the Elizabethan sonnet and Elizabethan literature as a whole which are so apt to be taken by us of today as a mark of artificiality, were really the effervescence of the first tumult of feelings, in a process of transition from one order of the rhythm of life to another. So much of emotion and such a conflicting variety of it struggled for expression that some amount of over-emphasis was inevitable in a young language just called upon to deploy its latent resources. What appears far-fetched was not really brought from so far; it came from a heart confused and convulsed by its sudden exuberance of wealth clamouring for an outlet. That there is parallelism of thought and expression in the sonnet-sequences is no irrefutable proof of their conventionality. Due allowance must be made for the recurrence of similar ideas and sentiments in a society of a comparatively restricted range of interests seized with the first intoxication of love and the problem of its adaptation to a newly emerging conception and environment of life.

## IV

It is against this general background that Shakespeare's Sonnets should now be examined. In respect of their subject-matter Shakespeare may be said to have followed the usual pattern. Doting friendship and unfaithful love might have been the traditional subjects of the sonnet. But what is peculiar to Shakespeare is the combination of these two topics in a manner calculated to complicate the emotional tension. To represent the friend and the lover as entering into an unholy combination against the poet so as to deepen his dramatic conflict, tear him between the pulls of conflicting loyalties and thereby to aggravate his perplexity of feelings is without doubt to add a new note to the familiar strain. It is difficult to imagine that even this double-crossing was the accepted stock-in-trade of the Elizabethan sonneteer, or represented an oft-repeated knot in the emotional tangles of the period. Here it may not be unreasonable to surmise that Shakespeare may have thrown in an unresolved crisis of his inner life rather than merely followed a conventionalized situation. He must have left a personal trail here instead of complacently treading a beaten track.

In those days of abject dependence upon patronage before authorship was securely established upon a self-respecting standard of independence, adulation and flattery tended to be concealed under the cloak of friendship. When every author had his patron as inevitably as every Jack his Jill, it was but natural for the author to pretend both to himself and to the world of letters that his patron was his friend and to assure intimacy of relationship with him. An extravagance of devotion and attachment was naturally simulated to disguise the ugly fact that it was a bid for favour. And very frequently there was a keen and unseemly rivalry among poets, as has been referred to in Shakespeare's Sonnets, to secure the monopoly of patronage of influential politicians and men about the Court through attempts to outbid one another in adulatory protestations and professions of loyalty unto death. Shakespeare, like his contemporary fellow-poets, must have thrown himself into this game of competition with all the zest of which his ardent nature was capable, but cleverer than the rest, professed to abjure art and take his stand upon naked truth. Thus in a great part of his panegyric of W.H. he must have indulged in a loud bout of chorus-singing instead of practising a solo music of a finer and more delicate strain.

But this is not the whole truth. From the days of classical antiquity right through the Middle Ages, friendship was treasured as a sacred, intimate feeling, one of the divinest traits in human nature, rivalling, if not surpassing, the sanctity of love. Certainly Homer exalts friendship above love, as Virgil does filial piety. Helen and Dido do not breathe as rare an odour as do the friends, Achilles and Patroclus. The attenuated sexual

passion of Platonic love makes it but a subsidiary branch of the wider principle of Platonic friendship, based on kinship of spirit and apprehension of ideal beauty. Even chivalric love, so exalted by troubadours and worshipped in the world of medieval Christendom, is but an extension of the ideal of knightly courtesy to the weaker sex, and does not involve a recognition of positive feminine attraction. The Knights of the Round Table, a brotherhood of the Church Militant for redress of wrongs and inculcation of exalted ideals of purity, play a worthier and more significant rôle in medieval society than love between man and woman, which, even if pure and innocent, does not exert any positive uplifting influence. It is only in Dante and Petrarch that love attains a spiritual transfiguration and opens the door to heavenly mysteries. The kind of love that is celebrated in Elizabethan sonnets is a mixture of the rather faded and worn-out ideals of chivalry and the new passionate awareness of feminine charm that came in the wake of a full-blooded enjoyment of life inspired by the Renaissance. But while the star of love was rising and gaining in lustre, the sun of friendship had not yet set. While love was preparing to ascend to the zenith of its influence, friendship was still a keen, absorbing passion, far from being the mild, exchange-and-barter sort of sentiment into which it has now subsided. Even so cautious and chill-blooded a man as Bacon was moved to an unwonted intensity of feeling in dwelling upon the glories of friendship, and became almost poetic in his utterance.

## V

In the Sonnets of Shakespeare, the two strains outlined above met and blended in his conception of friendship and his exaltation of friendship over love. The friend who absorbed so much of Shakespeare's passionate thought and feeling and inspired such noble and profound speculations on life and death combined in himself the deference due to a benefactor and warmer personal intimacy in proportions which it may be difficult to fix with any precision. The sentiments are not all motivated by conformity to the established practice: there must have been some part of Shakespeare not quite smothered under the burden of tradition it had to carry but left free to ventilate his own native feeling. No made-to-order-business could have been moved to the occasional sublimities of utterance which break in upon the undistinguished commonplaces of the rhetorical jugglery of thoughts and words. There must have been times when Shakespeare forgot the immediate occasion, the rather squalid motive of his writings, and soared into the artist's heaven where his crea-

tive spirit would work in the fulness of its inspiration untrammelled by any grosser consideration. The sustained literary excellence of the Sonnets, even where the ideas were trite or contorted by fanciful conceits, furnishes a confirmatory proof that the poet and the reflective philosopher in Shakespeare did not entirely succumb to the inglorious role of an adulating versifier writing for a crumb of patronage.

Another circumstance that considerably weakens, if it does not altogether discountenance, the undiluted panegyric motive, is the strange indifference of the writer to the collection and publication of the Sonnets. They were published posthumously with corrupt readings of the text and in an uncertain order or sequence by enterprising booksellers who banked for their sale on Shakespeare's established popularity. The fact remains that Shakespeare did not care to preserve the Sonnets or even to fix their order. They seem to have been written in batches which were not strung together on any coherent plan, but left to make their mark by their individual merit. Granting that in the Elizabethan age and particularly among playwrights the responsibilities of authorship were not taken as seriously as in later times and artistic conscience was not as deliberately cultivated, it seems strange conduct for a poet to write to win the favour of his patron without giving his writing a permanent form which alone would enable it to make a lasting impression. One would rather weave a garland for a neck proposed to be honoured, instead of scattering flowers at random. The private feelings of the poet might find a casual outlet, but a laudatory composition would demand a care for arrangement and unity of effect. The fact that this minimum care was not taken goes far to shake the patronage theory of composition.

Of the two sections into which the Sonnet-sequence is divided—friendship and love—it is quite clear that friendship engages the deeper interest of the poet and spurs him on to a more intimate searching of the heart and a deeper probing of the scheme of life. In comparison love awakens but a faint interest in him and touches him but lightly. Matters are further complicated by the friend appearing in the role of a rival in love to the poet, so that much of the tangle of love gets mixed up with the poet's relations with his friend which are in themselves of a strained, equivocal character. The friend is a paragon of beauty and the pink of perfection, universally beloved and blunting the edge of envy itself by the charm of his manners. In the beginning the poet's main complaint against him is his disinclination to marry and thereby perpetuate his beauty in his posterity. The poet will try to redeem his beauty from extinction through his verses, but poetry is a poor substitute for the living immortality ensured by progeny. To this is added the further reason of a competition from other poets and the friend's wavering attitude in res-

pect of his preference. Shakespeare urges plain, rugged sincerity as his principal recommendation and concedes artistic superiority to his rivals, among whom Chapman may be identified. Soon, it seems that his friend himself has some grievance against him: he has grown cold and indifferent and turned his attentions perhaps to some other patron. He quibbles on his lapses and urges that the cooling is more apparent than real and that the occasional spells of inconstancy has merely set off the unalterable constancy of his heart.

As regards his friend's entanglement with his mistress, he presents a somewhat queer front. He is more concerned with the sullied purity and the smirched reputation of his friend than about his own wrench of feelings. As for the lady, he makes light of her infidelity. One who has proved faithless to her marriage vow cannot be expected to behave better. His own passion he describes as pure infatuation, a shutting of the eye to reality. In fact he deals with his relations with the lady in a spirit of light-hearted unconcern and does not set them higher than an idle and frivolous gallantry. She is more to be blamed for seducing his friend and driving a wedge into their friendship than for hushing his own feelings. The "dark" lady is in effect a conventional figure, a rather colourless abstraction dressed up in stilted phrases and far-fetched conceits. No cooler or more disillusioned lover, treating love as a second fiddle to friendship, could be conceived than Shakespeare in his Sonnets. Love comes into her own in "*A Lover's Complaint*" appended to some editions of the Sonnets, but in the Sonnets themselves she is a chill sentiment inspiring some amount of intellectual ingenuity but not a single poignant or passionate cry of the heart.

## VI

What, then, would constitute the permanent value of the Sonnets as literary productions? They certainly continue a line of tradition, but may also be the record of a personal feeling. No convention is likely to cover such an intricate entanglement of feelings and situations that inspired their writing. Prof. Elton thinks that Drayton is the only sonneteer, with whom Shakespeare has a marked and recognizable resemblance and it is more likely that Drayton may have borrowed from Shakespeare than Shakespeare from Drayton, though the question cannot be conclusively determined. The very fact that there is only one out of a whole crowd of sonnet-writers with whom Shakespeare has an affinity makes it highly probable that Shakespeare's Sonnets reflect a unique, rather than a common, experience.

Whether individual or traditional in their inspiration, the Sonnets have reached a high level of poetic excellence in depth of feeling, profundity of reflection on life, and dignity and sublimity of expression. Shakespeare had the rare power of pouring his richest experiences into the mould of thought currently adopted, of making rhetorical conceits subtly instinct with the most vital emotions and irradiating them with sudden flashes of the most original imagination. Just as he transformed the Elizabethan commonplaces of action, the sordid intrigues, the brutal blood-lust, the vulgar craze for sensationalism, the crude yearning for magic and enchantment, into the subtlest and most consummate triumphs of art, so he displayed an equally astonishing power of instilling the breath of life into the most frigid and well-worn mannerisms and tricks of style debased and vulgarized by unthinking use by mediocre writers. Even Euphuism came alive in the hands of Shakespeare. His *Rosalind* and *Celia* indulged in the most pedantic allusions and the dead logic-chopping of scholasticism, but yet managed to express their youthful exuberance of spirit and the delicately aggressive charm of femininity with its roseate visions of love and romance through that stilted medium. His *Falstaff* uses the current tavern jargon of Cheapside, but exudes the quintessence of the zest of life through his coarse ribaldry and drunken hiccoughings. So the confused sentiments and their twisted, involved, circumlocutory expression in the Sonnets suddenly give way to an inspiring, thrilling directness of utterance, a startling immediacy of contact with life, that transport us into a keenly awakened mood of awareness and receptivity. Even on the common, every-day levels the style has an opulence, a richness of concrete imagery, a rotund fulness of contour, that redeem the leanest and most impoverished ideas. Sonnets Nos. 29, 30, 33, 54, 55, 65, 73, 106, 107, 116, etc., are apt examples of this wonderful transformation. Sonnet No. 107, beginning with the lines

Not mine own fears, nor the prophetic soul  
Of the wide world dreaming on things to come,

in particular, packs a wealth of suggestiveness and infuses a cosmic range of imagination into the commonplace idea that death has no terrors for a soul confident in its own spiritual ideals, so that commentators have had new historical and political vistas opened to their vision and read into it allusions and parallelisms to fill up the interstices of the wider circle conjured up by its haunting cadences. This is the Shakespeare touch, the magic wand of *Prospero* invoking dream-visions and building cloud-capped towers on this too, too solid earth.

SRIKUMAR BANERJEE



## Shakespeare the Man

*The Character of the man is best seen in his Writings.*

—NICHOLAS ROWE

REVIEWING Tennyson's life written by his son, Rabindranath Tagore put forward the interesting thesis that in his day to day life the poet is generally very much like an ordinary man with his joys and sorrows, his sympathies and antipathies. But he also lives a larger and intenser life which is reflected in his poetry which alone can give us the clue to his personality. Except for a poet like Dante whose life is fused with his poetry, the attempt at finding a connexion between the external life of action and thought and emotion that motivate action and the inner life of poetic vision is bound to be a mistaken quest.<sup>1</sup> This interesting theory propounded by a major poet about another major poet may be applied to the world's greatest poet who seems to have lived one life as a grammar school boy, as husband and father, as a prosperous player and "gentleman", and another life as the author of the plays which won him popularity during his lifetime and have brought him immortality afterwards.

Not that attempts have not been made to connect the two streams—the life of thought and action and the life of the imagination. Once upon a time it was believed that we did not know enough of Shakespeare's life to be able to make any reasonable inference or conjecture from it. But there has been a good deal of research during the last six decades or so, and we now find that we know much more about Shakespeare than about most of his contemporaries. There are critics who have tried to read his dramatic work in relation to his biography and explain the one in terms of the other. We know that Shakespeare received the severest shock from Fortune in August 1596 when his only son Hamnet died. It may be said that Shakespeare expresses his own emotions for his dead son when Constance in *King John* breaks forth into a passionate outburst of sorrow for her son:

Grief fills the room of my absent child,  
Lies in his bed, walks up and down with me,  
Puts on his pretty looks, repeats his words,  
Remembers me of all his gracious parts,  
Stuffs out his vacant garments with his form: (III. iv. 93-97).

There is even deeper insight in the brief rebuke she gives to the celibate Cardinal who thinks that her grief is excessive:

He talks to me, that never had a son. (III. iv. 91)

But this is an emotion universally felt, and Shakespeare, who expressed with such subtlety and force all human emotions—grave and gay, intricate and simple—should be able to portray a bereaved mother even if he had no bereavement of his own. There is a more suggestive touch in the advice Duke Orsino gives to Viola-Cesario:

Let still the woman take  
An elder than herself, so wears she to him,  
So sways she level in her husband's heart:  
For, boy, however we do praise ourselves,  
Our fancies are more giddy and unfirm,  
More longing, wavering, sooner lost and worn,  
Than women's are. (Twelfth Night, II. iv. 29-35)

Was Shakespeare thinking here of his own wife who was several years older than he and of his own giddy and unfirm fancies which got him entangled with her? Orsino's comment comes so abruptly and is so thinly connected with the context in which it appears that such a conjecture cannot be ruled out. But here, too, the advice reflects the almost universal experience of mankind, for howsoever laws of marriage might differ from one age or country to another, the husband is almost always older than the wife. More pointed than Orsino's comment is Prospero's admonition to Ferdinand:

If thou dost break her virgin knot before  
All sanctimonious ceremony may  
With full and holy rite be minister'd,  
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. (The Tempest, IV. i. 15-23)

Was Shakespeare in writing this passage haunted by memories of his own pre-nuptial intimacy with his wife, leading to the birth of their eldest child within six months of their marriage? Was the bed of the Shakespeares strewn with weeds so loathly that they began to hate their union? There is nothing improbable in the suggestion, but pre-nuptial intimacy is proscribed by the universal wisdom of mankind; in the lonely island where social inhibitions are non-existent Ferdinand might, indeed, be tempted to break his sweetheart's virgin-knot, and Prospero, a garrulous old man, is long-winded and over-emphatic.

Shakespeare's son and wife have been the source of some wild guesses about his personal life. His greatest character in whom he had supposedly put most of himself was called Hamlet—a name that had suggestive similarity to that of his son Hamnet, and Hamlet's disgust with the world was caused by the incestuous adultery of his mother who was no longer young. Since Shakespeare had two brothers Richard and Edmund (besides Gilbert) and one of Shakespeare's greatest villains is the adulterous bastard Edmund, and another villain Richard, Duke of Gloucester, woos a lady named Anne, are we to assume that Shakespeare's own wife Anne, several years his senior, was guilty of incestuous adultery with one of his brothers? That is the suggestion made in James Joyce's *Ulysses*.<sup>2</sup> But it is a fanciful speculation without any basis in fact. The name "Hamlet" is derived from a well-known revenge saga; the necessities of the story require that Gertrude cannot be young; Anne Warwick, Richard III's wife, is a historical character; and when christening his son at Stratford-on-Avon in 1585, Shakespeare could not have thought of the play he was to write fifteen years later. Possibly James Joyce did not make the suggestion seriously, and academic critics have not taken much notice of it. It only shows—and this may be part of Joyce's meaning—how in the reconstruction of Shakespeare's biography a fabric of guesses may be made on the slenderest evidence of fact.

Frank Harris, who makes a more elaborate attempt at connecting Shakespeare's life with his art, is not less fantastic in his speculations than James Joyce. Harris looks upon Shakespeare as a snob and a sex-obsessed neurotic who is reflected in Orsino-Hamlet-Antony, and he represents his shrewish, scolding wife—there is, incidentally, no evidence for the suggestion that Anne was a shrew—in Adriana, Constance, and Katharina. Shakespeare, on this view, would have been a writer of light-hearted comedies, of histories and songs but for his encounter with Mary Fitton, who made him "the greatest man who has left record of himself in literature, the author of half-a-dozen masterpieces, whose names have become tragic symbols in the consciousness of humanity".<sup>3</sup> Such criticism treats both biography and literature in a facile manner, easily adding two and two and making a dozen. Bernard Shaw accepts the Mary Fitton theory, but gives it a more fanciful twist by imagining, at the suggestion of Dame Edith Lyttelton, a scene of fierce jealousy between Queen Elizabeth and her maid of honour. If we leave the shadowy character of Mary Fitton out of account for the moment, Shakespeare in his plays seems to have identified himself not only with Orsino, Hamlet and Antony but produced an *alter ego* of himself in Posthumus, Edgar and even Macbeth. Frank Harris would go further and say that there is little difference between Hamlet and Macbeth, who are clearly one and the same person. The extrava-

gance of such criticism is its own answer. What would these critics say to the suggestion that in Queen Katharine who was several years older than Henry VIII Shakespeare portrayed his own loving and submissive wife?

There are other critics who try to relate Shakespeare's art to his biography in a more cautious and scientific way. Such are the writers who present the historical plays as documents of Tudor historical thinking. Shakespeare quite obviously transcribed medieval English history from a modern point of view. But what was his own point of view? Some critics think that Shakespeare, who had accepted the Tudor succession, tried in these plays to mirror the political problems of Elizabeth's reign. Lily Campbell, for example, argues that through the death of Arthur, the baronial revolt as if brought about by Arthur's supposed murder, and the French invasion, Shakespeare portrayed "the imprisonment and death of Mary, the revolt of the nobles as if brought about by Mary's imprisonment and death, and the Spanish attempt at invasion".<sup>4</sup> The danger of such criticism is that it assumes as a premise what it seems to prove as a conclusion. That is why contrary deductions are made from the same data. It is known for a fact that Shakespeare was a follower of Southampton and Southampton belonged to the Essex circle, and the play that was staged on the eve of the Essex rebellion so that people might be prepared for the Queen's deposition was in all probability Shakespeare's *Richard II*.<sup>5</sup> It is, therefore, reasonable to conclude that Shakespeare ranged himself on the side of the opposition and expressed in covert language the opposition point of view in the historical plays. That is the opinion held by Richard Simpson who thinks that "there was a political current in Shakespeare's mind, which, in the days of Elizabeth, led him into opposition",<sup>6</sup> and the Queen herself angrily complained that she was likened to Richard II, possibly the Richard II of the play that was staged on the day preceding Essex's ill-fated rising.

The same criticism may be made of the charge based mostly on *Julius Caesar* and *Coriolanus* that Shakespeare was a snob, an enemy of the people and an upholder of aristocratic government. This charge has been thoroughly answered by Bernard Shaw who was a Socialist and not generally sympathetic to Shakespeare's genius. The creator of Osric and the fop who annoyed Hotspur on the one hand and of old Adam and Alexander Iden on the other was not certainly a courtly flunkey. What these critics—Tolstoy, Frank Harris and others—have failed to notice is the deep irony in Shakespeare's presentation of the mob in *Julius Caesar* and *Coriolanus*. The point about the portraiture of Brutus is that he is a passionate idealist without a hold on practical realities. This is best brought out in his first contact with the common people who show their appreciation of

his Republicanism by shouting "Let him be Caesar!" The people's lack of insight into the principles for which Brutus stands and the readiness with which they flock to Antony who appeals only to personal loyalty underlines the tragedy of a man who is not only at odds with himself but cannot grasp the forces that sweep him on to his doom. *Coriolanus* is a tragedy of aristocratic pride, and this tragedy acquires pointed significance when it is remembered that, ironically enough, it is the masses whom Coriolanus holds in undisguised contempt who secure his downfall.

It seems that in matters political or ethical Shakespeare's attitude was neutral and undecided. He did not want to take sides with either Richard II or Bolingbroke, he was equally indifferent to Brutus and Antony and tried to draw a portrait of Shylock that was at the same time sympathetic and hostile. This, argues Hardin Craig, was a characteristic of the Renaissance mind which suspended truth not between hypothesis and verification, but between the affirmative and the negative in debate. In such circumstances, truth became not a fixed proposition, but a shifting, elusive, debatable thing to be determined by dialectical acumen before it shone forth in rhetorical clarity by its own unassisted effulgence.<sup>7</sup> Although there is a good deal of truth in this contention, it does not reveal the depth of Shakespeare's personality which on this view seems to have been more negative than capable. We have to pierce beyond conflicting thoughts and opinions to those intuitions and yearnings in which lies the essence of character.

## II

Attempts have been made by critics of all times to discover Shakespeare's personality through allusions to men and things of his own time. There is the well-known story of Shakespeare having had to fly away from Stratford because he was too severely prosecuted by Sir Thomas Lucy whose park he had robbed. Several years later when comfortably settled in London, he made a pointless and somewhat unsavoury joke about a dozen "lucres" in Sir Robert Shallow's old coat (*The Merry Wives of Windsor*, I. i. 17-18). The very pointlessness of the joke creates a presumption that the story of the poaching has some foundation in fact. If so, although Shakespeare might in his later plays have preached the value of forgiveness, he seems to have had a tenacious, unforgiving memory. The other contemporary references—to the visit of a German Ambassador or the War of the Theatres, for example,—do not, in the absence of fuller details, throw much light on Shakespeare's character. They have no greater significance than ordinary tittle-tattle about natural phenomena—the

"wet" summer of 1594 described in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (II. i. 81-117) or the eclipses of 1605 alluded to in *King Lear* (I. ii. 115).

Nor is much light to be derived from supposed caricatures of contemporary persons in the dramas. Was Lord Burleigh the original of Polonius, Lord Buckhurst of Sir Toby Belch or Sir William Knollys of Malvolio? There is no positive contemporary evidence in support of these identifications. "One cannot be expected to argue whether Lord Buckhurst was or was not Sir Toby Belch," says E. K. Chambers.<sup>8</sup> There is a further point to be considered here. The greatest figures in fiction are not only individuals alive to the tips of their fingers but also universal symbols—Polonius of a statesman's senility, Malvolio of a Puritan's self-love and sense of human dignity, Sir Toby Belch of unbridled epicurism. It will be wrong to look upon these characters as personifications and to reduce their complexity to one simple idea. And the idea which the artist derives from his experiences is only the starting-point, it is what he makes of the idea that throws light on his own mind and art and not the incident or character that first stirred his imagination. The assiduous student of Elizabethan history might go on multiplying originals for Shakespearian characters, and even stray phrases such as "the school of night" in *Love's Labour's Lost* (IV. iii. 255)<sup>9</sup> might reveal a wealth of hidden Elizabethan lore, but they will not take us near hidden recesses in Shakespeare's character. He himself made the point clear when he changed Sir John Oldcastle to Sir John Falstaff. Whatever the original Sir John Oldcastle might have been, his connexion with Shakespeare's fat knight is not worth investigation. "Oldcastle died a martyr, and this is not the man" (2 *Henry IV*, Epilogue).

The efforts made by critics to connect Shakespeare's works with his biography have not been successful not only because we do not know enough about Shakespeare's opinions outside his writings but his treatment—almost always dramatic—does not lead to any definite conclusion and sometimes points in a direction contrary to what we may deduce from known biographical data. In 1596 his son Hamnet died, and it was in this year that his father John Shakespeare, who had been financially at a loose end, applied, obviously with the poet's assistance, for a coat-of-arms. Although the application, full as such applications generally were of references to imaginary ancestors, was rejected, it was renewed three years later, and in 1599 John Shakespeare, indeed, became a "gentleman". If we remember the part the son's prosperity and influence must have played in this acquisition of gentlemanly status, we cannot help noting the searching irony in Shakespeare's presentation of a similar theme in *A Winter's Tale*, in which the Shepherd and his Clown of a son accidentally find themselves transformed into gentlemen:

*Clown:* . . . Give me the lie, do, and try whether I am not now a gentleman born.

*Autolycus:* I know you are now, sir, a gentleman born.

*Clown:* Ay, and have been so any time these four hours.

*Shep:* And so have I, boy.

*Clown:* So you have: but I was a gentleman born before my father; for the king's son took me by the hand and called me brother; and then the two kings called my father brother; and the prince my brother and the princess my sister called my father father; and so we wept: and there was the first gentleman-like tears that ever we shed.

.....

*Clown:* Give me thy hand: I will swear to the prince thou art as honest a true fellow as any in Bohemia.

*Shep:* You may say it, but not swear it.

*Clown:* Not swear it, now I am a gentleman? Let boors and franklins say it, I'll swear it. (V. ii. 150-81)

The above comments on gentlemanly status which have no immediate contextual significance coupled with Shakespeare's presentation years before of Jack Cade's aristocratic lineage carry their own commentary on the persevering efforts made by John Shakespeare to obtain a coat-of-arms for the family.

The extant records are enough to show that Shakespeare was a prosperous man of affairs who made careful investments in property, was meticulously upright in his dealings, and rigorous in litigation. But his greatest creations in whom we can see however dimly a reflexion of his personality—Hamlet, Brutus, Othello and King Lear—are portraits of futility. And whenever he draws the portrait of a successful man, he seems to draw with some mental reservation. He is just towards Octavius Caesar but not enthusiastic. When Cleopatra says that it is paltry to be Caesar, she partly echoes our sentiment—and possibly her creator's. His most serious attempt at depicting a successful man of affairs is King Henry V, but critics are divided in their views whether it is intended to exalt or debunk the great monarch. Leaving aside the controversy between the opposing critics whom Dover Wilson classifies as *pro* and *contra*,<sup>10</sup> we can only say that this portrait is less intensely conceived than his tragic masterpieces. Why should the genius of a successful man of affairs find its richest utterance when dealing with the theme of failure and frustration? The obvious disparity between a career of unbroken success undisturbed, so far as we can confidently affirm, by emotional upsurges and moving portraits of passion and pain in the dramas has led some critics to think that there is no passage from the life of the man to his works. Sidney Lee, one of the most competent of biographers, lays stress on the objectivity of

Shakespeare's creative work. On this view no "direct or definite connexion can be discerned between the progressive stages of his work and the progressive stages of his life. To seek in his biography for a chain of events which should be calculated to stir in his own soul all or any of the tempestuous passions that animate his greatest plays is to under-estimate and misapprehend the resistless might of his creative genius."<sup>11</sup>

But even if we admit that Shakespeare's art is unrelated to his life, that his genius is objective, unconscious and instinctive, still the life of imagination has a reality of its own. The truest poetry may be the most feigning and the poet's majestic imaginings may be airy nothings not immediately rooted in personal experience, yet the life of the imagination is not empty dreaming and the nurslings of the poet's brain are truer than the drab facts of actuality. It is this life that we have to reconstruct from the poet's work, and it is this life which Shakespeare lived inwardly that is of primary value for us. Of all such attempts at the exploration of Shakespeare's inner life independently of the known facts of his biography, the most famous—and possibly the best—is that of Edward Dowden who neatly divides his work into four periods. In the first, Shakespeare is only an apprentice, making tentative dramatic efforts. In the second period, he is concerned with the problem of "how a man may fail, and how a man may succeed in attaining a practical mastery of the world"—the dominant theme of the histories and the middle comedies. In these periods Shakespeare's work is characterized by a resolute fidelity to fact, a tendency to see things as they are and to shape life accordingly. But there is a change in his attitude towards the end of the century, and in the third period he is obsessed with the mystery of life, sounding the depths of evil as he never sounded them before. This is the period of the tragedies and of the "dark comedies", as they have come to be designated in later criticism. It is followed by a period of peace and joy, and accordingly in his latest plays, "while grievous errors of the heart are shown to us, and wrongs of man as crude as those of the great tragedies, at the end there is a resolution of the dissonance, a *réconciliation*."<sup>12</sup>

Dowden's theory of the growth of Shakespeare's mind and art is open to certain grave objections. *Titus Andronicus* is an early work, and although it is immature, evil is not less rampant here than in *Othello* or *King Lear*, and Richard III's murderous ambition is only an anticipation of Macbeth's. Lytton Strachey dissents from Dowden's interpretation of the final period, in which he finds a mood of tiredness and boredom—and not of reconciliation, "word over all, beautiful as the sky".<sup>13</sup> More open to criticism is the hypothesis that the poet passed through a period of unhappiness while sounding the depths of evil in Iago or Goneril or surveying the stews of Vienna in *Measure for Measure*. Shakespeare wrote his early histo-



rical plays when he was supposedly imbued with the "Tudor gaiety of spirit", but the second tetralogy of *Richard II—Henry V* when he was near his tragic period is on the whole more joyous in tone than the first consisting of the three parts of *Henry VI* and *Richard III*. The strongest objection to Dowden's deductions is that there is nothing in the recorded facts to show that Shakespeare suffered from any shocks in life that might account for the dominant mood of gloom and dejection we find in the tragedies. The sorrows attributed to him during his Jacobean period are "mythical", for the gloomy tragedies were written at a time when from all accounts he seems to have been prosperous and happy.

Dowden's reconstruction of Shakespeare's mind has been assailed from various points of view, but it has held its ground, and he has been supported by other critics who have followed along his lines, though sometimes in details their findings have differed from his. Their conclusion has been most bluntly put by Wyndham Lewis, who says, "The 'impersonal' fallacy appears in the light of a genial bluff, it is a similar device to that whereby a man hunting a seal will cover himself with the skin of a dead seal, and, disguised in that way, stalk his prey."<sup>14</sup> Indeed, it seems, as Kenneth Muir points out, that the portrait of a passionate and sensitive Shakespeare is nearer the truth than "the smilesian pachyderm" posited by Sidney Lee.<sup>15</sup> The fact that the dramatist bought some property and was a successful player and playwright does not tell us anything about the emotions that welled up in his heart. Sorrows are not less genuine, because they are "mythical", for myths, although they are embroidered with imagination, grow out of reality. As a dramatist Shakespeare must, indeed, have held aloof from his creations, and even the sonnets might be mere literary exercises, but he must have had a point of view from which he approached the creatures of his fancy, and it is this point of view, which is connected with his outward achievements as well as his inner longings and frustrations, that is critically valuable.

The attempt to distil the essence of Shakespeare out of his works is subject to another limitation. It seems to re-create the total personality of a man who passed through a period of hectic dramatic activity lasting for two decades, expressing, if he expressed himself at all, his moods of the moment as the plays came out from his "quick forge and working-house of thought". Quoting Antony, we may say that his personality was like a cloud that put on different shapes and then became indistinct as water in water. But this is as true of his creations as of himself. He loved to depict his characters changing, though the necessities of stage-performance imposed severe restrictions on such portraiture. Othello is not in the Fifth Act what he was in the First, and Hamlet, a young university student, manifestly in his teens, grows into a mature man of thirty towards

the end of a play, covering, large as it is, less than four thousand lines. Yet in spite of these changes we have a total impression of Othello and Hamlet and even of the riotous Prince who develops into the mighty King Henry V. So also we may assume that although Shakespeare with his extraordinary capacity for absorbing impressions must have passed through various transformations from the day he wrote his early poems to his retirement at Stratford-on-Avon, yet he was the same man through his varied experiences, and it is our duty to re-capture this essential Shakespeare, Shakespeare in his totality.

### III

The most prominent feature of Shakespeare's character seems to be his ambivalence, his capacity for realizing opposed points of view. This is not the indecisiveness noted by Hardin Craig, although the two mental states are not unrelated. It means an intense capacity for appreciating contradictory impulses, emotions and ideas. It does not suspend truth between a negative and a positive but looks upon opposed attitudes as equally positive and truth as an aspiration for their synthesis. At a time when Shakespeare is busy purchasing land, Hamlet describes the land-owning courtier Osric as a chough, "spacious in the possession of dirt". Himself the greatest of poets, he could not but have been conscious of the power of poetry. He expresses the emotions of mankind with so much subtlety and force that it is impossible to think that he wove a pattern of words only as a part of his profession and was himself unaware of the implications of his own poetry. Such an instinctive genius might have written *Love's Labour's Lost*—it is doubtful if he could have gone as far as that—but he could not have created either the great tragic heroes or Shylock or even Bottom, Dogberry and Autolycus. In the Sonnets Shakespeare claims that his poetry will be able to confer immortality on his friend, and the most signal success that his greatest character Hamlet achieves is through a dramatic show that holds the mirror up to nature. And yet Theseus looks upon the best of dramatic shows as only shadows, and the poet as the confrère of the lover and the lunatic, whose fancies have no connexion with reality. In *The Dark Lady of the Sonnets*, which is no more than a dramatic skit, Bernard Shaw presents Shakespeare as a snapper-up of unconsidered trifles of speech, a king of words, but the Dark Lady knows that he can anatomize your very soul, and Shakespeare claims that "vile as the world is, you have to invest all this vileness with a magical garment of words to transfigure us and uplift our souls til earth flowers into a million of heavens."

Shakespeare knew all sorts and conditions of men, and the remarkable quality of his character is that he appreciated all things with intensity, but out of this intense realization was born a sense of their limitation. He portrayed the man of action, as Dowden points out, in Theseus, Henry V and Hector, but what Dowden fails to note is that if the accepted chronology of his works be followed, we shall find a growing scepticism about worldly success. Theseus is a very eminent warrior and ruler, who, untroubled by doubts, takes up a very lofty, patronizing attitude towards love, poetry and drama. He cannot enter into the ecstasies of Lysander, Hermia and Helena, and for him poetry is a majestic spectacle built out of airy nothing. Henry V is equally lofty and equally unromantic. He, too, is contemptuous of poetry, "for these fellows of infinite tongue, that can rime themselves into ladies' favours, they do reason themselves out again. What! a speaker is but a prater, a rime is but a ballad" (V. ii. 162-6). Shakespeare, while fully portraying Henry's magnificence, also places him in situations that bring out the limitations of his mind. He does not probe the Mortimer claim, his consulting the Archbishop about his French title is largely an after-thought, and his penitence is confessedly inadequate. Shakespeare takes another step forward in his portraiture of Hector who heads the Trojan army but is haunted by doubts about the rightness of the Trojan cause:

'Tis mad idolatry  
To make the service greater than the god;  
(*Troilus and Cressida*, II. ii. 56-57).

Indeed, Hector is a much nobler figure than the other men of action in the play only because his devotion is punctuated with a relentless enquiry into the quality of that duty, because he perceives that success in the practical field cannot be its own justification.

If from the men of action we come to the men of introspection, to men who think, feel and suffer, we have the same impression of inadequacy. The greatest of such characters is Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, who, it has been said, represents Shakespeare and who, Bradley suggests,<sup>16</sup> might have composed Shakespeare's plays. But the principal change that Shakespeare makes in the source story is to remove all external grounds for the hero's delay and to make all his actions—his assumption of madness, his staging a play within the play, his sparing his enemy—apparently causeless and inconsequential, and indeed, he communicates to the Prince himself a keen awareness of his futility. Some of Hamlet's characteristics are found in Hieronimo, but Kyd had not Shakespeare's insight, and *The Spanish Tragedy* is more a succession of "whirling" scenes than a drama. Leaving Kyd out of consideration, we may say that in Hamlet Shakes-

peare, the successful man of business, projected a character greater than himself and yet lesser. He envisages here the sensitiveness, the refinement and the wide vision which constituted the inmost part of himself but which he had to subdue in order to be a prosperous man of affairs. And if there is anywhere any passage in which we hear the intimate voice of Shakespeare, it is in Hamlet's reflections on the greatness and littleness of man:

What a piece of work is man! How noble in reason! How infinite in faculty! in form, in moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals! And, yet to me, what is this quintessence of dust?  
(II. ii. 323-9)

Many critics have noted the existence of Shakespeare's two personalities. Dowden concludes that Shakespeare moved in two worlds—one limited, practical and positive; the other a world opening into two infinities, an infinite of thought, and an infinite of passion.<sup>17</sup> Granville-Barker notices the existence of the "complaisant" Shakespeare, who is seen for the last time in *Henry V*, and the "daemonic" Shakespeare, who first fully manifests himself in *Hamlet*.<sup>18</sup> A. L. Rowse says that Shakespeare, himself a calculating rationalist, turned against calculating rationalism as a guide to life.<sup>19</sup> What it is necessary to point out is that the two sides to Shakespeare's personality do not exist side by side, needing to be mutually adjusted, but they are inextricably interfused. If we examine his great characters—Henry V, Shylock, Hamlet—we see that behind the intense realization of their thoughts and emotions there is an undertone of criticism that these are not enough. That is why almost all his dramatic works—from *Love's Labour's Lost* to *The Tempest*—are pervaded by an incisive irony, and there is an intricate artistry in the language used by the characters as also in their ideals, yearnings and dreams. When, for example, Berowne makes out a plea for plain, unvarnished language, he expresses himself through a decorative metaphor: *russet* yeas and honest *kersey* noes. Not unoften a single word sums up the opposed points of view that constitute Shakespeare's attitude to life. Plutarch says that when Cleopatra met Julius Caesar and Cneius Pompey, she was young and ignorant, but she was mature both physically and intellectually when she first came in contact with Antony. Cleopatra, at the height of her life of pleasure, thus refers to her salad days, apostrophizing Caesar:

Broad-fronted Caesar,  
When thou wast here above the ground, I was  
A morsel for a monarch,            (*Antony and Cleopatra*, I. v. 29-31).

But when Antony, consumed with jealousy, speaks of his first meeting with her, he says in utter disgust:

I found you as a *morsel*, cold upon  
Dead Caesar's trencher; (III. xi. 116-17).

The same word "morsel"—no reader or spectator can miss the connexion between the two passages—expresses Shakespeare's appreciation of the delicious appeal made by physical charm and also his withering scorn of charm that is merely physical.

Dogberry and Bottom have stolid self-assurance, and they are successful in their own ways. But they, too, have eerie longings and dreams which throw a strange light on their follies and eccentricities. Of all aspirations of the human soul, certainly the strangest is Dogberry's: "O! that I had been written down an ass!" Bottom is a hard-headed, hard-handed realist without imagination, but with a soaring ambition to dominate the world of artistic vision. This side of his character, which is as closely related to his realism as the convex mirror to the concave or the centrifugal force to the centripetal, is represented and caricatured in his bottomless dream. Leave out the dream and Bottom becomes only a burlesque of a rude mechanical; leave out his experiments in realistic acting and he would be only an item in an anti-masque.

It has already been suggested that Shakespeare showed possibly more sympathy for unsuccessful men than for the successful. Brutus is a deeper character than Antony in *Julius Caesar*, and although the dramatist is fair to Octavius Caesar, his imagination takes wings when he writes of Cleopatra. Yet Brutus is "mad", and Cleopatra little better than a courtesan. The same thing is partly true of the comedies, too, although here Shakespeare seems to be anxious to celebrate the triumph of human impulses over barren idealism whenever he has occasion to present any clash between these two forces. The first example that comes to mind is *Love's Labour's Lost*, where Berowne, who is said to be a self-portrait, exclaims against the tall demands made by the King of Navarre:

O! these are barren tasks, too hard to keep,  
Not to see ladies, study, fast, not sleep. (I. i. 47-48)

On the surface the drama portrays the defeat of Navarre's philosophy and the triumph of Berowne's, but Shakespeare delves deeper and administers the hasty lovers a well-deserved rebuke through their ladyloves who ask them to go through a period of austerity before they can get an answer to their proposals. Thus the only difference between the First Act of *Love's Labour's Lost* and the Fifth is that the period of withdrawal from amorous and worldly pleasures is reduced from three years to one, and though the

King is humbled, his ideal is vindicated. And we have to note further that Berowne's anti-asceticism leads directly to Sir Toby Belch's philosophy of cakes and ale, which upholds the primitive instincts but also degrades human life to mere animality. The Puritan Malvolio is exposed and disgraced, but in defeat and darkness he asserts the dignity of the human soul—"I think nobly of the soul and no way approve his (Pythagoras's) opinion"—and thus proves superior to his persecutors. It is reasonable to conclude, therefore, that although Shakespeare caricatured the eccentricities of a Puritan, he had respect for Puritanism. That is the impression we derive even from his portraiture of the unhandsome Angelo in *Measure for Measure*. Angelo is a corrupt deputy whose practice does not agree with his philosophy, and his philosophy, too, takes no note of the basic instincts of humanity. But Vienna is such a vile place that if it is not controlled by the principles that are enunciated by Angelo, it would become a sink of lechery and the consequences which follow from lechery.

The ambivalence spoken of above is seen not merely in Shakespeare's handling of character, plot and language but also in his choice of locality for many of his plays—his comedies and romances. The action of *Love's Labour's Lost* takes place not in the court of Navarre but in a park which is supposed to be away from it. At the end of the play, however, although the King is prescribed a period of probation in which he will live an "austere insociable life", Berowne, the real hero of the play, is enjoined to purge himself of his faults by social service, seeking "the weary beds of people sick". In *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, it is in a forest—"This shadowy desert, unfrequented woods"—that the lovers are united and all discords are resolved, but they quickly return to the city to enjoy "triumphs, mirth and rare solemnity". The principal incidents of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* happen in a wood near Athens; it is there that the course of true love runs smooth in spite of impediments, but the excursion to the woods is only an interlude; it vitally influences the destinies of some of the characters but is not intended to be permanent. In *The Winter's Tale*, the pastoral scenes are a refreshing contrast to the stuffy life of Bohemia and Sicilia, but Perdita returns to her royal heritage and rejuvenates the sickly life at court. In appearance and influence she is like "Flora/Peering at April's front". It is in an enchanted uninhabited island and not in Milan that Prospero, who has so often been identified with Shakespeare, realizes his ambitions, but he does not stay there permanently. At the crest of his power he claims back his dukedom of Milan—not for himself but for his daughter for whom he also annexes the kingdom of Naples. Is this combination of the desire to grab and the desire to relinquish a characteristic of Shakespeare himself? We may recall that he made his fortune in London, but like Prospero buried his magic staff and lived in retirement at Strat-

ford-on-Avon. In *Cymbeline*, too, there is an excursion into the mountain caves of Wales, although this is no more than an excursion. Since the idyllic scenes are somewhat unnecessary to the plot, it may be that they express a deep yearning in the poet's soul. It seems that he got sick of the cramped atmosphere of urban life and wanted to escape into the freer surroundings of woods, forests and mountains, but he was too much of a realist not to know that such an escape can give only a temporary holiday. The best example of this interaction between the country and the city is to be found in *As You Like It*, where pastoral scenes alternate with scenes of court life, and the rival claims of urban and rural life are discussed at more levels than one. The sincerity of Duke Senior has been called in question, because having extolled the Forest of Arden over the painted pomp from which he has been driven out, he rushes with alacrity to take back his dukedom from his brother. But he may reflect Shakespeare's own attitude to life which possibly tried to make a synthesis of the outer and the inner, the material and the spiritual.

This is the conclusion suggested by some passages which have an overtone of meaning beyond their immediate dramatic context. The advice Polonius gives to his son is memorable for its pithiness and worldly wisdom. Parallels for many of these precepts have been found in Lyly's *Euphues* and Lord Burleigh's advice to his son. One of the intriguing things in this worldly homily is the unconventional ending which is in a different key from what has gone before:

to thine own self be true,  
And it must follow, as the night the day,  
Thou canst not then be false to any man.

(*Hamlet*, I. iii. 78-80)

Polonius might have got this precept at second hand and tagged it without understanding its implications or for him truth to self might have meant only intelligent selfishness. But this homily sums up Shakespeare's double nature—his observant, circumspect uprightness which won him success and prosperity and his searching conscience which would always look inward. It is the combination of these two faculties that gave him breadth of vision and insight into the tortuous workings of the human mind. The Duke in *Measure for Measure* is the quintessence of a quintessence, but he is also something like Providence; in relation to the other characters he is omniscient, and although they move as they like, he is also omnipotent. There is a more harmonious combination of Freedom and Necessity here than even in *The Tempest*. So when Shakespeare conceived this character, he might have likened him to himself. But one thing that this Duke does not do is self-examination. He never scrutinizes himself

adequately, and therefore many of his actions are difficult to explain. If he is wise like Providence, he is also enigmatic as Providence alone can be. Yet when Shakespeare describes him through the lips of Escalus, he gives him a characteristic that is not true of him dramatically: "One that above all other strifes contended to know himself. . . a gentleman of all temperance" (III. ii. 251 ff.). Although the Duke is a man of "temperance", the "strifes" he observes and manipulates never move him to self-questioning. Knowing, however unconsciously, that the Duke stood in relation to the plot as an author to his creation, did Shakespeare, equally unconsciously, give him a trait of character that was truer of himself than of the Duke?

#### IV

This questioning impulse leads us to the most prominent feature of Shakespeare's character—an acute consciousness of the conflict between Good and Evil. For him Evil is elemental, overwhelming, and in the ultimate analysis, causeless and inscrutable. If he had not this compelling sense of Evil as a primal and terrific force, he would not have modified the source stories of his tragedies in the way he did. The story of King Lear had originally a happy ending, Macbeth in Holinshed's *Chronicles* is a much better man than in Shakespeare's play, and Iago in Cinthio's narrative has a recognizable motive for his crime. Many of the other villains—Edmund and Goneril, for example—are more evil-minded than their immediate motives would warrant. Nor could it be said that it was towards the end of the century—in what is called his Jacobean or tragic period—that he came to have his first glimpse of the power of Evil. Aaron is an early portrait, and Don John, who, like Iago, derives satisfaction from the unhappiness of others, figures in one of the sunny comedies. And what is more significant is that the conflict between Good and Evil, which is the substance of the tragedies, remains in a sense unresolved till the end. In the latest plays, the ending is happy and there is some kind of "reconciliation", but while, according to Dowden, Shakespeare in "the tragedies had made his enquiries into the mystery of evil", in the last plays his severity was tempered, that is to say, he was no longer interested in any "inquisition" into the mystery of evil.<sup>20</sup> That is why—although one may not go as far as Lytton Strachey—the reconciliation effected at the end of these plays looks somewhat like a patchwork. Jealousy leaves Leontes as mysteriously as it came to him; Iachimo's villainy might have had serious effects but he himself has not the deadly seriousness of Iago; in *The Tempest* Antonio and Sebastian are exposed and forgiven but fratricidal ingratitude is not explored as filial ingratitude is in *King Lear*. Evil



even in the last stage of Shakespeare's dramatic work remains a destructive force which may be subdued or pardoned but never adequately explained or assimilated.

Over against this there is the force of Good—equally elemental, equally inscrutable, and equally irrepressible. Why should Cordelia take upon herself the duty of protecting her father against daughters to whom he had given away his kingdom? More mysterious still is Emilia's exposure of her husband with whom her interests were obviously bound up. Then it is a commonplace of criticism that in Shakespearian tragedy although Evil destroys much that is good, it also destroys itself and the survivors are Cassio, Edgar, Albany, Fortinbras and Macduff—men who are not evil-minded, and some of them positively good. There is a soul of goodness in things evil and strangely enough, often the seed of evil in things good. Macbeth's conscience or imagination is as powerful as his criminal intention, and although Goneril dies unrepentant, dying Edmund feels a strong urge to do some good before it is too late. More significantly, Iago, in whom Shakespeare portrays "an absolute infidel", acknowledges the superiority of goodness, for when all his other motives are abandoned, he says that he must kill Cassio, for Cassio has a daily beauty in his life which makes him ugly.

This is only one side of the picture. If Shakespeare had an overwhelming intuition of evil, he had in a sense even stronger faith in goodness, which in characters like Cordelia, Desdemona and Ophelia (who all figure in the tragedies) is unmixed with even a "dram of eale". But goodness by itself is frail, and even un-understanding. Ophelia cannot fathom Hamlet's mind, and in her perplexity Desdemona turns to Iago of all men for advice. In her own quiet way Cordelia recognizes that goodness is often ineffective:

We are not the first  
Who, with best meaning, have incurr'd the worst.  
(*King Lear*, V. iii. 3-4)

But there is another reflection which Shakespeare's portraiture of the conflict of Good and Evil arouses in us. If Cordelia had been less unbending in her goodness, she would have been able to manage her father better in the initial stages, and the tragedy might not have happened. If Ophelia had been more sophisticated, she would have been able to see into Hamlet's mind, and although it is impossible to conceive of any turn in the events that might have averted the tragedy of Hamlet, Ophelia's history might have been less pathetic. As it is, she innocently plays into the hands of her father and the King, and acts as a decoy, thus helping to sharpen Hamlet's pessimism and misogyny. *Othello* produces on us the feeling that

the love of Desdemona and the Moor was bound to end in disaster, and Iago only accelerates the process of its dissolution. This aspect of the tragedy has been most effectively put forward by Middleton Murry, who thinks that the course of every true love leads inevitably to its own destruction. The tragedy of *Othello*, says he, "has its source in the heart of the passion, which is the oneness of two separate beings. When their oneness is entire, still they are separate beings: and that is the tragedy of human love. . . . Iago is an inevitable by-product in the process of making drama of the subtle tragedy of human love. Take that tragedy out of its own time-medium, and an Iago is necessary to maintain its motion in the medium of the two hours' traffic of the stage." Iago is thus "simply the awareness of the potentiality of death in human love. That awareness is Shakespeare's."<sup>21</sup>

A poet with such a complex awareness of Good and Evil takes an aesthetic rather than a religious view of life. A religious attitude is compelled to explain the presence of Evil as a part of the scheme of things designed by a benevolent Deity. The creator of Aaron, Don John and Iago could have no such assurance. He posited Evil as a power alien to Good but inextricably interfused with life. But he was neither a pessimist nor a cynic, for he knew that Good can be defeated but not eliminated, and Evil can never sustain itself; what is more, its energy is not only pernicious but suicidal. There was a tradition that Shakespeare died a Papist, but it might be assumed that he lived the life of a conforming Anglican. Attempts have been made to show that Shakespeare's plays express a Christian view of life and some of them dramatize the preachings of the gospels. But as a dramatist he seems to have had no firm notion of a benevolent Deity, and to say that he was imbued with the spirit of Christianity would be just as true as to say that he was a Nihilist or a Marxist or a Pagan. A man with a soaring imagination and a penetrating intellect, who saw both the magnitude and futility of human endeavour, he was naturally led to speculations about the existence of a higher power that might interfere with human destiny. Sometimes he felt that it is not because of the stars but of ourselves that we are underlings, sometimes he thought the gods—not God—to be as capricious as wanton boys with flies, sometimes he believed them to be just, but he never formulated a definite theory about the nature of the Divinity that shapes our ends, and when in what was one of his latest works, he did conceive of a character gifted with omniscience and omnipotence, he imagined him as a magician rather than as a religious man. This might have been his limitation as a thinker—for different reasons Tolstoy, Bernard Shaw and T. S. Eliot have found his thought unsatisfactory—but it gave variety and incisiveness to his dramatic work.

As a dramatist he was interested in the diverse strands making up the complex web of human life, in the mystery and subtlety of human impulses and in the medley of splendour and squalor in human society. But his deepest urge seemed to be for simplicity, for tenderness and spontaneous goodwill. Ben Jonson called him a man of "an open and free nature", and that is how he described one of his most loving and lovable tragic heroes, Othello; and although Hamlet is neither open nor free, the King says that he is most generous and above all contrivings (IV. vii. 135). The Duke in *Measure for Measure* is referred to as a man "Rather rejoicing to see another merry, than merry at anything which professed to make him rejoice" (III. ii. 255-7). In the play the Duke promotes the happiness of Claudio and Juliet and Marina and also finds a bride for himself. The above description is not particularly applicable or inapplicable to the Duke, and Escalus who gives it is aware of its irrelevance to the context. But this seems to give an idea of what Shakespeare himself aspired to be—a man diametrically opposed to Don John and Iago, who delighted in spoiling the happiness of others. And we seem to catch Shakespeare's own voice also in Portia's description of herself:

an unlesson'd girl, unschool'd, unpractis'd;  
 Happy in this, she is not yet so old  
 But she may learn; happier than this,  
 She is not bred so dull but she can learn;  
 Happiest of all is that her gentle spirit  
 Commits itself to yours to be directed,  
 As from her lord, her governor, her king.

(*The Merchant of Venice*, III. ii. 160-6)

This is certainly an over-idealized portrait of a brilliant woman who can bandy legal sophistries in the manner of a Lord Chancellor, but it seems to give an idea of the woman Shakespeare in the deepest recesses of his heart longed to meet.

Arguing along these lines, we can get an intimate glimpse of Shakespeare's personality in his portraiture of the relations between Feste the Clown and Lady Olivia. Actors in Elizabethan times faced inveterate opposition from the puritancial city fathers; if they held their own, it was largely due to the patronage of the gracious Queen herself. In 1572, an Act of Parliament was passed against, among others, "Common Players in Enterludes and Minstrels, not belonging to any Baron of this Realme or to any other honorable Personage of Greater Degree", but in 1573-74, Queen Elizabeth, much to the annoyance of the City Corporation, issued a patent authorizing Leicester's men to perform plays anywhere in England, and in 1583 she formed a Company of her own, the Queen's Men. There was a tradition confirmed by Ben Jonson that the Queen was "taken"

by Shakespeare's plays, and it was said that she delighted in the acting of William Kempe, who played Falstaff. If, in the light of all this, we approach the character of Feste, who was tolerated and patronized by Lady Olivia in spite of the hostility of her puritanical steward Malvolio, we can see into the inner recesses of Shakespeare's mind:

*Mal:* I marvel your ladyship takes delight in such a barren rascal: I saw him put down the other day with an ordinary fool that has no more brain than a stone. Look you now, he's out of his guard already; unless you laugh and minister occasion to him, he is gagged. I protest I take these wise men, that crow so at these set kind of fools, no better than the fools' zanies.

*Oli:* Oh! you are sick of self-love, Malvolio. To be generous, guiltless, and of free disposition, is to take those things for bird-bolts that you deem cannon-bullets. There is no slander in an allowed fool, though he do nothing but rail; nor no railing in a known discreet man, though he do nothing but reprove.

*Clo:* Now, Mercury endue thee with leasing, for thou speakest well of fools! . . . Thou hast spoken for us Madonna, as if thy eldest son should be a fool; whose skull Jove cram with brains!

(*Twelfth Night*, I. v. 88-120)

In this instinctive, effusive response of the Clown to Olivia's generous and free disposition we may hear the voice of Shakespeare, who, if the Sonnets have any autobiographical significance, was haunted by thoughts of his own inferior status in society. Feste's heart as well as Shakespeare's melts at the touch of kindness in a world where "the rain it raineth everyday".

The nearest picture of the man that Shakespeare wished to be—and possibly was—is to be found in the portrait of Henry V drawn by his father towards the end of 2 *Henry IV*:

For he is gracious, if he be observ'd:  
He hath a tear for pity and a hand  
Open as day for melting charity;  
Yet, notwithstanding, being incens'd, he's flint;  
As humorous as winter, and as sudden  
As flaws congealed in the spring of day. (IV. iv. 30-35)

The portrait is dramatically irrelevant, and it does not give a correct picture of its subject, who as Prince and King never had a "tear for pity" or "a hand/Open as day for melting charity". But it takes us to the essence of Shakespeare's own character. He was sweet and gentle, convivial and lovable, and if as a keen man of business, he was solemn and grave, careful about his investments and strict in the exaction of his rights and dues,

possibly flint when he was incensed, "humorous" and sudden, at heart he was gracious, charitable and emotionally responsive.

SUBODH CHANDRA SENGUPTA

#### NOTES & REFERENCES

1. Essay on *Kavijeevanee* (1901).
2. *Ulysses* (ed. 1937), pp. 172-206.  
It is to be noted that in the only play—*The Merry Wives of Windsor*—in which Shakespeare portrays his own middle class society the wives are sportive but chaste.
3. *The Man Shakespeare and His Tragic Life-story* (1909).  
*The Women of Shakespeare* (1911), p. ix.
4. *Shakespeare's 'Histories'* (San Marino, 1958), p. 136.
5. The question is discussed at length in two articles by E. M. Albright in *PMLA*, xlii, xlvi.
6. *New Shak. Soc. Trans.* (1874), p. 440.
7. *The Enchanted Glass* (Blackwell, 1957), p. 157.
8. Quoted by F. P. Wilson (Proc. Br. Academy, Vol. XLII), p. 280.
9. F. A. Yates: *A Study of 'Love's Labour's Lost'* (Cambridge, 1936); M. C. Bradbrook: *The School of Night* (Cambridge, 1936).
10. Introduction to *Henry V* (New Cambridge Shakespeare), p. xv.
11. *A Life of Shakespeare* (1899), p. 249.
12. *Shakespeare: A Critical Study of His Mind and Art* (twentythird impression), p. 406.
13. *Shakespeare's Final Period*, 1903.
14. *The Lion and the Fox* (1927), p. 286.
15. *Shakespeare Survey*, Vol. 4, p. 7.
16. *Oxford Lectures on Poetry* (1955), p. 355.
17. *op. cit.*, p. 35.
18. *Aspects of Shakespeare* (Oxford, 1933), pp. 49-83.
19. *William Shakespeare: A Biography* (1963), p. 375.
20. *op. cit.*, 405.
21. *Shakespeare* (1945), p. 316, p. 322.

[The Shakespeare references are to the one-volume Oxford edition of W. J. Craig.]

## “*Macbeth*”

### I

*Macbeth* presents the religious view of man's existence and destiny. The unparalleled religious crisis through which Europe was passing at this period, shaking the traditional religious heritage to its foundations, necessarily deprived Shakespeare's interpretation and vision of the simple clarity of an *Everyman* or of a *Pilgrim's Progress*. The first, written before the violent phase of the disintegration had got under way, and the second when more settled ideas had begun to consolidate themselves, have both a fluency of construction which we must not look for in Shakespeare. But the religious, Christian view is intensely there to determine the nature of the imagery and the significance of the characters and of the *mythos*; to provide, in short, the basic theme of the great Shakespearean tragedies, chiefly that of *Macbeth*. Needless to say, this Christian view is not personal to Shakespeare but that of his age and of his people; what belongs to him is, as always, the power, range and integrity of the poetic realization of the idea, showing that he does not merely passively receive and record it but achieves a genuine cognition of it through arduous intellectual and emotional effort.

How sustained this effort is is shown by the many half-realized and incomplete prefigurements of *Macbeth*, particularly *Richard III*. An idea or concept engages Shakespeare, at first intermittently and then dominatingly, until he comes to a full understanding of it and projects it in an adequate dramatic form. The human problem that is the basic idea of *Macbeth* is the relation between evil in human nature—sin—and the everlasting scheme of things presided over by a Deity whose justice, wisdom and benevolence could be doubted temporarily but never rejected. More abstractly, the problem was that of human responsibility and free will, human freedom, in a world ruled by divine necessity.

The Catholic answer to this problem, arrived at after centuries of groping, resolved the contradiction by an extremely subtle dialectical process, but was not equal to the challenge of the Reformed Theology, particularly that of Calvin's merciless logic. Shakespeare's own Church adopted the Calvinist doctrines of Predestination and Reprobation into the traditional doctrine with a masterly ambiguity, as Bindoff points out.<sup>1</sup> Shakespeare, it must be emphasized, is not writing a religious or theological tract. But he did not have to be a theologian in order to respond to and be profoundly affected by issues and pressures which were of passionate concern

to the masses of the people. *Macbeth* explores the meaning of human life in those terms which art uses in order to project our deepest thoughts and feelings; in broad, popular religious symbols and myths, whose meaning is as profound as it is easily recognized. To analyse them is the purpose of the pages that follow.

## II

Uniquely among Shakespeare's plays, *Macbeth* begins with a set of supernatural figures. Witches, deriving from mankind's immemorial heritage of superstition, have been always mostly associated with darkness and night and crime. A certain nimbus of "nefas" attaches to them even when pre-Christian mythology elevates them to a certain augustness of function, for consultation with them, except under express divine mandate, is full of unpredictable danger. The prophecies are ambiguous and hard to interpret, and are mostly intended to mislead and harm:

Tu ne quaesieris, *scire nefas*, quem mihi, quem tibi  
finem Di dederint, Leuconoe, nec Babylonios  
tentaris numeros,

warns Horace against oracular and astrological prophecies.<sup>2</sup>

The most conspicuous Scriptural resort to witchcraft (a divinely appointed prophetess like Hulda in 2 *Kings* is different) in order to know the future occurs in I *Sam.* 28, in which Saul visits the Witch of Endor in order to know his destiny from the shade of the Prophet Samuel. The act was improper. Saul himself had taken severe measures for the destruction of sorcery and witchcraft in Israel. The parallelism between the situation of Saul and that of Macbeth is obvious, for the latter, too, is cast away by God and seeks the aid of sorcery when he is "afraid and his heart greatly trembled." Despair overcomes him with redoubled strength at the end of the scene (IV. i); "Saul fell straightaway all along on the earth, and was sore afraid, because of the words of Samuel; and there was no strength in him." The obvious disapprobation of sorcery and witchcraft in the Book of Samuel is emphatically repeated in the Prophetic Books and in St Paul's dealings with Barjesus and "certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists" of Ephesus, of St Philip with Simon. Figures of ancient tribal superstition, receiving a moral orientation through Scripture, Witches pass into the low intellectual tradition of medieval Christianity and survive sporadically in modern Europe as in the rest of the world. They became, in the process, figures of diabolic abomination.

*Macbeth* Witches would be real old women with horrible physical

deformities, who—as folk lore, not unsupported by some learned theologians of the Catholic and Reformed Faiths, maintained—had entered into a compact with the Devil against God. They meet together in foul weather of their own making (this power of theirs is very old and is recognized even in tribal superstitions) at the end of one unsuccessful rebellion against the Christian king of Scotland and conspire to launch another—they know it will be unsuccessful at the end, although they will at first succeed;

Though his bark cannot be lost,  
Yet it shall be tempest-tost. (I. iii. 24-25)—

says the First Witch, after predicting Macbeth's own doom in the master o' the Tiger's,

Sleep shall neither night nor day  
Hang upon his pent-house lid;  
He shall live a man forbid. (I. iii. 19-22)

Macbeth, their chosen instrument, has the primary place in their plans and Banquo is not mentioned at their first appearance at all. Fair is foul and foul is fair, they declare, with that ominous equivocation which they never drop; the battle is going to be lost and won. Here certainly more is indicated that the immediate situation.

The Witches' subsequent appearances make it perfectly clear that their relation to the hero is not merely private. Few great dramas of the period are concerned with the fate of the individual except as radically linked with the fate of the community. They tempt the hero to assassinate the king and usurp the throne; to subvert all laws divine, natural and human; to challenge with senseless rashness religion and the foundations of the created order:

Though you untie the winds, and let them fight  
Against the Churches; though the yesty waves  
Confound and swallow navigation up;  
Though bladed corn be lodg'd and trees blown down;  
Though castles topple upon their warders' heads;  
Though palaces, and pyramids, do slope  
Their heads to their foundations; though the treasure  
Of Nature's germens tumble all together,  
Even till destruction sicken, (IV. i. 51-60).

Notably, as Elliott points out,<sup>3</sup> the fight is first of all against the Churches, that symbolize the primary foundation of ordered human existence; then all human achievement is to be annihilated; finally, by tumbling all together the treasure of Nature's germens, primeval chaos is to be restored.



We have here a re-enactment of the Jewish-Christian battle between God and Satan, which is a re-echo, with a new moral significance, of one of mankind's oldest myths. The battle for the human soul is perpetually lost and renewed by Satan. *Macbeth*, telling the story of this battle, takes its place among the major achievements of European Christian culture, as does Marlowe's *Dr Faustus*. When Macbeth invokes "seeling Night" to come and

Scarf up the tender eye of pitiful Day,  
And, with thy bloody and invisible hand,  
Cancel, and tear to pieces, that great bond  
Which keeps me pale! (III. iii. 47-50)—

he has already realized his alienation from the human order based on God's law (that great bond) and commits himself unequivocally to the service of the "common Enemy of man".

I am in blood  
Stepp'd in so far, that should I wade no more,  
Returning were as tedious as go o'er. (III. iv. 135-7)—

he says, almost repeating Clytemnestra's words in Seneca's *Agamemnon*:

da frena et omnem prona nequitiam incita;  
per scelera semper sceleribus tutum est iter.<sup>4</sup>

Seneca's tirade is transformed by Shakespeare into a defiance of the divine providence and thus into a curse against the speaker himself. And the Witches, those

secret, black and midnight hags (IV. i. 48)

doing a deed without a name, evoke the personae of an awe-inspiring drama.

### III

Nature in *Macbeth* is organically related to the moral and religious theme. It is perverted and corrupt, full of

Shipwrecking storms and direful thunders (I. ii. 26)

that break

whence the sun 'gins his reflection, (I. ii. 26)

showing that it too like the hero rebels against God's law. The quarter of the sky where the life-giving sun rises is corrupted into a source of des-

truction. Lightning and murky night, predatory and night-roving animals, ominous birds like the raven, the owl, the bat, the crow and the rook, poisonous reptiles like the snake and the scorpion, abound in the play's first three acts, which present Macbeth's evil and rebellious world. The climax of abomination occurs in IV. i, where the Witches hold a sort of Walpurgis night. Symbolically, all the beasts, birds, reptiles and insects represent sin or announce a sinful act, and Lady Macbeth's advice to her husband to

look like th' innocent flower,  
But be the serpent under it (I. v. 64-65)

is the first statement of the association between Macbeth and Satan. The raven, Lady Macbeth's chosen evangel, is in folk lore

The hateful messenger of heavy things  
Of death and dolour telling,

which,

seldom boding good,  
Croak their black auguries from some dark wood.

Dyer's *English Folk Lore*, from which the above is taken,<sup>5</sup> informs us that the rook mentioned by Macbeth before Banquo's murder:

Light thickens; and the crow  
Makes wing to the rooky wood (III. iii. 50-51)—

is universally associated with death in English folk lore and that "in Looe, East Cornwall, it is a popular belief that rooks forsake an estate, if, on the death of the proprietor, no heir can be found to succeed."<sup>6</sup> The connection between the superstition of a region remote and unknown in Shakespeare and the *Macbeth* passage must not be laboured. The connection, nevertheless, is extremely interesting, especially in view of the fact that the whole scene is occupied with Macbeth's rage over the failure of his succession and that the question of the rightful heir is one of the play's issues.

Hooker tells us that Nature may sometimes deviate from the law of divine Providence on account of "divine malediction" through participation in human sin. It also, then, rebels against God's law.<sup>7</sup> This corrupted and rebellious Nature belongs to Macbeth's sin-polluted world. Its sterility and hatred against itself are to be especially emphasized. Even

Duncan's horses (a thing most strange and certain)  
Beauteous and swift, the minions of their race,

Turn'd wild in nature, broke their stalls, flung out,  
 Contending 'gainst obedience, as they would make  
 War with mankind. (II. iv. 14-18)

Chaos is indeed "come again". The last two lines are particularly significant. The horse, king-symbol in many ancient mythologies, crowns the hierarchy of animals in the medieval view of degree. When they contend against obedience, the collapse of the entire hierarchical order, physical, human and ethical, must be imminent indeed. Finally, they even "eat each other", symbolizing religious and civilized man's regression into cannibalism. We recall from *King Lear*:

It will come  
 Humanity must perforce prey on itself,  
 Like monsters of the deep.

Thus the trebly odious sin of Duncan's murder:

He's here in double trust:  
 First, as I am his kinsman and his subject,  
 Strong both against the deed; then, as his host...

Besides, this Duncan  
 Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been  
 So clear in his great office... (I. vii. 12-14; 16-19)

is followed immediately by terrible convulsion in the physical universe. Even time's even flow, guiding all things to the appointed period of their maturity, is perverted into a stormy, preternatural tumult by the sinful deeds of Macbeth, the fertility of which is sickening. This is indeed the only kind of fertility that exists in the Macbeth world:

*Mal* : What's the newest grief?  
*Rosse* : That of an hour's age doth hiss the speaker;  
 Each minute teems a new one. (IV. iii. 174-6)

The night and darkness that envelop this world symbolically represent its hellishness: "Hell is murky". Unnaturally cruel deeds are committed only in the night. Undoubtedly, this association of night and evil deeds has a purely literary ancestry, deriving from Seneca. But to the Christian imagination night suggests also the deeper terror of abandonment by God, isolation and intense spiritual dread, as the innumerable evening hymns, belonging to all the churches, testify. All motion is suspended after sunset in Dante's Purgatory. And all this sense is communicated by the image of night in *Macbeth*.

## IV

Again: the silence of night may indicate trust, an assured expectancy of some supreme divine gift, as in the beautiful Christmas hymn "Still night, holy night"; or it may indicate the suspension of all normal activity because of the withdrawal of the protective forces and of the temporary and permitted domination of evil:

Now o'er the one half world  
Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse  
The curtain'd sleep: witchcraft celebrates  
Pale Hecate's off'rings; and wither'd Murther,  
Alarum'd by his sentinel, the wolf,  
Whose howl's his watch, thus with his stealthy pace,  
With Tarquin's ravishing strides, towards his design  
Moves like a ghost. (II. i. 49-56)—

says Macbeth, as he mimetically performs the deed he is about to commit. The echoes of his steps shock him into a sense of reality, as the nightmare world of crime is for a moment interrupted. So he demands of "sure and firm-set earth":

Hear not my steps, which way they walk, for fear  
Thy very stones prate of my whereabouts,  
And take the present horror from the time,  
Which now suits with it. (II. i. 57-60)—

as if it is now the earth and earth alone that refuses to be his accomplice in the foul conspiracy.

Darkness hides the day after the King's assassination:

...by th' clock 'tis day,  
And yet dark night strangles the travelling lamp.  
Is't night's predominance, or the day's shame,  
That darkness does the face of earth entomb,  
When living light should kiss it? (II. iv. 6-10)

Dark night strangling the sun directly evokes the image of Christ's crucifixion. Darkness entombs earth's face during Christ's agony on the Cross in the Synoptic Gospels, and Christ is pervasively associated with the sun in the New Testament. He is the Sun of Righteousness. It is also of interest to note that according to Frazer,<sup>8</sup> followed by a number of later scholars, Mithra, the solar god, is the origin of Christ.

The deeper and more lasting reverberations of the above lines and indeed of the whole situation are, then, to be traced to Scripture, to which Shakespeare's debt is as profound as that of the Greek dramatists to Homer.

## V

The percurrence of the blood image in *Macbeth* and its significance have been noted by all critics.

Frazer describes the taboo attached to blood in primitive societies and the horror in which the spilling of the king's or chief's blood on the earth was held.<sup>9</sup> The latter gives an additional point to the shock of Macduff on discovering the King's dead body and to the peculiar nature of Macbeth's suffering immediately after killing the King. A deep-rooted and primitive instinct has been violated.

Religion sanctified this instinct, and blood was elevated from an object of taboo into one of veneration. The word "blood" is an important one in both the Old and the New Testaments, but there is no agreement as to the meaning precisely indicated by it. We need not enter into the controversy among modern Anglican theologians as to whether "blood" stands for the quickening power of the life released by death, or for physical death by violent means. The latter meaning, adopted by Stibbs<sup>10</sup>—not fully excluding the alternative meaning, however—appears to be more appropriate.

The first human figure in the play is that of the bleeding Sergeant.

What bloody man is that?

(I. ii. 1)

exclaims Duncan, as the man is visible at a distance. "Bloody" here means blood-smeared and suggests blood-thirsty (the second meaning appears more often in the play); so the Sergeant is a prefigurement of Duncan and his dead body covered with blood, and also of Macbeth the murderer.

The Scriptural sense of the word as death brought about by violent means explains the terrible intensity of the blood image in the murder scene and thereafter, which we otherwise altogether miss. The consequences of the murder flow from this significance. "If ye put me to death," says Jeremiah, "ye shall surely bring innocent blood upon yourselves, and upon this city, and upon the inhabitants thereof" (26.15). The hero does so by murdering Duncan—his blood pollutes the land. Macbeth does not know a moment's respite from fear after the murder, for—"So ye shall not pollute the land wherein ye are: for blood it defileth the land: and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it" (*Num.* 35.33). Macbeth is afraid of the sudden and righteous vengeance of God, which must come upon him, the sinner who has forfeited God's protection and has become an outlaw although he is king. In his fear he wades deeper and deeper in blood; and the climac-

tic act of the slaughter of Macduff's family starts the last phase in his progress in damnation. The point of this episode is the utter innocence of Lady Macduff and her son, which makes them purely sacrificial victims for the recovery of the land from pollution.

Sinful Macduff!  
They were all struck for thee. (IV. iii. 224-5)—

says Macduff, substituting himself for the real sinner; his suffering makes him another sacrificial victim.

In all this the most important meaning of the word "blood" is that given to it by Stibbs—death, symbolizing either a crime or its expiation. Christ dies on the Cross in order to expiate, in token of the new "Covenant" between man and God. We must here refer again to a passage already mentioned. Macbeth speaks of the "great bond" which "keeps me pale", just before the killing of Banquo; night's "bloody and invisible hand" is to "cancel and tear it to pieces". (III. iii. 48, 49). This bond suggests the Covenant sealed by Christ's death, that is, by His blood shed on the Cross, and it is to be torn to pieces by another death, again that of an innocent man. Thus the bond of which Macbeth is so afraid that it keeps him pale is not only an ancient compact between God and man (*Ex.* 19 ff.), but is also based on a more recent, holier, more binding dispensation.

The killing of Duncan makes Macbeth an outcast from the community of God even before he is King:

One cried, "God bless us!" and, "Amen," the other,  
As they had seen me with these hangman's hands.  
List'ning their fear, I could not say, "Amen,"  
When they did say, "God bless us." (II. ii. 26-29)

He is, in a deep sense, excommunicated; the crown upon his head is indeed "fruitless" (III. i. 60), the coronation a hollow ritual. The sense of all this fills him with unbearable agony, almost stunning him:

But wherefore could I not pronounce "Amen"?  
I had most need of blessing, and "Amen"  
Stuck in my throat. (II. ii. 30-32)

And Lady Macbeth—a "moral imbecile", as Dr Whitaker<sup>11</sup> says—is for a moment nearly silenced. She can only say:

Consider it not so deeply.

These deeds must not be thought  
After these ways: so, it will make us mad. (II. ii. 29; 33-34)

Her fate shows that, in spite of what she says to Macbeth, she actually begins to lose grip of herself from this moment.

Finally come those words of supreme terror, as the sinner is blinded by his sense of sin to everything but the symbol and the visible token of his sin:

What hands are here? Ha! they pluck out mine eyes.  
 Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood  
 Clean from my hand? No, this my hand will rather  
 The multitudinous seas incarnadine,  
 Making the green one red. (II. ii. 57-62)

No analysis or commentary can exhaust the visual, semantic and moral associations of the above passage, but it is noteworthy that the same idea, same image almost, occurs in the *Choephoroi* (72-74) of Aeschylus:

All the world's waters running in a single drift  
 May try to wash the blood from the hand  
 Of the stained man; they only bring new blood guilt on.

The two following passages from *Revelation* are also strikingly relevant:

And the second angel sounded, and, as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood: (8.8)

And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea. (16.3)

The Apocalyptic passages, which may be the basis of Macbeth's image, link up the play's theme with the moral history of man and the universe in the Christian vision, giving it the perspective which belongs to it. There is a re-enactment of the sins of Adam and of Cain, of man's first disobedience, of the first bloodshed. And Macbeth's crime is no longer a private and individual crime involving his destiny alone; like Raskolnikov's, it compels a re-presentation and re-examination of the fundamental moral laws and their final vindication effected through the sinner's punishment. The kingdom of Scotland is contaminated and chaos invades the physical world; death alone exists. "Every living soul died in the sea." The sick and impotent king rules over a sick kingdom pining for a healer.

Attention may also be drawn to the following passage from *Arden of Feversham* (pubd. 1592), where, in spite of the crudity of the expression, we have an anticipation of the great scene in *Macbeth*. After the husband's

murder, the guilty wife and her maid, surprised by a knocking at the door, try to remove the bloodstains from the floor:

*Susan* (The Maid): The blood cleaveth to the ground and will not  
out.

*Ales* (The Wife) : But with my nails ile scrape away the blood;...  
The more I striue, the more the blood appears!

*Susan*: What's the reason, M(istris), can you tell?

*Ales* : Because I blush not at my husband's death.<sup>12</sup>

Here too there is a realization by the murderer herself of the abomination of her deed. The stain is indelible because she is unrepentant like Macbeth.

Macbeth's

It will have blood: they say blood will have blood: (III. iv. 121-2)

after Banquo's murder, recalls

And he (God) said, What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's  
blood crieth unto me from the ground. And now thou art cursed  
from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's  
blood from thy hand;  
(Gen. 4. 10-11)

connects his sin directly with Cain's sin, and emphasizes the idea that Macbeth is cursed and an outcast, and that unless he repents he must suffer all the infernal torments to which the sinner is condemned.

## VI

Enough has been said to indicate a definition of Macbeth as a tragic hero. He is a sinner, like King Lear; but he is the remorseful but unrepentant and damned sinner, cursed, outcast, and destroyed at the end. Even his dead body is horribly outraged and there is rejoicing at his death. And his last word is a curse:

And damn'd be him. . . . (V. viii. 34)

Surely no other tragic hero perishes in this way. Himself the great betrayer, he is also betrayed by all out of fear and hate, and his reign is over wilderness and abomination. In a certain sense—but in a certain sense only—*Macbeth* truly presents the Shakespearean metaphysic of evil, the answer to Lear's great question:



Then let them anatomize Regan, see what breeds about her heart  
Is there any cause in nature that make these hard hearts?

(III. vi. 77-79)

Sinner, betrayer, murderer, Macbeth is a "man of blood", and—an important point—a Superman. Admiration for such a type does not belong to the Hellenic-Christian tradition and appears—in Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*, for example—only at the beginning of its disintegration. In his definition of the Tragic Hero Aristotle is careful to insist that he is more or less of the average type—"differing neither in valour nor in righteousness"—although of illustrious lineage and high prosperity. The ideal Greek character,<sup>13</sup> further, possessed of the four cardinal virtues of prudence, temperance, fortitude and justice,<sup>14</sup> became the ideal Christian character when he added to these the Pauline virtues of faith, hope and charity. Such a combination would not make for the Superman. And indeed, Spenser's representation of Magnificence, ideal Renaissance man and king, is a featureless, colourless personality compared with the high-aspiring personalities like Tamburlaine and Dr Faustus and Macbeth. It has of course never been maintained that the Tragic Hero is an ideal character, but the question hinges on the nature of the defect, the cause of the fall, the meaning of the fall. The Aristotelian hamartia is a defect of judgment, a temporary or lasting intellectual defect, and the suggestion of vice or moral depravity is excluded. The concept is inapplicable to a number of Shakespeare's tragic heroes, particularly to Macbeth, who is above all an outstanding individual, one from the first apart from the community and presented as such. And his hamartia is in the Pauline sense of sin, signifying precisely that depravity, that corruption of soul, which Aristotle excludes in the *Poetics*, although not elsewhere.

Much more, then, than a temporary or chronic intellectual failure is involved in the case of a Shakespearean hero like Macbeth or a Marlovian hero like Dr Faustus. Faustus saying "Consummatum est" as he seals his compact with Mephistopheles, repeating Christ's last words in the Vulgate version of St John; or Macbeth dismissing Duncan's soul as he is about to plunge the dagger into the king:

Hear it not, Duncan; for it is a knell  
That summons thee to Heaven, or to Hell.

(II. i. 63-64)—

these heroes do not belong to the Hellenic-Christian literary type at all but represent a new type, true and typical product of the biggest movement in man's history. Their prototypes—especially those of Macbeth—are Lucifer, Cain and Judas. Dante names the first and fourth rings of Hell's Ninth Circle after Cain and Judas respectively. At the centre

of Giudecca Satan, "Emperor of the Realm of Sorrow", stands fixed; to him "all the streams of Guilt keep flowing back, as to their source".

It is against the background of these prototypes that we should understand Faustus' or Macbeth's contemporary significance. The uncontrollable passion for self-aggrandizement and self-glorification from which their pride and ambition spring is anarchic, egocentric and centrifugal; and by challenging the theocentric order based on degree and order, these heroes represent for us the deepest significance of the movement we call the Renaissance and the Reformation, and represent, further, by their fortune, an unqualified criticism of the decisive aspects of this movement. Shakespeare—and not Shakespeare alone—sees it as the destruction of an extremely precious heritage based on a sense of human responsibility and all-embracing faith in a supernatural reality and its replacement by something inherently incapable of ever achieving any kind of a durable and stable organization, a society without any truly social bond, worshipping only the acquisitive instinct.

The inescapable judgment passed on the sinner is death: For the wages of sin is death (*Rom.* 6. 23). And by a terrible irony, the expected reward for which the sin is committed itself becomes the punishment: . . . per quae peccat quis, per haec et torquetur.<sup>15</sup> For Macbeth, no less than for Mephistopheles in *Dr Faustus*,

Why this is hell, nor am I out of it.<sup>16</sup>

Still living, but in a world turned into hell, the Shakespearean hero's pursuit of the "golden round" (I. v. 28) turns into his punishment, as an overriding fear from which he must free himself but cannot. Every measure that he takes for the purpose only cabins, cribs, confines, binds him into it. More. The eruption of the ambitious individual through pride would produce the same consequences, Hooker says, as would be produced if some one constituent of the physical universe wished to gain predominance over all the rest:<sup>17</sup> chaos, that is to say.

Other and equally important considerations remain. Macbeth as sinner is to be further defined as reprobate—possibly in the Calvinist sense, possibly in the more moderate Anglican sense. The fact that he alone is mentioned by the Witches in Sc. i as the object of their coming tryst and that in I. iii they address themselves mostly to him, suggests that he is already "cast away", a predestined instrument and victim of evil, a positive and predestined reprobate in the Calvinist sense. The prophecies produce a remarkable effect on him. He feels that he is disintegrating:

My thought, whose murder is yet but fantastical,  
 Shakes so my single state of man,  
 That function is smother'd in surmise,  
 And nothing is but what is not. (I. iii. 139-42)

There is confusion of intellect along with paralysis of will, there is neither knowledge and judgment nor action but only bewilderment and an irresistible temptation which there is no serious desire to subdue. The state of tormenting vacillation and doubt comes to a head in the great soliloquy "If it were done" in I. vii, there is a momentary decision not to "proceed any further in the business", cancelled almost as soon as made, followed by a declaration of the opposite and now unshakably determined resolution:

I am settled, and bend up  
 Each corporal agent to this terrible feat. (I. vii. 80-81)

As if it is only through the perpetration of the murder that he hopes to restore and regain his personality. The condition through which he passes in Act I can hardly be called self-conflict. It is rather an intolerable bewilderment, a sense of dissolution of the self; the image of dissolution pervades Macbeth's utterances after the meeting with the Witches. This image reaches a harrowing climax in the soliloquy already referred to, in which Macbeth, pausing to take stock, is overwhelmed and swept away by a vision of the Day of Judgment.

The "progress of the reprobate" is according to Christian moral psychology. The fall of the already corrupted will perverts the judgment and reason so that it listens to wrong counsel. Then the sinful act is committed. And this leads to such hardening of the soul (the "spirit of own mind")<sup>18</sup> that the same deed is committed repeatedly and other sinful acts follow. All this is accompanied by sterile and self-consuming remorse, leading to despair, the ultimate sin, when the sinner is ready for extermination. His spirit is measurelessly alienated from the living world, which, for him, is an arid and dusty wilderness:

Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow  
 Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,  
 To the last syllable of recorded time;  
 And all our yesterdays have lighted fools  
 The way to dusty death. (V. v. 19-23)

Without hope and without desire, with no sense and no feeling except that of unbearable frustration and remorse, he realizes his condition in

his last moments on earth:

I have liv'd long enough: my way of life  
Is fall'n into the sere, the yellow leaf;  
And that which should accompany old age,  
As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends,  
I must not look to have; but in their stead,  
Curses, not loud, but deep, mouth-honour, breath,  
Which the poor heart would fain deny, and dare not.  
(V. iii. 22-28)

Here indeed "Nought's had, all's spent" (III. ii. 4). The beautiful images of growth and plenteous harvest in the speeches of Duncan and Banquo in I. iv are thus consummated in the wintry image of Macbeth.

The ineluctability of this "progress" is so rigorous and of such an un-deviating course, that a Calvinistic view of Macbeth's reprobation is indicated. He is not a reprobate in the negative, Anglican sense, thus rather cursorily and reluctantly defined in the 17th of the Thirtynine Articles: "...curious and carnal persons, lacking the Spirit of Christ, (having) continually before their eyes the sentence of God's Predestination". Macbeth not only *lacks* the "Spirit of Christ"; he is full of the contrary Spirit. The word "Fear" is drummingly repeated in the play. Everybody is overcome by fear until nearly the end of the play, when the opposite movement begins. It turns Bellona's bridegroom into a rash and desperate maniac, who contaminates the whole world with it and makes it sick. Love, which "casteth out all fear",<sup>19</sup> does not exist in Macbeth's world, where

All is the fear, and nothing is the love. (IV. ii. 12)

In all of Scotland

... we hold rumour  
From what we fear, yet know not what we fear,  
But float upon a wild and violent sea  
Each way, and move. (IV. ii. 19-22)

A sick country ruled by a sick king. Ironically, it is Macbeth himself, the source of the infection, the sterility, the drift and the chaos, who gives the deepest utterance to the yearning for a healer felt by all:

If thou could'st, Doctor, cast  
The water of my land, find her disease,  
And purge it to a sound and pristine health... (V. iii. 50-52)

## VII

The basic question remains: is Macbeth free? From the Christian point of view the only decisive and logically unassailable answer is Calvin's negative one. St Augustine approached it in the controversy with Pelagius but dared not state it in unequivocal terms. He rested in the position—as far as it was possible for a spirit like him to rest—that in perfect freedom of will there was no freedom of choice but a willing and loving submission to the will of God. But Calvin's answer was anticipated by Gottschalk in the ninth century. The Catholic Church condemned him and reasserted freedom of will reconciling it with Original Sin and Divine Necessity in the Thomist Doctrine of Grace, in a dialectical balance so delicate and precarious that the position could be maintained only as a dogma, which was shattered when Calvin invaded it with his terrible logic. And all the Reformed Churches, Lutheran, Zwinglian, Calvinist and Anglican, did away with the universal soteriology and those beneficent intercessory influences that the Catholic tradition had put between sinful man and God's wrath:

Therein the patient  
Must minister to himself, (V. iii. 45-46)

as the Doctor says in *Macbeth*.

Except for the few elect, man is isolated from God—but not only isolated, but positively and gratuitously predestined to eternal damnation. "Whatever is in man," says Calvin, "from intellect to will, from the soul to the flesh, is all crammed and defiled with concupiscence; or, to sum it up briefly, the whole man is in himself nothing but concupiscence."<sup>20</sup> This is not merely a more emphatic reassertion of Augustine's statement of the general human condition as "*una massa peccati*" (one mass of sin), as the following will show.

Damnation is preordained and actively and positively brought about by Calvin's God. "To carry out His judgments He directs their (sinners') councils and excites their wills, in the direction which He has decided upon, through the agency of Satan, the victim of his wrath." Thus the problem of evil disappears. As to why God should be so bent upon destruction, Calvin says: "We must consider what Paul noted down from Moses: 'Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee...' (*Rom. 9.17*)... By the just but inscrutable judgment of God are they raised up in order to make His glory known by means of their damnation." Burns' *Holy Willies' Prayer* gives a not unfair caricature of this God:

O Thou, wha in the heavens dost dwell!  
Wha, as it pleases best Thyself,

Sends ane to heaven and ten to hell  
 A' for Thy Glory;  
 And no for any guid or ill  
 They've done afore Thee!

(II. 1-6)

Calvinism would make the Witches and their master instruments of God's wrath (per ministrum irae suae Satanam,—through Satan, minister of His wrath), thus, in a sense, reverting to the classical mythology of upper and lower gods all subservient to a single will.

The triumph of logic in theology is the death of art. Calvinism would never inspire a poet to write a *La Commedia*, and it is not suggested that Shakespeare was a Calvinist. It is undeniable, however, that *Macbeth* and *Dr Faustus* could only be written in a world and in a period exposed to the Calvinist doctrines as a dominant influence. We cannot positively assert that Macbeth has freewill. His moral turmoil in Act I shows only the process of perversion of reason and corruption of will; he knows the good but will not and cannot do it, and there is no intercessory power for him to turn to for aid. His incapacity to pray in the soliloquy in I. vii; the intervention by his wife (instead of a good angel) just when he has decided, in a feeble moment, not "to proceed any further in this business"; the promptness with which the phantasy of the deed forms itself in his mind after he hears the prophecy and his violent reaction to it; above all, the moral identity between themselves and him which the Witches take for granted—all this gives the impression that Macbeth is a reprobate predestined to damnation and that his destruction is planned and brought about by providence. Calvinism turns temptation itself into an act of God's judgment and sin, as contemporary critics like Arminius pointed out, was caused by God.

Exposure to this view—not certainly an unqualified acceptance of it, for that would be the death of art—and to its destructive and anti-traditional influence would explain a large part of the hopeless and inspissated gloom in the poetry and drama of this period. Macbeth the sinner expresses the human condition—*massa peccati*—in the passages already quoted ("Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow"; "My way of life"; "If thou could'st, Doctor"). At these moments he gets rid of the self and of the obsessive constriction of fear and identifies himself with man's general situation, thus achieving tragic dignity by representing Everyman.<sup>21</sup>

## VIII

Two of Macbeth's mythological prototypes are directly presented in the

play, in images of obvious application.

Except they meant to bathe in reeking wounds,  
Or memorize another Golgotha (I. ii. 40-41)

says the Sergeant, referring to both Macbeth and Banquo. At this stage, however, we have hardly any impression of Banquo, and so we naturally apply the image to Macbeth. Golgotha, Latin Calvary, is "a place of a skull"; and it was "memorized" by Judas because it was the site of Christ's crucifixion.

We have then Lady Macbeth's advice to her husband:

...look like th' innocent flower,  
But be the serpent under't. (I. v. 64-65)—

in which, perhaps knowingly, she holds up the example of Satan tempting Eve in the Garden of Eden.

Lastly, Malcolm's

Angels are bright still, though the brightest fell (IV. iii. 22)

identifies Macbeth with Satan in an image which recalls Duncan's unqualified trust in Macbeth and the high admiration in which everybody holds him at the beginning of the play.

Such passages should not be regarded as casual, for they have a persisting resonance that lifts them out of the immediate context and connects them with the play's thematic structure.

Elliott mentions a number of instances in which Macbeth might have repented and humbled himself and prayed. The most conspicuous of them is in I. vii. In the most crucial soliloquy in the play ("If it were done..."), Macbeth hollowly declares that if he could be certain of his safety

...here  
But here, upon the bank and shoal of time,  
We'd jump the life to come. (I. vii. 5-7)

As he goes on, a terrible revelation suddenly looms and sweeps away all the moorings of his mind. The revelation begins with the abrupt eruption of the word "chalice", used since Old English in connection with the Eucharist; tradition had thus made it a symbol of the promise of redemption and immortality in Christ. Bartlett records only three instances of this word's use in Shakespeare, in *Merry Wives*, *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*.

In *Hamlet* King Claudius prepares a "poisoned chalice" for Hamlet

before the duel with Laertes:

When in your motion you are hot and dry—  
 ...And that he calls for drink, I'll have preferr'd him  
 A chalice for the nonce; whereon but sipping,  
 If he by chance escape your venom'd stuck,  
 Our purpose may hold there. (IV. vii. 156-62)

When Laertes informs Hamlet of this before his death, the hero first stabs the King and then forces him to drink the poisoned draught:

Here, thou incestuous, murd'rous damn'd Dane,  
 Drink off this potion. (V. ii. 317-18)

In the *Macbeth* passage there is undoubtedly a conscious echo of this scene:

...this even-handed Justice  
 Commends th'ingredients of our poison'd chalice  
 To our own lips. (I. vii. 10-12)

Macbeth thus foresees for himself the exact fate of the usurper in *Hamlet*. But he is carried much farther away; an apocalyptic vision of the Judgment Day is released by the word "chalice" and grows upon him in image upon image of overwhelming impact; we think of Dürer's etchings of the Apocalypse:

...his virtues  
 Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongu'd, against  
 The deep damnation of his taking off;  
 And Pity, like a naked new-born babe,  
 Striding the blast, or heaven's Cherubins, hors'd  
 Upon the sightless couriers of the air... (I. vii. 18-23)

Yet, even after Macbeth realizes the grotesque abjectness of his moral position:

I have no spur  
 To prick the sides of intent, but only  
 Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself  
 And falls on th' other— (I. vii. 25-28)

he does not pray or feel any impulse to do so. And Lady Macbeth—as if through the operation of a higher than the Satanic will—intervenes at this moment to crush his feeble resistance.

## IX

Macchiavelli's Prince is not a prototype of Macbeth but supplies some



contemporary outlines to the figure of the hero. The Prince was looked upon with abomination all over the Continent and was repudiated and condemned by the Catholic Church. It is true, as Praz points out,<sup>22</sup> that the bogey was more the creation of Gentillet than of Macchiavelli himself, but there was a sound instinct behind the former's distorted caricature.

For all his so-called realism, however, Macchiavelli draws a figure no less abstract than the most abstract "ideal" type. The Prince is a de-humanized and mechanical type representing the Political Man; without any inner life, guided solely by the motive of selfish expediency and by a long-range plan whose aim is the foundation of a strong, united state ruled by an omnipotent dictator. All "higher" considerations, which are mentioned briefly and with ironic respect, are to be superseded by "policy", unless they can be used as its instruments. Ethical principles which are never used in practice are at most to be verbally recognized.

In all this Macchiavelli ignores the fact that ethical ideals are not invalidated by their uselessness in practice; they are rooted in real human needs, individual and communal, having a traditional sanctity which enters deeply into the composition of human nature at all times, as the moral conscience. It is possible for the theoretical Superman alone to destroy his conscience.

Such a person must amputate himself from tradition and from community, force on himself an alien and non-human nature dictated by the needs of "policy". This is making an impossible demand on man's capacity to be unnatural. Paranoia therefore is the occupational disease of all dictators ancient and modern, and Macbeth is a brilliant ethical and psychological exposure of the Macchiavellian and all subsequent Supermen, achieved from the inside. Employing fraud and violence, he scrupulously follows the advice given by Macchiavelli "to those who have attained the position of prince by villainy", making violence his principal instrument. And inevitably the hero of "policy" becomes the victim of it. All Macbeth's efforts to set up the State of Scotland collapse as King and people infect each other with hatred and fear. Insurrection and assassination had given the crown to Macbeth. Insurrection brews again, and defences crumble when the English army intervenes to restore Malcolm.

## X

Essentially, therefore, from the Christian point of view, Catholic, Calvinist or Anglican, Macbeth is not a sympathetic character. Macchiavellian villain-usurper, sinner, superman, sick king, Macbeth reaches his

full stature when, cast out by man and by God and rejected by Satan, and confronted with his destined headsman, he gathers up all his strength and courage in words that do not resonate like Hamlet's or Othello's last words and lose themselves in a desperate couplet:

... I will not yield,  
 To kiss the ground before young Malcolm's feet,  
 And to be baited with the rabble's curse.  
 Though Birnam wood be come to Dunsinane,  
 And thou oppos'd, being of no woman born,  
 Yet will I try the last: before my body  
 I throw my warlike shield: lay on, Macduff;  
 And damn'd be him that first cries, "Hold, enough!"  
 (V. viii. 27-34)

His dead body is horribly outraged:

Behold, where stands  
 The usurper's cursed head: (V. ix. 20-21)

Then the feeling which everybody shares: "The time is free." There is universal rejoicing at the sinner's fall, celebrated in ritualistic words by the new king.

Undeniably, Macbeth is one of the sublime figures of poetry and resembles Dante's *Farinata* who defied the torment of hell with unbending pride:

ed ei s'ergea col petto e colla fronte,  
 come avesse lo inferno in gran dispetto.<sup>23</sup>

Macbeth, *Farinata*, Milton's Satan are indeed sublime but none of their creators belongs to the Devil's party without knowing it. An identification between the poet and his creation because of its sublimity is too readily assumed by us, probably because of the Romantic tradition expressed by the classical poet Carducci in the well-known

O Satana! O Rebellione!<sup>24</sup>

We should, in this connection, rather remember St Thomas's words:

"A sin committed against God has a certain infinity owing to the infinity of the Divine Majesty; for the greater the dignity of the person against whom we sin, the greater the offence; hence for condign satisfaction the act of him who would make the satisfaction should have an infinite efficacy."<sup>25</sup>

These words give the correct perspective to the action of the play. We realize the hero's significance no longer in his isolated grandeur but against

the Christian background of the sacrifice of Jesus and of man's history as a whole. He is the type of the sinner, whose passage from temptation and fall to destruction has that inevitability which must belong to tragic action. And the *katharsis*, the purification of spirit, occurs through rejoicing at the sinner's fall, which restores our assurance of justice. The radical shift that has here taken place in man's consciousness and in the understanding of his relation to the higher powers should be the object of more detailed study than it has hitherto received.

## XI

The foregoing prepares us for a further revision of the Romantic view of *Macbeth* and for a more careful study of the last movement and of certain passages, situations and figures regarded as incidental by the great critics of the last century.

The first among these figures is Banquo, who, contraposed to and attending on Macbeth like his shadow, represents the Christian heroic ideal. The Witches' prophecy concerning him involves him in no action on his part, as if he is outside the range of their operation; and he faces their prophecy with an equal mind. Even if he is slightly shaken at the fulfilment of the prophecy in Macbeth's case, his integrity continues to be untouched. When temptation assails him, he can pray, as Macbeth never could:

...merciful Powers!  
 Restrain in me the cursed thoughts that nature  
 Gives way to in repose! (II. i. 7-9)

He knows man's helplessness if he is unsupported by grace and, like the other good characters in the play, Duncan and Macduff, his sinfulness. Human nature is innately sinful, owing to Original Sin, and "The righteous man is his own accuser".

After the crime Macbeth becomes aware of an implacable opposition between Banquo and himself, which makes itself felt as fear and sense of inferiority:

Our fears in Banquo  
 Stick deep, and in his royalty of nature  
 Reigns that which would be fear'd  
 ...and under him  
 My genius is rebuk'd. (III. i. 48-49 & 54-55)

It is Banquo's noble words that rally the dazed and shocked bystanders after the King's assassination:

Fears and scruples shake us:  
In the great hand of God I stand; and thence  
Against the undivulg'd pretence I fight  
Of treasonous malice. (II. iii. 129-32)

Thus, not incidentally, it is given to Banquo to speak the words of loyalty after "Confusion hath made his masterpiece". Equally designedly, Macduff is made the first to respond to those words, for, after Banquo's murder, the heroic ideal and the mission of the restorer passes to him. He is the instrument of God's vengeance; like St Paul's magistrate, he "beareth not the sword in vain; for he is a minister of God, and avenger for wrath to him that doth evil".<sup>26</sup> He flies to England in panic and bewilderment, where, however, he recovers his proper self and his role as the restorer of the rightful succession. He reminds Malcolm of his spiritual inheritance in beautiful words that explicitly canonize his parents:

Thy royal father  
Was a most sainted King: the Queen, that bore thee,  
Oft'ner upon her knees than on her feet  
Died every day she liv'd. (IV. iii. 108-11)

The music in the whole scene (IV. iii) is set to a low and even key, for any over-emphatic words or gesture of self-glorification is ruled out. On the other hand, Malcolm's self-abasement receives an exaggerated expression, and uncontrollable passion fills the words of Rosse as he delivers his message. Similarly, Macduff is stunned with grief. Fitly, for

No mind that's honest  
But in it shares some woe, though the main part  
Pertains to you alone. (IV. iii. 197-9)

It is soon controlled, however, and the violence never becomes unmeasured; Macduff truly "feels it as a man".

The positive parts of the scene, however, related directly to the play's theme, have a note of assured and quiet self-confidence, in which the image of another world of supernatural grace, healing benediction, restoration, and fruitfulness is steadily intensified. After he is convinced of Macduff's integrity Malcolm says:

God above  
Deal between thee and me! (IV. iii. 120-1)

and the "great bond" torn by Macbeth is once again restored. Recalling Macbeth's treachery, Malcolm goes on:

(I) never was forsworn;  
 Scarcely have coveted what was mine own;  
 At no time broke my faith; would not betray  
 The Devil to his fellow; and delight  
 No less in truth, than life...

What I am truly  
 Is thine, and my poor country's, to command.

(IV. iii. 126-9 & 131-2)

The words express a princely ideal radically opposed to Macchiavellism—uncovetous and unambitious, truthful, modest, and subordinated to the claims of community and tradition. Degree, responsibility of all to all, obedience are fully recognized. Like the ideal prince, Malcolm is "good"—colourless, unassertive, but solidly dependable and conservative and stable, entirely suited to his role as the head of the hierarchical social and political order, which belongs to the "great chain of being" descending from God. There is no thought of "solely sovereign sway".

The "holy king" of England, described by the English Doctor, is, however, the central figure of the scene, for he represents the physician that Macbeth and Scotland have been vainly yearning for. He comes just before Rosse with his terrible message, so that we might compare the English and Scottish Kings vividly:

Ay, Sir; there are a crew of wretched souls  
 That stay his cure: their malady convinces  
 The great assay of art; but at his touch,  
 Such sanctity hath Heaven given his hand,  
 They presently amend.

(IV. iii. 141-5)

H. N. Paul gives a description of the "touching for the King's evil": "The King sat in a chair of state. A chaplain read the service to be found in some ancient prayer books. Each patient was first touched by the King's bare hand, then the sign of the Cross was made by the King."<sup>27</sup> For use in this therapy, Tudor sovereigns coined the gold angel, whose reverse bore the legend: "A Domino factum est istud et est mirabile",<sup>28</sup> from *Mark* 12. 11. It was almost like a Church service. Elizabeth used to hold an elaborate ritual with prayers and responses and Gospel readings from *Mark* and *John*.

Belief in the possession of supernatural powers by kings belongs, as Frazer points out, to a very early period. Christianity attributed them to God's grace. A canon ascribed to St Patric includes among the blessings

of a just king "fine weather, calm seas, crops abundant, and trees laden with fruit", and the divinity of kings is recognized in Manu, Homer and Christianity.<sup>29</sup> Thus the *Macbeth* passage is not a digression offering undramatic and gratuitous flattery to the reigning king.

This supernatural power is dynastically transmitted as a sign of rightful succession:

...and 'tis spoken,  
To the succeeding royalty he leaves  
The healing benediction. (IV. iii. 154-6)

The whole passage is dramatically altogether relevant to the theme and to the immediate situation and further emphasizes Macbeth's reprobation.

Rosse enters immediately after with the news of the latest deed of Scotland's "Hell-kite" king. The words in which Macduff expresses his grief are of deep import:

...Did Heaven look on  
And would not take their part? (IV. iii. 223-4)

The doubt however gives way to the characteristically Christian gesture of resignation and self-abasement:

...Sinful Macduff!  
They were all struck for thee. Naught that I am,  
Not for their own demerits, but for mine,  
Fell slaughter on their souls: Heaven rest them now!  
(IV. iii. 224-7)

In the scene that follows healing is once again the theme. Lady Macbeth's malady also "convinces The great assay of art" (IV. iii. 42-43) and is, as the Scottish Doctor says, "a great perturbation in nature" (V. i. 9). The failure to cure it is a sign of the sinful king's sickness and impotence. Like her husband the Queen is in hell; her punishment is to enact every sleepless night her role in the murder of Duncan, with every word she had spoken then and every gesture she had made, and, additionally, recall words spoken by her husband:

What, will these hands ne'er be clean?...Here's the smell of the  
blood still: all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little  
hand. Oh! oh! oh! (V. i. 41 & 48-50)

Deeply moving as these words are, we must note that Lady Macbeth is unrepentant and her last act is one of sinful horror—self-destruction. The Doctor makes a bitter choric commentary:

... Unnatural deeds  
 Do breed unnatural troubles; infected minds  
 To their deaf pillows will discharge their secrets. (V.i. 68-70)

The sinners' entirely hopeless state receives poignant expression in his deeply humane prayer:

More needs she the divine than the physician,—  
 God, God forgive us all! (V.i. 71-72)

Along with corrupted Nature there also exists another Nature in the play in order to symbolize the continuity of divine providence deep beneath. Macbeth's castle, which the Porter is to call hell, has for Duncan

... a pleasant seat; the air  
 Nimbly and sweetly recommends itself  
 Unto our gentle senses. (I. vi. 1-3)

To Banquo this raven-haunted building evokes a temple filling him with a vision of perfume and holiness and love and all the fecundity of Nature in her blessedness:

This guest of summer,  
 The temple-haunting martlet, does approve,  
 By his lov'd mansionry, that the heaven's breath  
 Smells wooingly here... (I. vi. 3-6)

There is ineffable irony in the fact that this castle, soon to be the scene of confusion's masterpiece, should evoke the loveliest passage in the whole play. And Duncan's words, full of trust, kindness and simple dignity recall to us the world of normal human relations and values that the diabolic reversal of values in the first scene cannot destroy. Duncan's and Banquo's words in I. iv are full of suggestions of life and fertility:

*Dun:* I have begun to plant thee, and will labour  
 To make thee full of growing...  
*Ban:* There if I grow  
 The harvest is your own.  
*Dun:* My plenteous joys,  
 Wanton in fulness, seek to hide themselves,  
 In drops of sorrow. (I. iv. 28-35)

The bird image dominates the scene in which Lady Macduff and her son are killed and pervades it with a haunting beauty. Once again, the basic human relations are recalled, at a moment when it was parti-

cularly needed to do so. Also, through the evocation of the Sermon of the Mount, the play's religious significance is reasserted:

*Lady Macd*: . . . for the poor wren,  
 The most diminutive of birds, will fight,  
 Her young ones in her nest, against the owl.  
 . . . Sirrah, your father's dead:  
 And what will you do now? How will you live?  
*Son*: As birds do, mother. . .  
 With what I get, I mean; and so do they.  
*Lady Macd*: Poor bird! thou'dst never fear the net. . .  
*Son*: Why should I, mother? Poor birds they are not set for.  
 (IV. ii. 9-11 & 30-35)

And they die heriocrally, without surrendering their integrity, defending the honour of Macduff.

The Porter's tough obscenities—he is this tragedy's essential Fool, making a brief but indispensable appearance, restores the sense of earthy stability and make a grotesque and savage mockery of the hero's evil world. And, in a sense, he is the first of all to desert the usurper:

I'll devil-porter it no further. (II. iii. 19)

### XIII

The use of the word "blood" in the sacred sense of expiation through death, must now be considered. This use is also derived from extremely ancient cults, is seen in many passages in the Old Testament, and receives a Christian ratification in the Gospels and especially in the *Romans*, *Corinthians* and *Ephesians*, and, most vividly, in *Revelation*. Even when the expiatory sense is not directly presented, the suggestion of it intensifies the note of agony and despair. Macbeth's cry:

What hands are here? Ha! they pluck out mine eyes. . .  
 (II. ii. 58)

or Lady Macbeth's

What, will these hands ne'er be clean? (V. i. 42)

gains power and intensity by reminding us that only blood shed in expiation, that is, only through repentance and prayer and thus receiving redemption in Christ's sacrifice can the hands be "washed white".

The most effective use of the word in the expiatory sense occurs in



the following:

*Cath:* Well, march we on,  
 To give obedience where 'tis truly ow'd:  
 Meet we the med'cine of this sickly weal;  
 And with him pour we, in our country's purge,  
 Each drop of us.  
*Len:* Or so much as it needs  
 To dew the sovereign flower, and drown the weeds.  
 (V. ii. 25-30)

The blood image here concentrates in an intense unity of perception all the various themes of the play: universal sickness and withering of all that is good, healthy and human; restoration of fertility and health, healing, re-establishment of human concord obedient to the plan of God. The sick land, ruled by a sick and impotent king, is renewed by the casting out of the old king by a new one, "medicine of the sickly weal". Further, Lennox' words carry the suggestion of restoration of Nature to its original purity and incorruption, as Cathness' "Give obedience where 'tis truly ow'd", restoration of order and degree and rightful succession.

Thus the blood image has an affirmative reassuring suggestion. Some words must now be said on the use of the word "grace", used most significantly in the Malcolm-Macduff scene.

Though all things foul would wear the brows of grace,  
 Yet Grace must still look so. (IV. iii. 23-24)

And sundry blessings hang about his throne  
 That speak him full of grace. (IV. iii. 158-9)

In the first passage the word refers to God directly in His relation to man; in the "divine influence which operates in men to regenerate and sanctify, inspire virtuous impulses, and impart strength to resist temptation". Above all, therefore, it must be possessed by the King no less than by the priest; it is not a privilege but implies a terrible responsibility. Duncan possesses it, as also the English King—his successor, as it were, until the usurper should be overthrown.

The word occurs for the last time in the play's last, ritualistic passage spoken by the new King who is about to receive his investiture:

This, and what needful else  
 That calls upon us, by the grace of Grace,  
 We will perform in measure, time, and place. (V. ix. 37-39)

The new King thus places himself under God at the inception of his rule, recognizing his own duty of obedience, his due place in the cosmic hierarchy.

Macbeth's destroyers, guided by no motive of revenge or by personal ambition, suffer from no confusion of purpose and embattle themselves in a determined and united band of crusaders. They are quite unlike the band of conspirators against Julius Caesar, each of whom has a different motive, and are led by a person who, because of his nobility of soul, fails to bring unity of purpose; he is never fully convinced of the rightness of the deed. The "chosen of God"—"God's soldiers"—repeatedly affirm their sense of dedication and freely submit to the leadership authorized by grace:

march we on,  
To give obedience where 'tis truly ow'd: (V. iii. 25-26)

the last line defines free will and free choice in the true Christian sense.

"The time is free" (V. ix. 21), says the new King, indicating a perfect adjustment between the flow of time and human purpose. "We will perform" all that has to be done "in measure, time, and place" (V. ix. 39). Macbeth's predestined fall takes place at the right moment, which comes with unhasting steadiness:

Macbeth  
Is ripe for shaking, and the Powers above  
Put on their instruments. (IV. iii. 237-9)

Thus, through the sustained maintenance of the religious note in the image pattern and through the conception of the hero after the great figures of evil in the Jewish-Christian mythology, *Macbeth* projects the Christian vision of life and man's history in a poetic drama of immense grandeur. And the vision is not one of evil but of good triumphant at the end with the aid of the "Powers above."

#### XIV

We must not, however, interpret *Macbeth* as in any sense a Divine Comedy. Only the High Middle Ages could inspire a vision of that. Western Europe was passing into the modern period when Shakespeare wrote, when, already, its civilization could no longer be described as "Catholic" or even "Christian". The Christian heritage, assailed on all sides, decreasingly belongs to the mainstream of life and ceases to be the focal experience of life. Paradoxically, it was not so much the new science or the Revival of Learning or the new social and political philosophy or even the Natural Theology of a number of major thinkers, that hastened the downfall of the theocentric view of the universe. These affected, as yet, only the social periphery composed of advanced intellec-

tuals. It was rather the Reformed Theology of all schools that did so, in spite of the bitter, intense, protracted and widespread religious conflicts that were launched. The Reformed Churches exterminated the vital emotional roots of religion by abolishing Purgatory, and by doing away with the cult of the Blessed Virgin; by denying transubstantiation and the intercessory power of the saints and by repudiating the whole elaborate superstitious but frequently beautiful and moving mythology of Christian heroes and heroines which, gathering through the centuries, had deeply penetrated into popular imagination. Thus religion was withdrawn from its multifarious contacts with life and from its broad sociological role as the pervasive and unifying myth that turns a mere conglomeration of people into a living community.

Allegory is the effective and immediately understood artistic form forged by a religious civilization in this sense. Medieval Christian civilization based itself on the faith in a figure in whom supernatural and human dimensions cohere. The faith remained, indeed, but only as a creed more and more destitute of emotional ardour. When the Revivalist movements from the last quarter of the 18th century tried to restore this ardour, they could only convert it into hysteria. The age of Shakespeare, last poet of the Middle Ages and therefore first poet of the modern age, is thus the age of the collapse of the allegory. The writings of Bunyan are the last of their kind.

Since Shakespeare is not only aware of the disintegration but has has an increasingly painful awareness of it, it is no wonder that his vision of the theocentric world should be not only troubled but also somewhat clouded. It is not likely that he could have explained the vision in *Macbeth* in those terms of assured conviction that we find in Dante's Epistle to della Scala. The Shakespearean world is unvisited by saints and angels; and the symbolic figures like Duncan, Macduff, the English King, hardly mitigate the sense of man's isolation from the "Powers above". In supernatural terms the verities are preserved with no diminished conviction. But their integration with human terms, in human figures and experiences, although not unachieved, is now a task of felt difficulty and complexity. It would have been easier if Shakespeare had been writing a religious tract in his drama or if, ignoring human concerns, he had written a direct allegory.

There is thus, in the play, a certain remoteness between the meaning on the level of purely human experience and that on the supernatural level. The intense bitter note of suffering in many utterances of the hero and in the sleep-walking scene and, above all, the sense of human isolation and of there being something precarious in the grace that at last descends—these remain to trouble us.

The result is a poetry of inexhaustible depth and richness, which, just at the age when allegory is declining, invests it with a new purpose and justification.

AMAL BHATTACHARJI

#### NOTES AND REFERENCES

[Particular obligation is expressed to the writings of Max Weber, R. H. Tawney, G. Wilson Knight, L. C. Knights, E. M. W. Tillyard, and J. F. Danby.]

1. S. T. Bindoff: *Tudor England*, (Pelican Books, 1959), pp. 189-94, gives a useful and non-technical account of the Elizabethan religious settlement. Hooker in his Preface to the *Treatise on Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* (arr. John Keble, Oxford, 1845) gives an extremely judicious account of the theological controversy from the Anglican point of view. Fuller's *The Church History of Britain* (ed. J. Nichols, Wm. Tegg, London, 1868), Vol. II gives a more documented history from the same point of view. There are so many resemblances of ideas and language between the First Book of the *E.P.* (it was published in 1594) and Shakespeare that it might be regarded as one of his source books.
2. Horace: *Odes*, I. xi. 1-3. "Do not ask, Leuconoe, what term the gods have set for you, for me—it is sinful to know—or meddle with Babylonian astrology." (Some versions translate "nefas scire" as "it is impossible to know").
3. G. R. Elliott: *Dramatic Providence in Macbeth* (Princeton University Press, 1958), p. 153.
4. Seneca, *Ag.* 114-15. "Fling loose the reins and, headlong, urge on all iniquity. For crime the safe way is ever through crimes".
5. T. Dyer: *English Folk Lore* (Hardwicke and Bogue, London, 1883), p. 78. The same author's *Folk Lore of Shakespeare* (Griffith and Farran, London, 1883) shows how extensively Shakespeare uses the material of folk lore and superstition in his plays.
6. *English Folk Lore*, p. 76.
7. Hooker, *op. cit.*, I. iii. 3.
8. Frazer: *The Golden Bough*, Abridged Edn. (Macmillan, London, 1949), pp. 358-9. See also C. G. Jung: *Psychology of the Unconscious* (Kegan Paul, London, 1933), p. 199.
9. Frazer, *op. cit.*, Ch. XXI.
10. Stibbs: *The Meaning of the Word "Blood" in Scripture* (Tyndale Press, London, 1953).
11. V. Whitaker: *Shakespeare's Use of Learning*, (Huntington Library, Calif., 1953), p. 293.
12. *Arden of Feversham*, V. i. 265-71. Tucker Brooke (ed.): *Shakespeare Apocrypha* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1908).
13. John Jones' important *On Aristotle and Greek Tragedy* (Chatto and Windus, London, 1962) was available only after this essay was written. It does not however necessitate any substantial alteration in the view here presented.
14. See especially. *Eth Nic* III. 6-V. 55 and St Thomas Aquinas, *Theological Texts*, tr. and ed. by T. Gilby (Oxford University Press 1955), VI-VIII, which gives an account of the entire Hellenic-Christian ethical tradition.

15. "What sins a man commits, through these he is punished".
16. *Dr Faustus*, 312. *Works of Marlowe*, ed. Tucker Brooke (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1929).
17. Hooker, *op. cit.*, I. iii. 2; VII. viii.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 220, quoting *Eph.* 4.23.
19. 1 *John* 4.17.
20. The Calvin extracts are translated from Kidd's *Documents of the Continental Reformation* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1911), II. xiv. 273.
21. The image of Macbeth as the predestined reprobate is throughout disturbed and sometimes even erased by another image—that of a man facing abysmal and limitless despair at the most purely human level ever compassed. The anguish surpasses even that of the worst sinners in *Inferno*, whose suffering does not touch this blankness of negation. The essential ambiguity of the Macbeth image which puts the figure much above the level of the contemporary villain-hero (including Shakespeare's), cannot be developed here and demands a separate study. The sense of Christian justice that the action of the play communicates does not qualify our human participation in the hero's anguish.
22. Mario Praz: *Macchiavelli and the Elizabethans* (*Pr. Br. Ac.* xiii).
23. "And he rose erect with breast and front, as if holding hell in high disdain" (*Inf.* x. 35-36). Macbeth's stance in the last scene recalls that of the blasphemer Capaneus when he died and, after his death, in hell, where the fiery rain "does not seem to ripen" him and he holds even God in defiance: "Qual io fu vivo, tal son morto—as I was when I lived, so am I dead". (*Inf.* xiv. 50-51).
24. *Inno a Satana*. All hail to thee, Satan! Rebellion, all hail! (Tr. E. Tribe, *A Selection from the Poems of Carducci*, Longmans, London, 1921), 197-8.
25. *Sum. Theol.* III. i. 2 *ad* 2m. Quoted in *The Catholic Catechism* (Sheed and Ward, London, 1932), p. 87.
26. *Rom.* 13.4.
27. H. N. Paul: *The Royal Play of Macbeth* (Macmillan, NY, 1950), pp. 369-70.
28. "The Lord made this and it is marvellous".
29. Frazer, *op. cit.*, p. 89-90. See also Dyer: *Folk Lore of Shakespeare*.

[References to and quotations from the plays of Shakespeare are from and to the Arden Edition, New Series. The *Hamlet* quotations are from Peter Alexander's Edition.]

*"The noblest Roman of them all":  
Malone and Shakespearian Scholarship*

TO PROMOTE the understanding of plays which are the Book of Life, scholarly disputants whom we call Shakespearians have over the centuries laboured, singly or in teams, to do what little they can to advance knowledge, but there is no one who has a nobler record of achievement than Edmond Malone. The most valiant of a race of valiant scholars whose numbers grow as the ages pass, he had the idealist's vision and sustaining faith; the sense of being engaged in a common worthy pursuit; on the whole a generous appreciation of what had been already accomplished, though he was to add nearly as much. T. S. Eliot says (in a different context), with a remarkable passage of Johnson's encomiastic criticism before him, that a writer cannot "ask more of posterity than to be greatly honoured by the great." Johnson, as Malone said in great sorrow, did not live to see his Shakespeare edition completed,<sup>1</sup> but Burke, another eighteenth-century master of the spacious phrase, paid it a noble tribute in a letter which was fittingly included in the Boswell Variorum edition.<sup>2</sup> He has not lacked praise, and some honour him above all others. His work has been deemed specially worthy of commendation for the manner in which it was done; it is marked from first to last by a rigid honesty. In a small book full of wisdom (1928), David Nichol Smith describes him as "the greatest of all our Shakespearian scholars." W. W. Greg expresses almost the same sentiment when differing from Malone on the authorship of 2 & 3 *Henry VI*; and J. Dover Wilson, who in an essay contributed to *Shakespeare Survey* discusses the whole question with reference to Greg's (as also Pollard's and Peter Alexander's) views, remarks that it is "dangerous to differ from Malone, even when one is founder and acting president of the Malone Society." E. K. Chambers declares in the preface to his *William Shakespeare: A Study of Facts and Problems* that he has used Malone's work more than that of any other eighteenth-century scholar. In another important book *William Shakspeare's Small Latine-and Lesse Greeke*, the author T. W. Baldwin, reviewing seventeenth-, eighteenth- and nineteenth-century opinion on the controversial subject, acknowledges that "as usual, Malone has summed up the case soundly".<sup>3</sup>

The words "as usual" need to be emphasized. There is hardly a field of scholarship in which Malone's contributions are not worth a Shakespearian's grateful remembrance. Had all his work been as frequently

consulted by later scholars as (say) his *Historical Account of the English Stage* and parts of *Life of Shakespeare*, and had his Notes to the individual plays been available for study in a compact collection like Sir Walter Raleigh's *Johnson on Shakespeare*, they would have found that in some matters he went farther than is usually thought; and that in some others he went far, that they have been on trodden paths where they think they have been pioneers.†

## I

On available evidence it seems a fair assumption that T. W. Baldwin has succeeded in indicating the probable limits of Shakespeare's Latin. As he magnanimously acknowledges, he has in his book, like T. S. Baynes in *Shakespeare Studies* (1894), adopted a programme of investigation which is implied in the few pages on Shakespeare's "scholastick attainment" in Malone's *Life*. George Colman had brilliantly argued against Farmer that the latter had only proved that Shakespeare's 'sources' were books in his own language; the resort to the translations of the classics did not prove that Shakespeare was without the Tudor schoolboy's Latin, though it would be readily allowed that the playwright's "*studies* lay in English." This was an invaluable distinction.<sup>4</sup> After giving a short history of the Stratford Grammar School where (it can be assumed) "our poet was placed," Malone with his usual candour and respect for facts says: "How long he continued at school, or what proficiency he made there, we have now no means of ascertaining." But one would not wish to affirm that the boy (about whom we "accurately" know little) had *no* portion of the qualities which "afterwards rendered him the admiration of the age in which he lived"—none "of his acuteness, facility, and fluency; of the playfulness of his fancy, and his love of pleasantry and humour; of his curiosity, discernment, candour, and liberality." There is good *evidence* that the school at Stratford, like other grammar schools of the period, provided sound instruction in Latin. Why should it be thought that Shakespeare did not do there at least as well as other boys? Malone (at the end of the eighteenth century) had no difficulty in correctly interpreting Ben Jonson's phrase which is an *admission* that Shakespeare had some Latin, but which the dwindling Latin in the curriculum of English schools has turned into a negative statement for unwary scholars. Of Farmer's essay he has the same opinion as Colman. It has completely established one position, and is quite arbitrary on a second. Malone's

† The present writer is planning a selection of Malone's writings on Shakespeare.

own views are pleasingly unemphatic: the "highest probability" is that Shakespeare acquired a "competent" (or a "moderate") knowledge of Latin at the Stratford school; though like many others "who have not been thoroughly grounded in the ancient tongues, from desuetude in the progress of life, he probably found them daily more difficult", and wishing to avail himself of any classical works in his plays turned "rather" to English translations. Nor can it "reasonably be doubted" that "such a mind as his was not idle or incurious," and that at this time of his life he read "several of the easier Latin classicks"; but "perhaps he never attained a facility of reading those authors with whom he had not been familiarly acquainted at school." Malone then makes an attempt to determine the grammar school Latin curriculum. There was no dispute at all about Lily's Grammar; on the other hand, he quotes the "Dedication prefixed to Arthur Gorge's Translation of Lucan...folio, 1614" on a "small manual, entitled Pueriles"; Peacham's *The Complete Gentleman* on Tully's Offices; Drayton's Epistle to Henry Reynolds on the first Latin poetry "put into the hands of learners." He is also interested in "the method of teaching then adopted by school-masters." It is interesting to find that Malone infers Shakespeare's probable reading in Latin partly from what information about the school curriculum he can collect, partly from the internal evidence of the works; T. W. Baldwin's formidable scholarship has been brought to bear on both these studies. But the eighteenth-century scholar does not stop there. Anxious to set in perspective this interminable discussion about Shakespeare's Latin and Greek, he makes the sane observation that Shakespeare did not need the help of books to read men, who delighted him most always; and adds that at Stratford he must have loved to observe "his young associates", and indeed "all around him."<sup>5</sup>

Malone's notes to some passages in the plays compel us to attend to one of many elements in Shakespeare's thought and vocabulary, one which had its probable source in the grammatical drill at school. It may turn up unexpectedly, as in grief-stricken Queen Margaret's words to grief-stricken Queen Elizabeth in *Richard III*, Act IV, Sc. iv:

I call'd thee then vain flourish of my fortune;  
 I call'd thee then poor shadow, painted queen;  
 The presentation of but what I was;  
 The flattering index of a direful pageant;  
 One heav'd a-high to be hurl'd down below;  
 A mother only mock'd with two fair babes;  
 A dream of what thou wert, a breath, a bubble,  
 A sign of dignity, a garish flag,  
 To be the aim of every dangerous shot;  
 A queen in jest, only to fill the scene.



Where is thy husband now? where be thy brothers?  
 Where are thy children? wherein dost thou joy?  
 Who sues and kneels and cries God save the queen?  
 Where be the bending peers that flatter'd thee?  
 Where be the thronging troops that follow'd thee?  
 Decline all this, and see what now thou art.

"Decline all this,] i.e. run through all this from first to last," Malone explains. "So, in *Troilus and Cressida*: 'I'll *decline* the whole question.' This phrase the poet borrowed from his grammar."<sup>6</sup> In regard to the good Duncan's confession about Cawdor, 'There's no art To find the mind's construction in the face', he differs from Johnson who had uncertainly suggested that the phrase, "peculiar to Shakspeare," implies "the *frame* or *disposition* of the mind, by which it is determined to good or ill," and maintains that the ordinary "school-term" was intended by Shakespeare; Duncan's meaning is, "we cannot *construe* or discover the disposition of the mind by the lineaments of the face." Malone cites the parallel use in 2 *King Henry IV*, '*Construe* the times to their necessities,' and "a kindred phrase" in *Hamlet*,

These profound heavens  
 You must *translate*; 'tis fit we understand them. (IV.i);

also, as metaphorical reference to still another grammatical exercise Thersites' words in *Troilus and Cressida* 'I'll *decline* the whole question', though not (on this occasion) the passage in *Richard III*.<sup>7</sup> It has to be remembered always that in an essay we *can* give an idea of the character and range rather than the quantity of Malone's notes. In an unusually interesting one he rejects the suggestion that Shakespeare, when he makes the Poet in *Timon of Athens* describe how his art 'moves itself In a wide sea of wax' (I. i), could have had in mind the English practice (known till the early fourteenth century) of writing on wax tablets, rather than the same practice in ancient Rome. Shakespeare, Malone believes, "was not a very profound English antiquary," and "it is surely improbable that he should have had any knowledge of a practice which had been disused for more than two centuries before he was born. The Roman practice he might have learned from Golding's translation of the ninth book of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*: 'Her right hand holds the pen, her left doth hold the emptie *waxe*.'<sup>8</sup> In relation to Chaucer again, Malone sees Shakespeare as the Poet of life who took a lively but not a learned interest in books. The character of the Host in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* has points resembling that of the Host of the Tabard, besides that the former's words on more than one occasion, "said I well?", which (in this rhetorical use as expletives) seem distinctly *individual*, are the same as those of the

other in a passage in the Pardoner's Prologue. This was found by Tyrwhitt, editor of the *The Canterbury Tales*, who also pointed out, without comment, that the passage in question is found only in manuscripts and not in any of the old printed editions. Malone does not disagree that the two characters may be linked, but says, "I imagine this phrase must have reached our author in some other way; for I suspect he did not devote much time to the perusal of old MSS."<sup>9</sup>

W. C. Hazlitt, planning to make available to readers such works as Shakespeare was then believed to have used in his plays chose for his collection the title *Shakespeare's Library*, and Capell's collection, in the late eighteenth, had a similar title, *The School of Shakspeare*. In the determination of the sources of individual plays, Malone's personal contributions are important, and they are well known, but they are not more remarkable than those of Capell. But it is well worth while to remember one or two things he says in a general way about Shakespeare's practices or mental habits. Commenting on an error of fact in *King Henry V* ('king Lewis the tenth', I. ii) and on the apparent contradiction in Prince Henry's words on the field of Agincourt, 'Besides, we'll cut the throats of those we have' (IV. vii), Malone held Holinshed rather than Shakespeare responsible, but at the same time made the point that the playwright preferred him, a "servile" and careless "copyist of Hall," to the elder chronicler. (Here is an interesting parallel to Shakespeare's use of translations of classical works and his being involved in error with them when they deviated from the original.) Malone again establishes this particular preference by a comparison of two passages in *King Richard III* with Hall's and Holinshed's histories. Apart from that the information has its own interest and clears away an editor's difficulties with the text, it proves to be of great value in Malone's Dissertation on the authorship of 2 & 3 *Henry VI*. Incidentally, he was able to show by close attention to the text of the play that *Romeo and Juliet* followed Arthur Brooke's poem rather than the same story in Painter's collection *The Palace of Pleasure*.<sup>10</sup> To consider a second matter: a habit of Shakespeare's mind in the use of sources is the subject of one of E. E. Kellett's interesting essays in *Suggestions* (1923), but the inconsistencies which result from this habit of keeping to the original closely at times and of departing from it at others had been investigated by Malone (though the modern critic does not appear to have known it). In fact, Malone investigated the matter more thoroughly than I thought some time ago ("Shakespeare as a Borrower: Kellett and 18th-century Critics," *Notes and Queries*, September 1963, pp. 332-4). Besides the two examples in *Romeo and Juliet* alone I pointed out then, there is a third in Act III, Sc. iii. Though Romeo has not done so, the Friar chides him for railing 'on thy birth, the heaven,

and earth'. With the cautious reminder that this line forms part of a passage which is not found in the first quarto (now condemned as a 'bad' quarto), Malone cites the lines from Brooke's poem on which it is based, as also the lines in which earlier in this interview with the Friar Romeo in the poem is described as blaming Nature, reproving his *birth*, "cry(ing) out" against the *stars* and *railing* on fortune.<sup>11</sup> Shakespeare's forgetfulness is that of a man who in telling a story with which his own mind has been made familiar omits one or two details and leaves embarrassing gaps. Or he may introduce from the original play, poem, novel, or history, a detail which contradicts his own story in its adopted form. Malone saw these curious processes of Shakespeare's mind at work clearly enough to generalize about them in *a discussion of matters of disputed authorship*, the Dissertation on the Three Parts of *King Henry VI*.<sup>12</sup> And he was so fascinated by these processes that he could detect them where the question was no longer one of simple relation to a 'source-book'. Pandar, uniting Troilus and Cressida, says to them:

...If ever you prove false one to another, since I have taken such pains to bring you together, let all pitiful goers-between be called to the world's end after my name; call them all Pandars; let all constant men be Troiluses, all false women Cressids, and all brokers-between Pandars! (III. ii)

Hanmer had read 'inconstant', a word which has seemed to some to express correctly Pandar's meaning. Malone, agreeing with Tyrwhitt that the text should not be disturbed, says: "Mr. M. Mason objects that *constant* cannot be the true reading, because Pandarus has already supposed that they should *both* prove *false* to each other, and it would therefore be absurd for him to say that *Troilus* should be quoted as an example of *constancy*. But to this the answer is, that Shakspeare himself knew what the event of the story was, and who the person was that did prove false; that many expressions in his plays have dropped from him, in consequence of that knowledge, that are improper in the mouth of the speaker."<sup>13</sup>

Malone's essay on the canon, first published in 1778, and revised and expanded for the edition of Shakespeare (1790), and his Historical Account of the English Stage show professional scholarship at its best. It is only necessary to say that though knowledge has advanced after him, he probably had nothing to learn from the twentieth century in the right use of it. A random page from his Historical Account has remarkably the same look as one from E. K. Chambers's *History of the Elizabethan Stage*. And as a specimen of the skill with which he disentangles the evidence of a variety of external sources and interprets it with the kind of imaginative respect for the text in individual passages that inspires in

readers the wholesome feeling that they are with him on a quest of truth, the longest discussion of any one single subject in *An Historical Account*—stage scenery and properties—can be cited. A neglected passage is the account that Malone gives of Shakespeare's plays in the Restoration and the eighteenth-century theatre. He speaks with sorrow, but with the historian's sobriety, of the 'improvements' and adaptations (which were at one time preferred) of Shakespeare's plays, and notes that the theatres started to go back to Shakespeare *after* 1740. Apart from that it is an important document for one who wishes to approach from the side of criticism the eighteenth-century history of Shakespeare in the theatre, it is a piece of fine prose, where beneath the quiet surface we can just perceive the strong emotion that is held in check.

Not to praise diffusely what is well known and is not in danger of being undervalued—the Preface, *An Attempt to Ascertain the [Chronological] Order of the Plays, An Historical Account of the English Stage*—we may take a calculated risk and suggest that some portions should be better known.

## II

I read with amazement Capell's and Malone's editorial prefaces ten years ago, because many of the essentials of the present century's Shakespeare editorial theory, it seemed, were there; and it is pleasant to know from the endorsement of this position in *The Times Literary Supplement*, *Notes and Queries*, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, and *Shakespeare Survey*, that my excitement did not lead me astray. Misled by the traditions of classical scholarship, their predecessors from Rowe to Hanmer had collated indiscriminatingly all the folios and quartos as if these were of equal authority, besides that their 'copy-text' (or what they had on the whole treated as such) had derived immediately or distantly from the latest of the folios. It was their capacity for taking infinite pains with available old Shakespearean texts that led Capell and Malone to principles particularly appropriate to the printed book. First editions (except the 'surreptitious' ones) alone have authority, and should be made the 'copy-text'; Malone flatly refused to recognize as *authentic* variant readings from any edition later than the first, making an exception in favour of the First Folio in regard to plays which had already been published in quarto editions. Capell admitted the possibility of some good variant readings being found in quarto reprints. At each stage—in the matter of the choice of the 'copy-text' and of acceptance (or rejection) of variants—they saw the necessity of examining *critically* the history and inter-relationship of the old printed

editions. They also recognized that some *first* quarto editions were 'bad'; both held that most were 'good', and Capell examined at length the presumptive proof of this 'goodness' or genuineness. His list of 'bad' quartos is more complete than that of Malone. It is proof of their sagacity, and of the kind of intuitive wisdom that good editors have, that they allowed the First Folio to have, in respect of the *previously published* plays, authority next to that of the 'good' quartos.<sup>14</sup>

If one examined the vast mass of materials lying scattered over a number of volumes in Malone's Notes to the text of the plays, one would think it a pity that it should ever have been thought that he did not recognize important features of the Shakespearian textual situation and did not distinguish the principles which should govern the study of *printed* texts. (The Preface alone should destroy this belief.) In fairness to Malone, and to show the clarity and consistency of his aims, we should fill a hundred pages with quotations from his Notes; and to choose from them is to be arbitrary. Here is his comment on a line in *King Richard II*, which has tasked the ingenuity of all editors,

I task the earth to the like, forsworn Aumerle (IV. i).

"*Task* is the reading of the first and best quarto, in 1597. In that printed in the following year the word was changed to *take*; but all the alterations made in the several editions of our author's plays in quarto, after the first, appear to have been made either arbitrarily or by negligence. (I do not mean to include copies containing new and additional matter.) I confess I am unable to explain either reading; but I adhere to the elder, as more likely to be the true one."<sup>15</sup> The words within parenthesis referred to the good quartos which took the place of 'bad' or spurious first editions of some plays. Commenting on Steevens's note on another debated passage in *King Richard II*, Malone says: "The lines in question are found in the first quarto of 1597, and continued in those of 1598, 1608, and 1615, all of which are now before me; but what these late copies read, what they insert, or what they omit, it is quite loss of time to examine. Not the smallest authority belongs to them; nor would they carry any with them, even if their title-pages announced that they were revised and corrected by the author. But the title-pages of not one of these copies contains any such assertion: though in some other of his plays, the booksellers were hardy enough to add those words." Malone goes on to observe that Shakespeare did not revise "a single quarto copy of any of his plays, whether in a first or second edition"—an important observation, which points towards the firm statement in the Preface that he will not entertain as genuine any readings from the quarto reprints. The good quarto of *Romeo and Juliet*, in 1599, was not the playwright's revised work, but was "printed from

an enlarged and corrected copy."<sup>16</sup> In one of the notes to *The Comedy of Errors*, he distinguished between *authoritative readings and emendations*, that is, "all readings not authorized by authentick copies, printed or manuscript," which, whether they are made in the Second Folio, or in Rowe's, Pope's, Theobald's, or Hanmer's edition, "stand on the same footing, and are to be judged of by their reasonableness and probability"; the few variant readings adopted into his text from F<sub>2</sub>, an edition of "no authority," appeared to him to be happy "conjectural emendations." It would be difficult to make this important distinction clearer.<sup>17</sup>

Malone, in denying the possibility that quarto reprints could have any genuine readings (Capell believed that they could have some and pleaded that "the time's distance" prevents the discovery of "fit materials" and the substantive basis of this belief),<sup>18</sup> seems to adopt an inflexible position. But it is one which logically results from *his* view of the character and history of the different members of a quarto series. A good example of what use he is prepared to make of a later number is his preference for 'wasp-tongue', the reading of the second quarto of 1 *King Henry IV*, which "I have adopted, not on the authority of that copy, (for it has none,)" but because on available evidence "I believe it to have been the word used by the author"; that is, it is judged to be a good emendation.<sup>19</sup> In the first quarto, the Earl of Northumberland calls the ranting Hotspur "a wasp-stung and impatient fool" (I. iii).

Interesting evidence of a careful study of the inter-relations between different texts is that he recognized that the same edition might have texts varying in small particulars, which all may have authority: he distinguished "three varieties" of the good quarto (1600) of 2 *King Henry IV*, and explained differences in copies of the good quarto (1597) of *King Richard II*, the 1608 quarto of *King Lear* and the First Folio, as due to alterations made in the press while the text "was working off", made—"I imagine"—"in conformity to" the copy-text.<sup>20</sup>

His use of the First Folio (remembering that he regards it as a substantive edition, and for plays first published in it the only authoritative edition) varies, as it should. Where its text seems to have been reprinted from a late number of a quarto series (*King Richard II*), he has few occasions for discarding the good quarto text in its favour; on the other hand, he forms his text of *King Richard III*, on "the folio, and the early quarto," after studying the character of both. The Folio text of *King Henry V* was "evidently printed from a MS. which was not the case in some others"—a reason for according it greater respect than usual, *while* making a good quarto edition (which followed a 'bad' one) the copy-text.<sup>21</sup>

The progressive degeneration of the text was strikingly *displayed* by Malone who produced hundreds of interesting instances, though the

matter had not been *understood* less clearly by Capell. In *King Richard II*, York's question, 'What, are there no posts dispatch'd for Ireland?' (II. ii) had appeared in the second quarto (1598) as, 'What, are there two posts dispatch'd for Ireland?', and with this corruption, reappeared in the quartos of 1608 and 1615; the Folio press reviser found the transmitted line puzzling, but without looking for "the oldest copy, cut the knot, instead of attempting to untie it, and left out the substituted word *two*"; the result, a verse, "quite different" from what it had originally been:

What, are there posts dispatched for Ireland?<sup>22</sup>

'In likely thoughts' (*Venus and Adonis*, line 990), the reading of "the first copy 1593," became 'The likely thoughts' in the edition of 1596, "the compositor having caught the word *The* from the preceding line; an error not infrequent at the press." "This being found nonsense," the edition of 1600 "substituted at random" *With* for *The*.<sup>23</sup> Malone took particular care to distinguish the kinds of error that are ordinarily made, and those that are not made, in the printing house. Disagreeing with Pope who sought to regularize the text of one of Sebastian's speeches in *The Tempest*, II. i, by dropping a word, Malone argued that "omission of any word in the old copy, without substituting another in its place, is seldom safe, except in those instances where the repeated word appears to have been caught by the compositor's eye glancing on the line above, or below, or where a word is printed twice in the same line." In other words, the blundering man in the press does not invent a word (still less should we think that he "invents whole lines or speeches," and should wish away two unsatisfactory lines in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, III. i), though he can miss one. Or, he can miss two half lines, and destroy the sense of a passage,

The truth thou art unsure  
To swear, swears only not to be forsworn      (*King John*, III. i).

"When the same word is repeated in two succeeding lines, the eye of the compositor often glances from the first to the second, and in consequence the intermediate words are omitted"; though we cannot know what is lost, and the problem remains with us always. At the same time, it is not likely that the compositor "should omit *half* a word", and Theobald's emendation of *in* to *instant* to regulate an incomprehensible line in *King Henry V*, IV. v, which is deficient of one syllable, should be discarded in favour of one more just.<sup>24</sup> Malone comments on two cases of suspected transposition of speeches, one in *Antony and Cleopatra*, III. xi, the other in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, I. i: "Printers, to save trouble, keep the names of the speakers in each scene ready composed and are very liable

to mistakes, when two names begin . . . with the same letter, and are nearly of the same length."<sup>25</sup> He disposes of one of Pope's emendations (*King Richard II*, V. iii) by remarking that *but* could not be printed *on*.<sup>26</sup>

The clear awareness of the errors to which a printed page is peculiarly liable went with the realization that the rapid changes in language which early made some words and some uses obsolete led ignorant editors to tamper with the text. I do not know of any scholar till very recent times who has with his persistence drawn attention to this additional cause of "the progress of corruption" (a favourite phrase of his). He is particularly hard on the editor of the Second Folio (1632), whom he described as one of "the two great corrupters" of the text (Pope being another), from ignorance of Shakespeare's language and metre; it would be difficult to dispute this verdict after one examines all the evidence with him.<sup>27</sup> His conclusion that the Second Folio is a purely derivative edition has not been shaken by M. W. Black and M. A. Shaaber's book.<sup>28</sup> The Fourth Folio contributed on this head a larger quota of errors than the Third, and even "that valuable copy of our author's plays"—the First Folio (to quote one of Malone's notes to 1 *King Henry IV*)—made "unwarrantable" changes.<sup>29</sup> Explaining the whole matter in the Preface, Malone draws attention to the fact that at the beginning of Charles I's reign "many words and modes of speech began to be disused, which had been common in the age of Queen Elizabeth." The Second Folio might have been edited by a young man, born about 1600, who was unaware of these changes. Sir William D'Avenant, born in 1605, made in his versions of the plays "various alterations" which suggest that he "did not always perfectly understand" Shakespeare's *language*. The "successive" English chronicles, compiled between 1540 and 1630, show the language in transition: Hall's diction is "very uncouth and ancient," Holinshed's ("about 40 years afterwards") is "less rude," Speed's and Baker's in 1611 and 1630 have "a somewhat more polished air." Interestingly, the second edition of Gascoigne's *Poems* (1587), which came "not much more than twenty years" after the first, had on the margin, to help readers with "many of the words" in the text, terms to them "more familiar."<sup>30</sup>

Countless were the restorations of the readings of the authoritative texts—either made by Malone on his own initiative or originally made by Johnson and Capell and defended by him on bibliographical principles and on grounds of propriety (the speaker's meaning; the speaker's character and habits; usage; Shakespeare's own linguistic habits; a congenial metaphor, etc.). On the few occasions he accepted or suggested an emendation, he proceeded in the same way; however, there was never an editor who was more shy of emendations.

One of the specialized fields of modern scholarship is the examina-



tion of disputed readings with reference to the idiosyncrasies of Elizabethan handwriting and spelling habits—particularly Shakespeare's handwriting and spelling habits, to the extent we have been able to fix them after Sir E. M. Thompson's identification of the handwriting in the three famous pages of the manuscript play *Sir Thomas More*. In this field, Malone went as far as was possible without a knowledge of Shakespeare's individual habits. It seemed to him an elementary principle that when the suspected source of error is the printer's failure to decipher a word correctly, the adopted reading should be as near as possible to the reading of the authoritative text. To Orlando's question about the two princesses, Le Beau says:

But yet, indeed, the taller is his daughter. (*As You Like It*, I. iii)

Everybody agrees that the line is corrupt, Rosalind being the taller of the two; Malone would make Le Beau say "smaller" rather than (with Pope) "shorter," the former word being "much nearer to the corrupted reading." In the same way, while reading with the Folio 'And on old Hyem's chin' (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, II. ii), he suggested that if one agreed on the necessity of emendation, Tyrwhitt's *thinne* (*thin*), being "nearer to *chinne* (the spelling of the old copies)" than Zachary Grey's *chill*, was "more likely to have been the author's word." A simple objection to Dr. Johnson's "my May of life" (*Macbeth*, V. iii), where the Folio has 'my way of life', is that "a compositor at the press should use a small *w* instead of a capital *M*." These are straightforward cases; however, the editor would need patience and exact knowledge to discover the particular errors which a printer deciphering an Elizabethan hand was liable to commit. "In the MSS. of our author's age," says Malone about the Folio *deuote* for *denote* in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, IV. vi, "*n* and *u* were formed so very much alike that they are scarcely distinguishable". The same point is made about *leave* for *lean* (*leane*, "the old spelling") in *Timon of Athens*, IV. iii. An evidently corrupt passage in *Measure for Measure*, III. ii yields sense by reading *mocking* for *making*; apart from what else can be said in favour of the change, it has to be remembered that in "the hand-writing of that time, the small *c* was merely a straight line; so that if it happened to be subjoined and written very close to an *o*, the two letters might easily be taken for an *a*." In fact, *mock* and *make* are "often confounded" in old Shakespearian texts. Hammer, misled by the "similitude" of the two words, substituted *swoon* for *sworn* in Perdita's

sworn, I think,  
To show myself a glass. (*The Winter's Tale*, IV. iii)

But the Folio word is more appropriate; also, Hanmer “forgot that *swoon* in the old copies of these plays is always written *sound* or *swound*,” and in either form could not have been mistaken for *sworn*.<sup>31</sup>

### III

In the Preface Malone defined an editor's two main duties: one is to settle the text; the other is explanation and illustration (to use his own words, which should not be narrowly understood). After Johnson, he is the most frequently quoted writer in Furness's New Variorum edition. When the explanation of a passage needs sturdy commonsense and a close knowledge of life, we would turn to Johnson rather than to Malone, but when it requires in addition exact historical scholarship, we would turn to Malone rather than to Johnson. It was not till we knew all that Shakespeare read, not till “every temporary allusion” was pointed out and “every obscurity elucidated” (said Malone), that the editors could think their labours were ended; there is hardly any Elizabethan work in which “I did not find somewhat that tended to throw a light on these plays.”<sup>32</sup>

Considering ‘Put out the light, and then put out the light’ or ‘my way of life, is fall’n into the sear, the yellow leaf’, he ranges over a wide field, though his gaze is never turned away from the play in question, from Shakespeare. Having been at work on him for decades, whom he loved on this side idolatry, he must have had all Shakespeare by heart, for he explains him with an amazing wealth of illustration out of his own writings. The eighteenth-century reader had a thrill of recognition, a happy feeling that what had appeared debatable was perhaps now identified, when four lines in Sonnet LXXIII—

That time of year thou mayst in me behold  
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang  
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,  
Bare ruin’d choirs where late the sweet birds sang.—

were quoted as the “best comment” on Macbeth's words, or when two from *The Rape of Lucrece*

Fair Torch, burn out thy light, and lend it not  
To darken her, whose light excelleth thine!

were put beside Othello's words with the comment, “Let the words—‘Put out her light’, stand for a moment in the place of ‘darken her’”.<sup>33</sup>

Malone establishes *penetrate*, *enter* as the meaning of *pierce* (which confounded Warburton who had taken it to mean *wound*) in inconsolable Brabantio's

I never yet did hear  
That the bruis'd heart was pierced through the ear. (*Othello*, I. iii),

by citing the word in Shakespeare's 46th Sonnet, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *The Rape of Lucrece*; in *The Mirror for Magistrates*, *The Faerie Queene*, Book VI, Canto ix, and Book IV, Canto viii, *Tamburlaine*, and Milton's *Ode at a Solemn Musick*: it is like following with him the history, the fortunes, of the word in poetry.<sup>34</sup> He has great admiration for Johnson, and in some broad matters of editing thinks himself as continuing the elder scholar's work; also, he is delighted to confirm in notes to many individual passages Dr. Johnson's reading (usually that of the authoritative texts) or interpretations. But this admiration does not restrain him from differing with Johnson when he thinks he should. Much good can result from disagreement. King Henry V, in Act I, Sc. ii, says that he will conquer and rule France in glory, and that the English chronicles will be full of praise for his deeds; or he will die in the attempt, and be deservedly forgotten, and his tomb be without 'a paper epitaph'. Dr. Johnson expressed a preference for the Folio 'a waxen epitaph' to the Quarto phrase, which he apparently understood to mean an epitaph written on paper, "to be affixed to a tomb," an insignificant memorial, whereas, says Malone (whom we have here quoted), King Henry meant "the best epitaph a prince can have, the *written* account of his achievements," in other words "an historical eulogy." The expression is "figurative." Dryden's dedication of his poem *Eleonora* has a "similar expression": 'this paper monument'. When metaphorically used by Shakespeare, 'waxen' (the Folio word) means 'soft', 'yielding', 'impressionable', and hence it "might mean also—easily obliterated"; but the passage requires here instead the sense 'lasting', the question being "whether his deeds should be emblazoned by narration, or his *actions* and his bones together consigned to 'dust and damn'd oblivion'". The Folio editors, like Steevens and Johnson, misunderstood the reading of the earlier edition, which they would else have preserved. Malone cites the 55th and 81st sonnets:

Not marble, nor the gilded monuments  
Of princes, shall outlive this powerful rime;  
But you shall shine more bright in these contents  
Than unswept stone, besmear'd with sluttish time.

Your monument shall be my gentle verse.<sup>35</sup>

But it is not possible to give an idea of the variety of these expla-

natory notes; nor of the ease with which Malone can expatiate on his subject in these notes, when he chooses.

Many of them offer such comments as are suggested by a close objective reading of the text, and explanation merges into appreciation. Sir Joshua Reynolds's comment on Lear's words 'And my poor fool is hanged!'—granting "that Lear means his *Fool*, and not *Cordelia*"—is as sensitive a piece of 'character' criticism as the early nineteenth century can show, and Malone differing with him justly praises on this occasion his "observations on all subjects of criticism and taste." (It is to be unjust to Sir Joshua Reynolds that he will remain unheard). Lear's mind from the time of his entrance (in the final scene) till his death, says Malone, is "wholly occupied" with thoughts of his daughter. Kent succeeds in forcing "himself on his notice," but this attempt to distract him fails, and his thoughts return to Cordelia, over whose body "he continues to hang"; he "is now himself in the agony of death." When Sir Joshua Reynolds's and Malone's comments are put together, the moral that emerges is that sensitive impressionism can go astray if enough attention is not paid to the text, to what happens *in* the play, and if the precise meaning of a word, a phrase, a line is not recovered by reference to Shakespeare's and other Elizabethan writers' practices. Lear has "just seen his daughter *hanged*;" the play does not say that the Fool was "hanged also," it is silent on his fate. And the expression 'poor fool' (which Sir Joshua Reynolds thought could be properly used only of "an inferior object, which may be loved, without much esteem or respect") means here 'dear, tender, helpless innocence'—the murdered Cordelia—a meaning which can be inferred from that of this expression in *Venus and Adonis* ("the *young*, the *beautiful*, and *innocent*" youth, worth a goddess's love and struggling to free himself from her embraces is 'the poor fool'), in *Twelfth Night*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, and Arthur Brooke's poem *The History of Romeus and Juliet*.<sup>36</sup> Malone's interest in character is often evident, and he is willing to acknowledge the help he may have received in a particular instance from one of the 'new' critics who concerned themselves especially with Shakespeare's characters. Though Macbeth has information that Banquo has been murdered, he remonstrates at the banquet (where Banquo who was to have been the "chief guest" is not present):

Who may I rather challenge for unkindness  
Than pity for mischance!

Thomas Whately's *Remarks on Some of the Characters of Shakspeare* had been published in 1785. Macbeth appears to Whately to betray himself here "by an over-acted regard for Banquo"—affects to miss him, and trying

to suggest, offhand, that he does not know what has kept Banquo away, makes an unguarded reference to the truth from his own knowledge of it. He has not been toughened by 'hard use', Malone explains; "this is one of Shakspeare's touches of nature."<sup>37</sup> Commenting on one of the speeches of Sir Toby in *Twelfth Night*, Act V, Sc. i, when he is drunk, Malone says that Shakespeare's characters have a way of being true to themselves *always*.<sup>38</sup> And though Shakespeare was careless about external details—Bardolph's rank, for example—and in matters where he depends or has to depend on books, he is amazingly truthful to life in everything that comes within his direct observation; the "most minute particulars" are correct (as we can understand when we look at Williams, the type of the common English soldier in *King Henry V*, IV. viii).<sup>39</sup>

An 'improbability' in the action of a play may not look like one, if we properly adjust our point of view. There are two interesting instances in *King Henry IV* alone, one in each part, and in both Malone engaged in controversy with Dr. Johnson, and has been proved to be right.<sup>40</sup>

Small points may be interesting. A favourite notion may be pointed out, and behind the dramatist's mask of impersonality Shakespeare's face may be revealed for a passing moment; it appears that he "considered *soft musick* as favourable to sleep."<sup>41</sup> Again, an idea may be associated with a particular word or with the word used in one particular way. With instances from *Macbeth*, *Coriolanus*, 1 *King Henry IV*, *King Lear*, and *Pericles*, Malone shows that where Shakespeare meaning to "describe a violent derangement of nature" usually mentions "the earth's *shaking*" or its "being otherwise convulsed," he "constantly employs the word *shook*, or some synonymous word, as a neutral verb"; that is, one which contains "a distinct proposition". Perhaps Malone appreciated the compulsive power of association. In any case, he felt, as Dr. Johnson did, that both the metre and the sense of

The round world should have shook  
Lions into civil streets,  
And citizens to their dens                    (*Antony and Cleopatra*, V. i.)

are defective, and that some words have been lost; his doubts were strengthened by the manner of the use of 'shook', which in a *comparable context* cannot be paralleled in Shakespeare. He does not disturb the text, but suggests that the meaning of the passage as it originally stood could have been: "The round world should have shook, Lions *been hurttled* into civil streets, And citizens to their dens."<sup>42</sup> Or, we may mention that Malone noticed that *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece* are full of "images and expressions that occur also in his plays" and that the Sonnets and the plays have many "thoughts" in common. Could it be

that two early nineteenth-century Shakespearians, Francis Douce (*Illustrations of Shakespeare and of Ancient Manners*) and Charles Knight (*The Pictorial Edition of the Works of Shakespeare*), took their cue from Malone's comment on the manner of Antonio's leave-taking in *The Merchant of Venice*, Act II, Sc. vii, that many passages in Shakespeare might be made themes for pictures and that it is "surprizing" that painters "do not study his plays with this view"?<sup>43</sup>

Students of Shakespeare's pronunciation in our century will find with interest that Malone has indicated the importance of this study. It may have a bearing on emendation and some other matters, and may have to sift much interesting and varied evidence; for example, the *i* in *parasites* in *Venus and Adonis*, line 848, the word seeming to some to rhyme defectively with *wits*, can be presumed to have been short from the spelling *parasits* "in the original copy 1593, as well as in that of 1596."<sup>44</sup> More, Malone recovered many quibbles which have been obscured by changes in pronunciation, though not as many as Helge Kökeritz has in his work specially devoted to Shakespeare's pronunciation with a separate chapter on lost quibbles.<sup>45</sup> To confine ourselves to one play, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, the pronunciation of the first word in each of the three pairs, *sheep*, *ship* (I. i), *quote*, *coat* (II. iv), *one*, *on* (II. i), was or can be presumed to have been close enough to that of the second word to make Shakespeare succumb to temptation; the quibble on *one*, *on* is repeated in two passages in *Love's Labour's Lost*, Act IV.<sup>46</sup> A connected matter is that some quibbles—*sutor*, *shooter* (*Love's Labour's Lost*, IV. i), *withal*, *with awl* (*Julius Caesar*, I. i)—are only for the ear, and went off well on the stage, but cannot be satisfactorily exhibited on a printed page. "Shakespeare who wrote for the stage, not for the closet, was contented if his quibble satisfied the ear."<sup>47</sup>

It is important to note that Malone keeps in mind this fundamental fact that Shakespeare "wrote for the stage" in the discussion of *all* matters.

#### IV

Quite a few of Malone's comments are on the images. I do not know if they have been at all discussed. He excels in analysing the character of an image, but is silent on its function.

One of the ideas that appears persistently in these comments is that it has been usual to think that Shakespeare's imagery "must be round and corresponding on every side," but that this is seldom so. Jealousy is 'the green-ey'd monster, which doth make the meat it feeds on' (*Othello*, III. iii). After the monster has been introduced into the comparison the

dramatist talks "of its making its *own food*, and being *begot by itself*," but he is "still thinking of jealousy *only*"; it is quite beside the point to ask if Shakespeare could not have some animal in mind.<sup>48</sup> To make Lepidus's description of Antony in Act I, Sc. iv, the second example:

His faults, in him seem as the spots of heaven,  
More fiery by night's blackness—

Antony's "goodness is a ground which gives a relief to his faults, and makes them stand out more prominent and conspicuous." Whether a man's *goodness* can be the counterpart of 'night's blackness', and whether (as Dr. Johnson said) stars which "have been always supposed to beautify the night" can stand for Antony's 'faults', are questions outside the comparison which turns on *one idea*.<sup>49</sup> Malone considers also the Second Carrier's words in 1 *King Henry IV*, 'your chamber-lie breeds fleas like a loach' (II. i), Hero's in *Much Ado About Nothing*, 'If low an agate very vilely cut' (III. i), Claudius' in *Hamlet*, 'And then this *should* is like a spendthrift sigh, That hurts by easing' (IV. vii), Menenius' words in *Coriolanus*, 'Thou rascal, that art worst in blood to run, Lead'st first to win some vantage' (I. i), and Touchstone's in *As You Like It*, III. ii, 'Truly, thou art damn'd; like an ill-roasted egg, all on one side': perhaps we cite more evidence on one point than we need to.<sup>50</sup> Malone is critical of Theobald's assumption behind some of his emendations that Shakespeare's similes "exactly correspond on both sides,"<sup>51</sup> and ridicules Warburton's attempt "to preserve the integrity of the metaphor" by reading *assail* for the offending word in 'Or to take arms against a sea of troubles.'<sup>52</sup>

He also noticed a phenomenon which has puzzled some scholars—the coalescence of two images. Macbeth's words 'I have no spur To prick the sides of my intent, but only Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself And falls on the other.' (I. vii)—provide him with his most striking example.<sup>53</sup>

In some of his comments on Shakespeare's 'incomplete' comparisons, Malone observed that the playwright does not always pursue "his metaphors far," or that he "seems to delight in passing hastily from one idea to another";<sup>54</sup> from this it was but one step to another striking observation of his, which, incidentally, Coleridge is assumed to have made first. An important characteristic of Shakespeare's "intellectual action" (as distinguished from Ben Jonson's, or Beaumont and Fletcher's) seemed to the romantic critic to be a continual evolution, "B out of A, and C out of B and so on"—like the movement of a serpent "which makes a fulcrum of its own body."<sup>55</sup> But Malone had this particular thought before Coleridge. (It can be discovered in a nascent state in Johnson's analysis of the speech, "To be or not to be, that is the question".<sup>56</sup>) Instead of

summarizing it we shall give one of Malone's notes in full, in order that we may appreciate the clarity with which he, a hundred and fifty years before the heyday of psychological criticism, understood this important matter. When Constance's hopes are destroyed by a diplomatic decision, she says (*King John*, III. i):

Thou may'st, thou shalt, I will not go with thee:  
I will instruct my sorrows to be proud;  
For grief is proud, and makes its owner stoop.  
To me, and to the state of my great grief,  
Let kings assemble; for my grief's so great,  
That no supporter but the huge firm earth  
Can hold it up: here I and sorrows sit;  
Here is my throne, bid kings come bow to it.

Malone's comment is:

"Our author has rendered this passage obscure, by indulging himself in one of those conceits in which he too much delights, and by bounding rapidly, with his usual licence, from one idea to another. This obscurity induced Sir T. Hanmer, for *stoop*, to substitute *stout*; a reading that has been too hastily adopted in the subsequent editions.

"The confusion arises from the poet's having personified grief in the first part of the passage, and supposing the afflicted person to be *bowed* to the earth by that pride or haughtiness which Grief, which he personifies, is said to possess; and by making the afflicted person, in the latter part of the passage, actuated by this very pride, and exacting the same kind of obeisance from others, that Grief has exacted from her.—'I will not go (says Constance) to these kings; I will teach my sorrows to be proud: for Grief is proud, and makes the afflicted *stoop*; therefore here I throw myself, and let them come to me.' Here, had she stopped, and thrown herself on the ground, and had nothing more been added, however we might have disapproved of the conceit, we should have had no temptation to disturb the text. But the idea of throwing herself on the ground suggests a new image; and because her *stately* grief is so great that nothing but the huge earth can support it, she considers the ground as her *throne*; and having thus invested herself with regal dignity, she, as queen in *misery*, as possessing (like Imogen) 'the supreme crown of grief', calls on the princes of the world to bow down before her, as she has herself been *bowed down* by affliction.

"Such, I think, was the process that passed in the poet's mind; which appears to me so clearly to explain the text, that I see no reason for departing from it."<sup>57</sup>

Two important passages where this mental 'process' is marked are Prince Henry's words about the runaway Falstaff from the Gadshill



misadventure, his "fat dripping with the violence of his motion" (as Theobald had said),

Did'st thou never see Titan kiss a dish of butter? pitiful-hearted Titan,  
that melted at the sweet tale of the sons! if thou did'st, then behold  
that compound. (1 *King Henry IV*, II, iv)

and Cassio's anxious words before Othello's safe arrival in Cyprus,

Therefore my hopes, not surfeited to death,  
Stand in bold cure. (II, i);

in both passages, one thought or image suggests another not too obviously connected with it.<sup>58</sup> When the detailed history of Shakespeare imagery criticism comes to be written, it may be recognized that Malone contributed one or two seminal ideas.

As editors, who have always to keep in mind all Shakespeare's works and compare him with himself, Johnson and Malone noticed his fondness for some kinds of images—for example, "domestick and familiar images," or those taken from falconry and the chase.<sup>59</sup>

Finally, eighteenth-century scholars knew how interesting the study of the origin of some images can be. One, 'shook hands, as over a vast, and embraced, as it were, from the ends of opposed winds' (*The Winter's Tale*, I, i), may have been taken from a common pictorial device on the title-page of old books. (Henley, whose comment on this image Malone admits into his edition, recalls that Shakespeare "had his eye on a wood cut in Holinshed, while writing the incantation of the weird sisters in *Macbeth*"). A second image, 'Blow, wind, and crack your cheeks!' (*King Lear*, III, ii), may have been taken from "the common representation of the winds, which he might have found in many books of his own time"; this image appears also in *Troilus and Cressida*.<sup>60</sup> Malone, in one of his notes to 2 *King Henry IV*, pointed out that dramatic impersonality is not always preserved; the matter of an image may reveal what the playwright, and not what the speaker—the character in the play—is "conversant" with. Kings, "who never had been in a tiring-room", speak the language of the stage and "talk of cues and properties."<sup>61</sup> Only four years after Malone's edition was published came Walter Whiter's *A Specimen of a Commentary on Shakespeare*, in which Locke's doctrine of unconscious association was pressed into the service of the study of Shakespeare's imagery and diction, and the effects of the stage on a "mind" which was "ever occupied... with the affairs of the Theatre" were examined in great detail.<sup>62</sup> For his work, Whiter read Shakespeare in Malone's edition. Is it possible that Malone's frequent mention of the stage as a source of Shakespeare's imagery and language started in Whiter's

mind the idea of his work whose importance as a pioneer study is being increasingly recognized—the idea that ‘association’ may sometimes exert on the creative mind a force of which it is not aware?

SAILABLENDRA KUMAR SEN

#### NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Preface.
2. (London, 1821. Based on Malone's edition.) Vol. III.
3. James Boswell (Malone's first biographer), Variorum edition, Advertisement, & II, 404n; James Prior, *Life of Edmond Malone* (London, 1860), p. 167. D. N. Smith, *Shakespeare in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 1928), p. 56; Greg, *The Editorial Problem in Shakespeare* (Oxford, 1942), p. 42; J. Dover Wilson, "Malone and the Upstart Crow," *Shakespeare Survey*, 4 (1951), 66; Chambers, Vol. I (1930), Preface, page x; Baldwin, Vol. I (1944), p. 72.
4. Boswell's Variorum edition (1821), I, 367-70 (Appendix to Colman's Translation of Terence).
5. *The Life of William Shakspeare*. (Boswell, II, 99-105.)
6. Boswell, XIX, 175. (The remainder of Queen Margaret's speech shows how literally she means this word here.) In this essay Shakespeare is given in Malone's text or in the text of the Oxford Standard Authors edition of Shakespeare's *Works* (first published 1905, reprint of 1957).
7. Boswell, XI, 53.
8. Boswell, XIII, 255.
9. Boswell, VIII, 34-35.
10. Boswell, XVII, 267, 270, 440-3; XIX, 136, 236-7; XVIII, 589-90; VI, 63.
11. Boswell, VI, 154.
12. Boswell, XVIII, 568. Incidentally, to get an idea of its range, we may remember that Malone's Dissertation on the Three Parts of *King Henry VI* enters convincingly (that is, not in a general way but with carefully collected and sifted evidence) into the following questions among others: (1) style and diction, (2) vocabulary, (3) versification, (4) Elizabethan publishers' practices, (5) the nature of entries in the Stationers' Register, (6) character of certain 'spurious' texts, (7) resemblances (in thought and expression) of the Folio additions to Shakespeare's undisputed work, (8) the use of Holinshed in the Folio additions, of Hall in the original quartos, (9) and, of course, the now well known allusion in Greene's *Groatsworth of Wit*. In his brief note appended to the Dissertation, Boswell has preserved for us the great Porson's judgment that it is "one of the most convincing pieces of criticism he had ever met with" (XVIII, 597). It is implied in Dover Wilson's essay (already cited) that modern scholarship might not have gone astray in this matter if it had identified a classical allusion as easily as Malone did in the eighteenth century (and assumed that others would do so too), when many Latin classics were still as familiarly known as they were to Greene's readers. (Boswell, XVIII, 571; J. Dover Wilson, *op. cit.*, pp. 65-66.)
13. Boswell, VIII, 337-8.
14. Capell and Malone, and *Modern Critical Bibliography* (Calcutta, 1960).

15. Boswell, XVI, 125.
16. Boswell, XVI, 39-40.
17. Boswell, IV, 129.
18. Capell's Introduction. Boswell, I, 134-5.
19. Boswell, XXI, 226.
20. Boswell, XVI, 226, 150; XVII, 30-31; X, 72-73; IV, 87.
21. Boswell, XVI, 25; XIX, 41; XVII, 391.
22. Boswell, XVI, 75.
23. Boswell, XX, 70.
24. Boswell, XV, 77; IV, 82; XV, 283; XVII, 433-4.
25. Boswell, XII, 323; VIII, 15.
26. Boswell, VIII, 154.
27. Preface, Boswell, I, 208-26.
28. *Shakespeare's Seventeenth-Century Editors* (New York, 1937).
29. Boswell, XVI, 226.
30. Preface, Boswell, I, 226.
31. Boswell, VI, 372; V, 220; XI, 252-3; VIII, 176; XIII, 361-2; IX, 137; XIV, 345-6.
32. Preface, Boswell, I, 202, 234-6.
33. Boswell, XI, 252-3; IX, 464-5.
34. Boswell, IX, 269-70.
35. Boswell, XVII, 283-4.
36. Boswell, X, 284-7.
37. Boswell, XI, 166-7.
38. Ibid. 494.
39. Boswell, XVII, 294, 451.
40. Boswell, XVI, 298-9; XVII, 65.
41. Boswell, X, 243.
42. Boswell, XII, 390-2.
43. Boswell, V, 66.
44. Boswell, XX, 62.
45. *Shakespeare's Pronunciation* (Yale Univ. Press, 1953).
46. Boswell, IV, 14, 45, 32; 358, 373.
47. Boswell, IV, 348; XII, 6-7.
48. Boswell, IX, 363.
49. Boswell, XI, 200.
50. Boswell, XVI, 233; VII, 74; VII, 455; XIV, 14; VI, 418
51. Boswell, XV, 229; XVII, 421.
51. Boswell, XV, 229; XVII, 421.
52. Boswell, VII, 322.
53. Boswell, XI, 80-81.
54. Boswell, VIII, 37; XVII, 421.
55. *Table Talk*, March 5, 1834.
56. Boswell, VII, 321.
57. Boswell, XV, 263-4.
58. Boswell, XVI, 269-70; IX, 296.
59. Boswell, XV, 294; XIII, 380.
60. Boswell, XIV, 238; X, 138.
61. Boswell, XVII, 231.
62. Whiter, pp. 153-85.

## A Note on "*The Tempest*", I. i. 37-44<sup>1</sup>

*Botes.* Downe with the top-Mast: yare, lower, lower, bring her to Try with Maine-course. A plague——!

*A cry within. Enter SEBASTIAN, ANTHONIO & GONZALO.*

upon this howling: they are lowder then the weather or our office: yet againe? What do you heere? Shal we give ore and drowne, have you a minde to sinke?

*Sebas.* A poxe o' your throat, you bawling, blasphemous incharitable Dog.

WHY does Sebastian call the boatswain "blasphemous"? Believing that "our boatswain has never yet brought out a single curse or oath" and referring to the long dash after "A plague" (l. 39) in F<sub>1</sub>, Nicholson<sup>2</sup> concludes that "it represents oaths or curses, the introduction of which, according to the statute, was illegal." Likewise, the editor (Frank Kermode) of the New Arden edition of the play, finding "lack of textual evidence of the boatswain's blasphemy" (note on V. i. 218), assumes that the word "blasphemous" used by Sebastian refers to expunged oaths or curses. In this connection he mentions the *Act to Restraine Abuses of Players* which "prohibited certain oaths on the stage", but as this Act of Parliament is dated 1606, a reference to the Act in this context necessarily presupposes the existence of a pre-1606 unexpurgated version of *The Tempest* containing the "oaths or curses" the omission of which is supposed to be indicated by the dash in the extant version of which the generally accepted date is 1610-1611. In thus indirectly accepting the hypothesis of an earlier version of the play, Kermode contradicts what he himself states in the Introduction to the play. After examining the question of an earlier version at some length he concludes with the observation that "the theory that *The Tempest* is a new version of a very early play seems, in fact, to have very little to support it." (p. xvii)

Editors seem to have made too heavy weather of a rather simple thing. It is not really necessary, for the purpose of interpreting this passage, either to assume expunged oaths or curses or to assume, for this purpose, an unexpurgated earlier version of the play. "Entities are not to be feigned without necessity", and there is no necessity here", observes C. S. Lewis<sup>3</sup> in another context, commenting on the habit of "research" to assume earlier versions. The word "plague" itself, as used in this passage, is an imprecation and should be sufficient to make the foul-mouthed

Sebastian use the epithet "blasphemous" to describe the man who has just uttered it. Besides, in no other instance of Shakespeare's use of the curse in this form—and there are at least twenty such instances<sup>4</sup>—are there words intervening between "plague" and the object of imprecation. It is also unnecessary to suppose, as some editors have done, that Sebastian calls the boatswain "blasphemous" because sailors are habitually so, even though this particular sailor has not used a single word of blasphemy. In fact, the dramatist has not put into Sebastian's mouth any epithet which has no immediate relevance.

Halliwell<sup>5</sup> seems to suggest that "blasphemous" is used here in the secondary sense of "abusive" or "calumnious". Giving this meaning of the word the *O.E.D.* also quotes Sebastian's speech to illustrate it. But the real nature of the boatswain's blasphemy and, therefore, the meaning of the epithet "blasphemous" as applied to him, are made clear in Gonzalo's words in V. i. 218-20:

Now blasphemy,  
That swear'st Grace ore-board, not an oath on shore,  
Hast thou no mouth by land?

Since the boatswain had started cursing (with "A plague") before he heard the "cry within", it seems that he was about to curse the "tempestuous noise of Thunder and Lightning" (S.D. at the beginning of the scene) which was drowning his voice as he was shouting out his orders to the sailors (thus doing part of "our office"). Commenting on this interpretation of mine Prof. J. C. Maxwell, in a letter to me dated 9.8.1961, made a very ingenious suggestion which, though not fully satisfactory, is probably the only way out of the difficulty presented by the *F<sub>1</sub>* text here. "It looks to me", wrote Prof. Maxwell, "as if the boatswain were *going* to curse the storm, and then in mid-sentence turned to the passengers" after having been interrupted by the "cry within". The long dash after "A plague", therefore, may be taken to signify this interruption and not to stand for oaths or curses supposed to have been subsequently omitted from the text.

Modern editors of the play, however, have sought to evade the difficulties by omitting the dash and making incidental changes in the placing of the *F<sub>1</sub>* stage directions.

PRIYATOSH BAGCHI

#### NOTES & REFERENCES

1. The text of all Shakespearean quotations in this Note is that of the First Folio. Line

numerations and (where necessary) Act and Scene divisions have been taken from the Globe Edition (1928) of Shakespeare's Works.

2. *Notes and Queries*, 3d S, xi. 251, quoted in New Var. Ed. (1892).
3. *A Preface to Paradise Lost* (Oxford Paperbacks, 1960), p. 29.
4. *Tp.* II. ii. 167; *All's W.* IV. iii. 134; *Tw. N.* I. v. 128, III. iv. 311; *1H IV.* I. iii. 243, II. i. 31, II. ii. 21, II. ii. 31, II. iv. 166, II. iv. 546, III. i. 5; *1H VI.* IV. iii. 9; *2H VI.* III. ii. 309; *Troil.* IV. ii. 78; *Cor.* II. iii. 56; *Tim.* II. ii. 50, IV. iii. 365; *Lr.* II. ii. 87, V. iii. 269; *Per.* II. i. 28.
5. Quoted in New Var. Ed. (1892).

## *Julius Caesar & Henry V*

WHEN analysing the character of Brutus, critics usually look beyond and see in him the shadow of his successor, Hamlet. Such a link may exist, but the picture becomes considerably clearer if we look both before and after, and consider Brutus, not as the first of a series, but as an important link in a chain.

It would not be out of place to begin by discussing the style and versification of *Julius Caesar*. So far as the date of composition is concerned, all evidence suggests that *Julius Caesar* was much closer in time to the earlier play. It is not mentioned in Francis Mere's *Palladis Tamia* which was entered in the Stationer's Register on Sept. 7, 1598, and it is, in all probability, one of the two plays that Dr. Thomas Platter,<sup>2</sup> the Swiss traveller, saw while he was in England from September 18 to October 20, 1599. The performance took place in a theatre on the other side of the river. Most scholars agree with Sir Edmund Chambers<sup>3</sup> in identifying Dr. Platter's "house with the thatched roof" with the newly built Globe Theatre, which had probably been completed by late summer, 1589.

Other evidence points to the same conclusion. There is an account of the Forum Scene in John Weever's *The Mirror of Martyrs, or The Life and Death of Sir John Oldcastle*<sup>4</sup> written in 1599 (as indicated in the Dedication to William Covell), and an echo of the lines—

O judgement, thou art fled to brutish beasts  
And men have lost their reason.<sup>5</sup>

is found in Jonson's *Every Man out of his Humour*—"Reason is long since fled to animals, you know."<sup>6</sup> We may then conclude with a fair degree of certainty that *Julius Caesar* was first performed in September-October, 1599, and written probably a few months earlier.

This dating places *Julius Caesar* very close to *Henry V* which was written almost certainly early in 1599. There is an allusion in this play to Essex's Irish campaign, and the eulogistic words—

Were now the general of our gracious empress,  
As in good time he may, from Ireland coming,  
Bringing rebellion broached on his sword,<sup>7</sup>

suggest that Shakespeare, at the time of writing it, had no inkling of the unfortunate conclusion of the campaign. The campaign was begun on March 27, 1599, and ended on September 28, 1599, and the disastrous

nature of the expedition had become evident to all long before the end. Between the spring and the summer of 1599, then, both *Henry V* and *Julius Caesar* were written. Perhaps even the one was begun before the other was completed. Certainly, Shakespeare had Caesar's theme in mind when he wrote, in the last chorus of *Henry V*:

Like to the senators of the antique Rome,  
With the plebeians swarming at their heels,  
Go forth and fetch their conquering Caesar in:  
(*HV*, V. Chorus 26-28).

It is the very scene with which *Julius Caesar* begins.

The dating of *Hamlet* is a more delicate business. The play is referred to by Gabriel Harvey in his ms. note in a copy of Speght's *Chaucer*,<sup>8</sup> and one sentence "The Earle Essex much commends Albion's England" implies that Harvey wrote the passage before the death of the 2nd Earl of Essex on February 25, 1601. This provides a terminal date for the play. On the other side, the company of boy actors, unmistakably referred to in *Hamlet* as "little eyases", was revived in 1599; so *Hamlet* must have been written after this date. Sir Edmund Chambers would like to place *Hamlet* in 1600,<sup>9</sup> which brings it, to use his own words, "nearer *Julius Caesar* as a companion study of tragic idealism." But there is no definite evidence towards this date. Other scholars favour the date 1601, which is the year Jonson's satirical plays were being produced by the Chapel children at Blackfriars. This would give more point to the allusion in "an aery of children." Chambers himself, in his final dating, leaves the question open, and suggests 1600-1, as the date of composition.<sup>10</sup> 1600 or 1601, whichever date we accept, *Julius Caesar* still remains closer to *Henry V*.

Evidence based on style and versification is at best uncertain, but here too, indications point the same way. Here are a few significant figures:<sup>11</sup>

		<i>HV</i>	<i>JC</i>	<i>Ham.</i>
Percentage of Run-on Verse	.. ..	21.8	19.3	23.1
Percentage of Double Endings	.. ..	20.5	19.7	22.6
Percentage of Speech Endings ( <i>i.e.</i> speeches ending in a part of a blank verse line)	.. ..	18.3	20.3	51.6

Run-on verse is indicative of sustained rhythm, and hence is symptomatic of greater command of rhythm. Double endings suggest a flexibility of blank-verse structure, and thus make for greater freedom in the handling of verse. Speech endings make for rapid and therefore dramatic dialogue. If a part of a blank-verse line forms the end of a speech, and the remainder the beginning of the next, the two speeches follow on the heels



of each other, so to speak. *Hamlet*, as we can see from the figures, contains a higher percentage of all three and seems, therefore, to be a maturer play, while on the whole the figures show *Julius Caesar* to be nearer *Henry V* than *Hamlet*.

Analysing the style and imagery one reaches the same conclusion. Shakespeare, even in his earliest comedies, has made fun of the euphuistic style (Cf. Holofernes in *Love's Labour's Lost*), but he was a child of the age, and was not himself entirely free from some of its defects. Many features of Euphuism abound in his earlier work, decreasing as his art becomes more mature—the passion for conceits, the accumulation of diverse images to illustrate a single idea, the use of a kind of repetitive jingle, or balanced and antithetical sentences with obviously epigrammatic turns of phrase. There is plenty of all this in *Julius Caesar*. In the opening scene of the play Marullus addresses the crowd:

And do you now put on your best attire?  
And do you now cull out a holiday?  
And do you now strew flowers in his way (I. i. 53-55).

Cassius expostulates with Brutus:

Why should that name be sounded more than yours?  
Write them together, yours is as fair a name;  
Sound them, it doth become the mouth as well;  
Weigh them, it is as heavy; conjure with 'em, (I. ii. 143-6).

Cassius again in the next scene:

Therein, ye gods, you make the weak most strong;  
Therein, ye gods, you tyrants do defeat:  
Nor stony tower, nor walls of beaten brass,  
Nor airless dungeon, nor strong links of iron, (I. iii. 91-94).

When the servant tells Caesar "They could not find a heart within the beast", Caesar plays upon this:

Caesar should be a beast without a heart,  
If he should stay at home today for fear. (II. ii. 42-43)

These are but a few examples selected at random. This style reaches its climax in the pointed, antithetical epigrammatic sentences in Brutus's funeral oration. In *Hamlet* the only elaborate example of this nature is in Hamlet's fourth speech—

'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,  
Nor customary suits of solemn black,

Nor windy suspiration of forced breath,  
 No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,  
 Nor the dejected 'haviour of the visage, . . . (I. ii. 77-81).

There is also a greater use of personification in *Julius Caesar*. Caesar compares himself to Danger:

. . . danger knows full well  
 That Caesar is more dangerous than he. (II. ii. 44-45)

Antony says:

Mischief, thou art afoot,  
 Take thou what course thou wilt! (III. ii. 265-6)

Brutus apostrophizes conspiracy over nine lines:

O conspiracy,  
 Shamest thou to show thy dangerous brow by night,  
 . . . . .  
 To hide thee from prevention. (II. i. 77-85),

and addresses slumber:

O murderous slumber,  
 Lay'st thou thy dangerous mace upon my boy, (IV. iii. 267-8).

Portia cries out—

O constancy, be strong upon my side, (II. iv. 6).

And in the last Act, Messala, seeing Cassius dead, says:

O hateful error, melancholy's child, (V. iii. 67).

For further examples of personification, see also I. iii. 111, II. i. 56, III. i. 78, III. i. 98, III. i. 207, III. i. 268, III. ii. 109, etc. In *Hamlet* there is plenty of mythology, but I have not found a use of personification on a similar scale. *Henry V*, on the other hand, has "a Muse of fire" (Gen. Pr., l. 1), "Expectation in the air" (II. Ch., l. 8), "Disorder" (IV. v. 17), "Mangled Peace" (V. ii. 34), "Consideration, like an angel, came" (I. i. 28), "Hydra-headed wilfulness" (I. i. 35), "She [England] a mourning widow of her nobles" (I. ii. 158). See also II. i. 65, II. iv. 104-5, III. iii. 15-17, III. vi. 28-29, IV. Ch. 20, IV. i. 257, IV. ii. 53, V. i. 90, V. ii. 378-9, etc. These figures of speech in *Julius Caesar* give an impression of declamatory poetry, an impression totally absent in *Hamlet*, but conti-

nually present in *Henry V*. Both *Henry V* and *Julius Caesar* are plays of rhetoric—*Hamlet* is more purely dramatic.

*Hamlet*, admittedly, abounds in puns. Hamlet himself utters most of them:

A little more than kin, and less than kind. (I. ii. 65)

I am too much i' the sun. (I. ii. 67)

By heaven, I'll make a ghost of him that let's me! (I. iv. 85)

It was a brute part of him to kill so capital a calf there.  
(III. ii. 110-11)

Is thy union here? (V. ii. 337)

Polonius also contributes with

Tender yourself more dearly;  
Or.....  
... You'll tender me a fool.<sup>12</sup>

and:

Ay, fashion you may call it; (I. iii. 112)

But it may be noted that Hamlet plays upon words deliberately, deriving a cynical pleasure out of twisting and perverting the meanings of the words used by others around him; while Polonius himself confesses that he is cracking "the wind of the poor phrase/Running it thus" (I. iii. 108-9). On the whole we can say that the puns in *Hamlet* have been put to a dramatic use, and are a spontaneous means of expressing character.

The same cannot be said of the puns in *Julius Caesar*. These are more artificial and contrived and have little dramatic relevance. They are there, as it were, for their own sake. Twice in this one play, Shakespeare puns on "Rome" and "room":

Now is it Rome indeed and room enough, (I. ii. 156)

and

Here is a mourning Rome, a dangerous Rome,  
No Rome of safety for Octavius yet, (III. i. 288-9).

The repetition of the same pun becomes monotonous. Another play on words, serving no dramatic purpose in the context, is Metellus's—

....his silver hairs  
Will purchase us a good opinion. (II. i. 144-5)

The very first scene of the play opens with several puns—soul-sole (1.15), withal-with awl (1.26), recover-re-cover (1.28), metal-mettle (1.66), guiltiness-guiltiness (1.67), etc. The most ornate pun in this play is Antony's lengthy elaboration on "hart" and heart"—

Pardon me, Julius! Here wast thou bay'd, brave hart;  
 Here didst thou fall; and here thy hunters stand,  
 Sign'd in thy spoil, and crimson'd in thy lethe.  
 O world, thou wast the forest to this hart;  
 And this, indeed, O world, the heart of thee.  
 How like a deer, stricken by many princes,  
 Dost thou here lie. (III. i. 204-10)

This is definitely in bad taste. The unending elaborations on this one theme are incongruously out of place in a speech that reflects intense emotions, and the passage most definitely resembles some of Shakespeare's earlier poems. One is immediately reminded of Dr. Johnson's famous indictment—"A quibble was to him the fatal Cleopatra for which he lost the world and was content to lose it."<sup>13</sup> Ll. 207-8, in particular, have such a cheap jingle about them that Coleridge actually doubted their genuineness, and suggested they had been interpolated from some old play.<sup>15</sup> The whole passage introduces a note of artificiality bordering on insincerity. It is the very last impression that Antony would want to create, and he is much too good an actor, as we see in the next scene, to allow himself to make a false slip at this moment. It is more likely that Shakespeare had not yet learnt to control fully his Elizabethan fondness for puns—a supposition that would class *Julius Caesar* among the earlier plays rather than as the first of the greater tragedies and close to *Hamlet*.

The puns in *Henry V* are similar in effect to those of *Julius Caesar*. The "gilt-guilt" pun in the Chorus (Act II., l. 26) is highly artificial, and not really in keeping with the exalted lyrical mood of the passage. Earlier, when the French ambassadors present the tennis-balls in I. ii, the puns with which Henry interlards his reply emphasize his sarcasm, but the effect is to make the whole passage declamatory:

We will, in France, by God's grace, play a set  
 Shall strike his father's crown into the hazard. (I. ii. 262-3)

"France" is both a country and a tennis-court. "Crown" is a coin (stake money) as well as the French throne. (The same "crown" pun is repeated later in IV. i. 231). "Strike a hazard" is to score a point in tennis and also to place "his father's crown" in jeopardy. "Courts", two lines later (1. 265), mean the royal court, tennis-courts and law-courts. "Chase" (1. 266) refers to points in tennis and disputes over claims.

At Harfleur (III. ii), the Boy's wit expends itself in deliberate puns. Ll. 28-57 are so full of them that it is impossible to refer to them all. One or two must suffice. "Carry coals" (l. 49) is to do degrading service and to show cowardice. "Pocketing up of wrongs" (l. 54) means to put up with insults and to receive stolen goods.

There are also several puns over similar-sounding French and English words: Paris Louvre-lover (II. iv. 132), bras-brass (IV. iv. 19), moi-moy (IV. iv. 22), etc. And there is the well-known passage where Henry requests Katharine to reply "in broken music": "for thy voice is music and thy English broken; therefore, queen of all, Katharine, break thy mind to me in broken English" (V. ii. 263-6). Many of these puns are delightful, but, as in *Julius Caesar*, they are more rhetorical, less dramatic.

If we study the nature of the imagery in *Julius Caesar* we shall find that the handling of the similes and metaphors here is distinctly indicative of earlier craftsmanship. As in *Henry V*, almost every image is clear and simple, a complete picture by itself. There is little of overlapping, of metaphors tumbling on each other. A breathless movement is a major characteristic of Shakespeare's maturer style. But in *Julius Caesar* each metaphor is carefully elaborated before passing on to the next. There is not the rapid transition, the leaping from image to image, that we find in *Hamlet* and the later plays.

Brutus's speeches contain a higher proportion of imagery than those of the other characters—and this is in keeping with Brutus's character. He is not unlike Hamlet so far as his complex, confused, tortured mind is concerned. But he moves slowly. Should we not expect from him a swifter movement, more mixed metaphors, more mixed similes? It may be argued that Brutus lacks the mercurial quality of Hamlet's nature, that his mind moves in that way. Even so, for an unpractical and confused man, his images possess a remarkable clarity.

His first soliloquy (II. i. 9-34) bristles with images—the adder, the ladder, and the serpent's egg. But they are all described in their separate compartments. The central ladder image is given the greatest space and is spun out to its fullest extent; while the serpent's egg is really a continuation of the adder-image, the two parts forming a neat whole that is not disturbed by the presence in the middle of the elaborate ladder metaphor. This *orderly* arrangement of metaphors is not in the style of *Hamlet*.

Instances like this can be multiplied right through the play. A few lines later (II. i. 66-69) is another single image carefully elaborated. We have "in council"... "state of man"... "little kingdom"... "suffers"... "insurrection". It is all so beautifully clear! Again, in Brutus's long speech to the conspirators (II. i. 162-83) all individual images are linked to a

central one—"cut the head"... "hack the limbs"... "Antony is but a limb of Caesar"... "butchers"... "dismember Caesar"... "Carve him"... "hew him"... "Caesar's arm"... "Caesar's head". This is, as it were, centripetal, quite unlike the wildly centrifugal force of Hamlet's imagery, the scattering of similes and metaphors in all directions.

A rare example of shifting imagery is found in one passage (II. i. 119-24) where from "fire" and "steel" Brutus passes on to "spur" and "prick". But here, too, the first image with its "fire"... "kindle"... "steel"... "melting" is sufficiently elaborated to form a complete picture, and we do not really get the impression of swift or confused movement.

In the quarrel scene (IV. ii) comes a horse image, again developed to the full:

But hollow men, like horses hot at hand,  
Make gallant show and promise of their mettle;  
But when they should endure the bloody spur,  
They fall their crests, and, like deceitful jades,  
Sink in the trial. (IV. ii. 23-27)

Then there is the famous "There is a tide in the affairs of men..." (IV. iii. 218-24) elaborated over seven lines. The beauty of this passage lies partly in its limpid clarity, and it may be said that this clarity, this "Roman" simplicity, is one of the qualities that make for *Julius Caesar's* greatness. But the dissimilarity with *Hamlet* and the later plays cannot be denied.

The same quality is evident in the speeches of the other characters. In I. i. 77-80, Flavius describes Caesar—"features"... "pluck'd"... "Caesar's wing"... "fly"... "ordinary pitch"... "soar"... "view"... In the next scene, Cassius elaborates a mirror image (I. ii. 56-70) that is undisturbed by a three-line speech of Brutus in the middle. Then there is Caesar's "constant as the northern star", an image elaborated over six lines (III. i. 60-65). Antony's hart-heart has already been dealt with. There is another single image in IV. i. 21-27, where a comparison of Lepidus with an ass spreads itself over seven lines. In the space of this paper it is not possible to discuss in detail the imagery of *Julius Caesar*. I have, however, tried to indicate the major similes and metaphors to illustrate the point made earlier.

Two passages in *Julius Caesar* have a parallel in a later play, *Macbeth*. Both Brutus and Macbeth are willing the mind to an act of murder. This is Brutus:

Between the acting of a dreadful thing  
And the first motion, all the interim is  
Like a phantasma, or a hideous dream:

The Genius and the mortal instruments  
Are then in council; and the state of man,  
Like to a little kingdom, suffers then  
The nature of an insurrection.

(II. i. 63-69)

And thus, Macbeth:

This supernatural soliciting,  
Cannot be ill, cannot be good: if ill,  
Why hath it given me earnest of success,  
Commencing in a truth? I amthane of Cawdor:  
If good, why do I yield to that suggestion  
Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair  
And make my seated heart knock at my ribs,  
Against the use of nature? Present fears  
Are less than horrid maginings:  
My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical,  
Shakes so my single state of man that function  
Is smother'd in surmise, and nothing is  
But what is not.

(I. iii. 130-42)

One notes at once the dramatic intensity of imagery in the later play. The first three lines of Brutus's soliloquy (II. i. 63-65) contain a certain element of horror, but the neat image that follows immediately reduces the intensity, so that beside Macbeth's words, Brutus's speech appears poor. The same phrase occurs in both passages, but "shakes so my single state of man" makes a greater impact than

... The state of man  
Like to a little kingdom, suffers then  
The nature of an insurrection.<sup>15</sup>

The same contrast is evident if we compare Brutus's first soliloquy (II. i. 9-34) with its "adder", "ladder" and "serpent's egg" images, and Macbeth's

If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well  
It were done quickly.

reaching its climax in

... his virtues  
Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongued, against  
The deep damnation of his taking-off;  
And pity, like a naked new-born babe  
Striding the blast, or heaven's cherubim, horsed  
Upon the sightless couriers of the air,  
Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,

That tears shall drown the wind. I have no spur  
 To prick the sides of my intent, but only  
 Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself  
 And falls on the other. (I. vii. 1-28)

The force of the imagery is here centrifugal, like Hamlet's, not centripetal as in *Julius Caesar*. *Macbeth*, of course, was written much later (1605-1606), but this very clearly shows that stylistically *Julius Caesar* reflects an earlier Shakespeare: a conclusion we would not draw about *Hamlet* if we place it beside *Macbeth*.

It is an interesting fact that Brutus, one of Shakespeare's most introspective characters, has only seventy-five lines of soliloquy in the entire play (not excluding the three lines in which he addresses Caesar's ghost at Philippi). In this respect, certainly, he is very far indeed from Hamlet, the king of soliloquies and much nearer to Henry V who has exactly seventy-two lines of soliloquy—practically the same figure!

Hamlet's "wild and whirling words" take us to a different world. In the first twenty lines of Hamlet's first soliloquy (I. ii. 139-49) we have the following images tumbling over each other—"melt"... "thaw"... "dew"... "unweeded garden"... "grows to seed"... "rank and gross"... "visit"... "hang on"... "Hyperion"... "satyr"... "increase of appetite"... "Niobe". It is impossible to compartmentalize these images; they run into each other. Two or three further examples would suffice. In I. iv. 20-38 we have "pith and marrow"... "mole"... "pales and forts"... "O'erleavens"... "stamp"... "livery"... "star"... "pure as grace"... "dram of eale". In the "to be or not to be" soliloquy (III. i. 56-82), we have "slings and arrows", the mixed metaphor "to take up arms against a sea of troubles", "heir", "rub", "shuffled off", "mortal coil", "calamity", "whips and scorns", "spurns", "quietus", "fardels", "grunt and sweat", "undiscover'd country", "bourn", "fly", "the native hue of resolution", "sicklied", "pale cast", "pitch", "currents turn awry". And there is Ophelia's lament over Hamlet (III. i. 158-68)—"rose of the fair state"... "glass of fashion"... "mould of form"... "suck'd"... "honey"... "music vows"... "sovereign"... "sweet bells jangled"... "blown youth blasted with ecstasy".

This kind of quick-shifting and clustered imagery does not belong to *Julius Caesar*, of which the imagery belongs really to the world of *Henry V*. There are not many similes and metaphors in the latter, but what there is, has the same clarity and distinctness. Always, it is the single image that is elaborated. Dominating all is the bee simile, expanded into a passage of eighteen lines (I. ii. 187-204). Henry V himself is compared to the strawberry and the summer grass (I. i. 59-62; 64-65), to roots (II. iv. 39-40), and in the Chorus to Act IV (43-47), to the sun. But these images



are separate and distinct; they do not converge, there is nothing complex about them.

While on the subject of imagery it would not be irrelevant to refer to Professor Spurgeon's remarks on *Julius Caesar*—

There is no leading or floating image in the play; . . . There is, however, a certain persistence in the comparison of the characters to animals. Caesar is a wolf, a lion, a falcon, a serpent's egg, an adder, a stricken deer; the Romans are sheep and hinds and bees; the conspirators are apes and hounds; Brutus is a lamb; Lepidus is an ass, a horse; Metellus and Casca are curs; Cassius is a showy, mettlesome steed which fails at the moment of trial; and Octavius and Antony are bears tied to the stake.<sup>16</sup>

Curiously enough, *Henry V* has exactly the same imagery, almost animal for animal. The English are "sur-rein'd jades" (III. v. 19), "mastiffs" of unmatched courage (III. vii. 152), "foolish curs" that run "into the mouth of a Russian bear" (III. vii. 153-4), and they "eat like wolves" (III. vii. 162); the Black Prince is a "lion's whelp" (I. ii. 109); Henry refers to snakes that "newly move, with casted slough" (IV. i. 22-23); "the king's a bawcock" (IV. i. 44); maids are "like flies at Bartholomew-tide" (V. ii. 336); patience is "a tired mare" (II. i. 26); the reason of the traitors Cambridge, Grey and Scroop has turned into their bosom "as dogs upon their masters, worrying you" (II. ii. 83); the Pistol-Nym group have but to open their mouths, and animal-images come out—"base tike" (II. i. 31), "iceland dog" (II. i. 44), "hound of Crete" (II. i. 77), "lambkins" (II. i. 133), etc.; Ely refers to "the eagle England" (I. ii. 169) and "the weasel Scot" (I. ii. 170), "playing the mouse in absence of the cat" (I. ii. 172); and there is the bee-simile of I. ii. 187-204.

There is one image that finds an almost identical echo in *Julius Caesar*. In the General Prologue to *Henry V* (ll. 6-8), the warlike Henry is described thus:

...and at his heels,  
Leash'd in like hounds, should famine, sword and fire  
Crouch for employment.

And again, in Act III, King Henry tells his soldiers:

I see you stand like greyhounds in the slips,  
Straining upon the start. (III. i. 31-32)

We may place beside these images Antony's words:

And Caesar's spirit, ranging for revenge, . . .  
... Shall in these confines with a monarch's voice  
Cry 'Havoc', and let slip the dogs of war, . . . (III. i. 270-3).

This recurring animal imagery provides more than a superficial link between *Henry V* and *Julius Caesar*. Professor Spurgeon had concluded from her study of *Julius Caesar* that the animal imagery in it does not have any strong cumulative effect. This is true enough but in both plays it does form an unobtrusive background of familiar animals which we can associate with wildness or tameness, with obedience or disobedience, with control or lack of control. The horse, the lamb, the ass, the sheep, the bee—they are the quieter, the domesticated creatures that man has brought under his control (horse-imagery, incidentally, is constantly present in words like prick, mettle, curb etc.); and there are the wolf and the lion, the ape, the hound, the cur, the adder and the serpent—animals that have not been subdued or brought under the influence of law and order (some of them may be forced to do man's will but the curb sits ill on them, and they strain at the leash). The division of the animals into domestic and undomestic thus becomes indirectly indicative of two opposing forces—law and chaos, order and confusion. This dual theme was constantly in Shakespeare's mind when he wrote the two plays, *Henry V* and *Julius Caesar*. True, the first play deals with the matter of Britain, and the second with the matter of Rome, and historically they are separated by long distances of time and space. But if we note carefully, we shall see that the theme is basically the same: the problems of the state and the establishment of order, and above all, the problems of the man who emerges as the leader. In England "the act of order" is taught to a peopled kingdom under the guidance of Reason, in Rome, Emotion sways the multitudes, and disorder and domestic fury fill the air. When writing *Julius Caesar*, it would in any case have been unnatural if Shakespeare had not been harking back at all to the English history plays he had just completed. It is my purpose here to show that there is a deliberate conscious link between them.

## II

*Henry V* is usually regarded as the end of a series, the last of a tetralogy. England passing through toil and suffering, racked by internecine wars under weak Richards and crafty Bolingbrokes, finally emerges, strong, triumphant, happy, under the noble leadership of the ideal king, Henry V. For so he is. Henry V fulfils all the requirements of the Renaissance ideal of the perfect ruler, mirroring in himself the physical, intellectual and spiritual perfection of Christendom. The eulogy of the Archbishop in the first fifty lines of the play lays the foundation-stone, as it were, on which the whole edifice of the play rests. No country could want a better ruler.

Yet no sooner has the play been completed than Shakespeare launches on another historical-political play and the serenity of the Anglo-French skies is forgotten in the turmoil and bloody scenes at the Capitol and on the plains of Philippi. Why? After *Henry V* what possible need could Shakespeare have felt to write yet another historical play? The question cannot be dismissed by saying that Roman history and English history are not connected in Shakespeare's mind. The theme, as I have already stated, is the same—public affairs. Nor can the problem be solved by saying that Shakespeare, having led England to prosperity, now wished to do the same for Rome, for that would have necessitated a Roman tetralogy. But *Julius Caesar* stands alone preceded by the English history plays, and followed by the tragedies. Years later comes *Antony and Cleopatra*, but these two plays cannot be said to form a unit; between them, and separating them, rise the spectres of *Troilus and Cressida*, *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Measure for Measure*, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear*. No, *Julius Caesar* is not to be passed over as belonging to the Roman Group. It has been called the precursor of the tragedies, it also forms an epilogue to the English tetralogy.

Somehow, somewhere, Shakespeare felt dissatisfied with *Henry V*. So far as England is the heroine of the English history plays, there seems no reason for dissatisfaction. But so far as the protagonist is not a country but a man, so far as human nature and human values are concerned, one wonders whether Shakespeare found in *Henry V* all that mankind need aspire to. *Henry V* is the perfect king—is he also the perfect man? The question is an unfair one, suggesting that a king is not a man. There is no such thing as abstract man and in any case, Shakespeare is hardly interested in abstractions. Man delights him, but in the concrete, and concrete human character can be judged only with reference to the particular rôle that every individual must play in life. The implication is, that within different frameworks different types of individuals emerge, and that which is perfection within one framework may not be perfection within another.

In the rôle of leader and King, *Henry V* is undoubtedly the ideal man. But here, as in every case, a selection and a rejection has been made, and this particular rôle involves the loss of some very fine qualities. The nature of this sacrifice is indicated to us in the Second Part of *Henry V* where it becomes symbolized in the rejection of Falstaff. Shakespeare realized that such a sacrifice was inevitable. Nevertheless a sense of dissatisfaction remained, and out of this dissatisfaction was born Brutus. Brutus and Prince Hal, so different in every way, but placed in a situation which, stripped of the Roman and English trappings, is fundamentally the same—the conflict between personal values and the general good. Prince Hal,

representing one type of manhood, succeeds in resolving the conflict, and so becomes the ideal king and leader. Brutus, representing another type, succeeds only partially, and so becomes a bad leader, but is not therefore a lesser man.

What then, are the qualities we find in the ideal king? In *Henry V*, we note that King Henry, more than any other Shakespearean character, appears to us consistently in the rôle of a public man. He is "the royal captain of this ruin'd band", whose function is to distribute "a largess universal like the sun". Never for a moment does he forget his responsibility:

Upon the King! let us our lives, our souls,  
Our debts, our careful wives,  
Our children and our sins lay on the King!  
We must bear all. O hard condition, . . . (IV. i. 247-50).

He speaks almost always in the plural—the royal "we", and does this, not from any vain self-glorification as does Julius Caesar, but from a devout sense of his rôle in life. His humility is seen when he returns from Agincourt and rides in triumph through London—

. . . free from vainness and self-glorious pride;  
Giving full trophy, signal and ostent  
Quite from himself to God. (V. Chorus. 20-22)

He shows himself to be deeply religious, but his religion, his ethics, his moral code, everything is determined by his consciousness of his public rôle. His God too, is not a personal God, but the God that guides the state.

We doubt not of a fair and lucky war,  
Since God so graciously hath brought to light  
This dangerous treason. . .  
.....let us deliver  
Our puissance into the hand of God, (II. ii. 184-90).

The characters in *Julius Caesar*, it has been said, appear in their public rôles, but what could be more personal than the Brutus-Portia, Caesar-Calphurnia scenes? There is nothing like that in *Henry V*—the courtship scene is a travesty of all personal emotions. It is the royal "we" cementing a treaty with France and the one fair French maid really represents the many fair French cities: "Yes, my lord, you see them perspectively, the cities turned into a maid" (V. ii. 347-8).

So complete is this picture of a man who has practically ceased to be a private individual and lives wholly in the rôle of a public man, that he would run the risk of becoming unreal and even dehumanized were it

not for the masterly touch with which Shakespeare gives rare glimpses of the man behind the mask. On the eve of the battle when he wanders unrecognized in the Camp, he tells the soldiers:

I think the king is but a man, as I am: the violet smells to him as it doth to me; the element shows to him as it doth to me; all his senses have but human conditions: his ceremonies laid by, in his nakedness he appears but a man.  
(IV. i. 104-9)

And then, the most significant statement of all:

Therefore when he sees reason of fears, as we do, his fears, out of doubt, be of the same relish as ours are: yet, in reason, no man should possess him with any appearance of fear, lest he, by showing it, should dishearten his army.  
(IV. i. 112-17)

He has personal emotions no less than any other man. But reason tells him that in his public rôle as King he must keep them under control, he must not show them. Here lies the secret of Harry's successful kingship—his iron self-control, breeding within him an attitude of detachment and objectivity towards life.

Not until we realize this secret of his success shall we understand the conversion of Prince Hal into King Henry. Much has been said and written about his conversion, but Shakespeare himself is quite clear on this point. It is no sudden transformation; it is a careful and planned growth. In *Henry V* Shakespeare describes it twice, once through the mouth of the Bishop of Ely—

The strawberry grows underneath the nettle  
And wholesome berries thrive and ripen best  
Neighbour'd by fruit of baser quality:  
And so the prince obscured his contemplation  
Under the veil of wildness; which, no doubt,  
Grew like the summer grass, fastest by night,  
Unseen, yet cressive in his faculty.<sup>17</sup>

and once, from the enemy camp, through the mouth of Constable:

And you shall find his vanities forespent  
Were but the outside of the Roman Brutus,  
Covering discretion with a coat of folly; (II. iv. 36-38)

Moreover, Prince Hal himself, in *Henry IV*, repeatedly explains his attitude. His very first soliloquy is significant:

So, when this loose behaviour I throw off  
And pay the debt I never promised,

By how much better than my word I am,  
 By so much shall I falsify men's hopes; . . .  
 . . . I'll so offend, to make offence a skill;  
 Redeeming time when men think least I will.  
 (1*HIV*, I. ii. 231-40)

This soliloquy has often been explained away as a stage device to prepare the audience for a later conversion. Nothing could be more unlikely. Where else does Shakespeare employ such a crude stage-device? No, Shakespeare meant the Prince to know exactly what he was talking about, and lest we misunderstand, at intervals through the two parts of *Henry IV* he continues to utter similar sentiments. When his father sorrowfully rebukes him he explains that there is a method in his wildness:

For every honour sitting on his helm,  
 Would they were multitudes, and on my head  
 My shames redoubled! For the time will come,  
 That I shall make this northern youth exchange  
 His glorious deeds for my indignities. (1*HIV*, III. ii. 142-6)

In all this we are struck above all by the cool, detached intellect of the Prince. He is a man of reason rather than of emotion, and his emotions are sternly kept under control. Not once in the three plays do we find Henry being carried away into doing or saying anything rashly or impetuously. Nor does he allow himself to become emotionally involved with Falstaff or with any one else. He cannot afford to, if one day he is to become king. This lack of emotional involvement is clear enough from his words when he sees the supposed dead body of Falstaff:

Poor Jack, farewell!  
 I could have better spared a better man:  
 O, I should have a heavy miss of thee,  
 If I were much in love with vanity! (1*HIV*, V. iv. 103-6)

There is regret here, but not a broken heart. Nor are the pranks with Falstaff the irresponsible thoughtlessness of giddy youth, for he carries with him a constant awareness of his future kingship. How can he forget it? It is the theme that is ever on his lips and on Falstaff's. Five times in Act I. Sc. ii, Falstaff uses the refrain "When thou art king", and the Prince himself picks it up in Act II. Sc. iv: "When I am king of England" (l. 35); while the phrase "heir-apparent" is repeated by Falstaff in at least three different scenes.

This detachment of the Prince is further heightened by the deliberate contrast in the character of Hotspur. Hotspur has all the noble qualities—courage, highmindedness, uprightness, loyalty, *but* he is hot-headed,

impetuous, "passion's slave". This may not be a grave moral failing, but for the rôle of leader and king he will not do.

Finally, Prince Hal's attitude to the crown. Nowhere do we get the impression of a man greedy for power. When he enters his father's sick-room, there is a thrill, no doubt, an awareness of greatness, but he grapples with the crown as with an enemy. It is "polished perturbation", "golden care". It challenges him, a challenge which he accepts by placing it on his head:

Thus, my most royal liege,  
Accusing it I put it on my head,  
To try with it, as with an enemy (2HIV, IV. v. 165-7).

To accept the challenge means to sacrifice all personal happiness of which he speaks a little wistfully on the eve of the battle of Agincourt:

What infinite heart's easy  
Must kings neglect, that private men enjoy!  
(HV, IV. i. 253-4)

As he soliloquizes that night it is clear that he has no illusions of the glories of kingship:

Art thou aught else but place, degree and form,  
Creating awe and fear in other men?  
Wherein thou art less happy being fear'd,  
Than they in fearing.  
What drink'st thou oft, instead of homage sweet,  
But poison'd flattery? (IV. i. 263-8)

To him, as he well realizes, is denied any intimate personal relationship—anything else but degree, order and form.

Yet he makes the sacrifice and devotes his whole life to the vocation of kingship. This is the beginning of the Henry V that we see in the later play—the character who more than any other in Shakespeare, appears to us in the rôle of a public man. From the moment that he puts the crown on his head the new king is prepared to give up all personal ties for the sake of public ones. In this mood comes the rejection of his own happy carefree youth—

I have turn'd away my former self;<sup>18</sup>

and the rejection of Falstaff.

In rejecting his own youth he is sacrificing himself: there is no moral conflict involved. But when he turns away from Falstaff with "I know

thee not, old man: fall to thy prayers", he is sacrificing another human being for the cause of his country. It is a ruthless act but we must not misunderstand it—it is not an immoral one, for the moral consciousness of Henry V is of a very high order. But it is a morality that is centred wholly round the state—the demands of the collective life. All moral problems for him revolve round the one question "What is good for the state". If individual morality clashes with collective morality, the former must give way—so Falstaff has to be sacrificed.

I know no personal cause to spurn at him,  
But for the general. (JC, II. i. 11-12)

The words are uttered by Brutus and it is a strange how again and again the words of Brutus come to the mind as we seek to understand the English King. Henry V is ruthless to Falstaff, but it is a clean and swift stroke, there is no hacking and mutilation of the limbs. So, though Falstaff dies of a broken heart, we realize that the king is a purger, and not a murderer.

Let's kill him boldly but not wrathfully;  
.....  
And let our hearts, as subtle masters do,  
Stir up their servants to an act of rage,  
And after seem to chide 'em. (JC, II. i. 172-7)

How well do these words of Brutus describe the rejection of Falstaff!

Henry V succeeded where Brutus failed. Yet both sacrificed the individual for the country. Henry succeeded because he did not allow personal emotions to get in the way of the intellectual awareness of what is good for the state. As the ideal king and leader, Henry had no other way but this. But in creating such a character Shakespeare had, perforce, to reject certain qualities, those that are associated with private emotions—sensitivity, tenderness, the pity that reigns in gentle hearts, the nobility of personal love. To minimize our sense of loss in this direction Shakespeare deliberately tones down the individual tragedy of Falstaff. Thus, as has often been noted before, Falstaff's character is deliberately coarsened in the second part of *Henry IV*. His wit lacks the old sparkle, his gulling becomes morally more reprehensible, his pleasure turns to lust.

At the same time, Henry's character in *Henry V* is strengthened by a deep religiosity. He is the most religious in the Christian sense, of all Shakespeare's characters. At every step in his career he turns to God. "By God's help", "By God's grace", "this lies all within the will of God, to whom I do appeal",—all this in the first scene when we meet him. Before the battle God's name is on his lips, and after the battle he gives thanks to God:



O God, thy arm was here;  
 And not to us, but to thy arm alone,  
 Ascribe we all! . . . Take it, God,  
 For it is none but thine! (IV. viii. 111-17)

Most moving of all is his prayer to God on the eve of the battle, uttered when he is all alone, spoken from the depths of his heart:

O God of battles! Steel my soldiers' hearts; (IV. i. 306)

His rôle as royal captain is also continually stressed, and so are his qualities of strength and goodness. He has assumed the "port of Mars" (I. Chorus, l. 6), he is "like a Jove" (II. iv. 100). He himself, at the beginning of the play, likens himself to the sun:

But I will rise there with so full a glory  
 That I will dazzle all the eyes of France,  
 Yea, strike the Dauphin blind to look on us. (I. ii. 278-80)

And there is the magnificent sun-simile in the chorus of Act IV:

A largess universal like the sun  
 His liberal eye doth give to every one, (II. 43-44).

His is the life-giving energy that nourishes England.

All this has lessened the individual tragedy of Falstaff, but it cannot be eliminated altogether. As the ideal king, Henry V has done the right thing but, paradoxically, a sense of dissatisfaction remains. "The king has killed his heart", says the Hostess (II. i. 92-93). "The king hath run bad humours on the knight; that's the even of it", says Nym. "The king is a good king", he continues, "but it must be as it may" (II. i. 127-32). The most significant comment on the king's action is made by Fluellen in *Henry V*:

Alexander . . . in his rages, and his furies, and his wraths, and his cholers, and his moods . . . did . . . kill his best friend, Cleitus . . . So also Harry Monmouth, being in his right wits and his good judgements, turned away the fat knight with the great-belly doubtlet: (IV. vii. 35-51)

The key words are "being in his right wits and his good judgements". Fluellen has correctly understood the King. When he turned Falstaff away, he was in full possession of his senses, and intellect and reason guided his actions. But there rests, in Fluellen's remark, an unspoken condemnation of the King; and we are made to feel, however unwillingly, that he has been guilty of cold-blooded murder. These words, uttered

even as Harry is triumphantly defeating the French, thus strike a jarring note at the very moment of victory.

The tragedy of Falstaff, then, cannot be entirely dismissed, and Henry's rôle in it reveals a quality of ruthlessness in his character. It is a ruthlessness that makes itself felt again and again, and not only in his treatment of Falstaff. No mercy can be shown to the conspirators Cambridge, Scroop and Grey. Though "touching our person we seek no revenge", yet

...we our kingdom's safety must so tender,  
Whose ruin you have sought, that to her laws  
We do deliver you. (II. iii. 175-7)

Therefore they must die. When Henry lays siege to Harfleur he warns the citizens that if they resist, he will ruthlessly destroy their city, and we know that the threat is no idle one:

The gates of mercy shall be all shut up,  
And the flesh'd soldier, rough and hard of heart,  
In liberty of bloody hand shall range  
With conscience wide as hell, mowing like grass  
Your fresh-fair virgins and your flowering infants.  
(III. iii. 10-14)

When the desperate French set fire to the English tents, Henry's just anger expresses itself in swift retaliation on the prisoners:

...we'll cut the throats of those we have,  
And not a man of them that we shall take  
Shall taste our mercy. (IV. vii. 66-68)

Such is the character of Henry—cold, ruthless, passionless. Though no blame can attach to the king, we feel that this repression of personal sentiment and feeling has meant the loss of certain finer and more humane qualities; an element of hardness has entered into his soul.

It is in search of those finer, more humane qualities that Shakespeare turned away from the man of impersonal detachment and created Brutus. Brutus too is confronted by the same conflict—individual morality versus collective morality. But Brutus is more emotional than intellectual. He feels too much. He thus fails as a leader, but his fine sensitivity of feeling reveals a type of nobility that Henry could not boast of. As the years pass, Shakespeare's interest in the sensitive Brutus-nature seems to deepen. He still has great regard for the qualities of detachment and self-discipline. Brutus himself aspires to them, and in certain respects, reveals a stoic forbearance that is not unrelated. Hamlet, too, possessing the same sensitivity, yearns wistfully towards Horatio who has his emotions under control:

...for thou hast been  
 As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing,  
 A man, that fortune's buffets and rewards  
 Has ta'en with equal thanks:.....  
 .....Give me that man  
 That is not passion's slave and I will wear him  
 In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart,  
 As I do thee. (III. ii. 70-79)

Like Henry V Brutus has to choose between friend and country. It is a hard decision:

O, that we then could come by Caesar's spirit,  
 And not dismember Caesar! (II. i. 169-70)

Intellectually he, too, like Henry V makes his choice. "It must be by his death" (II. i. 10). Intellectually, yes, but emotionally he cannot do the deed. Lacking the clarity of reason he does not understand that emotional involvements are not consistent with ideals of public leadership. He realizes that the individual has to be sacrificed for the common good, but instead of destroying his attachment, as Henry V did, he feeds it; instead of shutting his mind to Julius Caesar, he ponders over, he dilates on his love:

As Caesar loved me, I weep for him.... There is tears for his love;  
 (III. ii. 26-30)

The perfect leader cannot afford to do that, for that way pity lies, and pity may lead to remorse. Yet because this weakness of Brutus springs from a noble emotion—the love of friend for friend, his very failure endears him to us.

The love for Caesar is linked with another love. This is an emotion that is deeper even than the attachment to Julius Caesar. It is his love for HONOUR.

Set honour in one eye and death i' the other,  
 And I will look on both indifferently:  
 For let the gods so speed me as I love  
 The name of honour more than I fear death. (I. ii. 86-89)

The words remind us of another who would have died for honour:

Send danger from the east unto the west;  
 So honour cross it from the north to south,  
 And let them grapple: (I<sup>HIV</sup>, I. iii. 195-7)

Hotspur and Brutus are dissimilar characters and even the word "honour"

means different things to them. For Hotspur, honour means public glory, the acclamation of the world. It is the same honour that Henry V himself refers to:

But if it be a sin to covet honour,  
I am the most offending soul alive. (IV. iii. 28-29)

With Brutus, honour has another meaning; it is a private honour, the honour of the conscience. But though Brutus's honour and Hotspur's have little in common, the attitude of the two men is the same. Unlike Henry, both have a passionate love for their honour. Neither possesses true detachment. Hotspur is all emotion, Brutus's tragedy is that though he has a fine intellect regarding most things, his emotional weakness confuses him when he has to make the major decisions of his life. Where honour is concerned, he is a pipe for fortune's finger to sound what stop she pleases.

The conspirators are not slow to take advantage of this weakness. Cassius cleverly supplicates: "honour is the subject of my story", though nothing could be farther from the truth. How little honour means to the conspirators becomes pathetically evident in the scene in Brutus's orchard. Brutus's participation in the conspiracy is imperative, so he has to be allowed his pet obsession; but the others' lack of interest in the theme of honour is thinly disguised. One is reminded of a group of adults indulgently humouring a boy in his childish fancies in order to extract from him a promise about something else. It would make us smile, were not the implications so tragic. Brutus dilates on the honourable nature of their pledge:

... every drop of blood  
That every Roman bears, and nobly bears,  
Is guilty of a several bastardy,  
If he do break the smallest particle  
Of any promise that hath pass'd from him. (II. i. 136-40)

But it is quite obvious that no one is listening to him. They impatiently wait for him to finish and then Cassius, completely ignoring the speech, goes on at once to a different subject, to more practical issues:

But what of Cicero? Shall we sound him? (II. i. 141)

Brutus's love of honour does not only make him blind to situations, it further engenders in him a quality that is not so admirable. This is pride, pride in himself as an honourable man. "I was not born to die on Brutus's sword", says Octavius Caesar (V. i. 58); and Brutus, with a

touch of pomposity, replies, "Young man, thou couldst not die more honourable" (V. i. 60).

But the tragedy springs from the fact that honour, as he conceives it, is linked with individual rather than collective morality. He would gladly sacrifice his own life for the cause of his country, but is it honourable to murder one's best friend? There is a clash of motives here, and Brutus, stoic as he is, is too confused emotionally to use his rational judgement in differentiating the two motives. "How honourably can we carry out our plans" and "How successfully can we carry out our plans" are not identical questions. It may be honourable to let Antony go, to cut the head off only, and not "hack the limbs"—

Like wrath in death and envy afterwards<sup>19</sup>

but does that lead to success?

This is where Brutus deceives himself. He realizes that the individual must be sacrificed for the society—up to this point he is aware of a conflict, and makes his choice. But he does not realize that personal honour also comes in conflict with the general good, and he is not prepared to make his choice here. Right through the play we find Brutus trying to find a *via media* between Personal Honour and the General Good. But there is no such clearly demarcated path, and Brutus, instead of following any path, passes like a shuttlecock from the one to the other. When he does what honour bids him do, it is invariably disastrous for the policy. When he does what policy bids him do, he immediately tries to give it an honourable gilding. There is almost a childlike naïvete in his eagerness to rationalize an unpleasant political act into a noble action. Murder is murder—does it matter much whether the murdered man is carved as a dish fit for the gods or hewn as a carcass fit for the hounds? For Caesar, certainly, carved or hewn, the cold fact of death cannot be changed; and for Brutus, ugly murder cannot thus, by a mere twist of words, be made into an honourable deed. He continues to rationalize, pathetically trying to convince himself that political murder is not incompatible with personal honour. When Casca remarks—

Why, he that cuts off twenty years of life  
Cuts off so many years of fearing death.<sup>23</sup>

he hungrily seizes that idea:

Grant that, and then is death a benefit:  
So are we Caesar's friends, that have abridged  
His time of fearing death. (III. i. 103-5)

Unhappy man! He convinces neither us, nor himself, and a sense of guilt

remains to haunt him. Not until the friend's blood has been paid for by his own does peace come to him:

... Caesar now be still:  
I kill'd not thee with half so good a will. (V. v. 50-51)

Brutus has often been compared with Hamlet. There is something in common between the two, but the comparison must not be carried too far. On one point, certainly, a very major point, they differ. Hamlet is morally urged to commit murder. The inward moral sanction is there, but somehow he is unable to will himself into action, and his conscience accuses him for the delay. His conscience bids him act, but his will to action is "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought". When Hamlet searches for motives, it is to whet his will towards action, *not* to soothe his conscience. With Brutus it is the opposite. His will bids him act, his conscience does not permit him; and he searches, not exactly for motives, but for means whereby he may gild the act with an honourable coating, in order to satisfy his conscience.

A small incident in the latter part of the play throws further light on the confusion in Brutus's mind. In the quarrel scene, he remonstrates with Cassius:

... I did send to you  
For certain sums of gold, which you denied me:  
For I can raise no money by vile means: (IV. iii. 69-71)

He is too honourable to raise money by vile means, but he will not hesitate to borrow from Cassius who in all probability raised money by those very vile means that Brutus despises! Here indeed is a curious situation—and we would have to accuse Brutus of intellectual dishonesty, did we not realize that he is lost in the mists of emotional confusion and is completely unconscious of the moral duplicity in his speech.

"Brutus is an honourable man". The barb is not directed by Antony alone. Shakespeare's hand guides it, for the irony in "Brutus is an honourable man" is the irony of the whole play. It is the real tragedy, the tragedy of a man who is trying and failing to convert a dishonourable deed into an act of honour. "The truth is", writes Maccallum, "though he (Brutus) personates a philosopher he is less of one than he thinks".<sup>21</sup> Never indeed was a philosopher more confused! When sufferings are inflicted upon Brutus by external forces, he is calm and bears all with stoic fortitude. The news of his wife's death brings forth the philosophical utterance:

Why, farewell, Portia. We must die, Messala:  
With meditating that she must die once  
I have the patience to endure it now. (IV. iii. 190-2)

But when he himself is called upon to act, and make decisions, then his philosophy is of no avail, and shrinking from a reality in which Personal Honour and General Good do not co-exist, he slips into unconscious self-deception. Brutus cannot be accused of moral hypocrisy, for he is not consciously a hypocrite. And the unconscious hypocrisy that is there is alien to his nature which is basically honest; therefore it brings him no relief, no freedom from the gnawing of conscience. Self-deception there is, but it is a type of self-deception that repeats itself in many of Shakespeare's characters—the unconscious self-deception of men who have but slenderly known themselves.

In the case of Brutus, we have the right man in the wrong rôle; he is not meant for public life. A man not of reason, but of noble emotion, he is truly himself with Portia, and all his finest qualities emerge in the one scene where we see them together. What a world of love lies in that hard-wrung confession:

You are my true and honourable wife,  
As dear to me as are the ruddy drops  
That visit my sad heart. (II. i. 288-90)

Here is his space; beside it kingdoms are clay. There is a depth of emotion here that Henry V with all his greatness never found. But alas, Brutus does not know himself, and in seeking a rôle that is alien to his nature, he brings down destruction upon himself.

From Henry V to Brutus. The dispassionate intellectual detachment of Henry V, and beside it, the sensitivity, the emotion, the warmth and—the muddle-headedness of Brutus. There is no question here of better or worse. Both are great men, but in different ways, for each possesses great qualities that we do not find in the other. They embody two different ideals of manhood; and the irony of human life, as Shakespeare perhaps had ruefully realized, is that these two ideals cannot be united in one man.<sup>22</sup>

### III

In each play the microcosm projects itself on the macrocosm. A sense of order and discipline prevails over *Henry V* and reflects Henry's inner order and discipline. The tone is set in the First Act, in Scene II, when Exeter speaks of the harmonious and ordered movement of government:

For government, though high and low and lower,  
Put into parts, doth keep in one consent,  
Congreecing in a full and natural close,  
Like music. (I. ii. 180-3)

Then comes the famous bee-simile, teaching the act of order to a peopled kingdom. It is worth quoting at length:

Therefore doth heaven divide  
The state of man in divers functions,  
Setting endeavour in continual motion;  
To which is fixed, as an aim or butt,  
Obedience: for so work the honey-bees,  
Creatures that by a rule in nature teach  
The act of order to a peopled kingdom.  
They have a king and officers of sorts;  
Where some, like magistrates, correct at home,  
Others, like merchants, venture trade abroad,  
Others, like soldiers, armed in their stings,  
Make boot upon the summer's velvet buds,  
..... I this infer,  
That many things, having full reference  
To one consent, may work contrariously. (I. ii. 183-206)

The search for this order and discipline had started long ago, in the reign of a king who had completely lacked discipline and self-control. The gardener's fable in *Richard II* has now become fact in *Henry V*. "Go thou", the gardener had said to his servant,

and like an executioner,  
Cut off the heads of too fast growing sprays,  
That look too lofty in our commonwealth:  
All must be even in our government. (*Rich. II*, III. iv. 33-36)

The gardener's advice is in effect carried out by Henry V when he sternly orders the execution of Earl Cambridge, Scroop and Grey. "In the compass of a pale", we must all "keep law and form and due proportion" (*Rich. II*, III. iv. 40-41). Henry himself uses the same garden-image when he describes the state of confusion in France:

...her hedges even-pleach'd,  
Like prisoners wildly over-grown with hair,  
Put forth disorder'd twigs; her fallow leas  
The darnel, hemlock and rank fumitory  
Doth root upon, while that the coulter rusts  
That should deracinate such savagery;  
The even mead, that erst brought sweetly forth  
The freckled cowslip, burnet and green clover,  
Wanting the scythe, all uncorrected, rank,  
Conceives by idleness. . .  
Even so our houses and ourselves and children  
Have lost, or do not learn for want of time,  
The sciences that should become our country; (V. ii. 42-58)



Nothing shakes this order in *Henry V*'s England. Even the threat of conspiracy is a mock-threat, and serves only to strengthen, by contrast, the feeling of security. In the Chorus to Act II we hear that Cambridge, Scroop and Grey have confirmed "conspiracy with fearful France" (I. 27). But they are like villains in a comedy, not be feared, for

The king hath note of all that they intend,  
By interception which they dream not of. (II. ii. 6-7)

While the deliberate parody in the scene following the Chorus, when Nym, Bardolph and Pistol decide to be "three sworn brothers to France" (II. i. 13-14) only throws them into greater ridicule.

The Roman scene affords a striking contrast that was surely intentional on the part of Shakespeare. In England everything was arranged in perfect and ordered proportions. But the curtain rises on a Rome where all order, sense and proportion are gone, and where one man bestrides the narrow world

Like a Colossus, and we petty men  
Walk under his huge legs and peep about  
To find ourselves dishonourable graves. (I. ii. 136-8)

"There is a civil strife in heaven" (I. iii. 11) as well. Caesar himself notes "nor heaven nor earth have been at peace to-night" (II. ii. 1), and Calphurnia, as she pleads with him, speaks of the fierce fiery warriors, that

fought upon the clouds,  
In ranks and squadrons and right form of war, (II. ii. 19-20).

The tumults in the heavens and on earth are an extension of the tumult in the mind of Brutus himself:

poor Brutus, with himself at war,  
Forgets the shows of love to other men. (I. ii. 46-47)

Where Henry V teaches the act of order to a peopled kingdom, Brutus describes "the state of man" (the very phrase used by Exeter in *Henry V*, I. ii. 184) as suffering the nature of an insurrection. Over against the bee-simile which sets the mood of *Henry V*, must be placed the words of Brutus as he meditates in the orchard:

The Genius and the mortal instruments  
Are then in council; and the state of man,  
Like to a little kingdom, suffers then  
The nature of an insurrection. (II. i. 66-69)

More than one critic has remarked on the imagery of civil disorder

and of "domestic fury and fierce civil strife" as forming the background of the play. What is the reason behind this state of chaos? What has gone wrong? The answer may perhaps be found in Brutus's soliloquy in the orchard. What Brutus fears may happen, what Cassius believes has already come to pass, is the "abuse of greatness". When does this abuse of greatness take place? Brutus says:

...to speak truth of Caesar,  
I have not known when his affections sway'd  
More than his reason.....  
.....So Caesar may.  
Then lest he may, prevent. (II. i. 19-28)

This, then, is the answer. So long as reason functions, there is nothing to fear. If reason controls the affections, order will exist on earth. But Caesar, believing he has become a god, has impaired his rational judgment, and the whole play works itself out in the clash between Reason and Emotion and their subsequent struggle for supremacy.

In the English play, the greatness of the king rested primarily on the fact that his emotions were controlled, that his reason guided him. Henry V has enthusiasm, he covets honour, but it is not with him an overriding love. In *Julius Caesar*, however, almost every character has one ruling emotion. Caesar is fed on self-love, Cassius is consumed by jealousy, Brutus has fallen in love with Honour. The thread of stoicism that runs through *Julius Caesar* is not unrelated to this central theme. For the stoic, too, with his ideals of virtue, endurance and self-sufficiency, aims, like the rational man, at calm detachment. With him, too, intelligence must govern, and feelings be brought under complete subjection. Many in this play aspire to this stoicism, none attain it completely.

Caesar himself believes that he is

As constant as the northern star,  
Of whose true-fix'd and resting quality  
There is no fellow in the firmament. (III. i. 60-62)

In this vaunting boast of constancy, uttered at the very moment when the daggers are raised and the blow about to fall, there is a terrible irony. It is not exactly a stoic utterance, but constancy is an attribute of reason rather than emotion. The same word has already been used, significantly enough, by Brutus in II. i. 227 ("with untir'd spirits and formal constancy") and has later been picked up by Portia who uses it twice (II. i. 299; II. iv. 6) in a more specifically stoic context. Caesar's deeds belie his words, for the man who declared himself to be "unshak'd of motion" had shown himself to be, but an hour ago, inconstant and waver-

ing, one moment deciding to go to the Capitol, the next moment changing his mind, and then, the moment after, reverting to his former decision.

Cassius is no stoic, and makes no pretence even to calmness and detachment. He is never in control of his feelings, and his instability is again and again made evident. During the storm, it is true, he appears unmoved beside the terrified Casca, but in front of the Capitol he becomes nervous at the slightest threat to the conspiracy:

... If this be known,  
Cassius or Caesar never shall turn back,  
For I will slay myself. (III. i. 20-22)

Later in the battlefield, his unstable nature gives way wholly to premature and irrational despair, and in desperation he takes his own life.

Brutus is not unstable like Cassius, who serves partly as a foil to him. He consciously follows the stoic ideal, and, in many respects he has attained this ideal. The calmness with which he receives the news of Portia's death is one of a number of instances that show his stoic forbearance. But all feeling has not been subjugated in him. His reason is ever in conflict with his emotions, and in him the struggle rages longest and strongest. But emotion seems ever to get the upper hand (as the second part of this paper has attempted to show) and the confusion within him is resolved only by death.

The tragedy of Brutus is repeated, on a minor note, in the tragedy of Portia. She too, like her husband, aims high, and is proud of her stoic ancestry—

I grant I am a woman; but withal  
A woman well-reputed, Cato's daughter. (II. i. 294-5)

She proves her strength of mind and shows how well she has brought her feelings under control:

I have made strong proof of my constancy,  
Giving myself a voluntary wound  
Here, in the thigh: can I bear that with patience  
And not my husband's secrets? (II. i. 299-302)

Yet she too fails. Her agitation makes itself felt soon enough, the very next morning. As she awaits the outcome of the day, she finds it difficult to check her feelings and appeals to her powers of self-control—"O constancy, be strong upon my side" (II. iv. 6).<sup>28</sup> Our last glimpse of her—reason is submerged, and in a state of wild distraction, she swallows fire and kills herself. Once again, emotion has asserted itself.

Thus Reason and Emotion fight for supremacy, and the background

is the fickle, changing mob. This juxtaposition, forming thus the central theme of the play reaches its ironic climax in the Forum Scene, where the funeral orations of Brutus and Antony are placed over against each other. Brutus makes a calm, objective, *rational* appeal to the intellect, Antony works entirely on the *emotions* of the multitude. Emotion wins the day, and in the next scene Shakespeare describes, with grim humour, the havoc caused by passions let loose.

#### IV

No mention has yet been made of Antony, for Antony does not quite fit in among the characters dealt with so far. How are we to explain his character? Not, as some critics have done, by referring to Shakespeare's later play, *Antony & Cleopatra*. A period of many years separates the two, and Shakespeare's vision had undergone many changes. What evidence have we that in the process his entire conception of Antony's character had not changed? In *Antony & Cleopatra* he returned to the same source, and it is likely that he remembered his earlier play, but we cannot conclude that the later Antony is a perfection of the earlier character. Round about 1599, certainly, when *Julius Caesar* was written, Shakespeare could not have had in mind an embryonic version of the older Antony who let Rome in Timber melt and the wide arch of the ranged empire fall. With *Antony & Cleopatra*, therefore, we need not concern ourselves. More relevant in this context is North's translation of the *Lives of Plutarch*. These lives Shakespeare *had* been reading, and in his deviations from Plutarch's Antony we shall find a safer clue to guide us in understanding his character.

Antony is generally described as a man of fiery emotion, who has pandered to his senses and passions all his life. He is contrasted with the stoical Brutus, so calm, so detached. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Brutus is the one, as has already been indicated, who is at war with himself, confused in his emotions, clinging to his loves—his love of honour, his love of a friend—in a situation where such personal emotions should not and cannot exist.

And Antony? Let us refer to Plutarch. Plutarch's Antony is extravagant and spends his time in rioting and banqueting. His manner of phrase "was full of ostentation, foolish bravery and vain ambition".<sup>24</sup> He "dealt very churlishly" with people, and "had an ill name to entice men's wives".<sup>25</sup> The noblemen hated him for his "naughty life: for they did abhor his banquets and drunken feasts he made at unseasonable times, and his extreme wasteful expenses upon vain light huswives; and then in the day

time he would sleep or walk out his drunkenness, thinking to wear away the fume of the abundance of wine which he had taken overnight. In his house they did nothing but feast, dance and mask: and himself passed away the time in hearing of foolish plays and in marrying these players, tumblers, jesters and such sort of people".<sup>26</sup>

But Shakespeare's Antony? He appears to us in the First Act as an athlete, a man with muscles and body well under control. Later, in Caesar's speech (I. ii. 198-214), we learn that he sees plays, and is fond of music, and, by oblique inference (since it is to him that Caesar complains that Cassius "never smiles") that he is of a cheerful disposition. Nothing of Plutarch's censure is evident here. True, Brutus slightly refers to him (in any case let us remember that Brutus was notorious for misjudging characters) as given to sports, wildness and too much company, but even here we do not get the picture of a man given totally to lustful pleasures and drunken bouts.

Shakespeare's Antony in Acts I and II, therefore, is an immense improvement on Plutarch's. He is—or he lets people think he is—only a harmless frivolous man, not interested in politics or the duties of the State. We get just one hint that there may be more in Antony than meets the eye. Cassius calls him a "shrewd contriver" (II. i. 158). It is, however, only a hint, no more, and when Brutus immediately after, sweeps away Cassius's fears—

Alas, good Cassius, think not of him:<sup>27</sup>

we also put him out of our minds. Then suddenly one day, Caesar is murdered; and in a moment the harmless Antony takes swift control of the situation, and the man of pleasure becomes the man of action. A sudden transformation—or a planned and careful growth? Can we say of him that he—

...obscured his contemplation  
Under the veil of wildness; which, no doubt,  
Grew like the summer grass, fastest by night,  
Unseen, yet crevice in his faculty. (HV, I. i. 63-66)

Can we conclude that

...his vanities forespent  
Were but the outside of the Roman Brutus  
Covering discretion with a coat of folly; (HV, II. iv. 36-38)

Both passages refer to Henry V. Antony may lack Henry's nobility, his selflessness, his deep religious sense, his sense of duty towards his country,

but the two have one thing in common—they are both men in whom the head rules the heart. Antony rouses emotions in others; this is not to say that he is emotional himself. On the contrary, the way he rouses it argues perfect mastery of his own emotions. His love for Caesar is genuine (*vide* his soliloquy); how great then must be his control over himself that he can even make use of this love, direct it, control it, shape it, in order to rouse the passions of the multitude. Antony's funeral oration shows a man in full and planned control of his emotions, a man in whom reason predominates. Even his tears are controlled, so that they fall from his eyes at the right psychological moment. Does the incendiary himself get scorched when he starts a conflagration? Antony has set fire to the multitude; but the flames do not reach him, and from the cool heights of his reason, he exults over the havoc he has caused:

Now let it work. Mischief, thou art afoot,  
Take thou what course thou wilt! (III. ii. 265-6)

In the next scene Antony, reinforced by Octavius, appears in his true light—cold, dispassionate and unmoved. The scene has nothing in common with *Henry V*, but is not the same rational faculty at work, directed, only, towards a different end? The change that has taken place is the change in Shakespeare's own attitude to Reason, for Henry V, the hero of Reason, had, after all, failed to satisfy him. Antony has thus grown out of Shakespeare's dissatisfaction with Henry. Antony and Octavius are the men of Reason, opposed to Brutus and Cassius, the men of Emotion. The incredible irony of the Forum Scene, heightened by the first citizen's comment on Antony's speech—"Methinks there is much reason in his sayings"<sup>28</sup>—now becomes fully evident: Antony, *the man of reason* working on the *emotions* of the multitude, Brutus the *man of emotion* appealing to them to use their *reason*. "O judgment!" says Antony with mocking irony,

.....thou art fled to brutish beasts,  
And men have lost their reason. (III. ii. 109-10)

Henry, Brutus and Antony. Brutus is Henry's opposite in temperament, placed in a situation that is basically the same, but Antony is the lineal descendant of Henry V. Henry may indignantly refuse to own him, but the family likeness cannot be denied. Why then does Antony fail to move us? Because where Henry works wholly for the collective good, Antony employs the very same faculties, first towards revenge, and then towards self-aggrandizement.

The rational faculty appears at its worst in the scene in Antony's house. One sees here a triumvirate of unscrupulous men, calmly, dispassionately sharing out the booty among them (contrast the moment of

victory for Brutus and Cassius—they formulate no plan of action, but dip their hands in Caesar's blood and vaguely shout "Peace, freedom and liberty")<sup>29</sup>—

Fetch the will hither, and we shall determine  
How to cut off some charge in legacies. (IV. i. 8-9)

Men are killed with the tick of a pencil, and are forgotten thereafter—"look, with a spot I damn him" (IV. i. 6). Nor is there any unity, any loyalty among them, and when Lepidus's back is turned, Antony contemptuously dismisses him as the ass that

.....bears gold,  
To groan and sweat under the business,  
Either led or driven, as we point the way; (IV. i. 21-23)

There is no honour here, no conscience, no honesty. Reason, however, is paramount; yet a reason so devoid of noble motives that we can hardly recognize it to be the same faculty that guided Henry V.

Immediately following it is the quarrel scene, and we turn with relief from the coldness of the men of reason to the warmth of the men of emotion. Brutus appears here at his worst—peevish, irritable, ready to pick a quarrel, unreasonable to an extreme degree. How different from his opponents of the previous scene! But at this moment, with all their faults which Shakespeare makes no attempt to gloss over, we prefer Brutus and Cassius to Antony and Octavius, because their faults of emotion are inextricably linked with something else—love. They drink to each other in one of Shakespeare's most tender reconciliation scenes, and anger is forgotten:

*Brutus:* Give me a bowl of wine.  
In this I bury all unkindness, Cassius.  
*Cassius:* My heart is thirsty for that noble pledge...  
...I cannot drink too much of Brutus' love.  
(IV. iii. 158-62)

This love sustains them till the very end—

*Cassius:* The gods to-day stand friendly, that we may,  
Lovers in peace, lead on our days to age!<sup>30</sup>

and so they wish each other good-bye:

For ever, and for ever, farewell, Cassius!  
If we do meet again, why, we shall smile;  
If not, why then, this parting was well-made. (V. i. 117-19)

Upon such love, the gods themselves throw incense.

Professor Price has drawn attention to the importance of the word "love" as the key-word of the play.<sup>31</sup>

There is the love of Brutus for Caesar, and of Caesar for Brutus, the love of Brutus and Cassius, Brutus and Portia, the mutual love between Brutus and Lucius and all his servants. Brutus is a centre of love wherever he goes.

As Shakespeare passes from *Henry V* and *Julius Caesar* and turns his face to the tragedies, he seems to tell us that the man of reason and of action is more powerful and more successful than the man of emotion. He is good, too, and necessary in the scheme of life on earth, for it is because of the Henrys of the world that life goes on. They are the guardians of our interests, the protectors of our countries, the leaders of our collective life. It is to them that we turn, not to Brutus and Hamlet, for strength and sustenance. Shakespeare never forgets them, and at the end of every tragedy, one strong man emerges, who sets the bleeding country or body politic aright, and establishes order and harmony once again. But, Shakespeare seems to add, when all is said and done, Love is best.

KAJAL BASU

#### NOTES & REFERENCES

1. All quotations from and references to the plays of Shakespeare are from and to the Globe edition of the Works of Shakespeare, ed. Clark and Wright (London, 1953).
2. Thomas Platter's account of the entertainment he saw in England was published in *Anglia*, XXII (1899), pp. 458-62.
3. E. K. Chambers, *William Shakespeare* (Oxford, 1930), Vol. I, p. 397.
4. Stanza 4. *Mirror of Martyrs* is reprinted in *The Hystorie of the Moste Noble Knight Plasidas, and Other Rare Pieces...Printed for the Roxburgh Club*, 1873. The passage referred to is on p. 180.
5. *Julius Caesar*, III. ii. 109-10.
6. III. iv. 33, ed. Herford and Simpson (Oxford, 1957). *E.M.O.H.* was registered with the Stationers on April 8, 1600.
7. *Henry V*, V, Chorus: 30-32.
8. The date of the note remains uncertain; "gabriel harvey 1598" on the top page can only be taken as that of acquisition. Speght's *Chaucer* was published in 1598.
9. *William Shakespeare* I, pp. 423-4.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 270.
11. These figures are taken from Prof. T. M. Parrot's *William Shakespeare: a Handbook* (Oxford, 1934). They are practically the same as in Chambers's *William Shakespeare*, Vol. II, but are more precise since they include decimal fractions.



12. *Hamlet*, I. iii. 107-9.
13. Dr. Samuel Johnson *Preface to Shakespeare* 1765 (*Johnson on Shakespeare*, ed. Walter Raleigh, London 1908, p. 24).
14. Coleridge doubts the genuineness of the lines "first on account of the rhythm, which is not Shakespearean, but just the very *tune* of some old play, from which the actor might have interpolated them; and secondly, because they interrupt not only the sense and connection but likewise the flow both of the passion and... the Shakespearean link of association... I venture to say there is no instance in Shakespeare fairly like it. Conceits he has, but they not [only] rise out of some work in the lines before, but they *lead* to the thought in the lines following. Here it is a mere alien..." (*Coleridge's Shakespearean Criticism*, ed. Ransom, London 1930, Vol. I, p. 17).
15. Professor G. Wilson Knight in *The Wheel of Fire*, Ch. VI, has referred to these two passages from *Julius Caesar* and *Macbeth*, and draws the same conclusions. In his book, however, he is more concerned with noting the *similarity* between the Brutus-theme and the Macbeth-theme.
16. Caroline F. E. Spurgeon *Shakespeare's Imagery and What It Tells Us* (Cambridge, 1935), pp. 346-7.
17. *Henry V*, I. i. 60-66.
18. 2 *Henry IV*, V. v. 62.
19. *Julius Caesar*, II. i. 164.
20. *Ibid.*, III. i. 101-2.
21. M. W. MacCallum, *Shakespeare's Roman Plays* (London, 1935) p. 246.
22. After completing the paper I came across Derek Traversi's analysis of the character of Henry V and also a remark by E. M. W. Tillyard, both of which have a bearing on the subject. Extracts from both are quoted below.

Traversi relates the gaining of maturity by Henry V "to the absolute measure of self-domination demanded by his office of the king". "Called upon to exercise justice and shape policies for the common good, Henry can allow no trace of selfishness or frailty to affect his decisions. He must continually examine his motives, subdue them in the light of reason;" Shakespeare's obligations to the demands of patriotic orthodoxy "while it confirms Henry's characteristic virtues limits firmly the range of emotions which he is capable of feeling... The inspiration of Henry V is, in its deeper moments... critical, analytic, exploratory. As we follow it and in spite of our admiration for its hero's dedication to his chosen ends, a certain coldness takes possession of us as it took possession, step by step, of the dying Falstaff." (*Shakespeare From Richard II to Henry V* (London, 1957), Ch. 5, p. 168 and pp. 197-98).

E. M. W. Tillyard in *Shakespeare's History Plays* (London, 1944): "No wonder if Henry V, traditionally the man who knew exactly what he wanted and went for it with utter singleness of heart, was the very reverse of what Shakespeare was growing truly interested in. And no wonder if in his next great public character, Brutus, Shakespeare pictured a man like Prince Hal in being subjected to a conflict but unlike him in being torn asunder by its operations." (Concluding paragraph of the chapter on *Henry V*).

Traversi's analysis is closely related to the analysis of Henry's character in this paper. But Traversi's survey ends with *Henry V*. There is no attempt to link the theme of the English History plays with that of *Julius Caesar*.

Tillyard's remarks are related to the central thesis of this paper. But Tillyard has not explored the possibilities of the suggestion he has made.

23. It may be noted here that the self-control of Plutarch's Portia is already beginning to give way at this stage. "At length, Caesar's coming being prolonged (as you

have heard) Portia's weakness was not able to hold out any longer, and thereupon she suddenly swooned, that she had no leisure to go to her chamber, but was taken in the midst of her house, where her speech and senses failed her." (*Shakespeare's Plutarch*, ed. Walter W. Skeat, London, 1875; *Life of Brutus*, p. 117). Shakespeare's Portia holds out longer.

There is one touching incident in Plutarch, however, which Shakespeare has omitted altogether, and which he may well have inserted in his play. It expresses beautifully Portia's struggle for self-mastery—her strength as well as her weakness.

After Antony's funeral oration and the flight of the conspirators, Brutus sees that the republic of Rome is about to be overthrown, and determines to go out of Italy. "There Portia, being ready to depart from her husband Brutus, and to return to Rome, did what she could to dissemble the grief and sorrow she felt at her heart: but a certain painted table bewrayed her in the end, although until that time she shewed always a constant and patient mind." (The 'table' was a picture of Hector bidding farewell to his wife Andromache and their little son, as he sets out of the city of Troy to go to the battle.) "Portia seeing this picture, and likening herself to be in the same case, she fell a-weeping; and coming thither often times in a day to see it, she wept still." (*Op. cit.*, p. 124).

24. *Ibid.*, *Life of Antonius*, p. 155.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 159.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 161.

27. *Julius Caesar*, II. i. 185.

28. *Ibid.*, III. ii. 113.

29. *Ibid.*, III. i. 110.

30. *Ibid.*, V. i. 94-95.

31. Quoted in the New Arden ed. *Julius Caesar* (1961), Introduction, p. lxi.

## *The Phantom of Melancholy:* *An Essay on "Hamlet"*

READERS of *Hamlet* have perpetually been baffled by Hamlet's character. The central enigma of that character resides in some deep-seated malady of the soul, Hamlet's inaction being merely a symptom of that malady. What has perhaps been overlooked is the fact that the nature of this state of mind (not unusual in life, yet not capable of explanation) engaged the dramatist's interest in other plays as well. He probably found in it the seed of a fruitful dramatic idea. It does influence his conception of several characters in other plays,<sup>1</sup> none of whom, however, plays so vital a rôle in shaping the play he appears in. This explains the difference in the magnitude of the interest that the figure of Hamlet obviously commands. All the same, we should observe that Shakespeare does present in the plays characters whose melancholy—for so it was currently known—is not entirely explained by the circumstances and is even, one might say, *intentionally* left unaccounted for. It probably suited the dramatist to leave it so, and the painstaking investigations into the origin of the malady may well prove so many instances of critical wild-goose-chase.

In what way then did it suit Shakespeare to create the enigma (without imposing too great a strain on our credulity) with as much care as his critics would presumably devote to its resolution? When he came to write *Hamlet*, Shakespeare chose to work within a framework which already existed: the framework of the "Revenge Tragedy". Accepting as he did the conventions of that type, he had to satisfy himself that the delay motif impressed his auditors as being more than a device to keep the play going. Professor Bowers points out in his *Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy* that given (as they would say in the legal jargon of crime stories) the motive, the means and the opportunity, no person could possibly delay taking revenge once he knew about the "foul deed", without raising doubts as to his probity or sanity.<sup>2</sup> The implication for the dramatist was that a play with a revenge theme could not last long. If he wanted to carry it on—and doesn't Shakespeare seem to enjoy doing it, *Hamlet* being the longest of his plays?—he must turn his attention from incident to character, or rather, find in the creation of character means to annihilate interest in the incident. In the case of *Hamlet*, the character was to be a tragic character in the highest sense of the term. How then to make it *spoudaios* and yet tardy in a cause so noble? He presents Hamlet as a

character out of love with life even before he has access to that knowledge which calls for immediate action. When we hear a critic talk of the Embassy of Death<sup>3</sup> in *Hamlet*, we ought to relate the pattern of ideas suggested to this ingredient in the composition of Hamlet's character, a character so completely out of love with life that he could hardly sustain an active interest in the task of revenge imposed on his maimed soul, to restore his sense of values. The situation is all the more tragic because we do feel he has the makings of a character in every way deserving a life altogether different. It is part of the tragic irony that we should have those tantalizing glimpses of the riches of his soul and yet discover that so consistently malign is the principle of ironic reversal that the very objects, persons, situations that might have helped him out of his dilemma only serve to drive him nearer self-destruction.<sup>4</sup>

## II

We may take this idea of a character driven towards self-destruction as our starting point. The scheme of the play is best understood, we suggest, if we see that the rôle of avenger thrust upon Hamlet demands not merely that Hamlet kill Claudius, but that he kill himself.<sup>5</sup> To avoid ambiguity it must be stated that the tragic choice is a metaphysical one: as Hamlet himself states it, "To be or not to be: that is the question". The reference to self-slaughter in Hamlet's first soliloquy (I. ii. 131-2) has nothing to do with the issue here. The earlier statement is the expression of sheer physical disgust, a blind protest of his tortured senses against all the ugliness of life that he found in Claudius' court. The other is made sometime *after* the disclosure of "murder most foul" and is the statement of a metaphysical problem, an agonized but strikingly clear-sighted contemplation of a choice between appearance and reality<sup>6</sup>—to be what he is (i.e., *should be*) or to be what he is not (i.e., *does not want to be*). At the end of Act I Hamlet exclaims:

O cursed spite,  
That ever I was born to set it right! (I. v. 189-90),

because in a flash he realizes that "to set it right"—what irony!—he must cease to be what is, wipe out his real being and substitute a false image of himself with the help of all that is foreign to his nature: guile, treachery,<sup>7</sup> villainy in short. Worked out in terms of the tragedy as Shakespeare conceived it, the conflict was to be sustained by a prolonged act of repression savagely illuminated by periodic manic outbursts the recurrent theme of which is "honesty". The irony deepens with poignant

overtones when, for example, Hamlet confesses to Ophelia, with apparent inconsequence, in the Nunnery Scene, "I am myself indifferent honest; but yet I could accuse me of such things that it were better my mother had not borne me" (III. i. 123-6).

This fatal passion for truth Hamlet shares with the other great tragic figure of all times, Oedipus. A stubborn insistence on naked truth, whatever be the cost to one's personal happiness, impels both and gives a fatal direction to whatever they do. Hamlet, however, is a man for whom life has few surprises: he can in no way be surprised by its potency of evil<sup>8</sup> after such knowledge as he chose to be crushed under, disregarding the warning:

What if it tempt you toward the flood, my lord,  
Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff  
That beetles o'er his base into the sea?<sup>9</sup> (I. iv. 69-71)

The case of Hamlet, then, is of a man torn between two loyalties. If he is to be loyal to his father, he cannot be loyal to himself. Our understanding of this cleavage will be enriched if we can view it in the perspective of an experience widespread in that age and obtaining in a situation as different as, say, that of Donne's when he had to choose between two faiths and, having chosen, was yet unable to resolve the conflict which, according to his own testimony, involved the polarities of his entire being. That there are points of contact between the basic antinomianism in two widely separated areas of experience, separated even by that massive wall which divides art from real life, will be apparent to anyone who cares to read—among many others—such passages as this on the theme of that subtle agent of self-destruction, *a vapour*:

But when ourselves are the *Well*, that breaths out this exhalation, the *Oven* that spits out this fiery smoke, the *Myne* that spues out this suffocating, and strangling *dampe*, who can ever after this, aggravate his sorrow, by this *Circumstance*, that it was his *Neighbor*, his *familiar Friend*, his *Brother*, that destroyed him, and destroyed him with a whispering, and a calumniating breath, when wee our selves doe it to our selves by the same meanes, kill our selves with our owne *vapors*? Or if these occasions of this selfe-destruction, had any contribution from our owne *Wils*, any assistance from our owne *intentions*, nay from our own *errors*, we might divide the rebuke, and chide our selves as much as them.... But what have I done, either to *breed*, or to *breath* these *vapors*? They tell me it is my *Melancholy*; Did I infuse, did I drinke in *Melancholly* into my selfe? It is my *thoughtfulnessse*; was I not made to *thinke*? ... I have don nothing, wilfully, perversely toward it, yet must suffer in it, die by it; There are too many *Examples* of men, that have bin their own *executioners*, and that have made hard shift to bee so; ... But I doe nothing upon my selfe, and yet

am mine owne *Executioner*. And we have heard of *death* upon small occasions, and by scornfull *instruments*: a *pinne*, a *combe*, a *haire*, pulled, hath gangred, and killd; But when I have said, a *vapour*, if I were asked again, what is a *vapour*, I could not tell, it is so insensible a thing; so neere *nothing* is that that reduces us to *nothing*.<sup>10</sup>—

or this on the uneven oppositions of life, its quintessential malignity:

We say, the *Elements* of man are *misery*, and *happinesse*, as though he had an equal proportion of both, and the dayes of man vicissitudinary, as though he had as many *good* daies, as *ill*, and that he liv'd under a perpetuall *Equinoctial night*, and *day* equall, good and ill fortune in the same measure. But it is far from that; hee *drinkes misery*, and he *tastes happinesse*; he *mowes misery*, and he *gleanes happinesse*; he *journies in misery*, he does but *walke in happinesse*; and which is worst, his misery is *positive*, and *dogmaticall*, his happinesse is but *disputable*, and *problematicall*; All men call *Misery*, *Misery*, but *Happinesse* changes the name, by the taste of man.<sup>11</sup>—

or these lines from *Divine Poems*:

... To (poore) me is allow'd  
No ease; for, long, yet vehement grieve hath beene  
Th'effect and cause, the punishment and sinne.<sup>12</sup>

All whom warre, dearth, age, agues, tyrannies,  
Despaire, law, chance, hath slaine...<sup>13</sup>

Thou art slave to Fate, Chance, kings, and desperate men,  
And dost with poyson, warre, and sicknesse dwell<sup>14</sup>

Oh, to vex me, contraries meet in one:  
Inconstancy unnaturally hath begott  
A constant habit...<sup>15</sup>

And how often in the *Divine Poems* do we encounter those obsessions with the taint of sin and death which form part of the atmosphere of the world of Hamlet:

I am a little world made cunningly  
Of Elements, and an Angelike spright,  
But black sinne hath betraid to endlesse night  
My worlds both parts, and (oh) both parts must die.<sup>16</sup>

My purpose in drawing this analogy is to invite closer attention to that soul-state which we have sought to relate to the tragic scheme of the play. Whether we choose to call it an act of self-effacement or of self-slaughter, it is clear that a man with a deep attachment to life was unfit

for such a task. What is more to the point, such a man would not have been able to communicate to us, as Hamlet does so vividly, what it was like to be faced with such a choice.

It may be argued that the mere accomplishment of revenge called for no more than the change of certain details of behaviour, the putting on of "an antic disposition" or so. This was a well-recognized rôle and Hamlet after all was familiar with the actor's art. Hamlet, in short, had to play a part and play it, as he well might, with professional skill—witness his virtuoso performance (as stage-manager) in the play scene. But what such a view of the matter ignores is that for an idealist like Hamlet, prone to morbid generalizations, a change of mere details of appearance is inseparable from a total and all-swallowing change of nature.

As for Hamlet's delay, we are apt to blame Hamlet for it when we look for factual grounds and find none; but the grounds we must find for the delay must be poetic, not factual. Hamlet's delay has this human excuse, if no other: he would like to put away for a while, if he can, the weight of an exceptionally painful knowledge which bears him down. The more is the pity that the time he gains is all a waste, for he can never get back his taste for life and is thus condemned to remain a weary traveller between life that has ceased to be what it was and death that is "a consummation devoutly to be wished". There is a resulting gain from all this, a poetic gain at the cost of that delayed act of revenge, an act which can never become an act in the interests of life but must grow into an instrument of self-destruction. Instead of making him culpable, the delay turns him into an object of immeasurable pity. His delay is merely the bail he vainly tries to secure till he realizes at the end that "this fell arrest without bail"<sup>17</sup> shall allow him no redemption. Instead of enjoying the privileged position of a wronged man who has heaven's warranty to get that wrong righted, Hamlet looks upon himself and does indeed behave like a condemned man.

### III

The ultimate evaluation of the tragic situation in *Hamlet* cannot, however, rest on a set of personal references or indeed on any exclusively human framework of reference, though Hamlet's individual tragic burden is demonstrably insupportable even on a purely factual assessment. It must, in other words, take into account the relation of the suffering of the individual to the universal scheme of things. Here, I think, Hamlet's melancholy provides a clue by its anonymity, its independence of assignable causes, even of character. The picture of the universe that emerges in

Shakespeare's mature tragedies reveals that this phenomenon of inexplicability was somehow connected in his mind with the essence of the problem of evil explored in those tragedies.<sup>18</sup> It is typical of the inclusiveness that forms the unique distinction of his pursuit of the problem that he admits this sense of bafflement as the essence of our experience—and in either case this is communicated through the explicit medium of the soliloquy—alike of the creation of the noble hero of *Hamlet* and the base, inhuman villain Iago in *Othello*.<sup>19</sup> What is more, villainy in Iago wears an aspect almost spiritual (in so far as it defies all attempts to pin it down to any concrete motive whatever and thus give it a substance) and there is more than a touch of malignity about the melancholy aspect of the Prince of Denmark. Where should we look for the hidden cause that will explain the unexpected relation between these two startlingly incompatible experiences? In the very scheme of things, of course. The source of malignancy must be in the amoral structure of the universe;<sup>20</sup> it is written all over the silent, immutable face it turns to all those voices convulsed by the most urgent human emotions which thence must turn for support to that sense of human purpose which alone can have meaning even in a meaningless universe. Hamlet's melancholy by its very inscrutability mirrors the inscrutability of the universe. But the passion for truth that Shakespeare substitutes for the passion for revenge has a higher value because it is animated by a strong sense of human purpose. The melancholy with which that passion is burdened was necessary to redress the balance between the burden of his individual suffering and the burden of everyman, that of an amoral universe. No wonder that in soliloquy after soliloquy—at deliberately spaced intervals, so to speak—where this melancholy is most vocal, we catch the articulate accents of that trapped animal which is in every man.

#### IV

The higher organization of the play demanded a highly imaginative use of two details Shakespeare took over from his sources, apparently by way of conformity to tradition. If the interpretation here offered of this higher organization is accepted, it follows that to the movement of the temporal action of the play composed of ingredients which have well-apportioned "motions of their own" had to be added "the motion of the *Primum Mobile*" by which they could be "whirled about" in ever-widening spheres of translunary suggestion, if we may adapt for our purpose the similitude used by Dryden to explain the function of "by-concernments" in the English plays as opposed to the French.<sup>21</sup> Guided by the feeling that the



play must move out of the orbit of definable or negotiable human relationships, Shakespeare saw he could but use sparingly the theme of the ghost of Hamlet's father and, in a spurt of sheer imaginative audacity, invented the other phantom, Hamlet's melancholy. The imaginative power of the play derives from the inevitability of impression which overcomes possible reactions to the native repulsiveness of much of the matter of *Hamlet*—the inevitability, for example, of a curse fulfilling itself as in *The Ancient Mariner*. Like Coleridge's, Shakespeare's problem was to find the agent that alone could set in motion the forces of retribution. Neither in Coleridge's poem, nor in Shakespeare's play could it be a human agent. In the case of *Hamlet*, what an artistic disaster it would have been if the provoking agent had been a man—or, a woman!<sup>22</sup> But Shakespeare's statement of the problem of Hamlet would not have been complete without that undiagnosed malady he gave to Hamlet to secure the invulnerability of the agent of retribution. To reinforce the analogy we may indeed apply to this phantom of the mind those words of Marcellus following the exit of the Ghost in the first scene:

...it is as the air invulnerable  
And our vain blows malicious mockery! (I. i. 145-6)

"Hamlet's world is pre-eminently in the interrogative mood", observes Maynard Mack in the article already referred to.<sup>23</sup> To prove this, he cites an abundance of questions—or question marks, rather—which serve to focus our attention on the riddle of existence that the theme of *Hamlet* is. These innumerable questions, however, are like restless atoms hovering around the still centre of Hamlet's universe, his unaccountable melancholy. It is as if behind each individual question—and almost everything that is said or done in the play can, according to the technique employed by these critics (i.e. Maynard Mack and Harry Levin), be expanded or contracted into a *question*—there are immense areas of ever-receding space filled with the silence that, in the words of Joyce, "is the infinite of space".<sup>24</sup>

Hamlet wears this silence as the heraldic emblem of his melancholy. It is "that within", as he tells us at the beginning, "which passeth show" (I. ii. 85). Again, at the end of his life he reminds us "The rest is silence" (V. ii. 369). He dies with his secret. There at the end it is a silence filled with ineffable peace, with flights of angels singing him to his "rest". It sets at rest all those restless questionings. Towards the end of the play, in the whole of Act V in fact, we hear the retreating footsteps of the unquiet demon and a new voice emerges alike in the unsparing thoroughness of a philosopher with which he contemplates death in the graveyard (V. i. 83-121) and in such calm, unruffled assertions of the hidden benignity

in the scheme of things, significantly in measured prose, as—

Not a whit, we defy augury: there's a special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, 'tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come; the readiness is all.  
(V. ii. 230-4)

That is the defiance born of a sense of purpose, the heroic fulfilment of a theme fraught with such unheroic hazards as an inveterate melancholy and its inalienable symptom of delay.

## APPENDIX

### MELANCHOLY IN OTHER PLAYS OF SHAKESPEARE

[An exhaustive treatment of the subject, which would demand a separate article or book to itself, cannot be undertaken here. Only a few suggestive lines of approach are indicated below. Though attempted on a modest scale, the length of this note obliges me to place it separately as an appendix to the foregoing article.]

The stock attributes of a melancholic character are sometimes exploited in Comedies with the obvious purpose of exposing a fashionable folly. In the character of Jaques ("Monsieur Melancholy") in *AYLI*<sup>25</sup> this type of melancholy is even associated with a vicious strain (II. vii. 64-69). Equally noteworthy are the suggestions of unsounded depths in states of mind not difficult to associate with the humours of a melancholy disposition, such as Oliver's spite (see note 19) and the unpredictable and ungovernable moodiness of the Usurper Frederick. Besides, the presence of Jaques in one of the brightest of the comedies, to the action of which he contributes nothing, can only be accounted for by the interest such a character must have held for Shakespeare.

Sometimes, as in *TN*, melancholy is viewed from several angles at the same time. Olivia's, directly connected with her brother's death, was one widely acknowledged by convention. Compare, for instance, Gertrude's interpretation of Hamlet's grief in the opening scene. Orsino's melancholy, also fashionable, is the lover's. The comic aspect of that "trick of singularity" habitually associated with the person whose trustful visage—the type is vividly described, incidentally, by Gratiano in *MV* I. i. 83-99—is the product of an adherence to rigid Puritanical principles and the unmistakable mark of "a contemplative idiot", is fully exploited in the Malvolio episodes. Strange as it may sound, the situation in *TN* II. v. 16-215,

where Malvolio walks into the snare laid by Maria, Sir Toby and company and is fooled to the top of his bent as he reveals his fantastic contemplations while the others watch him under cover, is one that we may recognize when Polonius and Claudius lay their plot to divine the true cause of Hamlet's melancholy and are naturally upset to find how strangely his behaviour differs from their normal expectations.

There is one other character in TN, Antonio, who may be mentioned here, if only because he reminds one of the other Antonio in MV. They have in fact nothing in common save their inordinate devotion to a younger man who involuntarily exercises a fascination almost of witchcraft (see TN V. i. 79-86). This remarkable constancy is inseparable from the habit of self-effacement which comes naturally to an inveterate melancholic disposition and is perfectly reconcilable, paradoxical as it may appear, with that extreme egotism which is its more familiar attribute.

It is in the MV that we have a confession of unaccountable melancholy at the very beginning by the character himself ("In truth I know not why I am so sad"), i.e. Antonio. The failure of the attempts made by his friends to locate the source of Antonio's melancholy only emphasizes its inherent baffling character. The central episode of the play demands a man who, without forethought and even timely caution, not merely "seals to" such an improbable bond but also lets it work his doom unchecked, accepting the consequences as inevitable. Finding the Jew inexorable in the Trial scene he says with stoic fortitude:

I do oppose  
My patience to his fury, and am arm'd  
To suffer. . . . (IV. i. 10-12)

This patience as the sole armour against suffering is typical of the rôle and forms one of the themes of Hamlet's famous "To be or not to be" soliloquy.

A cultivated indifference to life, weary or stoical or both, is also the theme of individual speeches in other plays. Take, for example, the famous speech addressed by the Duke to the condemned Claudio (*M. for M.*, III. i. 5-41). Neither the Duke nor Claudio is stricken with the melancholy that afflicts a character like Jaques, Antonio or Hamlet. But that speech voices a philosophy which such a character would readily identify himself with.

As a soul divided against itself, a prey to tormenting indecision, Hamlet has been compared with Brutus and also Macbeth.<sup>26</sup> Brutus, we observe, has an innate disposition towards the same malady, thought-sickness. This resemblance is supported by other evidence, viz. their common distaste for murder and preference for a sacerdotal rôle to that of a butcher.<sup>27</sup>

What is more to the point is that, like Hamlet, Brutus is riven by an internal conflict at the outset, i.e., before he is drawn into the conspiracy which led to tragic consequences unforeseen by himself. His manner in these early scenes, whether he is with the wily Cassius or by himself in the orchard meditating on the phantasmagoric interim "between the acting of a dreadful thing And the first motion", has the authentic introspective cast about it. He goes about like a man who nurses a secret wound he dare not disclose even to his dear wife.

That indifference to life, which is the most marked characteristic of melancholy, must have been conceived by Shakespeare as an essential ingredient in all tragic experience: the sad phantom of melancholy which stalks through all his tragedies is the most formidable antagonist that the tragic character has to grapple with. It is the counterpart, we notice in our study of the development of Shakespeare, of that almost exclusive concentration on life in the Comedies. Death is the object of exclusive contemplation in *Hamlet*. In the tragedies the subject appears sometimes in individual speeches (e.g. the famous "To-morrow and to-morrow etc." soliloquy in *Macbeth*); sometimes, as in *Hamlet*, it is plotted more extensively on the graph of the soul. But though in his last play Shakespeare does present a situation which has a marked parallelism to that in *Hamlet*,<sup>28</sup> it is in *The Tempest* that Shakespeare attains the crowning vision in which life and death are no longer contraries cancelling each other.<sup>29</sup>

ARUN KUMAR DAS GUPTA

#### NOTES & REFERENCES

[All quotations from and references to the works of Shakespeare are from and to the Collected Works of Shakespeare, ed. Clark and Wright, London, 1949.]

1. See the Appendix to this article: "Melancholy in other plays of Shakespeare".
2. Cf. "A revenger with no knowledge and no possible clues to investigate is a static figure since action is impossible. Yet a revenger with complete knowledge would normally act at once, and the play would be over." (F. T. Bowers: *Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy, 1587-1642*, Princeton, 1940, p. 68).
3. "The Embassy of Death: An Essay on *Hamlet*" in *The Wheel of Fire* by G. W. Knight, London, 1930.
4. The only other character in the play whose fate is a parallel illustration of this behaviour of events is Ophelia. This, I think, underscores the pattern of reversal, Ophelia's fate being bound up with Hamlet's, her madness and suicide constituting a lyric mirror of the idea worked out in all its tragic elaborations in the destiny of Hamlet. See G. W. Knight, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

5. The superior tragic value of the inclusion of the hero-avenger in the final holocaust was recognized in the course of the evolution of the Revenge Tragedy. In the earlier plays *revenge*—the bloody act itself—was meat and drink to the avenger. But this crude satisfaction could hardly suit a tragic hero. Hence later dramatists assigned to the noble, dedicated avenger a sacerdotal rôle, his best offering being himself. The hero, according to the logic of this trend of development, must not survive his act of revenge. See Bowers: *op. cit.*, p. 184. To Shakespeare alone it was given to expand the idea—give it a metaphysical extension, so to speak—till it became the very basis of the tragic dichotomy as formulated here. The notion of self-dedication had probably a ritual character in its origin. Shakespeare transmuted it into a highly complex idea, rich in tragic possibilities, for the creation of a highly complex being.
6. Maynard Mack in "The World of Hamlet" discovers this as an operative idea in the imagery of *Hamlet* but characteristically fails to see its central reference—a reference made directly by Hamlet himself—to Hamlet's tragic predicament. What should have been a key-passage in such a treatment is quite ignored in what he has to say on "this problem of reality... central to the play and written deep into its idiom". (*Tragic Themes in Western Literature*, ed. Cleanth Brooks, Yale University Press, 1955, p. 39). See also Harry Levin (who follows up the lead given by M. Mack), *The Question of Hamlet*, New York, 1959, p. 20. J. Lawlor, another modern critic who has a flair for discovering abstract patterns in Shakespeare's poetry, has a chapter on "Appearance and Reality" in *The Tragic Sense of Shakespeare*, London, 1960, but it deals with *Henry IV*! He does, however, interpret the tragic conflict in *Hamlet* and its appeal in relation to Shakespeare's handling of the revenge theme by suggesting that the question "To revenge or not to revenge" becomes universalized in the issue, "To be or not to be—that is the question" (*op. cit.*, p. 67).
7. The zeal with which Hamlet lays the mouse-trap (to satisfy his conscience only) and the skill with which he removes the odious Rosencrantz and Guildenstern—the killing of Polonius was unpremeditated—may be contrasted with his open-hearted acceptance of Laertes' challenge without a trace of suspicion of the latter's duplicity as also with his chivalrous bearing throughout the duel. How far he remains till the end incapable of identifying himself with the false image he had to create, may be measured by the cry of "Treachery! Seek it out" (V. ii. 323) with which he swiftly moves to action.
8. That is why he appears so callous when he finds he has killed Ophelia's father without intending to, why later he can not only bear the death of Ophelia herself even when he knows he is in a measure responsible for it, but can also enjoy the luxury of a rhetorical detachment from the ugly fact of her death in that angry exchange with Laertes over her grave (V. i. 277-307). The sense of personal liability is diminished when the mind is pervaded by a sense of the exclusive presence of evil in life. This does of course argue a major difference between Hamlet and Oedipus. This emotional atrophy, by no means an index of lack of moral susceptibility, is part of the make-up of Hamlet's mind and makes no sense without that deep ineluctable melancholy. A statement like "O cursed spite etc.", placed so early, would have contradicted the scheme of the work in a play like the *Oedipus Tyrannus*. Yet given that melancholy cast of the mind, a mind steeped in fore-knowledge of fate—such knowledge as is not given to Oedipus, a victim after all of a conspiracy of events merely—it comes out all right in *Hamlet*.
9. It hardly needs to be added that we read the passage here with its image components, *the cliff and the sea*, symbolically. It suggests the vision of a soul set on the sharp edge

of a rampart dividing two worlds, of being and not being. How effectively such a vision may be suggested in the theatre may be measured by the expression, as of a death-mask, on Hamlet's face—drained almost of emotion to the point of being emancipated from its flux—in the striking picture reproduced from the Jean-Louis Barrault production at the Marigny Theatre, Paris, 1946, in *Hamlet Through the Ages*, a pictorial record compiled by Mander and Mitchelson, London, 1955, p. 39.

10. Donne's *Devotions XII* (Nonesuch edn., London, 1930, pp. 528-9).
11. *Ib. XIII*, ed. cit., pp. 530-1.
12. *Holy Sonnets*, iii, ed. cit., p. 280.
13. *Ib. vii*, p. 282.
14. *Ib. x*, p. 283.
15. *Ib. xix*, p. 287.
16. *Ib. v*, p. 281.
17. Sonnet LXXIV. Cf. *Hamlet*, V. ii. 346-7.
18. The analysis that follows is based on a consideration also of such patently unsatisfactory, even, according to many, flagrant instances of (un-)“tragic deaths” as those of Desdemona and Cordelia, which most of us are unable to connect even with that sense of waste inseparable from our tragic experience in these plays. The inclusion of these innocent victims is meaningful tragedy only on such a reading the universe.
19. Supporting evidence of this direction of Shakespeare's interest may be found in such interesting minor creations as Oliver in AYLI. The touch of enigma, self-confessed, about his hatred for Orlando is, in a small way, something of an anticipation of that “motiveless malignity” which assumes such a diabolic magnitude in *Othello*. Compare AYLI I. i. 175 with *Othello* V. i. 19.
20. This again is the frame of reference against which we should review the analogy of a malignant “spiritual illness” which, according to Spurgeon, who suggests this analogy on the basis of her discovery of an abundance of metaphors connected with some morbid ulcer or tumor, should determine the nature of the problem in *Hamlet* and our approach to it. (*Shakespeare's Imagery and What it Tells us*, Cambridge, 1961, pp. 318-19). Given a cosmic extension, the tragic implications of the analogy gain in magnitude.
21. “An Essay of Dramatic Poesy” in *Essays of John Dryden*, ed. W. P. Ker, Oxford, 1900, Vol. I, p. 70.
22. The amusing consequences of such an attempt have been recorded by W. J. Courthope who mentions an experiment made by Paul Bourget to modernize the story of Hamlet, in which the ghost of Hamlet's father, described by Courthope as “an essential part of the machinery”, had to be replaced with a maiden aunt! See *Life in Poetry: Law in Taste* by W. J. Courthope, London, 1901, pp. 207-8.
23. *Op. cit.*, p. 33. See also Harry Levin, *op. cit.*, p. 19 et seq.
24. James Joyce: *Ulysses*, London, 1937, p. 395.
25. On Jaques's melancholy see the article on *As You Like It* by James Smith in *Scrutiny*, IX (1940), No. 1.
26. According to H. J. C. Grierson, Shakespeare's own “preoccupation with the problem of temptation and evil and their influence on men of introspective mind and brooding imagination” was a “factor in the shaping of *Macbeth*”. “For *Macbeth*”, he says, “is not a person who stands altogether by himself in Shakespeare's tragedies. He is of the same family as Brutus and Hamlet.” See his introduction to his edition of *Macbeth*, Oxford, 1914, p. xix.
27. This is discussed in some detail in an early exposition of the parallelism between

Hamlet and Brutus by H. S. Bowden in the *Religion of Shakespeare*, 1899. See *Readings on the Character of Hamlet, 1661-1947*, compiled by Claude C. H. Williamson, London, 1950, pp. 225-6.

28. Prospero's, like Hamlet's, is a trustful nature, noble, impulsive, paralysed suddenly by a shock ("that a brother should be so perfidious!"), but it gradually settles into a philosophic indifference to life. He is not a victim of his own melancholy, takes on the rôle almost of Providence and above all, unlike Hamlet, has an emotional support in Miranda. Some idea of the similarity in details of the initial situation may be obtained from a consideration of I. ii. 62-132.
29. There is thus a great difference between Hamlet's and Macbeth's famous pieces on life (*Ham.*, III. i. 60-69 and *Macbeth*, V. v. 24-28) and Prospero's equally famous piece on the "fading" of the "insubstantial pageant" (*Temp.*, IV. i. 148-58). Hamlet's and Macbeth's pronouncements on life, born of their very weariness of life, come at moments of concentrated agony; Prospero's, by contrast, accompanies a vision of serenity, the abundant happiness of life, and implies a larger synthesis than hitherto achieved.

## *Shakespeare's Temptation Scenes: A Study of Some of The Lesser Ones*

A GOOD DEAL has been thought and written generally about Shakespeare's profound sense of evil. Shakespeare recognizes evil both as inherent in human nature and also as emanating from non-human sources, subtle and dark influences of undetermined modes of being. Yet what must have fascinated the great humanist more is not what witches or ghosts do to us, but rather what man, when perverted, may do to other men. Of all forms of evil, that which originates in man and enters another man's soul, seduces and degrades it by simultaneously befogging the reason and throttling the conscience, is surely the most terrible as well as the most mysterious. In many of his plays, Shakespeare seems to be seriously engaged in watching and probing this mystery, the mystery of temptation, the hopeless gullibility of human minds, the fragility of the naturally honest man, and the dangerous resourcefulness of the opposite number. One has only to turn to the Iago scenes to appreciate Shakespeare's penetration into the actual working of an evil mind, and to realize what dangerous use may be made of reason and imagination when the first impulses towards a criminal action are born in a man. The process is fascinating and is best appreciated if we inspect the text closely and see with what deftness and artistry, psychological and verbal, Shakespeare realizes his aims. There are, as a matter of fact, so many temptation scenes, great and small, major and minor, in his plays that temptation must be set down as one of the major themes of Shakespearean drama, and it is intriguing to think of the curious interest it must have had for his mind.

Though *Othello* would seem to be the focal point of our attention, we shall, in fact, pass over the very familiar Iago scenes as well as the equally well-known scenes between Macbeth and his Lady to invite attention to scenes of temptation that are not usually in the limelight. The scene in *King John* (III. iii) where the king incites Hubert to murder Arthur is one such. It is a remarkably powerful scene, developed out of six bald lines in *The Troublesome Raigne*. John begins well and with a confession that suggests a heart overflowing with gratitude:

Come hither, Hubert. O my gentle Hubert,  
We owe thee much: within this wall of flesh



There is a soul counts thee her creditor,  
And with advantage means to pay thy love:

.....

Give me thy hand. (ll. 19-22, 25)

With this he warmly extends his hand and takes in Hubert's—a gesture of friendship as exists between two men of the same status! John has something to say—

...I had a thing to say,  
But I will fit it with some better time. (ll. 25-26)

However, let not people think that Hubert is not in his confidence:

By heaven, Hubert, I am almost asham'd  
To say what good respect I have of thee. (ll. 27-28)

The unsuspecting Hubert has no ear for flattery. Loyalty and courtesy come most naturally to him:

I am much bounden to your majesty. (l. 29)

An oath of allegiance! John sees his chance. With another pretence of hesitancy, the familiar “I had a thing to say, but let it go” (l. 33), he begins the temptation. In a long speech (ll. 34-53) he makes the rather trivial point that given the right occasion, atmosphere and frame of mind, he could unbosom himself to Hubert. And this atmosphere he seeks to induce by his very words. In the art of simulating sudden passion John can hardly be surpassed. Suddenly we find his emotions at fever-heat. Ideas and images flow from his lips and with such fluency that in a speech of twenty lines (ll. 34-53) he only has leisure for three full sentences, one of which runs to a length of seventeen lines. It is composed of several conditional clauses with irregular breaks, evidently spoken with a good deal of flourish and agitation, both of the body and of the mind, gaining its effect by a certain splendour of imagery and diction. Most of the details are sinister and fearful: “the midnight bell” with “his iron tongue and brazen mouth”; “the drowsy ear of night”; a “churchyard” with a man “possessed with a thousand wrongs”; melancholy baking one's blood and making it heavy-thick, “which else runs tickling up and down the veins” and produces “that idiot, laughter”; a man seeing without eyes, hearing without ears, making reply without a tongue; and finally, the “brooded watchful day”. Whatever their sequence, the very accumulation of these lurid details, so excitedly delivered, has its impact. They may not tell us anything of the speaker's intention but they help to create an atmosphere

that is like the work he has in hand, most bloody, fiery and most terrible! The enigma deepens for Hubert as John rounds off his speech with yet another pose of hesitancy:

I would into thy bosom pour my thoughts:  
But ah! I will not: yet I love thee well;  
And, by my troth, I think thou lov'st me well. (ll. 53-55)

The bait is being alternately dangled and withdrawn. Should he keep the secret from Hubert? After all, he loves him well and he has no doubt Hubert loves him well too. He pauses for the assurance and Hubert is not late with it:

So well, that what you bid me undertake,  
Though my death were adjunct to my act,  
By heaven, I would do it. (ll. 56-58)

So Hubert pledges himself unconditionally to do whatever his lord bids him to, even before he knows the precise nature of his errand. What more could John expect? His heart suddenly warms to him:

Do not I know thou wouldst?  
Good Hubert! Hubert, Hubert, throw thine eye  
On yon young boy. . . (ll. 58-60)

Even as he lets the cat out of the bag, John makes a last, brief show of the presence of a conscience in him, as if he wants a thing which at the same time he degrades. Hence the stammer and the stumble; hence the artful repetition of "Hubert"; the birth-pangs of an idea monstrous but necessary. The ice once broken, John gives free rein to his malice: Arthur is a very serpent in his way;

And wheresoe'er this foot of mine doth tread,  
He lies before me: dost thou understand me?  
Thou art his keeper. (ll. 62-64)

Even here John does no more than merely hint his wish, "murder" sticks in his throat! Anyway, if the suggestion suffices, why not keep a civil tongue in one's head? Hubert's reply is unconsciously diplomatic:

And I'll keep him so  
That he shall not offend your majesty. (ll. 64-65)

Apparently Hubert understands no more than that the king would like him to keep a very strict watch on Arthur. So John must make himself clearer. The little dialogue that follows is a masterpiece:

*John* : Death.  
*Hub* : My lord?  
*John* : A grave.  
*Hub* : He shall not live.  
*John* : Enough.  
 I could be merry now. (ll. 66-67)

The expansive John who just now made a torrential speech to impress his man has now become remarkably laconic. It shows the born actor's power in him to appear, like Milton's angels, "dilated or condensed" at will. It shows also how to secure the maximum effect by the minimum effort. The actor in John is seen also in the significant pauses he allows himself. Beginning with a highly dramatic pause, he breaks the silence with the monosyllable "death". In spite, however, of his precautions, he fails to avoid shocking Hubert whose bewildered query "My lord?" seems to voice a general protest of all mankind against treachery and inhumanity. The query is followed by a pause of breathless, though controlled, agitation until John smothers all flutter with "A grave". There is yet another thrilling pause, filled in by the tense, though brief, struggle in Hubert between fear of his royal master and his own better conscience. And he gulps down his agitation and mechanically replies, "He shall not live". It seems he hardly knows what he says; and what he says is just an involuntary and contrary extension outside of an inner reverie. Though, however, they belie his own heart, the spoken words are quite enough to make John breathe freely again.

It should not be difficult now to realize that John has in himself the makings of an Iago. Yet one feels, despite the subtlety of his moves, that his victory is all too quickly won. Hubert hardly offers any resistance, so that the process of guilt-seeding is swift and sure, and the result entirely predictable. It would be interesting to see how Shakespeare's handling of temptation gets subtler as he matures. The scene in *King John* is a one-man show. The conflict of two wills, the prolonged tug-of-war of two fairly evenly balanced personalities, is naturally a more enthralling experience. There are beginnings of this in the scene in *Julius Caesar* (I. ii) where Cassius is inciting Brutus against Caesar.

Before he provokes his passions, Cassius wants to pervert Brutus's mind. How to set about this? Knowing full well that Brutus will never fail to acknowledge an appeal to his sensibilities as a private person, he assumes the tone of tender but disprized friendship:

You bear too stubborn and too strange a hand  
 Over your friend that loves you. (ll. 35-36)

His tactics pay off—Brutus warmly responds to this appeal to his affec-

tion. Cassius is quick to turn this to his advantage. He regrets having misunderstood his friend, assures himself of a sympathetic audience and plays lightly on Brutus's curiosity—he has hours of talk in store for him! With these brief preliminaries he begins one of the subtlest of his moves. He closes up to Brutus and asks the tantalizing question:

Tell me, good Brutus, can you see your face? (I. 51)

Of course he cannot, except in a mirror; and that precisely is everyone's regret in Rome; every worthy Roman, "except immortal Caesar", speaking of Brutus,

And groaning underneath this age's yoke,  
Have wish'd that noble Brutus had his eyes. (II. 61-62)

Instead of blurting out angry queries of "Are you blind?", "Can't you see the situation?", and provoking his wrath, Cassius artfully mixes caution with aggression, fact with fiction, sincerity with flattery, and generalizes his personal jealousy into a national sorrow. It is the whole country calling him now: will he fail to respond? Brutus, as his reply shows, is perfectly aware of the problem but reluctant to act. Cassius wilfully misunderstands his reluctance as diffidence and lack of self-knowledge:

And, since you know you cannot see *yourself*  
So well as by reflection, I, your glass,  
Will modestly discover to *yourself*  
That of *yourself* which you yet know not of. (II. 67-70)

You are greater than you know! A thousand pities that you do not know *yourself*! For, your self is a noble self, a heroic self, a patriotic self that never brooks insult, never tolerates tyranny—be true to your own self. The repetition is intended to reach the subconscious; it is expected to vibrate in Brutus's ears, so that his imagination is both intrigued and balked, so that again when he goes home and begins to think things over at leisure, the word will rise to the surface of the mind and be an audible admonition.

But all this is when he goes home! At present he has only one ear for his excited friend, while the other is all intent on the noise coming from the Capitol:

What means this shouting? I do fear the people  
Choose Caesar for their king. (II. 79-80)

"Fear"! The word betrays the first flaw in his defence. Cassius sees the

leak and immediately contrives to enlarge it: if Brutus "fears" the consequences, he should surely remove the object of fear. Brutus makes no effort to resist Cassius here. He firmly states his position—he is prepared to undertake any honourable enterprise—but does not concede anything more. Cassius, it would seem, is up against it. His task is not so much to acquaint Brutus with a new idea, as to work him up to a state of excitement which produces action. It is not a case of straightforward temptation; it is a fight against sloth and scruple, against conscious passivity. To achieve his end, he begins with a vicious anti-Caesar campaign. With a cunning few are capable of Cassius turns a physical infirmity into a moral disability and a political disqualification: how can Caesar claim superior status over them, seeing that they have all been fed on the same diet, which has generated the same heat and the same power of resistance? Why should this bad swimmer (for Cassius once beat him, he says, in a swimming-match) now become a god? Why should this sick man (for Cassius saw him shake once in Spain, when the fit was on him) become so imperious? What a world is this in which a man unmistakably subject to all the frailties of flesh comes to be revered as a god! With Brutus getting yet more phlegmatic, Cassius runs mad with passion: can Caesar claim that he has a fairer, heavier and altogether a more impressive name than has Brutus? Hardly have we reckoned with the possibilities of this most extraordinary piece of reasoning when Cassius intensifies the pressure again: is it not strange that Caesar should monopolize all power and get away with it when a descendant of Junius Brutus is still alive in the land? Was ever Rome so domineered by an individual? To rise against Caesar (to rise, "speak and *strike*", as the anonymous letters thrown in at his window will later insinuate) is therefore a duty which it is dishonourable to shun. And here lies the subtlety of the approach: Cassius associates the proposed course of action with something honourable, even desirable; Brutus, it will be noticed, is being led to commit a crime by a specious appeal to just those instincts and feelings which are in general productive of the noblest actions; he is being tricked into criminal action by an appeal to his sense of justice, propriety and the public good, his appreciation of tradition and pride of ancestry. Yet he is still able to keep the fiend at bay: his firm reply that he would think over the matter at leisure would seem to have done for Cassius. But it is just the contrary. Insinuations follow direct appeal: it is not Caesar, "but you and I, and honest Casca, we have the falling-sickness"; Casca, though blunt, is not tardy—he is a man of "bold or noble enterprise" (as you are not!), and so on. This disintegrating play of word and thought, we feel, effectively weakens Brutus's defence, though he is still the picture of self-possession when he leaves the stage. And it is no self-deception when Cassius soliloquizes

triumphantly:

Well, Brutus, thou art noble; yet, I see,  
Thy honourable metal may be wrought  
From that it is dispos'd: therefore 'tis meet  
That noble minds keep ever with their likes;  
For who so firm that cannot be seduced? (ll. 313-17)

The seducer has a right to exult: even Brutus is not invulnerable; even he, armed so strong in honesty, is corruptible. Cassius's individual sense of triumph soon expands into a universal symbol; it becomes the celebration of the victory of evil over good.

Can Cassius claim all the credit for Brutus's fall to himself? Correctly, Brutus falls into temptation because he was himself half-inclined to do so. Cassius's function has really been to excite him, to steer him along the intended course by deft touches to the rudder. It is quite otherwise in the case of Isabella in *Measure for Measure* who has not an inkling about which way she is being led. The scenes between Angelo and Isabella are highly complex studies in temptation. Most interesting is the ironical interview (II. ii) where the virtuous Isabella is seen in the unconscious role of a temptress, pleading with Angelo for her brother's life. She calmly but timidly begins her case, divided as she is between her natural abhorrence of the guilt and her affection for the guilty man. In her petition she enjoins condemnation of the sin and pardon for the sinner. Whereupon the stern justicer points out the impracticability of the policy. Yet, may not mercy season justice? With Angelo, it may not. Isabella gathers fire and eloquence as next she proceeds to put the searching question how it would be if Angelo himself were to be judged. Angelo begins now to feel the power she is gradually gaining over him. "Pray you, be gone", he implores her. Is it that he dare not trust himself longer in her presence? However that be, Isabella now seizes him more strongly than ever. Has he forgotten the central truth of Christianity? Does he need to be reminded of the eternal justice which had found mercy and atonement for the whole forfeit race of man? The talk of "justice" has an unfortunate effect; it acts as a fresh reminder to Angelo that he is also an instrument of justice and must follow law like an inflexible moral principle. The impression becomes strong that the rigid doctrinaire is too deeply impressed with his powerful position. Isabella senses it. And her lecture on the right use of power could hardly be better timed. How well does she rise to the full heights of her opportunity! Disdain and scorn sparkle in her eyes as she reminds Angelo of his fleeting appointment and turns upon him with the annihilating irony of her picture of man in authority—"man, proud man, drest in a little brief authority"—as an angry ape at

whose fantastic tricks the angels, were they human, would laugh themselves to death. The attack goes home: the man of steel relents. Instead of being supplicated to, he now supplicates:

Why do you put these sayings upon me? (l. 133)

Does he not know why? To warn him against self-deception, of course, and lack of self-criticism:

Go to your bosom;  
Knock there, and ask your heart what it doth know  
That's like my brother's fault: if it confess  
A natural guiltiness such as is his,  
Let it not sound a thought upon your tongue  
Against my brother's life. (ll. 136-41)

Touched on his weakest spot, Angelo is almost "betrayed by what is false within":

She speaks, and 'tis  
Such sense that my sense breeds with it. (ll. 141-2)

He bids her come the next day when he will listen to her again.

What has softened this hard heart? The fire of her reasoned eloquence, or the glow of her charms, both physical and mental? Perhaps Angelo cannot himself answer the question at this stage. But he will soon be enabled to know his mind better. The fateful stroke is to be dealt by Isabella. She suddenly blurts out:

Hark how I'll bribe you. Good my lord, turn back.  
*Ang*: How! bribe me?  
*Isab*: Ay, with such gifts that heaven shall share with you. (ll. 145-7)

Shocking as these words sound on their first utterance, they rouse illicit hopes in the unfortunate man. They give to the airy nothings of his mind a local habitation. And the word "bribe" certainly gives them a name. The wavering man is thus put on a definite course along which he goes on unhindered to meet his doom. Even while he slips, he struggles hard to escape the temptation but fails to retrieve himself. And so, "come to me tomorrow". The fatal words again escape his lips. No one perhaps is more aware of the anguish of consciously and, as it would seem, unwillingly falling into temptation than Angelo when he makes what may be taken as the final statement on this first strange and fatal interview:

What's this? what's this? Is this her fault or mine?  
The tempter or the tempted, who sins most? (ll. 162-3)

Thus ends a most strange scene of temptation, temptation of Angelo by the pure and innocent Isabella.

Only a scene later (II. iv) we see how the rôles are reversed. Angelo is now in the rôle of the tempter and Isabella the victim. She comes back at the appointed hour to know his decision—"I am come to know your pleasure", she humbly says. To Angelo in his present mood, her simple "your pleasure" suggests the gratification of his sensual desires. He consequently wishes she might really know his pleasure instead of asking questions about his decision:

That you might know it, would much better please me,  
Than to demand what 'tis. (II. 33-34)

Once tainted, the "corruption is over him like leprosy". Angelo rushes into temptation once his immoral feelings are excited. Every virtue gets perverted into the corresponding form of vice. Isabella, now about to leave, is told falsely, "Yet may he live awhile", and detained. The suggestive "yet" invites speculation, fair and foul. Then comes a puritanic pose, a further stiffening of his stiff attitude—"to bring illegitimate children into the world is as criminal as a murder"—so that he achieves a complete breakthrough. Isabella, driven to desperation, can only plead for a more humane treatment of her brother: after all, one should make allowances for human weakness; the world is what it is, with all its imperfections on its head: "'Tis set down so in heaven, but not in earth" (I. 51). Isabella's pleading the cause of guilty love (as it must appear to Angelo) encourages him in his wicked proposal:

Say you so? then I shall pose you quickly.  
Which had you rather, that the most just law  
Now took your brother's life; or, to redeem him,  
Give up your body to such sweet uncleanness  
As she that he hath stain'd?

.....

Might there not be a charity in sin  
To save this brother's life? (II. 52-56, 64-65)

He does not say yet who may save her brother's life. Proceeding with the utmost circumspection, he is anxious to make her realize that these are general reflections, brought in for argument's sake, not an expression of his personal opinion. The unsuspecting Isabella takes them as such and replies that it may be a sin for her to beg his life, but if Angelo grants his life, it will be an act of charity for him. Angelo at once gives this a suitable twist and drives steadily to his point: charity done to her brother will counterbalance the sin she commits in showing that charity. The



instigations, however, pass by the saintly Isabella as the idle wind. With her mind immovably set on nobler impulses, she reveals a divine innocence of her interlocutor's motives. She is continually at cross-purposes with him. Her impenetrability is baffling to Angelo: "Your sense pursues not mine", he says in irritation. And how could it? It is a case of crafty casuistry *versus* innocent simplicity. Angelo decides now to "speak more gross", so that he is "received plain". But if he speaks more gross, he certainly does not speak plain (witness the speech beginning at line 89). The phrases wind about as his thoughts wind about; he does not come straight to the point but fetches about a good deal. Yet try as he may, he fails to record any progress. Her brother will rather die than she yield her body and die in spirit. Force fails but guile prevails: is she not being cruel to her brother? No, not really, she thinks; she is only distinguishing between "lawful mercy" and "foul redemption". In that case, is she not being too kind to her brother? Hardly does she answer one question when she is hemmed in by the next. Casuistry can go no further. And this last question keeps tormenting her. Is she being lenient to vice? To a severe and ascetic character like Isabella the answer is going to be a crucial one and is usually self-condemnatory. She nearly admits that she might after all be doing some special pleading for her brother. This gives Angelo an opening and he begins with the pious: "We are all frail". "All" is suggestive, both men and women, that is to say (cp. Iago's "Good name in man and woman"). Isabella pursues him logically: all men are frail; frailty then is not something peculiar to her brother. Her sense once again pursues not his. So Angelo has to make himself clearer:

Nay, women are frail too.

(l. 125)

A further hint at his base motive. To Isabella, however, this is only the confirmation of a universally known truth—women are indeed frail, "ten times frail"; help them heaven! For, "men their creation mar in profiting by them". Angelo is evidently heartened by the drift of her thoughts (though we know she is just as far away from him as ever) and decides to use her testimony to the general weakness of her sex as a stick to beat her with:

I do arrest your words. Be that you are,  
That is, a woman; if you be more, you're none;  
If you be one, as you are well express'd  
By all external warrants, show it now,  
By putting on the destin'd livery.

*Isab:* I have no tongue but one: gentle my lord,  
Let me entreat you speak the former language.

*Ang*: Plainly conceive, I love you.

*Isab*: My brother did love Juliet; and you tell me  
That he shall die for't.

*Ang*: He shall not, Isabel, if you give me love.

*Isab*: I know your virtue hath a licence in't,  
Which seems a little fouler than it is,  
To pluck on others. (ll. 135-48)

So the mask is off and the villian stands revealed in his true colours. Isabella never realized till now the personal nature of Angelo's remarks. Her recoil is instinctive and violent, as one may expect. For the first time her eyes are opened and the fire of hatred, of outraged shame, flashes from them:

Seeming, seeming!  
I will proclaim thee, Angelo; look for't:  
Sign me a present pardon for my brother,  
Or with an outstretch'd throat I'll tell the world aloud  
What man thou art. (ll. 151-5)

The trapped beast now bares his fangs:

Who will believe thee, Isabel?  
My unsoil'd name, the austereness of my life,  
My vouch against you, and my place i' the state,  
Will so your accusation overweigh,  
That you shall stifle in your own report  
And smell of calumny. I have begun;  
And now I give my sensual race the rein:  
Fit thy consent to my sharp appetite.... (ll. 155-62)

Now that his faults have been cried out from the housetop, now that he has paid the price, why sacrifice the gains? He must have her. But the last we hear from Isabella in the scene strengthens our confidence that she that has chastity is clad in complete steel.

Of all the victims of temptation in Shakespeare, Isabella perhaps proves the most intractable. The path she treads and the path she is asked to set her foot on continually run away from each other. The temptation is no sooner sensed than resisted and the resistance is absolute. The process of the gradual familiarization of a mind to the suggestion of guilt is not therefore allowed to be prolonged. The Angelo-Isabella scenes also offer illuminating comments on the degree of individual responsibility in the case of temptation. As partially with Brutus, so more distinctly with Othello and Macbeth, there is the feeling that the victim contributes to his own fall in no small measure. That Isabella's purity is shown to be unassailable by sophistry only reinforces this feeling. No

doubt the devil walks into your life with silent, muffled footsteps. Yet it will make you stretch forth your hand, so that it does not appear to intrude, unless invited. And once it crosses the threshold, it is free to make its own way.

Sometimes the devil has a very easy access to the heart of its victim. This may be due to several reasons. The devil may on occasions be pleasantly surprised to discover that his intended victim is, in fact, his next of kin, if not an even more accomplished artist; witness, for instance, the Machiavellian dialogue between Menas and Pompey in *Antony and Cleopatra*. Menas is the schemer while Pompey, on whom he works, appears a curious amalgam of honourableness and dissimulation. The context is easily recalled: the triumvirs are feasting with Pompey in his ship (II. vii) when Menas, taking him aside, whispers into the ears of the host: "wilt thou be lord of the whole world?" Pompey can have little objection: "Show me which way". And Menas shows the way:

These three world-sharers, these competitors,  
Are in thy vessel: let me cut the cable;  
And, when we are put off, fall to their throats:  
All there is thine. (II. 77-80)

A concrete and specific offer this and too well framed for Pompey to ignore it. But the trouble is that you must go into the water to catch fish. Pompey will not go into the water. He would have their throats cut, but, heaven forbid, not by himself! This is a true refinement of villainy. Menas should have done it, "and not have spoke on't!" In himself it is villainy, but in the less chivalrous Menas it would have been "good service". Poor Menas who came to do him good only earns a rebuff:

Thou must know  
'Tis not my profit that does lead mine honour;  
Mine honour, it. Repent that e'er thy tongue  
Hath so betray'd thine act; being done unknown,  
I should have found it afterwards well done,  
But must condemn it now. (II. 82-87)

There may be occasions, on the other hand, where the tempter proves immeasurably superior to the victim, the game yielding him some sort of an aesthetic satisfaction. Consider, for instance, Cassius with Casca, Claudius with Laertes, Iago and Roderigo or Macbeth and the murderers. As for these dupes, they all "take suggestion as a cat laps milk". The first two instances may be analysed in some detail.

Cassius's meeting with the forlorn Casca in thunder, lightning and rain (I. iii) is admirably contrived. Terribly frightened by the prodigies

of the unruly night, Casca's normal vigilance and intelligence are in abeyance. A favourable moment this for Cassius, and the latter realizes it. He begins in the equivocating strain to play on his already excited nerves. Very soon he works himself up into an unwonted state of excitement (cp. King John) and raises emotions to fever-heat. An incredibly shrewd and ingenious political interpretation of the disturbances of the night is offered. Thunder and lightning are interpreted as so many declarations of the divine wrath, and the unnaturalness of the atmosphere is equated to the abnormality of the political situation in Rome. The climax comes with Cassius stretching the analogy the whole of its fantastic length:

Now could I, Casca, name to thee a man  
Most like this dreadful night,  
That thunders, lightens, opens graves, and roars  
As doth the lion in the Capitol,  
A man no mightier than thyself or me  
In personal action, yet prodigious grown  
And fearful as these strange eruptions are. (ll. 72-78)

Cassius does all but name the man and waits to be questioned. Bedevilled by sophistry, Casca readily walks into the trap:

'Tis Caesar that you mean; is it not, Cassius? (l. 79)

Now that the desired answer is evoked, Cassius affects supreme indifference:

Let it be who it is. . . . (l. 80)

This really confirms Casca in his suspicion and Caesar continues to run in his head. To enliven this process of incubation Cassius throws in a few platitudes and ends up with a martyr's attitude: "Cassius from bondage will deliver Cassius" rather than die a slave. Anxious to get credit with him for being clever and energetic, Casca immediately professes an entire agreement with him. Death before dishonour is his ideal too. If so, Cassius presses the point home, if we can defy death, why should we fear Caesar? Is it not Caesar is a wolf because he sees the Romans are but sheep? A lion because they are hinds? Why should we serve for the base matter to illuminate so vile a thing as Caesar? This open abuse climaxes the slowly ascending tension. And at this point, with all the genius of a born actor, Cassius suddenly checks himself, dissembles having overreached himself and committed the highest indiscretion. It is grief and not jealousy, we may be sure, that has led him to this:

But, O grief!  
Where hast thou led me? I, perhaps, speak this  
Before a willing bondman. (II. 111-13)

And so there is another expectant pause which Casca should fill in. These continual spells of hide-and-seek, of self-withdrawal and re-emergence, completely upset Casca. The pretence of self-distrust cheats him into a stronger persuasion of Cassius's rectitude and precipitates him into an unconditional pledge of support:

You speak to Casca, and to such a man  
That is no fleering tell-tale. Hold, my hand. (II. 116-17)

And he suits action to the word and the bargain is made.

A similar cunning in the management of lesser men is displayed by Claudius as he works up Laertes against Hamlet (IV. vii). This angry young man who comes back a rebel to avenge his father's death plays himself into the hands of the seasoned Claudius in an even shorter time. The tempter takes the expected long route to the goal. First there is fulsome flattery of Laertes—it goes without saying that he is an infinitely better fencer than Hamlet; not Danes alone, even a French horseman acknowledges his superiority. After much long-winded talk about horsemanship and fencing, concluded with a reference to Hamlet's jealousy of his skill (which is a suggestion in disguise and gives a definite turn to Laertes's passion), the king pauses to see if Laertes's vanity has been sufficiently worked up:

*King:* Now, out of this,—  
*Laer:* What out of this, my lord?  
*King:* Laertes, was your father dear to you?  
Or are you like the painting of a sorrow,  
A face without a heart? (II. 106-9)

Note how circumspectly he breaks his plan. The appeal is now to the stronger motive of revenge:

Hamlet comes back; what would you undertake  
To show yourself your father's son in deed  
More than in words? (II. 124-6)

This powerful appeal coupled with a few roundabout sentences on the evils of inconstancy and irresolution suitably directs the inflamed Laertes and evokes from him the blunt remark that he would undertake

To cut his throat i'the Church. (I. 126)

"Deed" rather than "words" indeed! Jubilant at this, the smiling villain nevertheless stifles his chuckle and proceeds to consolidate his gains. He amplifies Laertes's answer which is, after all, a laconic one and works out details—Laertes is to choose a sharp-pointed sword and so on. Once stirred up, Laertes is driven forward by his own momentum. Ideas pour out in profusion: of course, the sword should be poisoned; the poison must be the deadly one he once bought in France, and so on. Claudius, the master-poisoner, is impressed by the aptitude displayed by this promising apprentice; and he casts about in his mind if he cannot still improve on the latter's suggestion.

There are two notable attempts at guilt-seeding in the last plays; first, Iachimo working on Imogen and Posthumus and second, Antonio on Sebastian. Iachimo is an inferior Iago, having little of the latter's malignity or self-conscious and self-congratulating devilry, but appearing nevertheless as a powerful disintegrating force. He is playing an equally deadly game, if only for its own pleasure, and exploiting the innocence and trust of his victims. Shakespeare cannot, owing to the exigencies of the plot, allow him a spacious playing-ground. There is but a scene or two in which to display his skill. Having lured Posthumus into a preposterous wager he sets about seducing Imogen to carry on his plot. He feels at the first sight of Imogen that she will be no easy quarry, but invoking "audacity" to his aid he makes a desperate bid for success. He begins well, feigning a fit of abstraction and successfully riddling her mind with doubts and anxieties. "Continues well my lord his health, beseech you?" she anxiously asks (*Cymbeline*, I. vi. 56). Iachimo mutters out three mysterious syllables: "Well, madam". Intrigued, she asks again: "Is he dispos'd to mirth? I hope he is." Here Iachimo sees his opportunity. With constant suspensions and checks of interest in its narration, he spins his false tale of her husband's infidelity and counsels her: "Be revenged". So far all goes well for him. But the audacious villain goes one step too far. He enters into disgusting details as to the way her husband spends the money drawn from her own coffers. Instead of rousing her resentment, this shocks her into sense. Iachimo fails to notice this change of mood coming over her and overreaches himself with,

I dedicate myself to your sweet pleasure. . . .

Let me my service tender on your lips. (II. 136, 40)

To the newly awakened Imogen he thus makes a lascivious fool of himself. Her faith in her husband comes back redoubled and the villain quails before her flaming wrath. He is overcome by a power which he had never reckoned with. Yet though frustrated and morally defeated, he has still cunning enough to drag himself out of the tight corner: cannot Imogen

guess why he has been slandering her husband? To test her constancy of course, and how happy he is now to be able to carry this report of her virtue back to Posthumus!

With Posthumus, however, Iachimo has better luck (II. iv). The masterly way in which he gradually entangles Posthumus in his snare repays close analysis. His first move is to produce Imogen's letters which attest his visit to the court of Britain and to add his testimony to her good looks:

Your lady  
Is one of the fairest that I have look'd upon. (II. 31-32)

To Posthumus, long away from his wife, this compliment may not be very pleasing. She is fair; isn't she faithful too? But determined to preserve an unflurried front, he bandies words with his opponent and the dialogue flows on smoothly. Iachimo, however, allows him little respite. He prickles him:

I now  
Profess myself the winner of her honour,  
Together with your ring. (II. 52-54)

This stirs his imagination into a turmoil and provokes the demand for proof:

If you can make't apparent  
That you have tasted her in bed, my hand  
And ring is yours; if not... (II. 56-58)

That Iachimo has already been able to "bribe" his imagination is quite clear. The mere thought of Iachimo winning her honour works like madness in his brain. And Iachimo is content to leave him at that. To prolong the period of suffering while suspicion hardens into conviction, he starts an elaborate account of his "circumstances". The seductive powers of eloquence have hardly been better displayed. The description of the bedchamber is an artist's work from the beginning to the end: all the significant details are emphasized and the speaker's intimacy with them is skilfully conveyed to the famished Posthumus, exiled from the pleasures that are his. But there is hope yet for him; Iachimo may only be describing what he has learnt from hearsay, and Posthumus tells him so. Obviously he must "see" before he doubts. Iachimo subtly following the mood of his victim now plays his trump card. He gives him a tantalizing glimpse of the bracelet, the same that Posthumus gave her, the symbol of their mutual trust and happiness. Things seen are mightier than things heard and Iachimo makes him see "her pretty action" of

stripping it from her arm and giving it to him. Insult is thus added to injury. Posthumus winces; he is on the verge of collapse:

May be she pluck'd it off,  
To send it me. (II. 104-5)

—the last straw at which the drowning man catches. Iachimo here makes his shrewdest thrust:

She writes so to you, doth she? (I. 105)

A maddening touch! Yet, for one last possibility: the bracelet might have been stolen! But Iachimo can swear, and by Jupiter too, that he had it from her arm. This is enough: the collapse is complete. The bankrupt mind of Posthumus readily disbelieves every one else only to believe the devil at his elbow! As for Iachimo, the pleasure of inflicting pain so intoxicates him that to crown his tale of proofs, he refers to the mole under her breast and even threatens further disclosure. But no more is needed; Posthumus is already set on the rack.

While Posthumus is overmastered by guile, Sebastian in *The Tempest* (II. i) almost collaborates in his debasement. It is he who gives the cue to Antonio. With Alonso, Gonzalo and the rest all fallen asleep, he says:

What a strange drowsiness possesses them! (I. 207)

For Antonio it is very strange indeed. Does Sebastian know that it is a providential event? "They fell together all, as by consent", which is uncanny enough; "they dropp'd as by a thunder-stroke", which is even more ill-looking. "Fell," "dropp'd", "thunder-stroke"—suggestive words to choose: whatever the logical link between them, they all harp on the theme of fall, of sudden collapse. Notice how cautiously and with what curious indirectness Antonio feels his way. There is further mystification before Sebastian has time to gather his wits well about him:

What might,  
Worthy Sebastian? O! what might?—No more:—  
(II. 212-13)

The vision is so overpowering that the voice is choked; and yet it is so compelling that it must out:

And yet methinks I see it in thy face,  
What thou shouldst be. The occasion speaks thee; and  
My strong imagination sees a crown  
Dropping upon thy head. (II. 214-17)



The feint at wonderment, however, does not work; nor does the flattery, nor the strong imagination. Sebastian is moving in a different world:

What! art thou waking?  
 .....

What is it thou didst say?  
 This is a strange repose, to be asleep  
 With eyes wide open; standing, speaking, moving,  
 And yet so fast asleep. (ll. 217, 220-3)

Out of his very words Antonio fashions the tools to entice him with:

Noble Sebastian,  
 Thou let'st thy fortune sleep—die rather; wink'st  
 Whiles thou art waking. (ll. 223-5)

The sleeping partner is pricked, but retains his good humour:

Thou dost snore distinctly:  
 There's meaning in thy snores. (ll. 225-6)

More out of amused curiosity than out of anything else, Sebastian agrees to give his friend a patient hearing. And he phrases himself well: "Well, I am standing water". Antonio holds to his raillery: "I'll teach you how to flow". And he keeps his words. He throws the first stone into the standing water by dogmatically asserting that Ferdinand, the King's son, is drowned. "I have no hope that he's undrown'd", Sebastian briefly responds and waits for further disclosure. His friend has begun a very interesting speech with a highly palatable exposure of Gonzalo, their common butt, and the suspense is great. As before, Antonio seizes on his words and betters them. Out of his "no hope" he makes the following speech:

O! out of that 'no hope'  
 What great hope have you! no hope that way is  
 Another way so high a hope that even  
 Ambition cannot pierce a wink beyond,  
 But doubts discovery there. (ll. 247-51)

Though at his most explicit so far, Antonio veils the murderous suggestion in clouds of metaphor and circumlocution. The tortured language and strained rhetoric are characteristic: the villain is trying to exalt actions ignoble in themselves by a forced greatness of manner. He is also, of course, trying to make Sebastian see eye to eye with him on the question of succession inevitably cropping up in the case of Ferdinand's death. He touches on this last point a second time, hoping that Sebastian will

realize its implications:

Will you grant with me  
That Ferdinand is drown'd? (ll. 251-2)

The sluggish Sebastian vaguely assents: "He's gone". If not by reason of his goodness or integrity, by his strange impenetrability at any rate Sebastian reveals that he is no good game for a seducer. Antonio realizes it and becomes plain-spoken:

Then tell me,  
Who's the next heir of Naples? (ll. 252-3)

Sebastian knows the answer and does not delay with it: "Claribel" of course. But Antonio shakes him most where he is most confident. He feigns unbounded surprise at what seems to him a fantastic and a most ludicrous answer to give. Good heavens, did you say Claribel?

She that is Queen of Tunis; she that dwells  
Ten leagues beyond man's life; she that from Naples  
Can have no note, unless the sun were post—  
The man i' the moon's too slow—till new-born chins  
Be rough and razorable..... (ll. 254-8)

The exaggerated language betrays the weakness of the plea. And to Sebastian much of it is incomprehensible:

What stuff is this!—How say you?  
'Tis true my brother's daughter's Queen of Tunis;  
So is she heir of Naples; 'twixt which regions  
There is some space. (ll. 262-5)

It is interesting to follow the method Antonio employs here onwards. He tries to belittle an enterprise great in its atrocity by a contrived littleness of manner. As usual, he picks up the thread of narration from Sebastian:

A space whose every cubit  
Seems to cry out, 'How shall that Claribel  
Measure us back to Naples?—Keep in Tunis,  
And let Sebastian wake!'—Say, this were death  
That now hath seiz'd them; why, they were no worse  
Than now they are. There be that can rule Naples  
As well as he that sleeps; lords that can prate  
As amply and unnecessarily  
As this Gonzalo; I myself could make  
A chough of as deep chat.

.....  
.....

Here lies your brother,  
 No better than the earth he lies upon,  
 If he were that which now he's like, that's dead;  
 Whom I, with this obedient steel,—three inches of it,—  
 Can lay to bed for ever. (ll. 265-74, 88-92)

Antonio is obviously trying to render any opposition ridiculous. He wants to convince his man that there is little difference between the sleeping and the dead, and that the transition from the one stage to the other is easily and most naturally effected. One should note too how the vivid, concrete touch—three inches of steel—lends a peculiar purposiveness to the periphrastic speech, a perspicuity to the real motive. With his increasing consciousness of Antonio's intentions, his growing powers over him, and his own proneness to temptation, Sebastian yet offers two brief oppositions: first, a contemptuous fling at his seducer who having once tried successfully his hand at usurpation for himself now does it a second time for another; second, a struggling defence of conscience which should never be outraged. To both of these the facile Antonio has ready answers. Is he, for instance, any the worse for usurping the dukedom? Does he not command men who were formerly his fellows? And as for conscience, he hardly feels this deity in his bosom. Indeed conscience pains him no more than a chilblain and he can ease the pain of an uneasy conscience with as little trouble as he can relieve that of a chilblain by simply putting on a pair of slippers. A cynical contempt for all human feeling peers out from behind this most unedifying analogy. The speech is instantly effective. His soul freed from the trammels of pity and remorse, the drifting Sebastian is now swept completely away. The spontaneous delight with which in the end he accepts his "dear friend" as his mentor is a measure of Antonio's success.

The most penetrating comment on this scene of temptation comes from Coleridge who admires the "profound management in the manner of familiarizing a mind, not immediately recipient, to the suggestion of guilt, by associating the proposed crime with something ludicrous or out of place,—something not habitually matter of reverence. By this kind of sophistry the imagination and fancy are first bribed to contemplate the suggested act, and at length to become acquainted with it."<sup>1</sup> The remarks, it will be observed, are of far wider application than the intended one. As a summary of the precise nature and process of demoralization that sets in during temptation, they are invaluable. The process, as we have seen, is displayed with varying degrees of subtlety in the different plays. It only remains, in conclusion, to remark with what skill and economy Shakespeare, in the two hours' traffic of the stage, manages to get over the critical moments of temptation without outraging the audience's

credulity. The problem facing Shakespeare is a practical one. Consistency of character is a thing audiences would not ordinarily make concessions on. Great men must by definition be relatively immune to seduction. When Macbeth persuades the murderers to kill Banquo, he has only to appeal to their mean minds, their miserable sense of grudge against Banquo. But with a nobler victim the seducer must first not commit himself at once, lest he should shock the victim and himself appear guilty of treachery.<sup>2</sup> The victim also, for the sake of realism, must be given a chance by the author to stake his claims to nobility before—as the plot demands—falling into guilt. In other words, the transition, or contemplation, while the proposed event is still entirely speculative, is something the audience must witness to bolster its acceptance of a dramatic character development by which a hitherto good or neutral man becomes an accomplice to evil. Shakespeare fully realizes this demand of the stage and the audience; he meets the twofold demand on his powers and blends in his treatment psychological profundity with consummate craftsmanship.<sup>3</sup>

ASOKE KUMAR MUKHERJI

#### NOTES & REFERENCES

1. Coleridge, *Shakespearean Criticism*, Vol. I (Everyman's Library, 1960, pp. 121-2).
2. Cp. King John's conduct; also Lady Macbeth's and Iachimo's; cp. also, for instances of extreme subtlety, Iago pretending reluctance to speak and Edmund to show his father the forged letter.
3. All quotations from and references to the plays of Shakespeare are from and to the Oxford edition by W. J. Craig (O.U.P., 1947).

## *Tolstoy and Shakespeare*

THE COMPLETE DETHRONEMENT of Shakespeare at the hands of Tolstoy is one of the most astounding phenomena in the history of literary criticism. In a sense, it is even more astonishing than the banishment of poets from Plato's *Republic*. For, Plato is not opposed to this or that particular poet; he is basically opposed to poetry as such and this opposition is based upon his general metaphysical position. But that is not the case with Tolstoy. He was a supreme literary artist himself and his mind was, like that of Plato, keenly sensitive to the beauties of poetry. And, unlike Plato, he never denounced poetry as such, although in the latter part of his life he developed a sort of monomania owing to his exclusive preoccupation with religious and moral questions and that robbed him of catholicity in literary appreciation and enjoyment. But we cannot explain his denunciation of Shakespeare in terms of his moral obsession, because he tells us himself that he started reading the works of Shakespeare long before his moral conversion and kept reading them repeatedly for 50 years, always with the same invariable feeling of tedium and repulsion. This sounds so fantastic and incredible, coming as it does from the pen of a man like Tolstoy, that it is advisable to give his testimony in his own words. The following excerpt is taken from Tolstoy's famous essay, *Shakespeare and the Drama*, published in 1906.<sup>1</sup>

I remember the astonishment I felt when I first read Shakespeare. I had expected to receive a great aesthetic pleasure, but on reading one after another the works regarded as his best, *King Lear*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*, not only did I not experience pleasure but I felt an insuperable repulsion and tedium, and a doubt as to whether I lacked sense<sup>2</sup>—since I considered as insignificant or even simply bad, works which are regarded as the summit of perfection by the whole educated world—or whether the importance attributed to Shakespeare's works by that educated world lacks sense. My perplexity was increased by the fact that I have always keenly felt the beauties of poetry in all its forms: why then did Shakespeare's works, recognized by the whole world as works of artistic genius, not only fail to please me but even seem detestable? For a long time I distrusted my judgement, and to check my conclusions I have repeatedly, during the past fifty years, set to work to read Shakespeare in all possible forms—in Russian, in English, and in German in Schlegel's translation, as I was advised to.<sup>3</sup> I read the tragedies, comedies, and historical plays several times over, and I invariably experienced the same feelings—repulsion, weariness, and bewilderment. Now, before writing this article, as

an old man of seventy-five, wishing once more to check my conclusions, I have again read the whole of Shakespeare, including the historical plays, the *Henrys*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *The Tempest*, and *Cymbeline*, etc., and have experienced the same feeling still more strongly, no longer with perplexity but with a firm and unshakable conviction that the undisputed fame Shakespeare enjoys as a great genius—which makes writers of our time imitate him, and readers and spectators, distorting their aesthetic and ethical sense, seek non-existent qualities in him—is a great evil, as every falsehood is.

It is perfectly clear from this quotation that Tolstoy's staggering denunciation of Shakespeare was not the result of his moral conversion, though it may have been strengthened thereby. Nor was it the case that he came to miss the beauties of Shakespeare in translation. The denunciation was based upon his attentive study of Shakespeare, in the original as well as in translation, extending over fifty years, and during these fifty years he tried very honestly—even desperately, one might say—to discover the beauties of Shakespeare, but he failed and, finally, decided to declare his aggressively firm conviction that "Shakespeare may be anything you like—only not an artist."

This verdict seems perverse and it has led most people to dismiss this remarkable essay of Tolstoy as totally absurd and extravagant. And yet it is definitely improper to dismiss it in a cavalier fashion. Anybody who cares to take the trouble of reading this essay from one end to the other cannot help realizing that it is a formidable attack backed up by arguments most of which are very sound and sensible and cannot be lightly brushed aside. It was not an act of smart and deliberately irreverent debunking on the part of Tolstoy. The man was too great for that sort of thing and we have to remember that he published it only four years before his death. Every statement made by him concerning his feelings about the writings of Shakespeare should, therefore, be accepted as absolutely truthful and honest, though at the same time we should carefully remember that truthfulness does not necessarily lead to the discovery of truth.

That this essay of Tolstoy has not been very seriously dealt with by the admirers of Shakespeare will be fairly clear from the following quotations. Sir Sidney Lee makes these comments on it—

A somewhat perverse protest against the Russian idolisation of Shakespeare was launched by Count Leo Tolstoy in his declining days. In 1906 Tolstoy published an elaborate monograph on Shakespeare in which he angrily denounced the English dramatist as an eulogist of wealth and rank and a contemner of poverty and humble station. Nor would Tolstoy allow the English dramatist genuine poetic thought

or power of characterisation. But throughout his philippic Tolstoy shows radical defects of judgment.<sup>4</sup>

This is not fair to Tolstoy, to say the least. Tolstoy wrote the essay, says Sir Sidney, "in his declining days"! There seems to be a sly hint in that phrase. But anybody who cares to read the essay cannot fail to be impressed by the characteristic power of Tolstoy's genius that marks all his writings. There is no sign of any mental or intellectual decline in it. It is not enough to call it "perverse" and pass on. If, according to Sir Sidney, Tolstoy shows "radical defects of judgment", he should face the obligation to point out what exactly these defects are. Then, again, Tolstoy is not opposed to Shakespeare primarily because the latter is "an eulogist of wealth and rank and a contemner of poverty and humble station." His opposition to Shakespeare is based primarily on literary, and secondarily on moral or social, grounds.

Here is another opinion, more recent—"Tolstoy's remarkable outburst in the same year (i.e., 1906) was equally unhelpful. This, however, was ethical rather than literary criticism. Shakespeare's art is bad because it is disruptive and fails to transmit the highest religious feeling."<sup>5</sup> This amounts to distortion. Tolstoy's criticism is not chiefly ethical but literary in character. His ethical obsession would not have prevented him from admiring the beauties of Shakespeare, had he been able to discover them in his works. For one thing, he began to read the works of Shakespeare long before his moral conversion, when he might have enjoyed and appreciated them, but, he says, he was always repelled by them. For another, his preoccupation with ethical questions did not completely blind him to the beauties of works of art even when he was opposed to them on moral grounds. Let anybody read his beautiful essay on Maupassant published in 1894<sup>6</sup> and he will at once realize the truth of this statement. How, then, are we to account for the withering attack on Shakespeare? It is a puzzling question. Most probably it was the cumulative effect of several factors. First and foremost, there was perhaps a sort of blind spot in Tolstoy which was responsible for his failure to discover any beauty in Shakespeare at any time during his long life. Then, there was his ardent moral passion (which, it must be remembered, was not there in him at first but developed gradually towards the end of his career) which found no satisfaction in Shakespeare's "Negative Capability" or moral neutrality. And, finally, there was his annoyed impatience with the blind worshippers of Shakespeare who shut their eyes to all his defects and tended to confuse him with the Creator of the universe. All these factors combined to fill him with a powerful passion for demolishing this idol which was, so he thought, falsely worshipped all over the world.

## II

Let us now have a look at the charges levelled against Shakespeare by Tolstoy. They may be brought under the following heads: (1) the characters created by Shakespeare lack consistency and individuality; (2) the situations are often unnatural and improbable; (3) the language is affected and inflated; (4) finally, his philosophy of life is morally reprehensible. Tolstoy does not bring these charges against Shakespeare in a flippant and irresponsible manner. He substantiates them with concrete illustrations taken from the plays of Shakespeare, especially from *King Lear* of which he gives an elaborate analytical summary. At the end of this impressive summary, Tolstoy makes the following observations which, he claims, apply to all Shakespeare's tragedies and comedies:

According to the laws laid down by those very critics who extol Shakespeare, the conditions of every tragedy are that the persons who appear should, as a result of their own characters, actions, and the natural movement of events, be brought into conditions in which, finding themselves in opposition to the world around them, they should struggle with it and in that struggle display their inherent qualities.

In the tragedy of *King Lear* the persons represented are indeed externally placed in opposition to the surrounding world and struggle against it. But the struggle does not result from a natural course of events and from their own characters, but is quite arbitrarily arranged by the author and therefore cannot produce on the reader that illusion which constitutes the chief condition of art. Lear is under no necessity to resign his power, and has no reason to do so. And having lived with his daughters all their lives he also has no reason to believe the words of the two elder, and not the truthful statement of the youngest; yet on this the whole tragedy of his position is built.

Equally unnatural is the secondary and very similar plot: the relation of Gloucester to his sons. The position of Gloucester and Edgar arises from the fact that Gloucester, like Lear, immediately believes the very grossest deception, and does not even try to ask the son who had been deceived, whether the accusation against him is true, but curses him and drives him away.

The fact that the relation of Lear to his daughters is just the same as that of Gloucester to his sons, makes one feel even more strongly that they are both arbitrarily invented and do not flow from the characters or the natural course of events. Equally unnatural and obviously invented is the fact that all through the play Lear fails to recognize his old courtier, Kent; and so the relations of Lear and Kent fail to evoke the sympathy of reader or hearer. This applies in an even greater degree to the position of Edgar, whom nobody recognizes, who acts as guide to his blind father and persuades him that he has leapt from a cliff when he has really jumped on level ground.



These positions in which the characters are quite arbitrarily placed are so unnatural that the reader or spectator is unable either to sympathize with their sufferings or even to be interested in what he reads or hears.

This is, to my mind, acute and sensible criticism which, it should be noted, has nothing ethical about it. It is absolutely sane and sound so far as it goes. The only objection that one can raise against it is that it does not go far enough for the proper assessment of the kind of drama that Shakespeare wrote. But we shall discuss this question later on.

Tolstoy brings an impressive mass of evidence in support of his contention that Shakespeare's characterization and plot-construction are faulty. It is not possible to quote all the instances cited by him. But I cannot resist the temptation of quoting the following passage on the character of Othello which, on the whole, seems to Tolstoy a genuine character:

In the romance Cassio, knowing whose the handkerchief is, goes to Desdemona to return it, but when approaching the back door of Desdemona's house he sees Othello coming and runs away from him. Othello perceives Cassio running away, and this it is that chiefly confirms his suspicion. This is omitted in Shakespeare, and yet this casual incident explains Othello's jealousy more than anything else. In Shakespeare this jealousy is based entirely on Iago's machinations, which are always successful, and on his crafty speeches, which Othello blindly believes. Othello's monologue over the sleeping Desdemona, to the effect that he wishes that she when killed should look as she is when alive, and that he will love her when she is dead and now wishes to inhale her 'balmy breath' and so forth, is quite impossible. A man who is preparing to murder someone he loves cannot utter such phrases, and still less after the murder can he say that the sun and the moon ought now to be eclipsed and the globe to yawn, nor can he, whatever kind of a nigger he may be, address devils, inviting them to roast him in sulphur, and so forth.... If he really suffers from grief and remorse then, when intending to kill himself, he would not utter phrases about his own services, about a pearl, about his eyes dropping tears '*as fast as the Arabian trees their medicinable gum*', and still less could he talk about the way a Turk scolded a Venetian, and how '*thus*' he punished him for it! So that despite the powerful movement of feeling in Othello, when under the influence of Iago's hints jealousy rises in him, and afterwards in his scene with Desdemona, our conception of his character is constantly infringed by false pathos and by the unnatural speeches he utters.

Here Tolstoy seems to show deeper insight than Shakespeare into the perennial, fundamental laws of human nature. It is really shocking (I mean aesthetically shocking) to see a man who is supposed to be genuinely stricken with grief and remorse talking about his own services and des-

cribing his own tears with the help of a striking simile. Taken separately, the simile is strikingly beautiful and unforgettable but, put into the mouth of Othello himself in that unbearably tragic situation, it really rings false, however ingeniously one may seek to defend it.

That there are inconsistencies in Shakespeare's characterization and improbabilities in his plots is now generally admitted by all sensible and thoughtful critics. But some of the moderns like J. I. M. Stewart<sup>7</sup> and L. C. Knights<sup>8</sup> have sought to maintain that these should not be regarded as serious flaws in the plays of Shakespeare. Shakespeare, they argue, wrote poetic dramas which are radically different in character from naturalistic or realistic dramas and the total poetic vision is the most important and fundamental thing in them. If a reader or spectator succeeds in apprehending this total vision of the poet, then, they suggest, he will perceive the deeper underlying significance of apparent inconsistencies and improbabilities. It is only when somebody fails to grasp the total meaning of the poet that he perceives "distortion and improbability".<sup>9</sup> This talk about the total vision sounds a little esoteric and seems to beg the question. It seems to involve the assumption (which may or may not be true) that every Shakespearean play is a successful artistic creation and contains a credible poetic vision which resolves all inconsistencies and contradictions. But, suppose, a man of the stature of Tolstoy rejects this assumption altogether. It is not enough to assert it. One must prove the assertion, though the proof may not be of the "Q.E.D." type. When Tolstoy refers to inconsistencies and improbabilities in Shakespeare's dramas, he means generally artistic inconsistencies and improbabilities, though now and then he seems to use these words in an empirical sense. Now, "every school-boy" knows that artistic probability is not identical with empirical probability. But what, precisely, is the relation between them? Are they mutually exclusive or inversely proportional to each other, so that the more glaringly an artist flies in the face of empirical reality, the more convincing or credible the work of art becomes? Obviously, that is not so. Or else, why should Coleridge admire Shakespeare, as he does in the following lines, for his minute knowledge of human nature? Commenting on the conversation between Hamlet and Horatio at the beginning of Act I. Sc. iv, Coleridge says: "The unimportant conversation with which this scene opens is a proof of Shakespeare's minute knowledge of human nature. It is a well-established fact, that, on the brink of any serious enterprise, or event of moment, men almost invariably endeavour to elude the pressure of their own thoughts by turning aside to trivial objects and familiar circumstances."<sup>10</sup> Now, this praise would be pointless altogether if empirical probability had no importance at all. That does not mean, of course, that an artist must always be faithful to

empirical reality. He has the freedom to sacrifice it if that is demanded by aesthetic considerations. As Aristotle has it, a poet should "prefer probable impossibilities to improbable possibilities."<sup>11</sup> If an empirical impossibility is felt as aesthetically probable, it will give us aesthetic satisfaction and, hence, it will be accepted without the slightest hesitation. But some of the improbabilities in Shakespeare pointed out by Tolstoy seem to be artistically objectionable and unsatisfactory. That is the impression we receive from his comments on the character of Othello which have already been quoted. And here it is not much use talking about the total poetic vision, because the total vision is bound to be affected by artistic flaws in the component parts. What is, after all, the total vision? It is not certainly something completely divorced from, or independent of, the component parts. No doubt the whole transcends the parts, but at the same time it has to be remembered that it is embedded in them. And the different parts of a work of art are organically bound up with one another and contribute to the total vision, so that, if there are flaws in the parts, they are bound to impair the total impression. It is, therefore, difficult to see how the total vision can be completely satisfactory and convincing if there are real defects in the parts.<sup>12</sup> These difficulties are forced on our attention by Tolstoy's vigorous attack on Shakespeare. We have to face them and answer them satisfactorily and in trying to do so we shall realize the difficulty of the task and be compelled to admit that we cannot dismiss Tolstoy very easily or lightly as some people have tried to do. In this connexion the following passage on artistic or dramatic illusion from Tolstoy's essay on Shakespeare should be carefully studied and borne in mind by anybody who wants to contradict Tolstoy:

An artistic poetic work, especially a drama, should first of all evoke in reader or spectator the illusion that what the persons represented are living through and experiencing is being lived through and experienced by himself. And for this purpose it is not more important for the dramatist to know precisely what he should make his acting characters do and say, than it is to know what he should not make them do and say, so as not to infringe the reader's or spectator's illusion. However eloquent and profound they may be, speeches put into the mouths of acting characters, if they are superfluous and do not accord with the situation and the characters, infringe the main condition of dramatic work—the illusion causing the reader or spectator to experience the feelings of the persons represented. One may without infringing the illusion leave much unsaid: the reader or spectator will himself supply what is needed, and sometimes as a result of this his illusion is even increased; but to say what is superfluous is like jerking and scattering a statue made up of small pieces, or taking the lamp out of a magic lantern. The reader's or spectator's attention is distracted, the reader sees the author, the spectator sees the

actor, the illusion is lost, and to recreate it is sometimes impossible. And therefore without a sense of proportion there cannot be an artist, especially a dramatist. And Shakespeare is entirely devoid of this feeling.

Shakespeare's characters continually do and say what is not merely unnatural to them but quite unnecessary. I will not cite examples of this, for I think that a man who does not himself perceive this striking defect in all Shakespeare's dramas will not be convinced by any possible examples or proofs. It is sufficient to read *King Lear* alone, with the madness, the murders, the plucking out of eyes, Gloucester's jump, the poisonings, and the torrents of abuse—not to mention *Pericles*, *A Winter's Tale*, or *The Tempest*—to convince oneself of this.

There is acute and penetrating criticism in this passage and, echoing Bernard Shaw, one might say, "whoever is really conversant with art recognizes in it the voice of the master," even though one might maintain that it did not apply wholly to Shakespeare. In spite of the fact that Tolstoy's final verdict on Shakespeare's poetic genius is unacceptable, it cannot be said that the reason is that Tolstoy takes a shallow, realistic view of art. There is a remarkable comparison between Homer and Shakespeare in Tolstoy's essay where we find him asserting that "not to speak of the wonderfully distinct, life-like, and excellent characters of Achilles, Hector, Priam, Odysseus, and the eternally touching scenes of Hector's farewell, of Priam's embassy, of the return of Odysseus, and so forth, the whole of the *Iliad* and still more the *Odyssey*, is as naturally close to us all as if we had lived and were now living among the gods and heroes." So, even gods and legendary heroes can, according to Tolstoy, have a reality of their own in the world of art. It is quite obvious that Tolstoy does not speak here of empirical reality.

The weakest point in Tolstoy's attack on Shakespeare is, to my mind, his staggering judgement that there is no genuine poetry anywhere in Shakespeare. This is frankly unacceptable and seems to indicate a blind spot in Tolstoy's aesthetic sensibility, for he had read Shakespeare in the original. If somebody fails to discover any poetry in, say, the soliloquies of Macbeth which, as Hazlitt put it memorably, are like "dark riddles on human life" or in the meditative, melancholy soliloquies of Hamlet, to mention only a few examples out of a thousand and one, one can only lay the blame at the door of the reader, whoever he may be. But Tolstoy's judgement on the language of Shakespeare that it is affected and inflated is not without foundation. It reminds one of Dr. Johnson's comment: "Not that always where the language is intricate, the thought is subtle, or the image always great where the line is bulky; the equality of words to things is very often neglected, and trivial sentiments and vulgar ideas

disappoint the attention, to which they are recommended by sonorous epithets and swelling figures."<sup>13</sup>

Some of the judgements of Tolstoy on Shakespeare are undoubtedly unsound and unacceptable. But, nonetheless, his essay is something of a classic that forces every honest and devoted student of Shakespeare to do his own thinking without taking anything on trust from any authority. Shakespearean criticism since the Romantic Age has very often tended to be "sentimental and exclamatory." As Sir Walter Raleigh puts it, "Since the rise of Romantic criticism, the appreciation of Shakespeare has become a kind of auction, where the highest bidder, however extravagant, carries off the prize."<sup>14</sup> This is finely said and with perfect justice. Tolstoy considered it an evil. He saw that people no longer thought independently about Shakespeare. They were under the influence of a hypnotic suggestion, so to speak, passed on from generation to generation that Shakespeare was the greatest dramatist of the world. This is what Dr. Johnson called "prescriptive veneration". And Tolstoy wanted to demolish it. Tracing the history of Shakespeare's universal fame, Tolstoy says:

A series of accidents brought it about that Goethe at the beginning of the last century, being the dictator of philosophic thought and aesthetic laws, praised Shakespeare; the aesthetic critics caught up that praise and began to write their long foggy erudite articles, and the great European public began to be enchanted by Shakespeare. The critics, responding to this public interest, laboriously vied with one another in writing more and more articles about Shakespeare, and readers and spectators were still further confirmed in their enthusiasm, and Shakespeare's fame kept growing and growing like a snowball, until in our time it has attained a degree of insane laudation that obviously rests on no other basis than suggestion....

On reading or hearing Shakespeare the question for a young man is no longer whether Shakespeare is good or bad, but only to discover wherein lies that extraordinary aesthetic and ethical beauty of which he has received the suggestion from learned men whom he respects, but which he neither sees nor feels. And perverting his aesthetic and ethical feeling, he tries to force himself to agree with the prevailing opinion. He no longer trusts himself, but trusts to what learned people whom he respects have said (I myself have experienced all this). Reading the critical analyses of the plays and the extracts from books with explanatory commentaries, it begins to seem to him that he feels something like an artistic impression, and the longer this continues the more is his aesthetic and ethical feeling perverted.

It seems reasonable to believe that what Tolstoy says here holds good of the majority of Shakespeare's critics and admirers. "Thousands and thousands of books have been written about Shakespeare," said Logan

Pearsall Smith, "and most of them are mad." That is not to say, of course, that every admirer of Shakespeare is mad or that he enjoys non-existent beauties in his works. When all is said and done, we have got to admit, even without accepting Tolstoy's astonishing verdict on Shakespeare, that his essay serves the purpose of a wholesome corrective to blind and unthinking Shakespeareolatry. I should like to apply to it the words of Adam Smith that he used in praise of Dr. Johnson's *Preface*—"the most manly piece of criticism that was ever published in any country."

NARAYAN CHANDRA SAHA

#### NOTES & REFERENCES

1. *Shakespeare and the Drama*, included in Tolstoy's *Recollections and Essays* (The World's Classics), tr. Aylmer Maude.
2. Italics mine.
3. Italics mine.
4. *A Life of William Shakespeare*, London, 1916, p. 631.
5. F. E. Halliday, *Shakespeare and his Critics*, London, 1958, p. 33.
6. *What is Art?* tr. A. Maude (The World's Classics, 1930), pp. 20-45.
7. *Character and Motive in Shakespeare*, London, 1949.
8. 'King Lear and the Great Tragedies' in *The Age of Shakespeare*, ed. Boris Ford, London, 1955.
9. Cf. Stewart: "Keats and Mr. Eliot clearly regard the poetry and the drama as inseparable: and their report is positive. We must conclude that the poetry, if operative, enters into and transforms the fable; or rather, and more strictly, that it acts directly and continuously upon the spectator or reader in some way which conditions the whole experience. Tolstoy in a sense was right. The poetry is mildly hypnogenic. We are put into a state which would be inappropriate for the reception of realistic prose drama, but in which such a drama as Shakespeare's can best operate according to its own proper laws..."

The poetic dramatist is thus constructing as for contemplation through some optical instrument which may reveal to a vision failing to adjust itself only distortion and improbability. It is in this way that I would account for the hit-or-miss quality of Shakespeare's art as instanced in the opinions of Keats and Tolstoy on *King Lear*....

The characters, then (but I mean chiefly those major characters with whom the imagination of the dramatist is deeply engaged), have often the superior reality of individuals exposing the deepest springs of their action. But the superior reality is manifested through the medium of situations which are sometimes essentially symbolical; and these may be extravagant or merely fantastic when not interpreted by the quickened imagination, for it is only during the prevalence of a special mode of consciousness, the poetic, that the underlying significance of these situations is perceived." (*Op. cit.*, pp. 8-10).

10. *Essays & Lectures on Shakespeare* (Everyman's Library, 1926, p. 145).

11. *Poetics*, XXIV, 19.
12. Cf. Charlton: "...he (Bradley) is assailed because he takes Shakespeare's dramas as plays and not as poems; he accepts the persons of them at their face value as semblable men and women, and not as plastic symbols, in an arabesque of esoteric imagery, nor as rhythmic ripples intoned in a chromatic ritual. The position of these neo-Shakespearians perturbs me because I cannot understand it... When I am told that to attain the 'soul-experience' of a Shakespeare play is 'a process which forces us to cut below the crust of plot and character, and to expose those riches of poetic imagination too often buried in our purely unconscious enjoyment of Shakespeare's art', I applaud the recognition of the mystery of poetic genius, but I ask whether the crust has not itself some meaning, whether in fact it is not the means to meaning chosen by the poet, whether it be not indeed part of the form which has attained identity with its substance (*italics mine*). Moreover, I feel entitled to demand whether the values of these treasure-troves from the unconscious should not be expressed in a recognised coinage of critical currency. Again, I am told how to approach Shakespeare if I am to participate with the elect in their mystic rites... All seems as systematic, as precise, and as rigorous as a measurement in the Cavendish Laboratory. But how does one estimate 'the kind and quality of imagery'? By what test does one establish that it has been 'truly' estimated? What instrument measures the 'precise degree' of evocation and on what principles does one determine how a word 'controls and is controlled by the rhythmic movement of the passage in which it occurs'? Are not critics of this school using the façade of the Cavendish to hide a conventicle of impressionist anarchists? The abracadabra apparently most potent in all these neo-Shakespearian conjurations is some such phrase as 'organic poetic structure' or the even more gnomic 'objective correlative'. These presumably can be recognised infallibly, and are sufficient warrant for distorting the plain sense of the words of the text and for discarding the apparent meaning of the incidents of the scene." (*Shakespearian Tragedy*, Cambridge, 1948, pp. 1-3).
13. *Preface to Shakespeare* (*Shakespeare Criticism: A Selection 1623-1840*, ed. D. Nichol Smith: The World's Classics, 1944, p. 105).
14. *Shakespeare* (*English Men of Letters*, London, 1913), p. 4.

## *Shakespeare and The Elizabethan Satire Tradition*

VERSE SATIRE in English literature is a mixed product, compounded of elements drawn mainly from three sources—the classical, the mediaeval European and the native Celtic. The debt of the English satirist to Greece and Rome is too well-known to need elaboration here. Formal verse satire in its early stages in England owes a good deal of its inspiration to the works of Latin satirists like Lucilius, Horace, Juvenal and Persius. We might note that satire is a form unknown to English literature in its earliest stage. It is not till Middle English literature that we find the satiric spirit at all manifest and even then it is something to be distinguished by tone, not by form. For example, among the poems classed by Skeat as probably from the pen of Chaucer, we find a piece *Against Women Unconstant* which is exactly in keeping with the traditional satiric view of the subject, but the form is described by the poet himself as a “Balade”.<sup>1</sup>

Mediaeval satire is a pan-European product whether we consider the Latin Goliardic verse or beast fables like those of Reynard the Fox or Burnellus the Ass. England, as sharing in the pan-European culture, also felt this influence. Allied to the *fabliau* or beast-fable is the mediaeval allegory, with its personification of the virtues and vices and certain crystallized conventions like the dream-device, the dance of the Seven Deadly Sins, the legacy or testament, etc.

We must also take into account a source which has been left fairly unexplored, that is, the native Celtic satire. Having its origin in magic verses chanted to inflict physical harm on the victim, it gradually sheds the implication of magical property, but retains the imagery of inflicting physical harm. According to Mary Claire Randolph<sup>2</sup> it is to this source that we may trace the metaphors of whipping, lancing a sore, cleansing a wound, applying a cathartic, etc., that we come across so frequently in Elizabethan and Jacobean satire. Such ideas are of course reminiscent of the epithet “scorpion-tongued” applied to Archilochus, the father of Greek (and, therefore, of European) satire, and of traditional stories regarding the Iambics of Archilochus and Hipponax having driven victims like Neobule and her father Lycambes to suicide.

These, briefly, are the main strands that went to make up the complex texture of the satire as we find it in England at the Renaissance and



immediately after. Though the Augustan age has been regarded as the golden age of English satire, it was in the Elizabethan age that the form took definite shape and emerged as a distinct literary *genre*. A study of the satires of Lodge, Hall, Marston, 'T. M., Gent',<sup>3</sup> Tournear, Drayton, etc., would serve to show that a new type of poetry had been established with conventions of its own. Form as well as matter now distinguished verse satire from other literary types.

When the satire had proved its worth as a powerful weapon in the hands of the literary or social or moral reformer, it began to be feared as well as hated and the ban of the Bishops (Whitgift and Bancroft) on all controversial literature (1599) is a gauge of the feelings which the satire had roused at this time. But the spirit of the satirist is not so easily curbed; checked at one point, it breaks out at another. "In the very year of the edict, the spirit of more severe satire was already passing by Pythagorean transmigration into the drama."<sup>4</sup>

In this connection it is of interest to note that many of the leading verse satirists or epigrammatists of the Elizabethan and Jacobean age are also dramatists. Verse satire and drama are, indeed, very closely related. It will be our purpose here to show that, though Shakespeare did not write any formal satire, the spirit of contemporary verse satire can be traced throughout his poems and dramas. This resemblance between the two forms can be traced in attitude, imagery and language as well as in the painting of certain character-types who are figures familiar to us through Elizabethan and Jacobean satire as well as drama.

The satirist has, through the ages, painted himself as a reformer, one who has no personal end to serve through his attacks or criticism, but is out only to correct the faults of the age. Since this is his attitude, he will naturally make out that his criticism is entirely impersonal. We find Horace doing so in his *Satires* (II. i). Coming to England, we find this attitude in Skelton, who says in his *Colin Clout*:

For no man have I naméd;  
Wherefore should I be blaméd?  
Ye ought to be ashamed,  
Against me to be graméd,  
And can tell no cause why,  
But that I write truly.<sup>5</sup>

We find the same sentiment expressed by Thomas Lodge in his *A Fig for Momus*. In the address "To the Gentlemen Readers Whatsoever", Lodge explains that in these satires "(under the names of certaine Romaines) where I reprehend vice, I purposely wrong no man but observe the lawes of that kind of poeme: If any repine thereat, I am sure he is guiltie, because he bewrayeth himselfe."<sup>6</sup>

Exactly the same sentiment is expressed by Hall in *A Postscript to the Reader*, at the end of *Virgidemiarum*:

But why should vices be unblamed, for fear of blame? And if thou may'st spit upon a toad unvenomed, why may'st thou not speak of vice without danger? Especially so warily as I have endeavoured: who, in the impartial mention of so many vices, may safely profess to be altogether guiltless in myself to the intention of any guilty person: . . . which notwithstanding, if the injurious reader shall wrest to his own spite, and disparaging of others, it is a short answer, *Art thou guilty?* Complain not: thou art not wronged. *Art thou guiltless?* Complain not: thou art not touched.<sup>7</sup>

We find the same attitude taken up by another Elizabethan satirist, John Marston. He declares plainly in the Epilogue to *The Scourge of Villanie*:

If any one (forced with his owne guilt) will turne it home and say *Tis I*, I cannot hinder him. Neyther doe I iniure him.<sup>8</sup>

We also find 'T. M., Gent' in his *Micro-cynicon, Six Snarling Satires*, published in 1599, expressing the same sentiments:

And if it venom, take it as you list;  
He spites himself that spites a satirist.<sup>9</sup>

Tourneur expresses the same thoughts in the Address to the Reader in *The Transformed Metamorphosis*, where he says:

For in particular I point at none;  
Nay, I am forc'd my lines to limit in  
    Within the pale of generalitie;  
.....  
Who finds him touch't, may blame himself, not me;  
And he will thanke me, doth himself know free.<sup>10</sup>

So we may take it that it had become part of the Elizabethan satire tradition to express such an attitude with regard to the rôle or function of the satirist. Turning to Shakespeare, we can find the same sentiments echoed in more than one place. Among the throng of characters created by Shakespeare, we might, for our present purposes, pick out Jaques as representative of the satirist. Into his mouth Shakespeare puts words which are expressive of exactly the same attitude as had been taken up by the formal verse satirists of Elizabethan England. Jaques expresses his appreciation of the philosophical remarks of Touchstone after having met him in the forest, and says that he himself is "ambitious for a motley coat". The reason he gives for this is that then he can speak his mind freely and with his criticism "cleanse the foul body of the infected world".

Here, be it noted, the function he assigns to the professional Fool is exactly the same as that undertaken by the satirist. When the banished Duke says that the rôle of a reformer would be most unsuitable for Jaques, a noted libertine, he retorts:

Why, who cries out on pride,  
That can therein tax any private party?  
Doth it not flow as hugely as the sea,  
Till that the weary very means do ebb?  
What woman in the city do I name,  
When that I say the city-woman bears  
The cost of princes on unworthy shoulders?  
Who can come in and say that I mean her,  
When such a one as she such is her neighbour?  
Or what is he of basest function  
That says his bravery is not on my cost,  
Thinking that I mean him, but therein suits  
His folly to the mettle of my speech?  
There then; what then? Let me see wherein  
My tongue hath wrong'd him: if it do him right,  
Then he hath wrong'd himself; if he be free,  
Why then my taxing like a wild goose flies,  
Unclaim'd of any man. (II. vii. 70 seqq.)<sup>11</sup>

Let us turn to another character, Hamlet. Though he says that it is a curse, yet he feels that he was born to set right the time which is "out of joint". Again, after having killed Polonius, he remarks that heaven had ordained for him the rôle of "scourge and minister". So he takes upon himself the task of correcting the evils of the world around him, which is the professed task of the satirist. In the light of this, let us consider his comment on the play within the play:

This play is the image of a murder done in Vienna: . . . 'tis a knavish piece of work: but what o' that? Your majesty and we that have free souls, it touches us not: let the galled jade wince, our withers are unwrung. (III. ii. 248 seqq.)

Turning to imagery, we find that certain comparisons tend to recur in Elizabethan satire. As has been mentioned above, M. C. Randolph would like to trace these back to Celtic magic verses. We find, for instance, the metaphor of flagellation used over and over again by the Elizabethan satirists.

Lodge uses it in *A Fig for Momus* in his address "To the Gentlemen Readers Whatsoever":

Where detraction is given to chalenge, it is good striking first, for whelpes that are whipt for branding are quicklie quiet.

In *Eglogue 2* of the same book, there is a reference to Rhamnusias, which would remind us of the Rhamnusian whip of later satire.

Marston uses the same image not only in the title, *The Scourge of Villanie*, but in the body of the work itself, when he declares in the proemium to Book I of *The Scourge of Villanie*:

I Beare the scourge of iust Rhamnusias,  
Lashing the lewdnes of Britania.  
.....  
Quake, guzzle dogs, that live on putred slime,  
Scud from the lashes of my yerking rime.<sup>12</sup>

The image is repeated in *The Scourge of Villanie*, Book I, Satire 3, in the words:

Whilst I securely let him ouerslip?  
Nere yerking him with my satyrick whip?<sup>13</sup>

We come across the image again in *The Time's Whistle*, by 'R. C., Gent'. The introductory piece, *Epigrammisatiron*, makes it clear that the attitude of the writer is in line with the traditional one of the satirist:

From the Rhamnusian goddesse am I sent,  
On sinne t'inflit deserved punishment.  
All-secing sunne, lend me thy searching eye,  
That I may finde and scourge impietic.<sup>14</sup>

Turning to Shakespeare, we find this image of whipping in more than one place. To cite a few instances, Biron, in *Love's Labour's Lost*, uses it as he advances from behind cover into the open, to expose his friends, saying:

Now step I forth to whip hypocrisy. (IV. iii. 151)

The Poet uses it in *Timon of Athens* when addressing the fallen Timon:

Poet: Sir,  
Having often of your open bounty tasted,  
Hearing you were retired, your friends fall'n off,  
Whose thankless natures—O abhorred spirits!—  
Not all the whips of heaven are large enough—  
(V. i. 60 seqq.)

One need not be reminded, we suppose, of the too familiar "whips and scorns of time" mentioned by Hamlet.

Medical or surgical imagery is frequently employed in Elizabethan satire. We have metaphors of cleansing a wound, lancing a sore, etc.

In *The Scourge of Villanie*, for instance, we find the metaphor of blood-letting:

It recurs later in the same book:

We find the same idea used in *The Time's Whistle*:

*Micro-cynicon* gives us the same image combined with an allegorical vein reminiscent of mediaeval satire:

Turning to Shakespeare, we find so many instances of surgical or medical imagery that, for the sake of brevity, no more than a few typical examples can be quoted at length.

The metaphor of blood-letting in the context of moral, not physical, improvement is employed by Mark Antony in *Julius Caesar* immediately after the assassination:

In *As You Like It* Touchstone, when trying to impress Corin with his court-bred ways and language, exclaims:

God make incision in thee! thou art raw. (III. ii, 75-76)

The thought that vice is a kind of disease needing treatment, is to be found in *Henry VIII* in the speech of Lord Sands:

We also find it in the speech of Jaques in *As You Like It*:

The comparison of vices to a sore growing to a head and being lanced (a traditional comparison in Elizabethan satire, as noticed earlier) is found in many places in Shakespeare. Duke Senior, discussing the reform of evil with Jaques, seems to pick up the traditional language of the satirist from his interlocutor and most aptly remarks:

King Lear, when taking leave of Goneril, uses the same metaphor, though with reference particularly to his daughter, not to vice or evil in general:

We find the same metaphor in *Coriolanus*:

*First Senator:* .....  
Leave us to cure this cause.

Men: For 'tis a sore upon us,  
You cannot tent yourself. (III.i.235-6)

Hamlet, chiding his mother, similarly employs medical imagery:

Mother, for love of grace,  
Lay not that flattering unction to your soul,  
That not your trespass, but my madness speaks:  
It will but skin and film the ulcerous place,  
Whiles rank corruption, mining all within,  
Infects unseen. (III. iv. 144 seqq.)

Incidentally, Hamlet who speaks in the rôle of reformer-physician here, takes upon himself the rôle of reformer-surgeon earlier:

The time is out of joint: O cursed spite,  
That ever I was born to set it right! (I. v. 189-90)

Allied to all these images drawn from the medical and the surgical world, we have references to the theory of humours. We have to remember that this theory was being overworked in the literary world. Hall, e.g., refers to it in *Virgidemiarum*, Book IV, Satire 4, and Marston in *The Scourge of Villanie*, Book III, Satire 10. The opening line of Donne's first Satire addresses a "fondling motley humorist".

Dr. G. B. Harrison, in his introduction to *The Scourge of Villanie*, points out that "close parallels to Hamlet's melancholy and Lear's madness will be found in the *Scourge of Villanie*, though needless to say Marston does not speak in Shakespeare's 'fine filed phrase'."<sup>19</sup> Hallett Smith<sup>20</sup> develops this thought in greater detail and points out that the scholar or intellectual, according to 16th-century authorities, is inclined to the melancholy disposition because those traits which make him an intellectual are those specially fostered by that humour. So the scholar would generally be melancholy or malcontent, which does not preclude his having a sense of humour. This is just the temperament befitting a satirist.

Additional factors contributing to this "malcontent" humour, this melancholy and bitterness, were, in our view, the inevitable *fin de siècle* feeling generated as the 16th century drew to a close, and the disintegration that must have set in as the Copernican cosmos clashed with the Ptolemaic. To adapt Donne's famous line, "the new Philosophy called all in doubt", and the frame of the universe was "disjoint".<sup>21</sup> And so to Hamlet, speaking at the beginning of the 17th century, the time was out of joint.

Shakespeare was no doubt affected by currents of contemporary thought, but at the same time, he could keenly realize the absurdity of

carrying any theory too far. His references to the humours would tend to show how he reacted to one of the most potent ideas of his age.

In *Troilus and Cressida* we have Alexander's description of Ajax:

A man into whom nature hath so crowded humours that his valour is crushed into folly, his folly sauced with discretion: there is no man hath a virtue that he hath not a glimpse of, nor any man an attaint but he carries some stain of it: he is melancholy without cause, and merry against the hair. (I. ii. 21 seqq.)

The Clown's description of Bertram in *All's Well that Ends Well* is also interesting in this connection:

*Clo*: By my troth, I take my young lord to be a very melancholy man.

*Count*: By what observance, I pray you?

*Clo*: Why, he will look upon his boot and sing; mend the ruff and sing; ask questions and sing; pick his teeth and sing. I know a man that had this trick of melancholy sold a goodly manor for a song. (III. ii. 3 seqq.)

Edmund, in *King Lear*, refers to the theory of humours in passing:

My cue is villanous melancholy, with a sigh like Tom o' Bedlam. (I. ii. 147-8)

In all the passages referred to above, Shakespeare utilizes the theory of humours in rather a satiric way, to paint pictures which always have an implication of criticism or disapproval. But in *Julius Caesar* this very same theory is employed to add the finishing touch to one of the finest portraits painted by him:

His life was gentle, and the elements  
So mix'd in him that Nature might stand up  
And say to all the world 'This was a man!' (V. v. 73 seqq.)

Let us turn next to Jaques, whose attitude and words, as noticed before also, seem to reflect the mood and traditions of the Elizabethan satirist. According to his own words he

can suck melancholy out of a song, as a weasel sucks eggs. (II. v. 12-13)

Evidently Jaques is very anxious to impress others about this particular humour of his, for in answer to Rosalind's casual remark "They say you are a melancholy fellow", he says, "I am so; I do love it better than laughing." He then goes into lengthy details about different types of melancholy:



I have neither the scholar's melancholy which is emulation, nor the musician's, which is fantastical, nor the courtier's, which is proud, nor the soldier's, which is ambitious, nor the lawyer's, which is politic, nor the lady's, which is nice, nor the lover's, which is all these: but it is a melancholy of mine own, compounded of many simples, extracted from many objects, and indeed the sundry contemplation of my travels, in which my often rumination wraps me in a most humorous sadness. (IV. i. 10 seqq.)

Rosalind's comment on this lengthy harangue sums up, we should like to think, the dramatist's own viewpoint:

I had rather have a fool to make me merry than experience to make me sad; and to travel for it too! (IV. i. 28 seqq.)

It is in *As You Like It*, *Henry V* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor* that we find Shakespeare's interest keenest regarding the humours. In the latter two dramas he deliberately introduces the word into the mouth of Nym, a character drawn from the lower classes, and makes him misuse the word in such a manner as to provoke pointed attention and ridicule. Space forbids extensive quotation of the relevant passages, but a few typical portions are noted below:

*Slm*: By these gloves, then, 'twas he.

*Nym*: Be avised, sir, and pass good humours: I will say 'marry trap' with you, if you run the nuthook's humour on me; that is the very note of it. (MWW, I. i. 170 seqq.)

In Act I, Sc. iii, there are nine speeches allotted to Nym and of these there is only one which does not contain the word "humour". Each use of the word serves to make it look ridiculous till the climax comes at the end of the scene:

*Nym*: My humour shall not cool: I will incense Page to deal with poison; I will possess him with yellowness, for the revolt of mine is dangerous: that is my true humour.

*Pist*: Thou art the Mars of Malcontents; I second thee; troop on. (I. iii. 109 seqq.)

The use of the word "malcontents" by Pistol is also significant in this context. Apart from Nym and Pistol, another comic character, Sir Hugh Evans, refers to the humours in rather a ridiculous way. While waiting for Caius in the field near Frogmore, Evans soliloquizes thus:

'Pless my soul, how full of chollors I am, and tremping of mind!  
I shall be glad if he have deceived me. How melancholies I am!  
(III. i. 11 seqq.)

Turning to the other play, *Henry V*, we again find Nym working the word "humour" to death. In Act II. Sc. i, for instance, in the quarrel with Pistol, the essence of his retorts lies in the use of that word:

*Pist:* ... For I can take, and Pistol's cock is up,  
And flashing fire will follow.

*Nym:* I am not Barbason; you cannot conjure me. I have an humour to knock you indifferently well. If you grow foul with me, Pistol, I will scour you with my rapier, as I may, in fair terms: if you would walk off, I would prick your guts a little, in good terms, as I may: and that's the humour of it.  
(II. i. 55 seqq.)

Even in the heat and danger of fighting, this verbal peculiarity does not leave him, for when Fluellen is driving the precious trio (Nym, Bardolph and Pistol) to the breach before Harfleur, Nym remarks as he is rushed off:

These be good humours! your honour wins bad humours.  
(III. ii. 27)

Why is it that in these three dramas particularly Shakespeare seems to draw pointed and witty or satiric attention to the malcontent, the man of melancholy or the man of humour in general? The answer seems to be a matter of chronology. According to the chronological table given by E. K. Chambers *Henry V* was written in 1598-99, *As You Like It* in 1599-1600, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* in 1600-01. Significantly, *Every Man out of his Humour* was first acted in 1599. O. J. Campbell has pointed out<sup>22</sup> that as far as their satiric purpose is concerned, Shakespeare's dramas seem to take a new turn after the emergence of Jonson's humour comedies. However that may be, this emphasis on the theory of humours at exactly this point of time is surely more than a coincidence.

The theory of humours is not the only idea linking Shakespeare's works with contemporary dramatic and verse satire. The extravagant love poetry of the times supplied much material for play of satiric wit to contemporary writers.

Hall, for instance, in Book I, Satire 7, of his *Virgidemiarum* describes the poet of love in most contemptuous terms:

Then can he term his dirty ill-fac'd bride  
Lady and Queen, and virgin deify'd:  
Be she all sooty black, or berry brown,  
She's white as morrow's milk or flakes new blown:  
And though she be some dunghill drudge at home,  
Yet can he her resign some refuse room  
Amidst the well known stars; or if not there,  
Sure he will saint her in his Kalendere.<sup>23</sup>

Marston, in *The Metamorphosis of Pygmalion's Image*, gives us a highly erotic poem which he makes out, though not very convincingly, to be a parody of contemporary love poetry. He returns to the attack in Satire 3 of *Certain Satyres* where we get a most graphic description of the writer of erotic verse, with "his chamber hanged about with elegies".<sup>24</sup> Not only the decoration of the room, but also the behaviour of this lover is fantastic to the extreme.

We find 'R. C., Gent' parodying the extravagant love poetry of his contemporaries in Satire 7 of *The Time's Whistle*:

Either his mistressse haire,  
Or else her forehead is beyond compare;  
Her eyes are starres, & her cheekes roses be,  
Her lips pure rubies, her teeth ivore,  
Her breath perfume, her voice sweet harmonie  
Passing Threician Orpheus melody.<sup>25</sup>

Shakespeare, too, is not without his fling at the exaggerated style of contemporary love poetry. That his keenly critical mind was conscious of all the different influences at work in the contemporary literary world we can make out from the skilful parody of popular drama in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* or from Hamlet's advice to the Players. Benedick, at the end of *Much Ado About Nothing*, when defending his new rôle of lover, says:

a college of wit-crackers cannot flout me out of my humour. Dost thou think I care for a satire or an epigram? (V. iv. 101 seqq.)

Similarly, another form popular in his day, the ballad, is subtly parodied by Shakespeare in *The Winter's Tale*:

*Clo*: What has here? ballads?  
*Mop*: Pray now, buy some: I love a ballad in print o' life, for then we are sure they are true.  
*Aut*: Here's one to a very doleful tune, how a usurer's wife was brought to bed of twenty money-bags at a burthen and how she longed to eat adders' heads and toads carbonadoed.  
*Mop*: Is it true, think you?  
*Aut*: Very true, and but a month old. (IV. iv. 262 seqq.)

But of all literary forms it is contemporary erotic poetry that has the most lengthy and detailed treatment at the hands of Shakespeare. We begin with a serious reference to it in Sonnet XXI:

So is it not with me as with that Muse  
Stirr'd 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. (II. 1 seqq.)

At the opposite pole is the ridicule poured upon it by Touchstone, who, on hearing some of the verses addressed by Orlando to Rosalind, says

It is the right butter-women's rank to market (III. ii. 103)

and supports his view by supplying several impromptu couplets parodying Orlando's lines. The description given earlier by Jaques of "the lover, sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad made to his mistress' eyebrow" is in the same satiric vein.

More subtly witty is Mercutio's conjuration of Romeo:

Romeo! humours! madman! passion! lover!  
 Appear thou in the likeness of a sigh;  
 Speak but one rhyme and I am satisfied;  
 Cry but 'Ay me!' pronounce but 'love' and 'dove';  
 (II. i. 7 seqq.)

Proteus, in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, speaks of

...wailful sonnets, whose composed rhymes  
 Should be full-fraught with serviceable vows (III. ii. 69-70)

and advises Thurio to

Write till your ink be dry, and with your tears  
 Moist it again, and frame some feeling line  
 That may discover such integrity. (III. ii. 75-77)

In *Love's Labour's Lost* the poems composed by the King, Longaville and Dumain are a parody of exaggerated love poetry and even the speeches of Biron in the same scene (IV. iii) are meant to draw gently humorous attention to the extravagances of erotic poetry.

More keenly satiric is the reference to love sonnets in *King Henry V.* The Dauphin, praising his horse to the skies, remarks:

I once writ a sonnet in his praise and began thus: 'Wonder  
 of nature',—  
*Orl*: I have heard a sonnet begin so to one's mistress.  
*Dau*: Then did they imitate that which I composed to my courser,  
 for my horse is my mistress. (III. vii. 42 seqq.)

Extravagance in dress is a vice to which attention has been drawn

time and again by Elizabethan verse satirists. In 1597 (just before the publication of the first book of Hall's satires) there was a proclamation against "the ordinate excess in apparel".

Hall's criticism of this tendency is to be found in many places. For instance, Book III, Satire 7, is devoted entirely to the subject. Book V, Satire 4, is also on the theme of extravagance in dress and makes mention of the "silver-handled fanne" which is referred to by Marston, amongst other Elizabethan writers. Another peculiarity of the contemporary fop, viz, eclecticism in dress, is not overlooked either and Hall's description of him in Book III, Satire 1, provides one of his most telling passages:

A French head joyn'd to necke Italian:  
Thy thighs from Germanie, and brest from Spain:  
An Englishman in none, a fool in all:  
Many in one, and one in severall.<sup>26</sup>

Drayton refers to this tendency in *The Moon-Calf*:

For his attire, then foreign parts are sought,  
He holds all vile in England that is wrought;  
And into Flanders sendeth for the nonce,  
Twelve dozen of shirts providing him at once,  
Lay'd in the seams with costly lace, that be  
Of the smock fashion, whole below the knee.<sup>27</sup>

Ben Jonson's description of the "English Monsieur" is quite familiar and in line with the English satiric tradition:

Would you believe, when you this Monsieur see,  
That his whole body should speake french, not he?  
That so much skarfe of France, and hat, and fether,  
And shooe, and tye, and garter should come hether,  
And land on one, whose face durst never bee  
Toward the sea, farther then half-way tree?  
That he, untravell'd, should be french so much,  
As french-men in his companie, should seeme dutch?<sup>28</sup>

Turning to another contemporary satirist, John Donne, we find similar ideas. Describing courtiers, he says:

As fresh, and sweet their Apparells be, as bee  
The fields they sold to buy them.<sup>29</sup>

Earlier in the same satire, we have a neat hit at the Frenchified Englishman:

He smack'd, and cry'd, He's base, Mechanique, coarse,  
So are all your Englishmen in their discourse.

Are not your Frenchmen neate? Mine? as you see,  
I have but one Frenchman, looke, hee followes mee.<sup>30</sup>

In Shakespeare, too, we find references to extravagance in dress. In 2 *Henry VI*, the Queen, describing the Duchess of Gloucester, says,

She bears a duke's revenues on her back,  
And in her heart she scorns our poverty. (I. iii. 83-84)

Jaques refers to this tendency when he says:

What woman in the city do I name,  
When that I say the city-woman bears  
The cost of princes on unworthy shoulders? (II. vii. 74 seqq.)

The idea is repeated in *King Henry VIII*, when Buckingham, describing the Field of the Cloth of Gold, says:

O, many  
Have broke their backs with laying manors on 'em  
For this great journey. (I. i. 83 seqq.)

In 1 *Henry IV*, Hotspur gives a graphic but sneering description of a foppish courtier on the field of battle:

a certain lord, neat, and trimly dress'd,  
Fresh as a bridegroom; and his chin new reap'd  
Show'd like a stubble-land at harvest-home;  
He was perfumed like a milliner;  
And 'twixt his finger and his thumb he held  
A pouncet-box, which ever and anon  
He gave his nose and took't away again;  
Who therewith angry, when it next came there,  
Took it in snuff. (I. iii. 33 seqq.)

The fop, the courtier or the travelled Englishman is a traditional butt of Elizabethan satire and we have many descriptions of such in Shakespeare. Gloucester refers to the polished but sly ways of the courtier in *Richard III*:

Because I cannot flatter and speak fair,  
Smile in men's face, smooth, deceive and cog,  
Duck with French nods and apish courtesy,  
I must be held a rancorous enemy. (I. iii. 47 seqq.)

In *Love's Labour's Lost* the rôle of Don Adriano de Armado is suggested at the very beginning, not only by his long and complicated nomenclature, but also by the description that he is "a fantastical Spaniard". When

trying to impress his own importance upon Holofernes, Sir Nathaniel, etc., in V. i, he describes himself as "a soldier, a man of travel, that hath seen the world".

In *Richard II* the Duke of York refers to

Report of fashions in proud Italy,  
Whose manners still our tardy apish nation  
Limps after in base imitation. (II. i. 21 seqq.)

In *King John* Philip the Bastard has a similar description of the much-travelled man and his ways in fashionable society:

Now your traveller,  
He and his toothpick at my worship's mess.  
And when my knightly stomach is sufficed,  
Why then I suck my teeth and catechize  
My picked man of countries.....  
.....  
And talking of the Alps and Apennines,  
The Pyrenean and the river Po,  
It draws toward supper in conclusion so. (I. i. 189 seqq.)

Portia's description of her English suitor in *The Merchant of Venice* is perhaps one of the best-known of its kind in Shakespeare:

How oddly he is suited! I think he bought his doublet in Italy, his round hose in France, his bonnet in Germany and his behaviour everywhere. (I. ii. 79 seqq.)

But it is in *As You Like It* that Rosalind, with her strong common sense, quietly says the final word uttered by Shakespeare on the man of travel:

A traveller! By my faith, you have great reason to be sad: I fear you have sold your own lands to see other men's; then, to have seen much and to have nothing is to have rich eyes and poor hands. (IV. i. 21 seqq.)

Apart from the travelled Englishman, there are also certain other character types who are met with over and over again in Elizabethan dramatic and verse satire. Some of them we have referred to already, e.g., the sighing or poetizing lover or the man of extravagant dress.

Allied to these is the courtier. We shall refer to only three well-known examples of this figure as representative of the class. One is taken from Ben Jonson:

At court I met it, in clothes brave enough,  
To be a courtier; and looks grave enough,  
To seeme a statesman: as I neere it came,

It made me a great face, I ask'd the name.  
A lord, it acryed, buried in flesh, and blood.<sup>31</sup>

The other is from *Satire 4* of Donne. The description is too detailed to quote *in toto* and only the first few lines are given below:

Towards me did runne  
A thing more strange, then on Niles slime, the sunne  
E'er bred; or all which into Noahs Arke came;  
A thing, which would have pos'd Adam to name.<sup>32</sup>

The third example is from Spenser's *Mother Hubbard's Tale*, where we get a description of the Ape as courtier:

For he was clad in strange accoutrements,  
Fashion'd with queint devices, never scene,  
In Court before, yet these all fashions beene;  
Yet he them in newfanglenesse did pas.  
But his behaviour altogether was  
Alla Turchesca, much the more admyr'd.<sup>33</sup>

Shakespeare also has satirized the courtier in many places. Let us begin with *As You Like It*:

*Jaq*: ...He hath been a courtier, he swears.  
*Touch*: If any man doubt that, let him put me to my purgation. I have trod a measure; I have flattered a lady; I have been politic with my friend, smooth with mine enemy; I have undone three tailors; I have had four quarrels, and like to have fought one.  
(V. iv. 42 seqq.)

Jaques then leads Touchstone on to a description of the "lie seven times removed", which is a commentary on the artificial trivialities of life at court. Incidentally, it is in the same drama and from the same character that we get a dig at the emptiness of the courtier's code of honour (I. ii. 66 seqq.) and the mediaeval code of love (II. iv. 46 seqq.).

In *The Merry Wives of Windsor* the remark of Mistress Page to Robin is as brief as it is telling:

O, you are a flattering boy: now I see you'll be a courtier.  
(III. i. 7-8)

In *All's Well that Ends Well* the Clown comments most shrewdly on the ways of the courtier:

Truly, madam, if God have lent a man any manners, he may easily put it off at Court: he that cannot make a leg, put off's



cap, kiss his hand and say nothing, has neither leg, hands, lip,  
nor cap; and indeed such a fellow, to say precisely, were not  
for the court. (II. ii. 8 seqq.)

But there is no need to pile up instances. We have only to turn to Rosen-  
crantz, Guildenstern and, above all, Osric, to realize how keenly Shakes-  
peare had studied the ways of the courtier and how delicately he could  
paint them.

We now turn to certain themes that had become the common stock-  
in-trade of satirists by the time of the Elizabethans.

Woman with her vanity and inconstancy has been the butt of satirists  
through the ages, beginning from Greek poets like Semonides of Amorgos  
or Hesiod or Hipponax, and Greek dramatists like Aristophanes. We find  
Latin satirists like Lucilius (in Books 4, 15 and 17 of his *Satires*), Horace  
(in *Satires* I. ii) and Juvenal (in *Satires* 2 and 6) similarly writing on the  
shortcomings and vices of Woman. In the Middle English period, we  
find innumerable poems with titles like *Abuse of Women*, *A Mocking Song  
of Love*, *The Trials of Marriage*, *Scorn of Women*, etc. Chaucer's "balade"  
on the inconstancy of Woman has been mentioned already. Coming to  
English satire of the Renaissance, we find Dunbar's *The Treatise of the  
Two Married Women and the Widow*, Lyndsay's *A Supplication against Side  
Tails*, Crowley's piece on "The Woman" in *The Last Trumpet*, and  
Gascoigne's Epilogue to *The Steel Glass*, to mention a few typical  
examples.

As far as Elizabethan satire is concerned, we find the sketch of  
Madam Fucata in Satire 2 of *The Time's Whistle*, Donne's description of  
the ladies at court in *Satire* 4 as well as his attitude to the subject of  
Woman and Love throughout the *Songs and Sonets*, not to mention Jonson's  
lines on The Court Pucell (*Epigram* XLIX).

Turning to Shakespeare, we find many references to the inconstancy  
of Woman. Let us leave aside the famous "Frailty, thy name is woman!"  
—for we have to consider the circumstances and the speaker and not  
take it as Shakespeare's view on womankind. Later in the drama we  
again find Hamlet describing the Prologue as "brief as woman's love"  
(III. ii. 164).

In Sonnet XX Shakespeare refers to two of the major frailties of  
Woman, viz., vanity and inconstancy:

A woman's face with Nature's own hand painted  
Hast thou, the master-mistress of my passion;  
A woman's gentle heart, but not acquainted  
With shifting change, as is false women's fashion. (II. 1-4)

In *Sonnets to Sundry Notes of Music* (*The Passionate Pilgrim*) we find the

same tone:

O frowning Fortune, cursed, fickle dame!  
 For now I see  
 Inconstancy  
 More in women than in men remain. (No. xviii. 259 seqq.)

In 1 *Henry IV*, Hotspur's remark to his wife is in line with satiric tradition:

I know you wise, but yet no farther wise  
 Than Harry Percy's wife: constant you are,  
 But yet a woman: and for secrecy,  
 No lady closer; for I well believe  
 Thou wilt not utter what thou dost not know.  
 (II. iii. 110 seqq.)

In *Othello* Iago's lines on Woman, though supposedly spoken in jest to while away the time, have yet a grim significance when we remember his rôle in the development of the plot. This is how he begins his tirade:

Come on, come on; you are pictures out of doors,  
 Bells in your parlours, wild-cats in your kitchens,  
 Saints in your injuries, devils being offended,  
 Players in your housewifery, and housewives in your beds.  
 (II. i. 110 seqq.)

He continues in the same vein, making out that even the best of women was fit only "to suckle fools and chronicle small beer."

King Lear's comment on women, though spoken in his madness, is worth quoting in this context:

Down from the waist they are Centaurs,  
 Though women all above:  
 But to the girdle do the gods inherit,  
 Beneath is all the fiends'. (IV. vi. 126 seqq.)

Similarly, we might consider the ravings of Posthumus in *Cymbeline* when he has been convinced of the faithlessness of Imogen:

Could I find out  
 The woman's part in me! For there's no motion  
 That tends to vice in man, but I affirm  
 It is the woman's part: be it lying, note it,  
 The woman's; flattering, hers; deceiving, hers;  
 Lust and rank thoughts, hers, hers; revenges, hers;  
 Ambitions, covetings, change of prides, disdain,

Nice longing, slanders; mutability,  
 All faults that may be named, nay, that hell knows,  
 Why, hers, in part or all; but rather, all;  
 For even to vice  
 They are not constant, but are changing still  
 One vice, but of a minute old, for one  
 Not half so old as that. (II. v. 19 seqq.)

Another stock target of the English satirist, since the days of *Piers Plowman*, has been the priest. We find innumerable attacks on him in Middle English and Renaissance satire, and also in Elizabethan satirists like Spenser. Shakespeare holds up the priesthood to gentle satire through the persons of Sir Oliver Martext of *As You Like It* and the Clown in the disguise of Sir Topas the Curate in *Twelfth Night*.

Another common theme of the satirist is the power of gold. We find Pindar, e.g., referring to it when he makes his "hireling Muse" quote Aristodamus:

But *now* she cites that word the Argive said,  
 That word too full of verity—  
 When wealth and friends, together from him ran,  
 "'Tis money," quoth he, "money maketh man."<sup>34</sup>

In mediaeval English literature we find many poems with titles like *Sir Penny* or *The Power of the Purse*.

Among the Elizabethans Spenser refers to the power of gold in *Mother Hubbard's Tale*:

That was the golden age of Saturne old,  
 But this might better be the world of gold;  
 For without golde now nothing wilbe got.<sup>35</sup>

Tourneur, in *The Transformed Metamorphosis*, says that it is gold that has brought about the degeneration of the Church of Rome:

Her robe, that like the Sun did clearly shine,  
 Is now transform'd vnto an earthly coate,  
 Of massive gold.<sup>36</sup>

Donne in one of his Satires refers to the power of gold in swaying the mind of the judge:

Judges are Gods; he who made and said them so,  
 Meant not that men should be forc'd to them to goe  
 By meanes of Angels.<sup>37</sup>

Turning to Shakespeare we find that he, too, has several passages on

the power of gold. Romeo, for instance, when buying poison of the Apothecary, remarks as he hands him the price:

There is thy gold, worse poison to men's souls,  
Doing more murders in this loathsome world,  
Than these poor compounds that thou mayst not sell.  
I sell thee poison; thou hast sold me none. (V. i. 80 seqq.)

In 2 *Henry IV*, when the King discovers that Prince Henry has taken away the crown from his pillow, he exclaims bitterly:

See, sons, what things you are!  
How quickly nature falls into revolt  
When gold becomes her object! (IV. v. 65 seqq.)

In *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, when Slender comes to woo Ann Page, she comments in an aside:

This is my father's choice.  
O, what a world of vile ill-favour'd faults  
Looks handsome in three hundred pounds a year.  
(III. iv. 31 seqq.)

In *Cymbeline* Cloten, when planning to bribe an attendant of Imogen, soliloquizes thus:

'Tis gold  
Which buys admittance; oft it doth;  
.....'tis gold  
Which makes the true man kill'd and saves the thief;  
Nay, sometime hangs both thief and true man: what  
Can it not do and undo? (II. iii. 72 seqq.)

But by far the lengthiest and most detailed passage in Shakespeare about the power of gold is to be found in *Timon of Athens*, where Timon, digging for roots, suddenly comes upon gold. His speech is too lengthy to quote in its entirety, but the opening words might serve as a sample:

What is here?  
Gold? Yellow, glittering, precious gold? No, gods,  
I am no idle votarist: roots, you clear heavens!  
Thus much of this will make black white, foul fair,  
Wrong right, base noble, old young, coward valiant.  
(IV. iii. 25 seqq.)

In certain points, the dramas and poems of Shakespeare seem to derive from mediaeval allegory and satire. To begin with, names like Shallow, Silence, Fang, Snare, Touchstone, Oliver Martext, etc., are

reminiscent of mediaeval allegory. The Induction spoken by Rumour in 2 *King Henry IV*, and the Prologue to Act II of *King Henry V* are similarly in the mediaeval allegorical vein.

One of the characteristics of mediaeval allegorical satire following the *Piers Plowman* tradition is the analysis of contemporary society class by class. This tradition is followed amongst others by Dunbar, Lyndsay, Skelton and Gascoigne as well as by Elizabethan satirists like Crowley. In certain passages in Shakespeare we find a similar analysis of society, class by class. For example, let us take the conversation between the Countess and the Clown in *All's Well that Ends Well*:

*Count*: Will your answer serve fit to all questions?

*Clo* : As fit as ten groats is for the hand of an attorney, as your French crown for your taffeta punk, as Tib's rush for Tom's forefinger, as a pancake for Shrove Tuesday, a morris for May-day, as the nail to his hole, the cuckold to his horn, as a scolding quean to a wrangling knave, as the nun's lip to the friar's mouth, nay, as the pudding to his skin.

(II. ii. 21 seqq.)

A most detailed and witty description of the different types of citizens thronging the gates at the christening of Princess Elizabeth is to be found in *King Henry VIII* (V. iv. 41 seqq.).

The writing of a testament has been a favourite device with satirists to draw down ridicule on certain classes or individuals. One of the best pieces of Goliardic satire is *The Will of the Dying Ass* (written in Latin), in which the ass bequeaths his head to the magistrate, eyes to constables, ears to judges, tongue to brawling wives, and so on. The device is employed, amongst others, by Dunbar in *The Testament of Kennedy*, Lyndsay in *The Testament and Complaint of the Papingo*, Drayton in *The Owl*, and Donne in *The Will*.

Shakespeare uses this framework first of all in *The Rape of Lucrece*:

This brief abridgement of my will I make:  
My soul and body to the skies and ground;  
My resolution, husband, do thou take;  
Mine honour be the knife's that makes my wound;  
My shame be his that did my fame confound;  
And all my fame that lives disbursed be  
To those that live, and think no shame of me. (ll. 1198 seqq.)

It is employed for a humorous or satiric purpose by Falstaff in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*:

*Fal*: Divide me like a bribe buck, each a haunch: I will keep my sides to myself, my shoulders for the fellow of this walk, and my horns I bequeath your husbands. (V. v. 26 seqq.)

In *King Lear*, the Fool's prophecy consists of a series of clauses beginning with "when", which lay down certain conditions illuminative of the contemporary social background:

When priests are more in word than matter;  
When brewers mar their malt with water;  
When nobles are their tailors' tutors;  
No heretics burn'd, but wenches' suitors, etc.  
(III. ii. 81 seqq.)

It is curious to note that such series of "when" clauses we get in two satires of the Renaissance and Elizabethan periods, viz, Churchyard's *Davy Dicar's Dream* and Gascoigne's *The Steel Glass*. Nor is the *fabliau* tradition entirely neglected by Shakespeare, for in *Henry VIII* (I. i. 158) we have a reference to the familiar figures of the Fox and the Wolf.

It now remains to trace verbal similarities between certain passages in contemporary satire and in Shakespeare.

We begin with Marston, *The Scourge of Villanie*, Book II, Satire 2, which the author himself labels "A Cynicke Satyre". It opens dramatically, with an echo of *Richard III* (V. iv. 7):

A man, a man, a kingdome for a man.

J. M. Cowper, in the introduction to his edition of *The Time's Whistle*, points out the parallel between

his sight unstable,  
Takes every bush to be a constable,<sup>38</sup>

or

Each bush doth fright him, and each flying bird,  
Yes, his own shadow, maketh him afear'd,<sup>39</sup>

and the following passage from Shakespeare:

*Glo:* Suspicion always haunts the guilty mind;  
The thief doth fear each bush an officer.  
*K. Hen:* The bird that hath been limed in a bush,  
With trembling wings misdoubteth every bush.  
(3 *Henry VI*, V. vi. 11 seqq.)

We may also add the following passages to Cowper's list. In Satire 7 we find a description of the merchant who has sent out his ship on a commercial enterprise:

If the day be faire  
 He hopes that homeward she doth then repaire;  
 If stormes obscure the brightness of the skie,  
 He hopes she doth in safest harbour lie.  
 .....not a puffe of winde  
 Blowes, but that straight his advantageous minde  
 Carries it to his ship.<sup>40</sup>

This bears a strong resemblance to the remarks of Salanio and Salarino in the opening scene of *The Merchant of Venice*. The guilty conscience of Latro in the same satire reminds us of Macbeth (though the similarity here is more in the situation than in the wording itself) or of Alonso's speech in *The Tempest* (III. iii. 95 seqq.)

Lastly, let us take a passage from *Pericles*. Three fishermen are talking by the sea-shore at Pentapolis:

*Third Fish*: . . . Master, I marvel how the fishes live in the sea.  
*First Fish* : Why, as men do a-land; the great ones eat up the little ones: I can compare our rich misers to nothing so fitly as to a whale; a' plays and tumbles, driving the poor fry before him, and at last devours them all at a mouthful: such whales have I heard on o' the land, who never leave gaping till they've swallowed the whole parish, church, steeple, bells and all. (II. i. 29 seqq.)

This passage has a striking resemblance to one in Donne's *The Progresse of the Soule*, where, describing the whale, the poet says:

He hunts not fish, but as an officer,  
 Stays in his court, at his owne net, and there  
 All suitors of all sorts themselves enthrall;  
 So on his backe lyes this whale wantoning,  
 And in his gulfe-like throat, sucks every thing  
 That passeth neare.....  
 .....  
 O might not states of more equality  
 Consist? and is it of necessity  
 That thousand guiltlesse smals, to make  
 One great, must die?<sup>41</sup>

All that has been said above would go to prove that though Shakespeare writes in the dramatic form, there is much in his works that is in direct line with the Elizabethan satire tradition. But one significant difference must be noted. Most of the Elizabethan satirists followed the Juvenalian and not the Horatian model; i.e., they wrote in a violent and abusive manner, attacking not only vice in general but contemporary

persons, though many of the allusions now seem obscure to us. Lodge is one of the few exceptions to this rule.

Sidney, an Elizabethan, be it noted, makes a fine distinction between two types of Poetry, which he labels the Iambic and the Satiric.<sup>42</sup> This is how he describes the Iambic: "...the bitter but wholesome Iambic, which rubs the galled minde, in making Shame the trumpet of villanie, with bolde and open crying out against naughtines." To describe the Satiric, he quotes Persius's well-known tribute to Horace in his first Satire:

Cunning Horace lays his finger on the faults of his friend one by one, making the latter laugh all the while; and thus gaining entrance, he plays around the heart.

We have to remember that the Greek name of satire, *Iambos*, is from the Greek verb *iapto*, meaning "to shoot", whence "to wound". So the name implies the use of some degree of violence, mental if not physical, against the victim. The Celtic incantation verses which are the origin of Celtic satire, were also meant to inflict some amount of physical harm or suffering on the victim. The violence of Elizabethan satire derives from both these sources, as well as from the confusion (pointed out by Alvin Kernan<sup>43</sup>) made by the Elizabethan satirists between the terms "satire" and "satyr", which made them think that the satire must always be couched in a crude, violent kind of language.

Though Shakespeare employs the rather violent imagery which is part of contemporary satiric tradition, his attitude itself is quite different. He studies the objects of his ridicule or banter with a sympathetic eye and laughs with them, rather than at them. Thereby he shows his affinity with Chaucer and Goldsmith rather than with Langland, Skelton and Pope. Satiric, we suppose, would be Sidney's label for Shakespeare's criticism of life and not Iambic.

It is interesting to note in this connection that Aristotle places Comedy in the direct line of descent from Iambic<sup>44</sup> and defines the *geloion* or ridiculous thus: "The ridiculous may be defined as a mistake or deformity not productive of pain or harm to others."<sup>45</sup> Cicero also describes the comic as arising "out of a certain ugliness or deformity which is pointed at as something offensive but in an inoffensive manner."<sup>46</sup>

This is exactly how Shakespeare evokes the feeling of the comic with regard to both mental and physical deformities, making us laugh at the stupidity of Dogberry or Elbow and the fatness of Falstaff, the laughter itself taking the sting out of the criticism. Not only that; Shakespeare seems even to go beyond the rôle of the satirist, which is to point out the defect, not necessarily to suggest the remedy. According to C. L. Barber,<sup>47</sup> the formula "through release to clarification" would help to explain the



significance of the action not only of the *Henriad* but also of certain Shakespearian comedies like *As You Like It*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Twelfth Night* or *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. In all these the discipline of normal daily life is upset by a spirit of holiday (symbolized in the *Henriad* in the portly person of Falstaff), and it is only after this spirit of Misrule or indiscipline has been mocked at and rejected that there is a return to the desirable norm. We can take the argument a step further and apply it to the tragedies also. When Misrule predominates over the mind in the shape of marital or parental jealousy, or greed for power or any other such overmastering feeling, it is then that chaos invades the moral world of the drama, and it is only after a struggle with the feeling and its rejection that there is a return to the norm. Shakespeare's satire, too, is in line with this and is always a plea for keeping within the limits of sober normality.

SUJATA CHAUDHURI

#### NOTES & REFERENCES

1. Chaucer: *The Works*, ed. F. N. Robinson (Oxford University Press, 2nd edition, 1957), p. 540.
2. M. C. Randolph: The Medical Concept in English Renaissance Satiric Theory; Its Possible Relationships and Implications (*Studies in Philology*, XXXVIII, 2 April, 1941).
3. *Micro-cynicon, Six Snarling Satires*, by 'T. M., Gent.' (1599). The authorship is generally attributed to Thomas Middleton or Thomas Moffat.
4. Bernard Harris: *Dissent and Satire*, article in *Shakespeare in His Own Age* (Shakespeare Survey No. 17, Cambridge University Press, 1964).
5. John Skelton, Laureate: *The Complete Poems* (Dent & Sons Ltd., London, 1959), p. 282, ll. 1112-17.
6. Thomas Lodge: *A Fig for Momus*, ed. Sir E. Gosse for the Hunterian Club, 1883 (microfilm reproduction).
7. Joseph Hall: *Satires and Other Poems* (G. Willis, London, 1838), pp. 123-4.
8. John Marston: *The Poems*, ed. A. Davenport (Liverpool University Press, 1961), p. 176.
9. Thomas Middleton: *The Works*, ed. A. Dyce (Edward Lumley, London, 1840), Vol. V, p. 868.
10. Cyril Tourneur: *The Works*, ed. Allardyce Nicoll (The Fanfrolico Press, London, n. d.), p. 54, ll. 22-25, 33-34.
11. For passages from Shakespeare reference has been made throughout this article to his *Works*, the Globe Edition, ed. Clark and Wright (Macmillan & Co., London, 1928).
12. John Marston: *op. cit.*, p. 102, ll. 1-2, 19-20.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 116, ll. 149-50.
14. R. C., Gent.: *The Time's Whistle*, ed. J. M. Cowper, E.E.T.S. Publication (Trübner, London, 1871), p. 2, ll. 1-4.
15. John Marston: *op. cit.*, p. 116, ll. 160-1.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 134, ll. 117-18.
17. R. C., Gent.: *op. cit.*, p. 2, ll. 8 *seqq.*
18. Thomas Middleton: *op. cit.*, p. 488, Sat. II, ll. 1 *seqq.*
19. John Marston: *The Scourge of Villanie*, ed. G. B. Harrison (The Bodley Head Quartos—XIII, John Lane, Bodley Head, London, 1925), p. xi.
20. Hallett Smith: *Elizabethan Poetry* (Harvard University Press, 1925).
21. *An Anatomie of the World; The first Anniversary*, ll. 191-219.
22. O. J. Campbell: *Shakespeare's Satire* (Oxford University Press, 1943).
23. Joseph Hall: *op. cit.*, p. 19, ll. 3 *seqq.*
24. John Marston: *op. cit.*, p. 78, l. 59.
25. R. C., Gent.: *op. cit.*, p. 93, ll. 2927 *seqq.*
26. Joseph Hall: *op. cit.*, p. 41, ll. 15 *seqq.*
27. *The Works of the English Poets*, ed. Johnson & Chalmers (London, 1810), Vol. IV, p. 128, ll. 299 *seqq.*
28. Ben Jonson: *Epigram LXXXVIII.*
29. John Donne: *Satire 4*, ll. 180-1.
30. *Ibid.*, ll. 81 *seqq.*
31. Ben Jonson: *Epigram XI.*
32. John Donne: *Satire 4*, ll. 17 *seqq.*
33. Edmund Spenser: *The Works*, the Globe Edition (Macmillan, 1940), p. 519, ll. 672 *seqq.*
34. *Greek Poetry for Everyman*, chosen and translated by F. L. Lucas (Dent, London, 1951), p. 265.
35. Edmund Spenser: *op. cit.*, p. 514, ll. 151 *seqq.*
36. Cyril Tourneur: *op. cit.*, p. 61, ll. 134 *seqq.*
37. John Donne: *Satire 4*, ll. 57 *seqq.*
38. R. C., Gent.: *op. cit.*, pp. 108-9, ll. 3484-5.
39. *Ibid.*, pp. 94-95, ll. 2988-9.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 107, ll. 3422-5, 3428-30.
41. John Donne: *The Progresse of the Soule*, stanza xxxiii.
42. Sidney: *An Apolog'e for Poetrie*, ed. E. S. Shuckburgh (Cambridge University Press, 1928), p. 29.
43. Alvin Kernan: *The Cankered Muse* (Yale University Press, 1959).
44. Aristotle: *Poetics*, chap. IV.
45. *Ibid.*, chap. V (tr. Bywater).
46. *De Oratore*, II, 236.
47. C. L. Barber: 'Saturnalia in the Henriad'—article in *Shakespeare: Modern Essays in Criticism*, ed. Leonard F. Dean (Oxford University Press, New York, 1961).

## *The Pastoral on the Elizabethan Stage and Shakespeare*

A PRETENCE at being natural is, I suppose, the most questionable of all pretences. Yet this is what a pastoral involves. An artificial reconstruction of a natural setting is a sort of rough-and-ready formula for the pastoral form in art. From the days of Theocritus European literature has had a very rich strand of Pastoral coming all the way down to the present times. My present investigation confines itself to a very limited area of this vast and variegated field; an area however, that is inviting in its fertility. The Elizabethan age, whether due to an excellent manuring (to continue the metaphor) or a brilliant "ploughmanship" or both, had seen an excellent harvest in a lot of crops. Hence, the pastoral, like many other vital forms of literature, had significant expression during the Elizabethan age. To my mind the pastoral bears a very intimate relationship to the Elizabethan age—its flowering during that period is by no means an accidental, nor a merely formal phenomenon. I shall try to work out this interesting relationship.

One remembers Polonius introducing the itinerant actors to the Prince of Denmark—"The best actors in the world, either for tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical-comical-historical-pastoral".<sup>1</sup> One feels grateful to Shakespeare for the Lord Chamberlain's garrulity for here he gives us, however comically exaggerated, a definite indication of the importance of the pastoral form among the prevailing modes of English drama on the Elizabethan stage. By this I am not suggesting that had Polonius not told us we would not have been aware of the pastoral as a "genre" in Elizabethan literature, particularly in drama. Far from it. All the important writers of critical treatises in the Elizabethan age like Puttenham and Sidney, or poets like Spenser, Drayton and Daniel, or dramatists like Peele, Lyly, Jonson and others were intensely aware of the significance of the pastoral form in Elizabethan literature. But what is interesting in this semi-farcical catalogue of Polonius is the inclusion of the pastoral in the "big four" of Elizabethan drama. One may recall that in 1623 Heminge and Condell had classified Shakespeare's plays according to the first three of the four major types mentioned by Polonius—"tragedies", "comedies" and "histories". But Shakespeare's treatment of the pastoral form is no less considerable. It received its due share of attention from him, making up in

literary significance what it may lack in numerical (for only three of Shakespeare's plays deal with pastoral themes, two openly and one implicitly, and those, too, in parts). The present study of the pastoral theme and form in Elizabethan literature is an attempt to provide an adequate background for a discussion of the significance of the pastoral theme and form in Shakespeare. An understanding of its significance in Shakespeare's plays will, I think, be the most useful key to perceiving the intimate relationship which the pastoral bears to the Elizabethan age.

The pastoral form appears to have been something of a "rage" in Renaissance England. Any historical account of the development of the pastoral form, whether it is as detailed as Sir Walter Greg's *Pastoral Poetry and Pastoral Drama* or as brief as the slender but stimulating introduction by Mr. Frank Kermode to his survey of English Pastoral Poetry, makes it perfectly clear why the pastoral motif should have been taken up with such enthusiasm in England in the sixteenth century. It was a form which had a distinct classical heritage, and enjoyed great prestige among the continental humanists. Naturally, therefore, it was resuscitated along with other classical literary forms. Taking a bird's eye view, the pastoral form began in Alexandria with Callimachus, was perfected by Theocritus, Bion and Moschus, and came down in various stages through Virgil, Calpurnius, Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, Mantuanus, Marot, Sannazaro, Montemayor, Guarini, Tasso and others to the English humanistic writers in the sixteenth century like Sidney and Spenser. With the Greeks and the Romans the pastoral had been confined to poetry; the Italians and the Portuguese extended it to the novel (Sannazaro's *Arcadia*; Montemayor's *Diana Enamorada*) and the drama (Tasso's *Aminta*; Guarini's *Pastor Fido*).

Apart from this impressive European legacy, the English stage, in particular, had inherited a native tradition of shepherd drama. There were the shepherds of the Nativity plays in England. Two of the liveliest plays in a representative cycle of Middle English plays like the Wakefield pageants are *Prima and Secunda Pastorum* in which the shepherds and their "country caper" are given a free play. Whether consciously or unconsciously, Shakespeare must have imbibed this tradition, specially when he wrote the pastoral scene in the fourth act of *The Winter's Tale*.

The question here is: are we in a position to understand the significance of the pastoral form in Elizabethan literature simply by indicating its literary ancestry? The answer to my mind is an emphatic "no". The pastoral, as I hope to show, was far too significant a form in Elizabethan literature to be merely explained by a literary ancestry. To make myself clear it is necessary at this point to pause a little and consider what the pastoral motif might have stood for in literature.

Any interpretation of the pastoral form, whether as involved as Emp-

son's<sup>2</sup> or as straightforward as Kermode's<sup>3</sup> will make it quite clear that the pastoral implies a contrast, a contrast which may be described in the broadest terms as between a hierarchical society in which the values and conventions have somehow got congealed and a simpler one as pristine and natural as possible. Pope in his *Discourse on Pastoral Poetry* says: "The original of poetry is ascribed to that age which succeeded the creation of the world: and as the keeping of flocks seems to have been the first employment of mankind, the most ancient sort of poetry was probably pastoral."<sup>4</sup> But, of course, when we talk of the pastoral motif in literature we do not really mean the poetry of the obscure beginnings of human civilization. As Pope himself says a little later: "A pastoral is an imitation of the action of a shepherd."<sup>5</sup> The word "imitation" implies, as I have suggested earlier, the existence of a society opposed to the natural simplicity of an actual pastoral world: for example, Alexandria under the Ptolemies or London under Queen Elizabeth I.

It is because of this implied contrast that, I feel, there is a difference between the cult of nature as promulgated by Rousseau which influenced the nineteenth-century Romantics and the cult of nature that is expressed in pastoral literature. For Rousseau and, to a certain extent, for a Romantic poet like Wordsworth, the natural world conceived is a real one. (Note that Wordsworth calls his poem about the real shepherd Michael a pastoral poem.) Rousseau conceives of an actual state of nature prior to this civilized society, with "man satisfying his hunger at the first oak and slaking his thirst at the first brook; finding his bed at the foot of the tree which afforded him a repast; and, with that all his wants supplied."<sup>6</sup> But Nature in a pastoral derives its reality, not from an actual existence, but from a contrast with its opposite—a rigidly hierarchical society headed by an aristocracy. For instance, in Greene's *Pandosto*, where we find almost a manifesto, as it were, of the pastoral life in Fawnia's defence of the pastoral way of life, a contrast with the court is maintained throughout:

Sir, what richer state than content, or what sweeter life than quiet?  
 . . . We count our attire brave enough if warm enough, and our food  
 dainty if to suffice nature: our greatest enemy is the wolf, our only  
 care in safe keeping our flock: instead of courtly ditties we spend the  
 days with country songs: our amorous conceits are homely thoughts  
 . . . Envy looketh not so low as shepherds: shepherds gaze not so high  
 as ambition.<sup>7</sup>

This is, in fact, a commonplace in any defence of the pastoral way of life—one finds it in Spenser's *Colin Clout's Come Home Again*, in the sixth book of *The Faerie Queene*, in Sidney, in Lodge, in Shakespeare. What emerges from all this is the fact that the pastoral as a motif is used in a

definite social context with a definite social and literary purpose. It is not a worship of nature simply because the simplicity of nature is beautiful, but because it serves as a useful foil to a different way of life—most notably, a courtly way of life. Moreover, the idea of a pastor ruling over a flock of sheep as an ideal of an ordered and perfect existence is possibly always present at the back of the consciousness of every Christian artist because of the prevalent image of Christ as the pastor. The twenty-third Psalm expresses the allegory in its various ramifications:

1. The Lord is my shepherd: therefore I can lack nothing.
2. He shall feed me in a green pasture: and lead me forth beside the water of comfort.
3. Yet though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff comfort me....

And so on. This basic Christian image gives, I think, a special warrant to the Renaissance and post-Renaissance use of the pastoral as a foil to the practices of corrupt, sophisticated society. The purpose of the contrast is to imply a criticism of the latter. It is this, I think, that Puttenham indicates when he openly declares the pastoral to be a kind of disguised writing:

...the poet devised the Eglogue...not of purpose to counterfeit or represent the rustical manner of loves and communication: but under the vaile of homely persons and rude speeches to insinuate and glance at greater matters....

Sidney seems to take the view even farther and almost identifies the pastoral with an allegorical device for political propaganda: "Is the poor pype disdained which sometime out of Melibeus' mouth, can shewe the miserie of people under hard lords, or ravening souldiers?"<sup>9</sup> He even goes to the length of suggesting that the pastoral may be used as an allegorical story like Aesop's fables: "sometimes under the pretty tales of wolves and sheepe can include the whole considerations of wrong doing and patience".<sup>10</sup>

The prevalence of the pastoral form in the Elizabethan age, therefore, was not merely a literary revival in vacuo; the pastoral motif had a distinct organic function in the literature of the time which was highly court-conscious—centred, in fact, round the patronage of the court. Like all significant literary genres, therefore, the pastoral in the sixteenth century was the product, on the one hand, of a conscious artistic exercise of imitating a rich and long-standing classical tradition, and, on the other, of an organic need for the particular form arising from a particular context. I

will now try to examine some of the individual handlings of the pastoral form in the sixteenth century. The apex of my discussion will be Shakespeare.

In the context of sixteenth-century England the basic tension in the pastoral was that between the courtly way of life and the pastoral. This tension is very largely present in the pastoral works of Spenser and Sidney specially when one considers their thematic use of the pastoral. In other words, if we are to exclude the more or less purely formal pastoral poems like Spenser's *Astrophel* [which falls directly in the line of the pastoral elegy taken up later by Milton (*Lycidas*), Shelley (*Adonais*) and Arnold (*Thyrsis*)], both these artists are trying to relate the pastoral to the courtly world in a way which implies a significant criticism of the courtly way of life. About 1591 Spenser wrote a fairly straightforward allegorical satire against the court in *Colin Clout's Come Home Againe*. The pastoral form and theme, it seems to me, are given a complex and more complete handling by Spenser in the sixth book of *The Faerie Queene*. Significantly enough, the sixth book of *The Faerie Queene* is the book of Courtesy. Sir Calidore represents the ideal courtier in Spenser's world. The concept of an ideal courtier had been given a wide circulation in sixteenth-century England through Sir Thomas Hoby's translation of Castiglione's *Courtier*, together with other books like Sir Thomas Eliot's *Boke of the Governour*. In the sixth book of *The Faerie Queene* the pastoral world acts as a kind of purgatory through which the courteous knight has to pass before he is fit to see the vision of the dance of the Graces. Once the courtier has seen the vision, Spenser does not hesitate to destroy the pastoral world—it is destroyed by a band of robbers and Pastorella's aristocratic heritage is established. In other words, as I have tried to indicate earlier, the natural simplicity of the pastoral world is never an end in itself for the literary artists of Queen Elizabeth I's court, but serves the function of symbolizing a certain kind of norm against which the most important social institution of the time, the court, is evaluated.

This is also illustrated, I think, by Sidney's *Arcadia*. Written as a literary entertainment for his sister, the Countess of Pembroke, this book ushers in a particular literary attitude in sixteenth-century England which has sometimes been called Arcadianism after this significant book. In more ways than one Sidney's *Arcadia* may be regarded as a study in the ideal of a courtier as one finds it expounded in Castiglione's book.<sup>11</sup> Even the immediate occasion of writing this book follows the formula laid down by Castiglione that a courtier must be proficient "in writing both rime and prose, and especially in this our vulgar tongue... he shall by this manner never want pleasant entertainments with women which ordinarily love such matters."<sup>12</sup> Apart from this external affiliation, the

entire book is charged with an atmosphere of refined aristocratic sophistication. The story centres round King Basilius, Queen Gynecia, their two daughters Pamela and Philoclea, and the two princes Pyrocles and Musidorus who stray into this world. It is interesting to note that the revised and enlarged version of *Arcadia*, published in 1590, begins almost dramatically with the two shepherd lovers, Strephon and Claius, moaning about their love (a typical pastoral set up), when the sea brings to them the two princes, Pyrocles and Musidorus, who have been shipwrecked. In this semi-dramatic situation of the two princes being shipwrecked on the shore of *Arcadia* one is tempted to see the courtly world making a startling entry into the pastoral world.

This sets the story into motion; complications follow one another, and *Arcadia* becomes the centre of courtly intrigues without any of the boredom of the day-to-day administration of a real court. In the figures of Philanax and Kalander Sidney draws the pictures of ideal courtiers, loyal to the very end and courteous even when they disapprove.<sup>13</sup> In Philanax's letter to Basilius we hear the protests of courtly life against the unreality of pastoral life. As I have indicated earlier, the pastoral way of life could never be the goal, but a step towards one. It is significant that like Spenser in the sixth book of *The Faerie Queene*, Sidney, too, at the end of *Arcadia* makes the pastoral world give way to a final triumph of the courtly world.

Sidney's *Arcadia*, though it was finally published in 1590 in a revised form, had been in private circulation for some time and must have influenced the two other famous Elizabethan pastorals. Robert Greene took up this genre distinctly under the influence of *Arcadia* and produced his romance *Pandosto, The Triumph of Time*, otherwise known as *Dorastus and Fawnia*, which was to be used later by Shakespeare in *The Winter's Tale*. Greene's romance, however, was published two years before the publication of Sidney's *Arcadia*. Lodge combined the two major trends in the prose fiction of the time, Euphuism and Arcadianism, in his pastoral romance *Rosalynde*, which came out in 1590 and which Shakespeare transformed into *As You Like It*. The other considerable pastoral romance in circulation was Montemayor's *Diana*. But I shall exclude it from the present discussion for two reasons: first, it was not originally written in English; and, second, when Shakespeare used one of its episodes in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* he did not borrow its pastoral fittings.

The juxtaposition and even to a certain extent the overlapping of the courtly and the pastoral world which we have already seen in Sidney's *Arcadia*, is also present in the two romances mentioned. In all these kings or princes or princesses stray into a world of shepherds. This world, one is constantly reminded, is one of simple joys and pleasure. But the initial



harmony is completely disrupted by the arrival of these aristocratic visitors who bring in their wake complicated intrigues.

It is this intrigue that provides the narrative interest. A great deal of what may be called the "box-office" appeal of the pastoral in an age which was actually entertainment-conscious, came from the handling of these intrigues. The intrigues, of course, mainly centred round the theme of love. In the rich natural exuberance of a pastoral setting, the only big problem appears to be "love-sickness". As Shakespeare says in *Twelfth Night*:

Love-thoughts lie rich when canopied with bowers (I. i)

The central intrigue in the plot of *Arcadia* is a hideous situation where Pyrocles dressed up as a woman is loved by Basilius, his wife, Gynecia, and his daughter Philoclea at the same time under various misapprehensions. Lodge's *Rosalynde* deals with practically nothing else but love. Starting with the love between Rosader and Rosalynde, who is disguised as the shepherd Ganymede, the reader finds Alinda, the chaste follower of Diana, suddenly catching the disease and eventually marrying Saladyne, and Montanus' incurable love for the disdainful Phebe suddenly faced with the rather unpleasant complication of Phebe falling in love with Ganymede alias Rosalynde. Greene's *Pandosto*, as its sub-title suggests, is the story of the love between Dorastus and Fawnia. The idyllic charm of the pastoral background provides a congenial setting for the passion of love. As Greg suggests, the pastoral is the ideal setting for love in vacuo.<sup>14</sup>

It is this "box-office" appeal, as I have called it, of the pastoral romances that is exploited with an obvious gusto by the majority of the pastoral plays on the Elizabethan stage. I feel that the surest way to understand the maturity of Shakespeare's handling of the pastoral theme and form is through the earlier group of pastoral extravaganzas playing havoc with the theme of love-intrigue in a pastoral setting. Peele's *The Arraignement of Paris* (1581), Lyly's *Gallathea* (1584), *The Woman in the Moone* (c. 1584) and *Love's Metamorphoses* (pub. 1601) all these play variations, as it were, on the theme of pastoral love. In this respect these plays are comparable with Fletcher's *The Faithful Shepherdess*, which falls just outside the scope of my present survey, but in which I feel that the amorous interplay of the Elizabethan pastoral romances and dramas comes to a climax. In this cluster of earlier Elizabethan plays the spirit and the atmosphere have far more in common with the romances than with proper drama as in Shakespeare's *As You Like It* or in Jonson's *The Sad Shepherd*. An almost Gothic love of detail and a spirit of exuberance bordering on a love of

fantasy, which blaze through the Romances, are also present in these plays. Though each of these plays was actually performed by the children of the Royal Chapel or of St. Paul's and most of them were first acted before the Queen, yet I fail to see in them any very marked dramatic qualities. Despite praises from a fine critic like Lamb, these plays seem to me to abound in incidents which are hardly ever focussed dramatically in the way they are even in Fletcher, for instance. Greg has discreetly called this group of plays Mythological drama. Figures from classical mythology jostle with mortal shepherds and shepherdesses and create complications. Greg gives a fairly exhaustive account of the literary ancestry of these plays in Italian plays like those of Poliziano and Correggio.<sup>15</sup> The pastoral motif in these plays is, I feel, at its thinnest.

*The Arraynement of Paris* is the first of this group of extravaganzas. In this play Paris is made into a shepherd in love with Oenone. The pastoral exterior sets the tone for a love theme. The beauty contest between Juno, Venus and Pallas Athene is given a focal point, as it were, in the idyllic love between Paris and Oenone. It is, however, shattered rudely by the strife between the goddesses at which Paris has to be the arbiter. In the pastoral world are also included the amorous cross-purposes which cut across each of these plays. Oenone is in love with Paris while Colin is in love with Oenone. Even through all this the deeper thematic significance of the pastoral peeps in. Peele's description of Flora's "cunning counterfeit" in which "art and nature met in one" foreshadows the famous dialogue between Perdita and Polixenes in the fourth act of *The Winter's Tale*. But basically the play revolves round the intriguing exchange between the gods and goddesses and the mortal shepherds.

These pastoral plays and romances bristle with "disdainful nymphs". Bred in the aristocratic tradition of courtly love, their scornfulness produces a curious tension in the alleged natural innocence of the pastoral setting. In Peele's play, for instance, the cruelty of the disdainful mistress goes too far—Colin dies of a broken heart and the enraged Cupid decrees that forsworn lovers all go to hell.

Love runs riot in Lyly's play *The Woman in the Moone*. This play strikes me as the most interesting in the whole group. For in it Lyly takes up the idea of a state of Nature. Nature herself is personified but her domain, the pastoral world, is given the name "Utopia", a name which must have been rich with associations for an Elizabethan. This Utopia, we soon learn, is nothing but an uncorrupted state of nature. Nature says

...fayre Utopia  
Where my chiefe works do flourish in their prime  
And wanton in their prime simplicity.

It is, therefore, a state which links up with the garden of Eden on the one hand and a Rousseauesque state of nature on the other. However, this world suffers from one great want—the shepherds complain to Dame Nature that they have no female companion. Therefore Nature summons up the essence of all beautiful things and creates Pandora.<sup>16</sup> But the planets, out of jealousy, take turns in influencing Pandora and upsetting the fine and harmonious balance of Nature, to the intense discomfort of the shepherds who woo her. Thus the pastoral here is a mere excuse for getting up an entertaining play expressing Elizabethan beliefs about the influence of the stars on men. At the end of the play, on being given a choice, Pandora chooses to reside in the moon and thus becomes “the Woman in the Moone”. It is interesting to note that in each of the mythological plays Diana is given the role of an arbiter, an indirect compliment to the Virgin Queen.<sup>17</sup>

*Gallathea* and *Loves Metamorphoses* deal with episodes from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. In *Gallathea* Lyly follows the Arcadian tradition by producing an amorous interplay between Gallathea and Phillida who are both girls dressed up as boys to avoid being sacrificed to Neptune, and between them and Diana's nymphs. In both the plays Cupid plays a Puckish role tying and untying love-knots and punishing nymphs and shepherds for not paying enough attention to him. The final impression is one of summer revelry when men and women fall victims to the passion of love unawares. The pastoral merely provides the outdoor setting necessary for the complicated but superficial designs of the god of love. In vain do the nymphs and shepherds declaim against love: “Gods doe know and men should, that love is a consuming of wit, and restoring of folly, a starting blindnesse and a blind gazing.”<sup>18</sup> In the end no one can resist it in the pastoral setting; such is the league between Cupid and Pan.

Having glutted oneself with all these sighs and tears and cross-intrigues, with what relief one turns to Shakespeare's *As You Like It*! I shall not try to gloss over the fact that he indulges in all the conventional patterns of the pastoral. In fact, in *As You Like It* he uses them all and adds a few new things. But through all the hackneyed conventions Shakespeare focusses a totality of vision amazing in its variety, complexity and inner tension. In *As You Like It* there are three pairs of lovers directly transposed from Lodge's *Rosalynde* on which it is based. But I feel, while the three pairs of lovers in Lodge's *Rosalynde* simply produce a cumulative effect, in Shakespeare's play the three pairs are handled distinctly and they represent the three different planes of the pastoral. The love of Rosalind and Orlando belongs to the refined courtly level; significantly, I think, it is thwarted in the vitiated atmosphere of Frederick's court and only finds its fulfilment in the pastoral atmosphere of the forest of Arden,

with Rosalind actually disguised as a shepherd. The love between Celia and Oliver, although less convincing than the one between Lodge's Alinda and Saladyne, seems to imply in a quasi-symbolical way the purgatorial aspect of the pastoral world: it is when Oliver falls in love with Celia<sup>19</sup> that the reader is satisfied about his inner conversion. In the love between Silvius and Phebe Shakespeare makes a concession to the usual pastoralism of the time. But apart from these three pairs of lovers whom Shakespeare derives from Lodge's romance, there is yet a fourth pair—Touchstone and Audrey—who, with William, add another dimension to Shakespeare's treatment of the pastoral. In a sense Touchstone and Audrey, like the Clown and Mopsa in *The Winter's Tale*, provide the "low comedy" without which a Shakespearian comedy is incomplete. But Touchstone is, after all, a court fool and jealously champions the cause of the court against the pastoral.<sup>20</sup> He, we find, has fallen a ready victim to the vices of speech that must have flourished in a highly articulate court like that of Queen Elizabeth I and yet he is in love with the honest "country wench" Audrey. The contrast is a source of humour, as, for instance, when he presents Audrey to the Duke with a smug Euphuistic flourish: "A poor Virgin sir, an ill-favour'd thing, sir, to take that that no man else will: rich honesty dwells like a miser, sir, in a poor house, and your pearl in your foul oyster."<sup>21</sup>

The way Shakespeare has fashioned a character like Touchstone in relation to the pastoral is one of the masterly strokes of his dramatic imagination. In none of the romances and plays I have examined is there an attempt to dramatize the contrast of attitude between the courtly way of behaviour and the pastoral. The nearest we get to any such thing is the group of mariners, Robin, Raffe and Dick, in Lyly's *Gallathea*, because they are marked out from the rest of the characters of the play by the natural colloquial prose which they speak. But this distinction in speech remains a superficial distinction as the characters are not in any way related to the pastoral world. Touchstone, on the other hand, as, I think, his name rather comically suggests, is the common measuring rod for both the worlds. In Touchstone Shakespeare focusses the inner drama of the court encountering the pastoral, although the method here (unlike as in the case of the court fool in *King Lear*) is one of absurdity and fun. I shall cite the most obvious instance from the first scene of the fifth act of *As You Like It* where Touchstone tries to outwit the simple shepherd William who has the audacity to be his rival in love.

*Touchstone:* You do love this maid?

*William:* I do, sir.

*Touchstone:* Give me your hand. Art thou learned?

*William:* No sir.

*Touchstone*: Then learn this of me: to have is to have for it is a figure in rhetoric, that drink may be poured out of a cup into a glass, by filling the one, doth empty the other; for all your writers do consent that ipse is he: now you are not ipse for I am he.

*William*: Which he, sir?

*Touchstone*: He, sir, that must marry this woman. Therefore, you clown, abandon—which is in the vulgar leave,—the society,—which in the boorish is company,—of this female,—which in the common is woman, which is woman, which together is, abandon the society of this female, or, clown, thou perishest; or, to thy better understanding, diest; or, to wit, I kill thee, make thee away, translate life into death, thy liberty into bondage, I will deal in poison with thee, or in bastinado, or in steel I will bandy with thee in faction, I will o'er-run thee with policy, I will kill thee a hundred and fifty ways, therefore tremble, and depart.

*Audrey*: Do, good William.

*William*: God rest you merry sir. [*Exit.*]

This is the *reductio ad absurdum* of the contrast between the two attitudes, the courtly and the pastoral, particularly as expressed in speech. But the absurdity drives the point home. The courtly speech is elaborate and artificial and the pastoral is simple and sincere. Here we necessarily come up against a problem which cannot be overlooked: how should the playwright adjust the language of the play to suit the peculiar needs of a pastoral?

The pastoral implies a double plane of existence—it is, as I said in the beginning, a form of affectation of simplicity. Therefore a style to match the simplicity of the pastoral would be a problem for any dramatic artist, more so for an Elizabethan who had to make due allowances for the principle of “decorum”, which, roughly speaking, meant a fitting of the style to the matter. The problem is aggravated by the fact that the pastoral is not meant to be a naturalistic representation of the lower classes. Puttenham says clearly (as quoted earlier) that the purpose of the pastoral was “under the vaile of homely persons and rude speeches to insinuate and glance at greater matters.” But it is Michael Drayton who gives an idea of the confusing nature of the subject. “The subject of Pastorals”, says Drayton, “as the language of it ought to be poor, silly and of the coarsest Woofe in appearance. Nevertheless, the most High and most Noble matters of the world may be shadowed in them, and for certaine sometimes are”<sup>22</sup> Dr. Johnson, with a failure of perception possible only in the greatest, misses this basic ambiguity in pastoral when he censures *Lycidas* as “easy, vulgar, and therefore disgusting”. A solution is suggested by Pope in his *Discourse on Pastoral Poetry*: “As there is a difference betwixt simplicity and rusticity, so the expression of simple thoughts should be plain, but

not clownish."<sup>23</sup> It is the same idea, I think, that is behind Wordsworth's theory of poetic diction as the actual adoption or true imitation of the real and very language of low and rustic life "freed from provincialisms."<sup>24</sup> Even in the more recent "realistic" play *Roots* by the socialist playwright, Arnold Wesker, the working class heroine Beatie feels genuinely articulate only when, towards the end, she suddenly finds herself freed from her provincial mannerisms.

In other words, in any representational literary form distinction of social classes brings in the problem of an apt language. This problem is specially complicated in an Elizabethan pastoral. First because of the very demanding concept of "decorum", and secondly because the shepherds in a pastoral are not really meant to be naturalistic representations of "low-born" people.

This problem is entirely side-tracked in the Elizabethan pastoral romances. Inheriting a sophisticated rhetorical tradition, the nymphs and swains in *Arcadia*, *Rosalynde* and *Pandosto* are merely stylized courtly figures in disguise. They speak the same polished Euphuistic language. For instance, Fawnia's animated defence of the pastoral way of life is composed of neatly balanced antithetical sentences. Again, note the roundabout language of refinement Coridon uses in *Rosalynde* when he asks Alinda and Ganymede about their unfortunate circumstances: "If I should not (fair Damosell) occasionate offence or renew your griefs by rubbing the scar, I would faine crave so much favour as to know the cause of your misfortunes."<sup>25</sup> In the so-called "mythological" plays the entire set-up is fabulous and the language is that of stylized High Comedy. Lyly does introduce coarse "low" language in *Gallathea* but the low characters are mariners and not shepherds.

In Shakespeare I find an increasing awareness of this problem which makes his handling of pastoral more and more real. In *As You Like It*, for most of the time, the language of the pastoral world is the same as that of the court. This may be seen in the conversation between Corin and Silvius in Act II, Sc. ii, when the reader first comes in touch with the pastoral world. The wooing scene between Silvius and Phebe in Act III, Sc. v, puts at times even the most rhetorical courtier to shame. There is nothing of the natural simplicity that Pope or Wordsworth advocates; Shakespeare here is simply reviving the atmosphere evoked by Lodge's stylized description of the corresponding couple, Phebe and Montanus.

But suddenly in Act III, Sc. ii, Shakespeare adopts a different method. Corin, the simple shepherd in the best pastoral tradition, is challenged by Touchstone the court fool. And I feel, that by making Touchstone the champion of the court, Shakespeare helps to bring out by contrast, the

pristine simplicity of the pastoral way of life, a thing which none of the more "artificial" Arcadian treatments succeeds in achieving.

*Touchstone*: Wast ever in court, shepherd?

*Corin*: No, truly.

*Touchstone*: Then thou art damned.

*Corin*: Nay, I hope.

*Touchstone*: Truly, thou art damned like an ill-roasted egg, all on one side.

*Corin*: For not being at court? Your reason?

*Touchstone*: Why, if thou never wast at court, thou never sawest good manners, then thy manners must be wicked; and wickedness is sin, and sin is damnation. Thou art in a parlous state, shepherd.

*Corin*: Not a whit, *Touchstone*: those that are good manners at the court are as ridiculous in the country as the behaviour of the country is most mockable at the court. You told me you salute not at the court but you kiss your hands: that courtesy would be uncleanly, if courtiers were shepherds.

But it is in *The Winter's Tale* that we find Shakespeare utilizing the formal and the thematic aspects of pastoral with a fullness and complexity that justify the entire genre in Elizabethan literature. For instance, he varies his use of language in the pastoral scenes according to the different characters. At the centre of it all stands Perdita, "the Queene of Curds and Creame", who speaks some of the finest poetry in the play. When she speaks with an aristocratic dignity, it is not because Shakespeare could not write any other way but because, like Spenser's Pastorella, she is a king's daughter, and Shakespeare does not fail to exploit the irony of the situation. Polixenes says

... Nothing she do's or seems  
But smacks of something greater than her selfe  
Too noble for this place."<sup>26</sup>

Yet Shakespeare shows restraint in never giving her too elaborately worked out rhetorical speeches. This comes out best, I think, in the famous dialogue between Perdita and Polixenes where Perdita's simple conviction expressed in the simple dignity of her speech contrasts with the rather intricate speech of Polixenes.

But Shakespeare's special triumph in *The Winter's Tale* is, I think, in the inclusion of the low comedy of the Clown, Autolycus, Mopsa and others in the beautiful and dignified pastoral setting. Ben Jonson's *The Sad Shepherd* has been hailed as a unique attempt to write an "English" pastoral-play as opposed to the "classical" conventional plays; yet even Ben Jonson never introduces the actual spoken language of the rustic

people in his pastoral. Shakespeare does, and although he indulges in the gross anachronism of introducing his native Warwickshire dialect in the pastoral land of Bohemia, yet the dramatic gain is enormous—Shakespeare's pastoral world, instead of being the cold abstraction of the classical convention, frisks and leaps into life. Between the simple and beautiful Perdita and the Clown with his pastoral nymphs hovers the figures of benevolence itself, the old shepherd. The pastoral world thus conjured up by Shakespeare is a fine example of the dramatic effectiveness of Shakespeare's spirit of "inclusiveness". If Professor Tillyard exaggerates, he exaggerates a truth, I feel, when he says in *Shakespeare's Last Plays*: "Shakespeare never did anything finer, more serious, more evocative of his full powers, than his picture of an earthly paradise painted in the form of the English countryside. . . the whole country setting stands out as the cleanest and most elegant symbol of the new life into which the old horrors are to be transmuted." The pastoral in *The Winter's Tale* succeeds in combining the refined, entertaining and slightly allegorical pastoral tradition of the classical writers and the Christian image of the ideal unpolluted state of the garden of Eden. Both these, combined with the robustness of a genuine country atmosphere coming down from the Nativity plays, produce a vital and complete pastoral world in which all the complications nurtured in the horrifying jealousy-ridden court of Leontes are dissolved in the idyllic love of Florizel and Perdita.

In *The Winter's Tale* the well-worn and popular Elizabethan treatment of love in a pastoral setting is given a distilled expression. Considered from this point of view, the love of Florizel and Perdita stands out as the fulfilment of the entire Elizabethan build-up of love in an idyllic setting. All the coyness and the artificiality of the earlier "mythological" plays have disappeared in this play. Perdita is a combination, so to speak, of Diana and Venus, hitherto strongly opposed in the other pastoral plays, and she is, therefore, the best medium, as it were, for purging the evil of Leontes' jealousy directed against the chaste and pure Hermione. Perdita is described as "Flora, peering in April's front",<sup>27</sup> and she will have no meddling with the processes of nature—the "streaked gillyvours" are, for her "nature's bastards".<sup>28</sup> In a situation rather reminiscent of the sixth book of *The Faerie Queene* Florizel wooes Perdita. But "country caper" and the rough-and tumble bucolic mirth serve admirably to bring out by contrast the intensity of the love between Florizel and Perdita. The slyness of the singing pedlar Autolycus makes this world of purity all the more convincing. Clearly Shakespeare makes the best of the tradition of Mak the sheep-stealer in the Nativity plays. The lively world of Autolycus, the Clown, Mopsa and others provides a kind of background which helps to put the young wooing couple in perspective. Their love, while in



its supreme idealization it still retains traces of the convention of pastoral love in vacuo which characterizes their originals, Dorastus and Fawnia, for instance, yet succeeds in achieving a sense of the real, largely derived from the authentic naturalistic background. Just as Sannazaro in his *L'Arcadia* is believed to have described an actual valley near Naples, Shakespeare is believed to have derived not a little of his pastoral world from his own native country in Warwickshire. *The Winter's Tale* contains one of the loveliest passages of flower description in English literature, born of what must have been a loving observation of nature.

Yet nature in *The Winter's Tale* is not the unadulterated natural world of Wordsworth or Rousseau. In the famous dialogue between Perdita and Polixenes Shakespeare expresses with remarkable succinctness what must have been a complicated and significant issue in the minds of Elizabethan thinkers. Just as the speech of Ulysses in *Troilus and Cressida* expresses faith in a hierarchical structure of the body politic, so *The Winter's Tale* vindicates the nobility of nurture, of aristocracy in short. It is simply a process of refinement of nature by nurture. It is interesting to recall that this is the thought with which he opens his other pastoral play *As You Like It*, and with which he is preoccupied in his supposedly last play *The Tempest*. In the third scene of the fourth act of *The Winter's Tale*, as a rejoinder to Perdita's objection against "pied" and "streak'd" flowers which have undergone the gardener's art of grafting, Polixenes speaks the famous lines:

Yet nature is made better by no mean,  
But nature makes that mean. So o'er that art  
Which, you say, adds to nature, is an art  
That nature makes. You see, sweet maid, we marry  
A gentler scion to the wildest stock  
And make conceive a bark of baser kind  
By bud of nobler race; this is an art  
Which does mend nature—change it rather; but  
The art itself is nature. (II. 89-97)

With this subtle piece of reasoning Shakespeare tries to dissolve the dualism between "nature" and "art" and, in a way, the opposition between the pastoral and the court. The pastoral, like the court, is a product of a union between art and nature.

Either in or through the pastoral world of Shakespeare's, which is the world of nature made more significant by his supreme art, all the unpleasant problems of the court find their solution. The court settings with which both *As You Like It* and *The Winter's Tale* begin, are putrid with artificiality and unnaturalness. In *As You Like It* Oliver deprives his brother of his proper "nurture" and tries to get him killed. Duke Frederick,

having usurped the throne from his brother, now banishes his niece and along with her his own daughter Celia. In *The Winter's Tale* Leontes in a frenzy of groundless jealousy which would probably have put even the Moor to shame, tries to arrange the murder of his guest and friend, Polixenes, and accuses his innocent queen, Hermione, of adultery and causes her apparent death and the loss of the child. These terrible wrongs cannot be set right in the turmoil of the courtly world, and the pastoral worlds of Arden and Bohemia serve as the purgatorial states. It is in Arden that the younger generation expiates the wrongs of the older generation through love. In the end there is a general change of hearts. Even Duke Frederick (who, incidentally, is killed by his brother in Lodge's *Rosalynde*) is converted by an "old religious man" on the outskirts of Arden, and all the struggles are resolved in the harmony of rustic revelry. In *The Winter's Tale* the theme of expiation is even more effective. The pastoral world as a symbol of this spiritual transition comes in between two groups of incidents in royal courts. The unnatural complications which are brewed in the first three acts and which appear almost insoluble, are suddenly resolved by the power of love between Florizel and Perdita in the pastoral world, almost a counterpart of an earthly paradise.

To conclude, the Elizabethan pastoral tradition attains a complete fulfilment in the hands of Shakespeare. Starting as a conscious and artistic imitation of classical and Italian forms, the pastoral captured sixteenth-century England through songs, eclogues and highly ornate pastoral romances. Shakespeare utilized the artistic potentialities of this outburst by using it in two of his most successful plays. But in doing so he showed a remarkable insight into the problems of the pastoral form and theme. Recalling the tradition of the English Nativity plays, he tried, at least in his more mature work, to capture some of the vitality of an actual pastoral locale, while, on the other hand, following the tradition of Sidney and Spenser, he focussed a good deal of the significant thought of his time in the theme of his pastoral, more particularly in *The Winter's Tale*. With the *esemplastic* power of his imagination Shakespeare brought together the different traditions to be fused into a significant piece of drama. The pastoral in *The Winter's Tale* is so convincing that the best comment on the play is, I feel, one of Shakespeare's own pronouncements:

The art itself is nature.

JASODHARA BAGCHI

## NOTES &amp; REFERENCES

1. *Hamlet*, II, ii, 392-6. (All quotations from and references to the works of Shakespeare are from and to Peter Alexander's edition, London, 1959).
2. *Some Versions of Pastoral* (1950).
3. *English Pastoral Poetry from the Beginnings to Marvell*, ed. Frank Kermode. London, 1952.
4. *Works of Pope*, Twickenham edition (London, 1961), Vol. I, p. 23.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 23.
6. *Discourse on the Origin and Foundation of the Inequality of Mankind*—Introduction, pp. 175-6. Quoted by Copleston in *A History of Philosophy*, Vol. VI (London, 1960).
7. *Pandosto*, ed. P. G. Thomas (The Shakespeare Classics, London, 1907), pp. 50-51.
8. Puttenham: *Arte of English Poesie*, Bk. I, Ch. XVIII (ed. G. D. Wilcock and Alice Walker, Cambridge, 1936).
9. *An Apologie for Poetrie*, Arber's Reprints, p. 43.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 43.
11. Sidney himself is said to have always carried in his pocket a copy of Hoby's translation of Castiglione's book.
12. Hoby's translation of Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier* (Everyman's Library edition). It is interesting to note in this context that during the early days of the revival of the Pastoral in Italy, in 1506 to be precise, "Castiglione himself with Cesare Gonzaga, in the disguise of shepherds, recited an eclogue interspersed with songs before the court of Guidobaldo at Urbino" (Greg: *Pastoral Poetry and Pastoral Drama*, London, 1906, p. 31).
13. *Philanax his letter to Basilius* (Sidney, *Works*, ed. Feuillerat, Cambridge, 1926, Vol. I, p. 24),
14. *Op. cit.*, p. 154.
15. *Op. cit.*, Chapter IV, p. 215.
16. The Pandora legend dates back to Hesiod's *Theogony*. The influence of Hesiod's *The Works and Days* on the European pastoral tradition may have been considerable.
17. In *The Arraignement of Paris* the compliment is direct: Diana gives preference to Queen Elizabeth I over Venus, Juno and Pallas Athene!
18. *Loves Metamorphoses* (ed. Bond, Oxford, 1902), II. i.
19. Shakespeare's Celia, it is worth noting, has none of the fierceness of Lodge's Alinda, an avowed follower of Diana before she meets Saladyne.
20. Witness the dialogue between Touchstone and Corin in III. ii.
21. V. iv. 57-59.
22. Drayton: *Preface to his Pastorals: Poems* (1619).
23. Pope: *Op. cit.*, p. 23.
24. Wordsworth: *Prefaces and Essays*, ed. G. Sampson, Cambridge, 1920.
25. Lodge: *Rosalynde*, ed. W. W. Greg, Oxford, 1907.
26. *The Winter's Tale*: IV. iv. 157-9.
27. IV. iv. 2-3.
28. IV. iv. 82-83.

## *Oscar Wilde as a Shakespearean Critic*

NO RECOGNITION has been given to Oscar Wilde in the history of Shakespearean criticism. Halliday in his *Shakespeare and his Critics* does not number him among those who have contributed to Shakespearean criticism. Even in Augustus Ralli's detailed two-volumed account of Shakespeare's critics, the name of Oscar Wilde is not so much as mentioned. By a strange irony, the man who conceived criticism to be as creative as a work of art, if not more, has been banished completely from the realm of serious criticism. Yet in a single essay, *The Truth of Masks*, this neglected critic of Shakespeare makes so brilliant an appraisal of his dramatic craftsmanship and shows such an insight into his art that one strongly feels that he deserved better treatment.

*The Truth of Masks* first appeared in *The Nineteenth Century*, May, 1885 (Vol. xvii). It was then entitled *Shakespeare and Stage Costume* and was written as a rejoinder to a very casually made statement by Lord Lytton (Owen Meredith) in a previous number (December, 1884) of the same journal. Writing with gushy admiration of "Miss Anderson's Juliet", Lytton thought that not only was the character presented to perfection but that the scenes, too, were beautifully and faultlessly conceived. Then, in a dogmatic footnote, he spoke thus of accuracy of setting in the plays of Shakespeare:

The attempt to archaeologize the Shakespearean drama is one of the stupidest pedantries in an age of prigs. Archaeology would not be more out of place in a fairy tale than it is in a play of Shakespeare. This scene<sup>1</sup> is beautiful and animated, and that is all that is wanted.<sup>2</sup>

Wilde's protest was against this assumption of Lytton, an assumption held by the majority of Victorians that Shakespeare himself was absolutely unconcerned about appropriateness and historical accuracy in the presentation of his plays, and that his plays are best rendered on a bare stage. In those years when the Shakespearean revivals with their "splendour of mounting" were causing a great deal of controversy among dramatic critics, Oscar Wilde went directly to the plays of Shakespeare to point out the fallacy of people like Lytton who could conceive of Shakespeare's dramatic works being akin to fairy tales. Wilde reveals in this essay a remarkable understanding of the *art* of Shakespeare, and that at a time when it was almost an accepted canon of Shakespearean criticism that all that he wrote was "unpremeditated", and necessarily written

without careful study of facts. What was genuine admiration for the genius of Shakespeare in those days had an undercurrent of quiet condescension for the supposed "wildness" of his supposedly "native wood-notes".

At a time like this, Oscar Wilde did a real service to Shakespearean criticism by pointing out how careful was the dramatist about his art. Reading *The Truth of Masks* we begin to realize that it was not merely Ben Jonson's neo-classical bias that caused this turn in the memorial verses he wrote for the First Folio:

Yet must I not give Nature all: Thy Art,  
My gentle Shakespeare, must enjoy a part.

Wilde makes us feel that there is sound sense in these lines. Concerned with the living drama, Shakespeare, Wilde shows, was conscious of the presentation—the play as it was to be acted—and wrote with a particular effect of stage-craft in mind and not merely for reading. "Indeed", says Wilde, "to put any play of Shakespeare's on the stage, absolutely as he himself wished it to be done, requires the services of a good property-man, a clever wig-maker, a costumier with a sense of colour and a knowledge of textures, a master of the methods of making-up, a fencing-master, a dancing-master, and an artist to direct personally the whole production".<sup>3</sup> *The Truth of Masks* contains an abundance of telling illustration to prove the truth of this assertion and to convince the reader that Shakespeare was very far from being a careless artist who depended entirely on the inspiration of the moment, without any second thought for the beauty and appropriateness of the stage presentation.

## II

Stage-directions going down to the minutest detail in the presentation and action which form so important a part of modern drama are not to be found in Shakespeare's plays. Carefully read, however, the plays reveal that quite a large portion of them could be re-constructed for stage purposes just from the statements made by characters in the course of the action. And, though this point has not been noticed by Oscar Wilde and has, as a matter of fact, been insufficiently noticed till now, Shakespeare always leaves significant room in his numerous shortened blank-verse lines for dramatic gestures, movements and a good many other things pertaining to acting and stage-craft.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, where spectacle was his aim, Shakespeare could be so elaborate in his stage-directions that no producer could have any difficulty in imagining the scene. The stage-

directions for the three processions in *Henry VIII* are cited by Oscar Wilde as illustrative of this aspect of Shakespeare's art. That the presentation on the stage was as accurate as the dramatist expected is evident from the fact that "one of the court officials of the time, writing an account of the last performance of the play at the Globe theatre to a friend, actually complains of their realistic character, notably of the production on the stage of Knights of the Garter in the robes and insignia of the order as being calculated to bring ridicule on the real ceremonies."<sup>5</sup> The reference, a very appropriate one, is to a letter of Sir Henry Wotton to Sir Edmund Bacon (2 July, 1613) where he describes the play being "set forth with many extra-ordinary circumstances of pomp and majesty, the knights of the Order with their Georges and garters, the Guards with their embroidered coats, and the like: sufficient in truth within a while to make greatness very familiar, if not ridiculous."<sup>6</sup>

That Shakespeare, in keeping with his time, appreciated the value of spectacle, purely for the pleasurable effect, is evident from the introduction of masques and pageants on every possible occasion, not only in the early plays but even in those of the final period. Wilde further points out that Shakespeare made a use of costume that was organically connected with the drama, and he thinks that the critics who tacitly assume that Shakespeare was more or less indifferent to the costumes of his actors are wrong. "Anybody", he says, "who cares to study Shakespeare's method will see that there is absolutely no dramatist of the French, English or Athenian stage who relies so much for his illusionist effects on the dress of his actors as Shakespeare does himself."<sup>7</sup> The costumes, appropriately presented in all their variety, not only produced picturesque effects but were used as means of producing certain intensely dramatic moments. "Of Shakespeare it may be said that he was the first to see the dramatic value of doublets, and that a climax may depend on a crinoline."<sup>8</sup> This is one of the finest of points made by Wilde about the use of costume, of "apparel and adornment", in the plays of Shakespeare and he makes it out with a wealth of finely chosen illustration from the different plays. He points out, for instance, how many of Shakespeare's plays, such as *Measure for Measure*, *Twelfth Night*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Cymbeline*, etc., "depend for their illusion on the character of the various dresses worn by the hero or the heroine", how the scene in *Henry the Sixth*, "on the modern miracles of healing by faith, loses all its point unless Gloucester is in black and scarlet", and how the *dénouement* of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* "hinges on the colour of Anne Page's gown". To quote him further:

After slaughter of Duncan, Macbeth appears in his night-gown as if aroused from sleep; Timon ends in rags the play he had begun in

splendour; Richard flatters the London citizens in a suit of mean and shabby armour, and, as soon as he has stepped in blood to the throne, marches through the streets in crown and George and Garter; the climax of *The Tempest* is reached when Prospero, throwing off his enchanter's robes, sends Ariel for his hat and rapier, and reveals himself as the great Italian Duke; the very Ghost in *Hamlet* changes his mystical apparel to produce different effects; and as for Juliet, a modern play-wright would probably have laid her out in her shroud, and made the scene of horror merely, but Shakespeare arrays her in rich and gorgeous raiment, whose loveliness makes the vault 'a feasting presence full of light', turns the tomb into a bridal chamber, and gives the cue and motive for Romeo's speech of the triumph of Beauty over Death.

Even small details of dress, such as the colour of a major-domo's stockings, the pattern on a wife's handkerchief, the sleeve of a young soldier, and a fashionable woman's bonnets, become in Shakespeare's hands points of actual dramatic importance, and by some of them the action of the play in question is conditioned absolutely. Many other dramatists have availed themselves of costume as a method of expressing directly to the audience the character of a person on his entrance, though hardly so brilliantly as Shakespeare has done in the case of the dandy Parolles, whose dress, by the way, only an archaeologist can understand; . . . nobody from mere details of apparel and adornment has ever drawn such irony of contrast, such immediate and tragic effect, such pity and such pathos, as Shakespeare himself. Armed cap-à-pie, the dead King stalks on the battlements of Elsinore because all is not right with Denmark; Shylock's Jewish gaberdine is part of the stigma under which that wounded and embittered nature writhes; Arthur begging for his life can think of no better plea than the handkerchief he had given Hubert . . . and Orlando's blood-stained napkin strikes the first sombre note in that exquisite woodland idyll, and shows us the depth of feeling that underlies Rosalind's fanciful wit and wilful jesting . . . the little Prince passing to the Tower plays with the dagger in his uncle's girdle; Duncan sends a ring to Lady Macbeth on the night of his own murder, and the ring of Portia turns the tragedy of the merchant into a wife's comedy. The great rebel York dies with a paper crown on his head; Hamlet's black suit is a kind of colour-motive in the piece, like the mourning of the Chimène in the *Cid*; and the climax of Antony's speech is the production of Caesar's cloak . . . The flowers which Ophelia carries with her in her madness are as pathetic as the violets that blossom on a grave; the effect of Lear's wandering on the heath is intensified beyond words by his fantastic attire . . . One of the finest effects I have ever seen on the stage was Salvini, in the last act of *Lear*, tearing the plume from Kent's cap and applying it to Cordelia's lips when he came to the line,

This feather stirs; she lives!

Mr. Booth, whose *Lear* had many noble qualities of passion, plucked, I remember, some fur from his archaeologically-incorrect

ermine for the same business; but Salvini's was the finer effect of the two, as well as the truer.<sup>9</sup>

Oscar Wilde thus shows that costume, to Shakespeare, had a dramatic value and was not merely decorative as Lord Lytton and most Victorians supposed, and as is usually supposed even now. The ability of the Elizabethan stage to be lavish in the matter of costume has been recognized since Oscar Wilde's day; not so, however, the ability of at least one Elizabethan playwright to use costume dramatically, "as a mode of intensifying dramatic situation"<sup>10</sup> and as "at once impressive of a certain effect on the audience and expressive of certain types of character."<sup>11</sup> In bringing out and emphasizing this aspect of Shakespearean drama Oscar Wilde establishes a highly important principle of Shakespearean production, and the hint thrown by him of the symbolical use of costume and colour in Shakespearean drama in such casual statements as "Hamlet's black suit is a kind of colour-motive in the piece" anticipates what later critics like Wilson Knight were to say afterwards.<sup>12</sup>

Wilde further points out that Shakespeare is "most careful to tell us the dress and appearance of each character":

'Racine abhorre la réalité,' says Auguste Vacquerie somewhere; 'il ne daigne pas s'occuper de son costume. Si l'on s'en rapportait aux indications du poète, Agamemnon serait vêtu d'un sceptre et Achille d'une épée'. But with Shakespeare it is very different. He gives us directions about the costumes of Perdita, Florizel, Autolycus, the Witches in *Macbeth*, and the apothecary in *Romeo and Juliet*, several elaborate descriptions of his fat knight, and a detailed account of the extraordinary garb in which Petruchio is to be married. Rosalind, he tells us, is tall, and is to carry a spear and a little dagger; Celia is smaller, and is to paint her face brown so as to look sunburnt. The children who play fairies in Windsor Forest are to be dressed in white and green—a compliment, by the way, to Queen Elizabeth, whose favourite colours they were—and in white, with green garlands and gilded vizors, the angels are to come to Katherine in Kimbolton. Bottom is in homespun, Lysander is distinguished from Oberon by his wearing an Athenian dress, and Launce has holes in his boots. The Duchess of Gloucester stands in a white sheet with her husband in mourning beside her. The motley of the Fool, the scarlet of the Cardinal, and the French lilies brodered on the English coats, are all made occasion for jest or taunt in the dialogue. We know the patterns on the Dauphin's armour and the Pucelle's sword, the crest on Warwick's helmet and the colour of Bardolph's nose. Portia has golden hair, Phoebe is black-haired, Orlando has chestnut curls, and Sir Andrew Aguecheek's hair hangs like flax on a distaff, and won't curl at all. Some of the characters are stout, some lean, some straight, some hunchbacked, some fair, some dark, and some are to



blacken their faces. Lear has a white beard, Hamlet's father a grizzled, and Benedick is to shave his in the course of the play. Indeed, on the subject of stage beards Shakespeare is quite elaborate; tells us of the many different colours in use, and gives a hint to actors always to see that their own are properly tied on. There is a dance of reapers in rye-straw hats, and rustics in hairy coats like satyrs; a masque of Amazons, a masque of Russians, and a classical masque; several immortal scenes over a weaver in an ass's head, a riot over the colour of a coat which it takes the Lord Mayor of London to quell, and a scene between an infuriated husband and his wife's milliner about the slashing of a sleeve.<sup>13</sup>

A valuable point he makes in this connection is that Shakespeare recognizes "the artistic beauty of ugliness":

Indeed to him the deformed figure of Richard was of as much value as Juliet's loveliness; he sets the serge of the radical beside the silks of the lord, and sees the stage effects to be got from each: he has as much delight in Caliban as he has in Ariel, in rags as he has in cloth of gold.<sup>14</sup>

As proof of Shakespeare's deep interest in costume he refers to the fact that "in the actual dialogue some of the most vivid passages are those suggested by costume": e.g., Rosalind's "Dost thou think, though I am caparisoned like a man, I have a doublet and hose in my disposition?", or Constance's

Grief fills the place of my absent child,  
Stuffs out his vacant garments with his form,

or the quick sharp cry of Elizabeth: "Ah! cut my lace asunder."<sup>15</sup> He also refers to "the metaphors Shakespeare draws from dress, and the aphorisms he makes on it, his hits at the costume of his age, particularly at the ridiculous size of the ladies' bonnets, and the many descriptions of the *mundus muliebris*, from the song of Autolycus in the *Winter's Tale* down to the account of the Duchess of Milan's gown in *Much Ado About Nothing*", and adds that "it may be worth while to remind people that the whole of the Philosophy of Clothes is to be found in Lear's scene with Edgar—a passage which has the advantage of brevity and style over the grotesque wisdom and somewhat mouthing metaphysics of *Sartor Resartus*."<sup>16</sup>

### III

On the question of stage-costume Oscar Wilde contests the common notion that Shakespeare had little regard for accuracy or appropriate-

ness in this matter, and he disagrees most emphatically with those who (like Lord Lytton) are inclined to think that such accuracy or appropriateness is of little or no concern in mounting the plays of Shakespeare even if it is a historical play. Wilde's stand on this issue appears to be commendably sound. It is difficult to assume that at a time when England had become extremely conscious of its past and was glorying in its present the Elizabethans would have accepted on the stage either their own ancestors or the people of other nations in their own garb or in any fanciful garb, for that matter. The past dealt with in Shakespeare's history plays was the past that lived in the memories of the people, and the dramatist's theatrical sense would have made him realize the enhancement of effect to be achieved from the difference in costume. The Elizabethans, too, were conscious of the dress of their own country as well as of those of other people. To Queen Elizabeth's court came envoys from all lands, and fashionable gallants, frequently borrowing parts of their attire, called forth the ridicule of many a playwright. Portia's description of the dress of young Falconbridge, who does not appear at all on the stage, would have been quite pointless had the audience not been aware of the particular fitness of the observation.

Wilde cites an amount of interesting factual evidence to prove and illustrate the Elizabethan knowledge of and interest in costume. Pointing out that the sixteenth century was the age of Vecellio,<sup>17</sup> he goes on to say:

Every nation seems suddenly to have become interested in the dress of its neighbours. Europe began to investigate its own clothes, and the amount of books published on national costumes is quite extraordinary. At the beginning of the century the *Nuremberg Chronicle*, with its two thousand illustrations, reached its fifth edition, and before the century was over seventeen editions were published of Munster's *Cosmography*. Besides these two works there were also the works of Michael Colyns, of Hans Weigel, of Amman, and of Vecellio himself, all of them well illustrated, some of the drawings in Vecellio being probably from the hand of Titian.

Nor was it merely from books and treatises that they acquired their knowledge. The development of the habit of foreign travel, the increased commercial intercourse between countries, and the frequency of diplomatic missions, gave every nation many opportunities of studying the various forms of contemporary dress. After the departure from England, for instance, of the ambassadors from the Czar, the Sultan and the Prince of Morocco, Henry the Eighth and his friends gave several masques in the strange attire of their visitors. Later on London saw, perhaps too often, the sombre splendour of the Spanish Court, and to Elizabeth came envoys from all lands, whose dress, Shakespeare tells us, had an important influence on English costume.

And the interest was not merely confined to classical dress, or the dress of foreign nations; there was also a good deal of research, amongst theatrical people especially, into the ancient costume of England itself: and when Shakespeare, in the prologue to one of his plays, expresses his regret at being unable to produce helmets of the period, he is speaking as an Elizabethan manager and not merely as an Elizabethan poet. At Cambridge, for instance, during his day, a play of *Richard the Third* was performed, in which the actors were attired in real dresses of the time, procured from the great collection of historical costume in the Tower, which was always open to the inspection of managers, and sometimes placed at their disposal. And I cannot help thinking that this performance must have been far more artistic, as regards costume, than Garrick's mounting of Shakespeare's own play on the subject, in which he himself appeared in a nondescript fancy dress, and everybody else in the costume of the time of George the Third, Richard especially being much admired in the uniform of a young guardsman.<sup>18</sup>

It may be added to the above that the professional players were not far behind the University people in borrowing from other "wardrobes" if their own failed them. We have Sir Henry Herbert, the Master of the Revels, recording in his Office Book:

I committed Cromes, a broker in Longe Lane, the 16 of Febru. 1634 [O.S.], to the Marshalsey, for lending a church-robe with the name of Jesus upon it, to the players of Salisbury Court, to present a Flamen, a priest of the heathens. Upon his petition of submission and acknowledgment of his faulte, I releasd him, the 17 Febr. 1634.<sup>19</sup>

Wilde suggests in so many words that we have tended to underestimate the costume resources of the Elizabethan theatre. He does well to draw our attention to the fact that while Shakespeare "more than once complains of the smallness of the stage on which he has to produce big historical plays, and of the want of scenery which obliges him to cut out many effective open-air incidents,"<sup>20</sup> he never writes as if he were handicapped by a limited wardrobe or by lack of facilities for make-up. The numerous instances of the employment of disguise in the plays of Shakespeare make it evident that the dramatist was not hampered by any limitation in the costume-wardrobe of the theatre. Above all there is the important testimony of the Henslowe Papers. To quote Wilde:

The burning of the Globe Theatre—an event due, by the way, to the results of the passion for illusion that distinguished Shakespeare's stage-management<sup>21</sup>—has unfortunately robbed us of many important documents; but in the inventory, still in existence, of the costume-wardrobe of a London theatre in Shakespeare's time, there are

mentioned particular costumes for cardinals, shepherds, kings, clowns, friars, and fools; green coats for Robin Hood's men, and a green gown for Maid Marian; a white and gold doublet for Henry the Fifth, and a robe for Longshanks; besides surplices, copes, damask gowns, gowns of cloth of gold and of cloth of silver, taffeta gowns, calico gowns, velvet coats, satin coats, frieze coats, jerkins of yellow leather and of black leather, red suits, grey suits, French Pierrot suits, a robe 'for to go invisibell', which seems inexpensive at £3, 10s., and four incomparable fardingales—all of which show a desire to give every character an appropriate dress. There are also entries of Spanish, Moorish and Danish costumes, of helmets, lances, painted shields, imperial crowns, and papal tiaras, as well as of costumes for Turkish Janissaries, Roman Senators, and all the gods and goddesses of Olympus, which evidence a good deal of archaeological research on the part of the manager of the theatre. It is true that there is a mention of a bodice for Eve, but probably the *donnée* of the play was after the Fall.<sup>22</sup>

The "inventory" Wilde speaks of is the one (Henslowe's?) first printed by Malone in his edition of Shakespeare (1790). (This is referred to in a footnote to Wilde's article in *The Nineteenth Century*.) Just a few quotations from the "inventory" itself will bear out Oscar Wilde on this point:

1 Senator's gown, 1 hood, & 5 senator's capes. 1 suit for Neptune; firedrakes suits for 'Dobe'. 4 Janisaries' gowns, & 4 torch-bearer's suits. 3 pair of red strossers [tight hose], & 3 fairies' gowns of buckram. 4 Herowdes [? Herald's] coats, & 3 soldier's coats, & 1 green gown for [Maid] Marian. 6 green coats for Robin Hood, & 4 Knave's suits. 2 pairs of green hose and 'Anderson's' suit. 1 white 'shepen' cloak. 2 russet coats, & 1 black frieze coat, & 3 priest's coats. 2 white shepherd's coats, & 2 Dane's suits, & 1 pair of Dane's hose. The Moor's limbs [i.e., armour], & Hercules' limbs, & Will Summers' suit... 1 yellow leather doublet for a clown, 1 'Whittcomes' doublet 'poke' [wide-sleeved?]. Eve's bodice, 1 pedant trusser [i.e., school-master's trousers], & 3 don's hats.<sup>23</sup>

That the Elizabethan playwrights were not as ignorant of the dress of other nations as is commonly supposed, is evident in any careful study of Elizabethan drama. In Kyd's(?) *Soliman and Perseda*, for instance, Lucina asks Basilisco:

...but how chance,  
Your turkish bonnet is not on your head?

And he explains—

Because I now am Christian againe.<sup>24</sup>

This shows that the "Turkish bonnet" had been worn in the earlier part of the play. In the same play Soliman remarks that Perseda's neck

will breake the edge of my keene Semitor<sup>25</sup>

In Shakespeare, the scimitar, appropriately, is often carried by eastern characters. So far as the Roman dress is concerned, it is difficult to say what the Elizabethan conception of it exactly was. But a dramatist who could speak of "toged consuls"<sup>26</sup> was perhaps not absolutely ignorant of their form of dress. The Spanish costume too was well known to Elizabethan England. In Ben Jonson's *The Alchemist*, when a disguise is needed for Druggier, Face tells him:

Thou must borrow  
A Spanish suit: hast thou no credit with the players?  
.....  
Hieronimo's old cloak, ruff and hat will serve.<sup>27</sup>

#### IV

In some cases, of course, costume and make-up on the Elizabethan stage must have been conventional, but it is evident from the foregoing that quite an attempt was made to maintain some degree of propriety or even archaeological accuracy. Not the least of Oscar Wilde's contributions to Shakespeare criticism is the way he refutes the point of view of those (who were a large number in his own time and still are) who like Lord Lytton think that archaeology is out of place in Shakespearean drama. In exposing the fallacy of this point of view he comes to develop an original slant on the historical plays of Shakespeare and to say about them quite a few valuable things which no serious student of these plays, or, for that matter, of Shakespearean production generally, can afford to miss.

Archaeology, Wilde maintains, was exactly one of the special characteristics of the age of Shakespeare—a statement which he supports with a number of fascinating details illustrating the Renaissance interest in archaeology following the revival of classical literature and architecture.<sup>28</sup> Archaeology was, in fact, so he claims, a live pursuit with the Renaissance and not a mere dead exhibit in a museum "for the contemplation of a callous curator and the *ennui* of a policeman bored by the absence of crime". What was more was that the Renaissance knew the right use of archaeology, which is to use it as a motive for the production of a new art:

And who does not feel that the chief glory of Piranesi's book on Vases is that it gave Keats the suggestion for his 'Ode on a Grecian Urn'?

Art, and art only, can make archaeology beautiful; and the theatric art can use it more vividly, for it can combine in one exquisite presentation the illusion of actual life with the wonder of the unreal world.<sup>29</sup>

This use of archaeology, far from being a bit of priggish pedantry as Lord Lytton described it, is, according to Wilde, "in every way legitimate and beautiful".<sup>30</sup> Accordingly he enters a strong plea for its proper and understanding use in Shakespearean production:

In designing the scenery and costumes for any of Shakespeare's plays, the first thing the artist has to settle is the best date for the drama. This should be determined by the general spirit of the play, more than by any actual historical references which may occur in it. Most *Hamlets* I have seen were placed far too early. *Hamlet* is essentially a scholar of the Revival of Learning; and if the allusion to the recent invasion of England by the Danes puts it back to the ninth century, the use of foils brings it down much later. Once, however, that the date has been fixed, then the archaeologist is to supply us with the facts which the artist is to convert into effects.<sup>31</sup>

This plea for the artistic use of archaeology in the mounting of Shakespearean drama applies with especial force to the historical plays—to the English history plays in particular. Wilde remarks on their "extraordinary fidelity" as regards personages and plots, and shows that Shakespeare's treatment of history is far from being so naïve or crude as is commonly supposed.

Many of the *dramatis personae* are people who had actually existed, and some of them might have been seen in real life by a portion of his audience. Indeed the most violent attack that was made on Shakespeare in his time was for his supposed caricature of Lord Cobham. As for his plots Shakespeare constantly draws them either from authentic history, or from the old ballads and traditions which served as history to the Elizabethan public, and which even now no scientific historian would dismiss as absolutely untrue. . . .

Again when Shakespeare treats of the history of England from the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries, it is wonderful how careful he is to have his facts perfectly right—indeed he follows Holinshed with curious fidelity. The incessant wars between France and England are described with extraordinary accuracy down to the names of besieged towns, the ports of landing and embarkation, the sites and dates of the battles, the titles of the commanders on each side, and the lists of the killed and wounded. And as regards the Civil Wars of the Roses we have many elaborate genealogies of the seven sons of Edward the Third; the claims of the rival houses of York and Lancaster to the throne are discussed at length; and if the English aristocracy will not read Shakespeare as a poet, they should certainly read him as a sort of early Peerage. There is hardly a single title in the Upper House, with the exception of course of the unin-

teresting titles assumed by the law lords, which does not appear in Shakespeare along with many details of family history, creditable and discreditable. Indeed if it be really necessary that the School Board children should know all about the Wars of the Roses, they could learn their lessons just as well out of Shakespeare as out of shilling primers, and learn them, I need hardly say, far more pleasurably. Even in Shakespeare's own day this use of his plays was recognized. 'The historical plays teach history to those who cannot read it in the chronicles', says Heywood in a tract about the stage, and yet I am sure that sixteenth-century chronicles were much more delightful reading than nineteenth-century primers are.<sup>32</sup>

Oscar Wilde would be the last person to need being reminded that the aesthetic value of Shakespeare's plays does not depend on their facts but on their truth. He himself says it, and with emphasis,<sup>33</sup> and it is a cardinal principle of his own aesthetics that Truth in Art "is independent of facts always, inventing or selecting them at pleasure". "But still", he adds, "Shakespeare's use of facts is a most interesting part of his method of work, and shows us his attitude towards the stage, and his relations to the great art of illusion." Shakespeare, he is sure, would have been very much surprised at his plays being classed with "fairy tales" as they are by Lord Lytton, "for one of his aims was to create for England a national historical drama, which should deal with incidents with which the public was well acquainted, and with heroes that lived in the memory of a people".<sup>34</sup>

All that being so, it follows that a dramatist who laid such stress on historical accuracy of fact would have welcomed historical accuracy of costume and equipment "as a most important adjunct to his illusionist method". And Oscar Wilde for one has no hesitation in saying that he did so.

The reference to helmets of the period in the prologue to *Henry the Fifth* may be considered fanciful, though Shakespeare must have often seen

The very casque  
That did affright the air at Agincourt

where it still hangs in the dusty gloom of Westminster Abbey, along with the saddle of that 'imp of fame', and the dinted shield with its torn blue velvet lining and its tarnished lilies of gold; but the use of military tabards in *Henry the Sixth* is a bit of pure archaeology, as they were not worn in the sixteenth century; and the King's own tabard, I may mention, was still suspended over his tomb in St. George's Chapel, Windsor, in Shakespeare's day. For, up to the time of the unfortunate triumph of the Philistines in 1645, the chapels and cathedrals of England were the great national museums of

archaeology, and in them were kept the armour and attire of the heroes of English history....

In fact, everywhere that Shakespeare turned in London, he saw the apparel and appurtenances of past ages, and it is impossible to doubt that he made use of his opportunities. The employment of lance and shield, for instance, in actual warfare, which is so frequent in his plays, is drawn from archaeology, and not from the military accoutrements of his day; and his general use of armour in battle was not a characteristic of his age, a time when it was rapidly vanishing before firearms. Again, the crest on Warwick's helmet, of which such a point is made in *Henry the Sixth*, is absolutely correct in a fifteenth-century play when crests were generally worn, but would not have been so in a play of Shakespeare's own time, when feathers and plumes had taken their place—a fashion which, as he tells us in *Henry the Eighth*, was borrowed from France....

The effeminacy of dress that characterized the reign of Richard the Second was a constant theme of contemporary authors. Shakespeare, writing two hundred years after, makes the king's fondness for gay apparel and foreign fashions a point in the play, from John of Gaunt's reproaches down to Richard's own speech in the third act on his deposition from the throne. And that Shakespeare examined Richard's tomb in Westminster Abbey seems to me certain from York's speech:

See, See, King Richard doth himself appear  
As doth the blushing discontented sun  
From out the fiery portal of the east,  
When he perceives the envious clouds are bent  
To dim his glory.

For we discern on the King's robe his favourite badge—the sun issuing from a cloud.<sup>35</sup>

For the historical plays, then, Wilde concludes, archaeology was definitely employed. So it was, he feels certain, for the others:

The appearance of Jupiter on his eagle, thunderbolt in hand, of Juno with her peacocks, and of Iris with her many-coloured bow; the Amazon masque and the masque of the Five Worthies, may all be regarded as archaeological; and the vision which Posthumus sees in prison of Sicilius Leonatus—'an old man, attired like a warrior, leading an ancient matron'—is clearly so. Of the 'Athenian dress' by which Lysander is distinguished from Oberon I have already spoken; but one of the most marked instances is in the case of the dress of Coriolanus, for which Shakespeare goes directly to Plutarch. That historian, in his Life of the great Roman, tells us of the oak-wreath with which Caius Marcius was crowned, and of the curious kind of dress in which, according to ancient fashion, he had to canvass his electors; on both these points he enters into long disquisitions, investi-



gating the origin and meaning of the old customs. Shakespeare, in the spirit of the true artist, accepts the facts of the antiquarian and converts them into dramatic and picturesque effects: indeed the gown of humility, the 'woolvish gown', as Shakespeare calls it, is the central note of the play. There are other cases I might quote, but this one is quite sufficient for my purpose; and it is evident from it at any rate that, in mounting a play in the accurate costume of the time, according to the best authorities, we are carrying out Shakespeare's own wishes and method.<sup>36</sup>

Costume, Wilde reminds us, "is a growth, an evolution, and a most important, perhaps the most important, sign of the manners, customs and mode of life of each century." Hence "to confuse the costume is to confuse the play."<sup>37</sup> The alternatives to historical or archaeological accuracy of stage-costume are either to invent an entirely new costume or to combine the dress of different centuries into one or to mount a play in contemporary costume. As for the first, it is almost impossible, says Wilde, except in burlesque or extravaganza. As for the second, it turns the stage into "that chaos of costume, that caricature of the centuries, the Fancy Dress Ball, to the entire ruin of all dramatic and picturesque effect";<sup>38</sup> Shakespeare's opinion of the artistic worth of such a medley may well be gathered, suggests Wilde, from his satire of the Elizabethan dandies for imagining that they were well dressed because they got their doublets in Italy, their hats in Germany and their hose in France. As for the third, Wilde pours ridicule on the eighteenth century for its Iachimo in powder and patches, its Lear in lace ruffles, its Lady Macbeth in a large crinoline, its Romans in flowing wigs and flowered dressing-gowns. Wilde reminds us further that, contrary to what Lord Lytton and others might think, it is not enough for stage-costume to be merely beautiful. "The Greek dress was the loveliest dress the world has ever seen, and the English dress of the last century one of the most monstrous; yet we cannot costume a play by Sheridan as we would costume a play by Sophokles". One of the first qualities of apparel is its expressiveness, as Polonius well says, and "the true dramatist aims first at what is characteristic, and no more desires that all his personages should be beautifully attired than he desires that they should all have beautiful natures or speak beautiful English."<sup>39</sup> And Wilde has already made the valuable point that Shakespeare recognizes the aesthetic significance of ugliness.

It is not difficult to anticipate the objection that will be raised to all this argument of Oscar Wilde: "What about Hector quoting Aristotle in *Troilus and Cressida*? How can one claim or demand historical or archaeological accuracy in regard to plays so rich in anachronisms as those of Shakespeare?" On the first impression there seems to be a good deal of force in this objection. Elizabethan drama does contain an *embarras de*

*richesse* of anachronisms and other historical inaccuracies, and Shakespeare's plays have their share of them. A few specimens, taken at random, will show how. Shakespeare's Cleopatra calls on Charmian to cut her stays, which leads Thorndike to remark that she was "doubtless as formidably bodiced as Queen Elizabeth".<sup>40</sup> Casca refers to the open doublet of Caesar,<sup>41</sup> and Cassius appears "unbraced" in the dismal, stormy night, baring his "bosom to the thunder-stone". The conspirators appear at the door of Brutus with their broad-brimmed hats "pluck'd about their ears", and Ligarius, like a true Elizabethan, wears the "kerchief" to denote sickness. Books, with their leaves turned down, are mentioned in *Julius Caesar* more than once, clocks denote the passing of the hours, and towards the end of the play a "riming" poet is dismissed with scorn. The story of *Macbeth* belongs historically to the middle of the eleventh century; yet a character in the second scene speaks of artillery (a much later invention), and another of the dollar—a coin (*thaler*) which first came into use in Bohemia in the early sixteenth century. Instances of such anachronisms could be multiplied with the greatest ease. But they do not substantially affect Oscar Wilde's stand, nor do they make out a real case for those critics of Shakespeare who hold that "for historical appropriateness no effort was made" and who, despite their admiration for his genius, treat his history in a cavalier fashion. Remarking that "a great deal of capital has been made out of Hector's indiscreet quotation from Aristotle", Wilde faces the objection squarely and makes a threefold answer, eminently sensible. Firstly, granting the anachronisms (though they are neither large in number nor very important), it is all the more necessary to mount a play accurately according to its proper period in order to set off the charm of the anachronisms. Secondly, the anachronisms and inaccuracies are after all a matter of detail—a detail here, a detail there; they do not affect the total picture. The play as a whole succeeds in recapturing "the general character, the social atmosphere, in a word, of the age in question." (This reminds one of Aristotle's observation in *Poetics* XXV that it is a lesser error in an artist not to know that the hind has no horns than to produce an unrecognizable picture of one.) Thirdly, it is with regard to minor and lower characters that Shakespeare tends to thrust his own time and place on other ones—not as a rule in the case of higher characters:

Stupidity he recognizes as being one of the permanent characteristics of all European civilizations; so he sees no difference between a London mob of his own day and a Roman mob of pagan days, between a silly watchman in Messina and a silly Justice of the Peace in Windsor. But when he deals with higher characters, with those exceptions of each age which are so fine that they become its types, he gives

them absolutely the stamp and seal of their time. Virgilia is one of those Roman wives on whose tomb was written 'Domi mansit, lanam fecit,'<sup>42</sup> as surely as Juliet is the romantic girl of the Renaissance. He is even true to the characteristics of race. Hamlet has all the imagination and irresolution of the Northern nations, and the Princess Katharine is as entirely French as the heroine of *Divorçons*. Harry the Fifth is a pure Englishman, and Othello a true Moor.<sup>43</sup>

Oscar Wilde says enough in *The Truth of Masks* to suggest that the Shakespearean stage was not really so simple or naïve as is commonly assumed. Later research tends to bear him out on this point. In Shakespeare's day stage-craft was a far more developed and complex business than is generally supposed. As early as the eighties of the sixteenth century, in all probability, multiple settings had been employed, for the comedies of Lyly, for instance. The public theatres could not, of course, get up their plays as sumptuously as the Court plays; but the cast-off costumes of the court players served to stock the professional player's wardrobe. Moreover, in the case of Lyly, the same children who played before the Court, played also in their own private theatres. This made the effect of the elaborate presentations at Court more easily felt in the public theatres, for the boy players, being so much of a challenge to the dramatic companies, would naturally invite competition from them. All this stimulated the development of artistic and spectacular mounting of stage-plays. With the accession of the Stuarts, and the designing of backgrounds for masques and plays by Inigo Jones, the public theatres naturally also advanced with the advancing age. The effect is evident in a play like *The Tempest*. In such plays as Thomas Heywood's *Four Ages*, evidence is available of the efforts made by professional players to make the presentation as arresting as possible. In the elaborate dumb-shows that intersperse the dialogue in that play all the resources of the theatre are employed. Thorndike quotes from them a few stage-directions to "indicate what the stage-managers could do when they aimed at a spectacular performance":

Sounde a dumbe shew. Enter the three fatall sisters, with a rocke, a threed, and a paire of sheeres; bringing in a Gloabe, in which they put three lots. Jupiter drawes heaven: at which Iris descends and presents him with his Eagle, Crowne and Scepter, and his thunderbolt. Jupiter first ascends upon the Eagle and after him Ganimed.

Sound. Neptune drawes the Sea, is mounted upon a sea-horse, a Roabe and Trident, with a crowne are given him by the Fates.

Sound, Thunder and Tempest. Enter at 4 several corners the 4 winds: Neptune riseth disturb'd: the Fates bring the 4 winds in a chaine, and present them to Aeolus, as their King.

Sound. Pluto drawes hell: the Fates put upon him a burning Roabe, and present him with a Mace, and burning crowne.

Thunder and lightning. All the servants run out of the house affrighted, the two Captains and Blepharo, Amphitrio and Socia amazedly awake: Jupiter appeares in his glory under a Raine-bow, to whom they all kneele.

Hercules sinkes himself. Flashes of fire, the Divels appeare at every corner of the stage with severall fire-workes. The Judges of hell, and the three sisters run over the stage, Hercules after them: fire-workes all over the house. Enter Hercules.

Hercules kills the Sea-Monster, the Trojans on the walles, the Greekes below.

Two fiery Buls are discovered, the Fleece hanging over them, and the Dragon sleeping beneath them: Medea with strange fiery-workes, hangs above in the Aire in the strange habite of a Conjureesse.<sup>44</sup>

The fact that so much effort was made to produce the appropriate effect, makes it difficult to conclude that the Elizabethan producer and playwright were only concerned with putting a play across somehow.

## V

So brilliant an essay as *The Truth of Masks*, and so significant a contribution to the appraisal of Shakespeare's dramatic craftsmanship, has unfortunately received very little attention from Shakespearean scholars and critics. Even when it has been noticed, it has got far less than its deserving. Allardyce Nicoll pays it a somewhat lefthanded compliment in *The Development of the Theatre*. While discussing "The Actors, Costumes and Accessories" in Ch. VIII ("The Theatres of Elizabethan England"), Professor Nicoll refers to Wilde's essay and remarks that he "demonstrated with some show of reason that Shakespeare was not so careless in regard to costume as has often been made out." Again, in an appendix, discussing costume on the Elizabethan stage, he refers thus to *The Truth of Masks*:

The question of Elizabethan stage costume, touched upon briefly ... is one which has been peculiarly neglected. Sir Edmund Chambers, apparently, does not deal with it at all in his *Elizabethan Stage*, and, although Professor Creizenach and Professor Thorndike note in passing that certain conventional dresses were used in Shakespearean play-houses, the general assumption is that throughout the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries plays were put forward in contemporary costumes. It is this assumption which has led to the production of *Hamlet* (and other plays) in 'modern dress'. A more careful analysis, however, of Elizabethan conventions tends to prove that Oscar Wilde's overstrained and not always scholarly thesis in *The*

*Truth of Masks* possesses more than a stylistic value, and that the general assumption is based on a too hurried examination of the evidence at hand, or even due to a complete neglect of it.<sup>45</sup>

It is good to find Oscar Wilde's thesis receiving some recognition and support from so distinguished an authority as Professor Nicoll. A few words in passing about his stricture that the thesis is "not always scholarly". It is true that Wilde's essay is not written in the approved style of "academic" criticism, complete with the usual paraphernalia of "documentation". But neither this nor the ease and liveliness of his manner should lead one to suppose that he did not have his share of scholarship. His digs at scholars and academicians were not, as such digs usually are, a cover for his own ignorance. The brilliant student of the classics that he had been at Oxford knew a lot, and the ease with which he roams the whole field of European art and literature from the times of the Greeks down to his own day in his critical writings like *The Decay of Lying* or *The Critic as Artist*, is remarkable, to say the least of it. But he carried his learning lightly and gracefully. In *The Truth of Masks* he shows not only a close and perceptive acquaintance with the plays of Shakespeare but also a surprising knowledge of "facts". Surprising, because the way he claims an absolute autonomy for Art in *The Decay of Lying* or *The Critic as Artist* or the epigrams that preface the *The Picture of Dorian Gray* would hardly lead one to expect him to insist on any kind of fealty to fact in matters of art or criticism; and anyone who said that Wilde makes the subjective impression the last word in critical or aesthetic judgement to the total exclusion of objective validity, would find plenty of material in these writings to support him. Yet in *The Truth of Masks* Wilde presents his thesis with a wealth of factual evidence, commends Shakespeare for his sense and use of facts, insists on archaeological accuracy in the staging of Shakespearean and other drama, and winds up with the statement that "the highest beauty is not merely comparable with absolute accuracy of detail, but really dependent on it".<sup>46</sup> This essay is thus exceptional among his critical writings and forms, accordingly, an important rider to his critical or aesthetic position—a corrective to much possible misunderstanding. An incidental though valuable purpose is served by Oscar Wilde's one considerable essay on Shakespeare, which is to show that he was far from having been an irresponsible autonomist in matters of art and criticism.

In the past few years some justice has been done to Oscar Wilde the man, but little to Oscar Wilde the critic. Typical of the general cavalier attitude towards his criticism, Shakespearean or otherwise, is Mr. Hesketh Pearson's summary dismissal of *The Truth of Masks*. He finds nothing of value in the essay which can demand even a passing mention "except

the characteristic close: 'Not that I agree with everything that I have said in this essay. There is much with which I entirely disagree. The essay simply represents an artistic standpoint'.<sup>47</sup> The conclusion of the essay, quoted in part by Mr. Pearson with so much disparagement, was not in the article when it first appeared in the *Nineteenth Century*.<sup>48</sup> The remainder of it will bear quoting, for it explains Wilde's apparently paradoxical statement:

The essay simply represents an artistic standpoint, and in aesthetic criticism attitude is everything. For in art there is no such thing as an absolute truth. A Truth in art is that whose contradictory is also true. And just as it is only in art criticism and through it, that we can apprehend the Platonic theory of ideas, so it is only in art criticism, and through it, that we can realize Hegel's system of contraries.

All this is not an exercise in flippancy, but a filiation from a cardinal principle of Oscar Wilde's aesthetics. Any kind of positivist aesthetics that would reduce Art to a set of fixities and definites has no appeal for Oscar Wilde. Beauty in Art is, according to him, suggestive rather than expressive—suggestive of a hundred possibilities rather than expressive of any one particular thing. "Beauty", he says in *The Critic as Artist*, "has as many meanings as man has moods";<sup>49</sup> its message to-morrow may not be the same as the one to-day. Art would have its wings clipped if it is reduced from what it should be—a fluid possibility, a perpetual becoming—to fixity and absoluteness of being.

Such a dynamic concept of aesthetics, however controversial, has certainly a good deal to be said for it, and it is this that explains the baffling conclusion to *The Truth of Masks*. Consistently with his aesthetic stand, Oscar Wilde humbly disclaims absolute validity for his critical statements—in pleasant contrast to many a modern critic who speak in such a pontifical manner as to suggest a profound faith in the absolute validity of their pronouncements.

Mr. Pearson and others, therefore, are being superficial if they seek to write off *The Truth of Masks* simply on the ground of its conclusion. If they must join issue with Oscar Wilde, they must face up to the fundamental points brought up in the body of the essay or to the one involved in the conclusion, and try to controvert them if they can. Anyway, there is no record of Wilde's having ever unsaid all that he says in *The Truth of Masks*, and the essay still stands with its challenge to certain common assumptions of Shakespearean criticism, which those who stand by these assumptions will have to face.

Finally, a word about the title. Originally captioned *Shakespeare and Stage-Costume* in the *Nineteenth Century*, the essay was significantly re-chris-

tened *The Truth of Masks*. At one time, with the Greeks and the Romans, the mask was of course a regular part of the staging of a play. Those who think that "the play's the thing" might criticize Oscar Wilde's insistence on the correct and careful mounting of a Shakespearean drama as an insistence on inessentials. "The play's the essence", they would say, "the costuming and all that are merely the mask. Let not the play be smothered under the paint. Let us stress the inward rather than the outward. To take so much thought for the make-up of a character is a waste of intellectual energy. Let us concentrate on the character itself." Oscar Wilde's answer to all that is suggested by the title: the "mask" is as true, as essential, as the play itself. This, again, is in line with another basic principle of his aesthetics, which gives form a vital importance in the making of Art. To him the form is not the husk of a work of art but the kernel itself, being the objective analogue of the content. Truth in Art, he says, is entirely and absolutely a matter of form;<sup>50</sup> the intrinsic truth of a work of art, that is to say—its native truth, so to speak—lies in the form being absolutely true to the content. In the case of a staged play, the text of the play is the content, the details of staging are the form. Just as the content and the form of a work of art constitute an organic whole—the reverse and obverse of the same entity, so do the text and the stage-form of a play. They are integral to each other, and the play comes true only if the stage-form is in perfect accordance with the text—not only with its surface meaning but also with its underlying spirit and intention; the right stage-form helps these to objectify and so realize themselves. You may call the stage-form of a play its "mask", if you like; but in this case the "mask" is as real, as true, as what it encloses. Hence the emphasis placed by Oscar Wilde on the appropriate mounting of Shakespearean drama.

## VI

*The Truth of Masks* is the only essay of Oscar Wilde's dealing exclusively with Shakespeare's art: one wishes there were more. Elsewhere, passing comments of deep and far-reaching implication are made on Shakespeare and his works, but just because they are in the characteristic Wildean manner little attention has been given to them. One such occurs in *The Decay of Lying*. Here, while putting forward the view that truth in imaginative writing is "entirely and absolutely a matter of style", Wilde says that art finds her perfection within and not outside of herself. Those who oppose this idea will try to support themselves by calling upon Shakespeare—"and will quote the hackneyed passage forgetting that this unfortunate aphorism about Art holding the mirror up to Nature is deli-

berately said by Hamlet in order to convince the by-standers of his absolute insanity in all art matters."<sup>51</sup> An amused smile, and nothing more, is the general reaction to a statement such as this. Yet it is one that should shock us into thought. Are we right after all in interpreting that remark of Hamlet's in the way we usually do? Thinking of the plays of Shakespeare as they pass in succession across one's mind, it becomes extremely doubtful whether Shakespeare could have written them to hold the "mirror up to Nature". He creates for each of his plays a world so different that what is "Nature" for one play would not simply do for another. And was it not Shakespeare, as Oscar Wilde reminds us, who "made Prospero the magician, and gave him Caliban and Ariel as his servants, who heard the Tritons blowing their horns round the coral reefs of the Enchanted Isle, and the fairies singing to each other in a wood near Athens, who led the phantom kings in dim procession across the misty Scottish heath, and hid Hecate in a cave with the weird sisters".<sup>52</sup> Where in all this is holding the mirror up to Nature in the generally accepted sense of that phrase? Even in plays not concerned with the super- or preternatural one feels like saying as the German sculptor, Dannecker, said of the figures in the Parthenon pediments: "They are as if modelled on nature; yet I have never had the good fortune to see such nature".

At most, says Oscar Wilde, "it is merely a dramatic utterance, and no more represents Shakespeare's real views upon art than the speeches of Iago represent his real views upon morals".<sup>53</sup> The explanation that the statement is intended by Hamlet to convince by-standers of his insanity is not of course meant to be taken seriously. Nevertheless, Oscar Wilde does succeed in raising a doubt in our minds about the current interpretation of the lines. One comes to wonder whether we have not been looking at the thing from the wrong end. Is it meant that the drama holds the mirror up to nature in the sense of reflecting nature, or that the drama holds a mirror up to Nature so that Nature may see and discover herself therein? That the latter rather than the former is meant seems to be borne out by the gloss that follows the statement in the passage where it occurs: "to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure". Man comes to understand his own nature, to be aware of and to realize himself, as he sees himself through the dramatist's conception. Through the drama comes self-discovery and self-knowledge. It seems that it is this that Shakespeare really implied when he wrote that oft-quoted remark of his about the function of the drama. Says Shelley: "In the drama of the highest order there is little food for censure or hatred; it teaches rather self-knowledge and self-respect. Neither the eye nor the mind can see itself, unless reflected upon that which it resembles."<sup>54</sup>



## VII

Of the plays of Shakespeare, it is to *Hamlet*, appropriately enough, that these stray references of Oscar Wilde most frequently allude. A rather arresting *obiter dictum* in *The Decay of Lying* speaks of the Falstaff in *Hamlet* and the *Hamlet* in *Falstaff*: "It is a humiliating confession, but we are all of us made out of the same stuff. In *Falstaff* there is something of *Hamlet*, in *Hamlet* there is not a little of *Falstaff*. The fat knight has his moods of melancholy and the young prince his moments of coarse humour."<sup>55</sup> Now, it is a fact that the ebullient *Falstaff* has his moments of depression and the melancholy *Hamlet* his moments of ribald humour. A link is thus forged by Wilde in a passing remark between the comic and the tragic world of Shakespeare. Here, perhaps, is a key to the solution of the problem that intrigues every student of Shakespeare: how was it possible for the same creator to fashion a *Falstaff* and a *Hamlet* at the same time and with the same mastery? It is an open question whether Shakespeare is greater as a tragic or as a comic genius. While one reads his comedies, one marvels at his comic achievement; while one reads his tragedies, one marvels at his tragic achievement. How was it possible for the same genius to shine with equal brilliance in two apparently different worlds? What is a paradox when maintained by the Platonic Socrates towards the close of *Symposium*—that the genius for tragedy and comedy is the same (a statement so paradoxical for the Greek, to whom the tragic and the comic world were irreconcilable, that the sole listener at the end of the banquet, "convicted rather than convinced", nods off to sleep)—turns out to be a fact in the case of Shakespeare. But how to account for the paradox becoming a fact? Oscar Wilde suggests in so many words that the explanation lies in the basic sameness underlying all the varieties of human nature and behaviour. You scratch a *Falstaff*, and you scratch a *Hamlet*, and they are ultimately reduced to the same substratum. The two apparently different worlds, the comic and the tragic, are, after all, formed of the same elements; the only difference is in the emphasis of the artist on this facet or that.

In the course of a couple of paragraphs in the letter written to Lord Alfred Douglas from Reading Gaol (otherwise known as *De Profundis*) Wilde has magnificently characterized *Hamlet* and his two friends Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, and the relation between them. The characterization is indeed so fine that it will bear quoting *in extenso*; no reproduction can do justice to it except in Oscar Wilde's own words:

I know of nothing in all Drama more incomparable from the point of view of Art, or more suggestive in its subtlety of observation, than

Shakespeare's drawing of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. They are Hamlet's college friends. They have been his companions. They bring with them memories of pleasant days together. At the moment when they came across him in the play, he is staggering under the weight of a burden intolerable to one of his temperament. The dead have come armed out of the grave to impose on him a mission at once too great and too mean for him. He is a dreamer and is called upon to act. He has the nature of the poet and he is asked to grapple with the common complexities of cause and effect, with life in its practical realization, of which he knows nothing, not with life in its ideal essence, of which he knows much. He has no conception of what to do, and his folly is to feign folly. Brutus used madness as a cloak to conceal the sword of his purpose, the dagger of his will, but to Hamlet madness is a mere mask for the hiding of weakness. In the making of mows and jests he sees a chance of delay. He keeps playing with action, as an artist plays with a theory. He makes himself the spy of his proper actions and listening to his own words knows them to be but 'words, words, words'. Instead of trying to be the hero of his own history, he seeks to be the spectator of his own tragedy. He disbelieves in everything, including himself, and yet his doubt helps him not, as it comes not from scepticism but from a divided will.

Of all this, Guildenstern and Rosencrantz realize nothing. They bow and smirk and smile and what the one says the other echoes with sicklier iteration. When at last, by means of the play within the play and the puppets in their dalliance, Hamlet 'catches the conscience' of the King, and drives the wretched man in terror from the throne, Guildenstern and Rosencrantz see no more in his conduct than a rather painful breach of court-etiquette. That is as far as they can attain to in 'the contemplation of the spectacle of life with appropriate emotions'. They are close to his very secret and know nothing of it. Nor would there be any use in telling them. They are the little cups that can hold so much and no more. Towards the close it is suggested that caught in a cunning spring set for another, they have met, or may meet with a violent and sudden death. But a tragic ending of this kind, though touched by Hamlet's humour with something of the surprise and justice of comedy, is really not for such as they. They never die. Horatio, who, in order to 'report Hamlet and his cause aright to the unsatisfied',

Absents him from felicity awhile  
And in this harsh world draws his breath in pain,

dies, though not before an audience, and leaves no brother. But Guildenstern and Rosencrantz are as immortal as Angelo and Tartuffe, and should rank with them. They are what modern life has contributed to the antique ideal of friendship. He who writes a new *De Amicitia* must find a niche for them and praise them in Tusculan prose. They are types fixed for all time. To censure them will be to show a lack of appreciation. They are merely out of their sphere: that is all. In sublimity of soul there is no contagion. High thoughts

and high emotions are by their very existence isolated. What Ophelia herself could not understand was not to be realized by 'Guildenstern and gentle Rosencrantz', by 'Rosencrantz and gentle Guildenstern'.<sup>56</sup>

The entire passage is a striking testimony to both Oscar Wilde's critical powers and the beauty of his style. All may not agree that Hamlet is a "dreamer", but there is no questioning either the fineness of Wilde's critical conceptions or his ability to get them across in fine, sensitive phrase. The passage shows a remarkable insight into subtle nuances of character and mind, and ability to correlate individual character with general human experience. As for the portraiture of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, it is even finer than Goethe's in *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*. One wishes that Wilde had left more such comments on the different plays of Shakespeare.

## VIII

The question whether the works of Shakespeare are subjective or objective documents has long been a subject of lively controversy. If a Wordsworth claims that "with this key Shakespeare unlocked his heart", a Browning rejoins: "Did Shakespeare? The less Shakespeare he." On this much-debated issue Oscar Wilde has something to say worth listening to. To him, "all artistic creation is absolutely subjective":

The very landscape that Corot looked at was, as he said himself, but a mood of his own mind; and those great figures of Greek or English drama that seem to us to possess an actual existence of their own, apart from the poets who shaped and fashioned them, are, in their ultimate analysis, simply the poets themselves, *not as they thought they were, but as they thought they were not*;<sup>57</sup> and by such thinking came in a strange manner, though but for a moment, really so to be. For out of ourselves we can never pass, nor can there be in creation what in the creator was not. Nay, I would say that the more objective a creation appears to be, the more subjective it really is. Shakespeare might have met Rosencrantz and Guildenstern in the white streets of London, or seen the serving men of rival houses bite their thumbs at each other in the open squares; but Hamlet came out of his soul, and Romeo out of his passion. They were elements of his nature to which he gave visible form, impulses that stirred so strangely within him that he had, as it were perforce, to suffer them to realize their energy, not on the lower plane of actual life, where they would have been trammelled and constrained and so made imperfect, but on that imaginative plane of art where Love can indeed find in Death its rich fulfilment, where one can stab the eavesdropper behind the

arras, and wrestle in a new-made grave, and make a guilty king drink his own hurt, and see one's father's spirit, beneath the glimpses of the moon, stalking in complete steel from misty wall to wall. Action being limited would have left Shakespeare unsatisfied and unexpressed; and, just as it is because he did nothing that he has been able to achieve everything, so it is because he never speaks to us of himself in his plays that his plays reveal him to us absolutely, and show us his true nature and temperament far more completely than do those strange and exquisite sonnets, even, in which he bares to crystal eyes the secret closet of his heart. Yes, the objective form is the most subjective in matter. Man is least himself when he talks in his own person. Give him a mask, and he will tell you the truth.<sup>88</sup>

The essence and novelty of Oscar Wilde's view of the matter lies in the phrase: "not as they thought they were, but as they thought they were not". Art is a palimpsest, so to speak, of the artist's hidden self. The artist realizes himself in his work, so Oscar Wilde suggests in so many words, realizes not his visible, known, familiar self, the façade by which he is known to himself and the world, but his deeper submerged self, his inner life which may be as unknown to him as it is to the world outside—realizes his potentialities of which he might be altogether unconscious in his extra-artistic existence. This realization is all the greater in drama because it offers a mask behind which one fancies one has wiped out one's identity while as a matter of fact one is realizing it deeper than ever. Thus the drama, an apparently objective art-form, may actually offer a greater release for all the hidden potentialities of an artist, for all his stirrings and impulses "of a deeper birth" (in Wordsworthian phrase), than other art-forms apparently more subjective.

Taking up the characters of Shakespeare referred to by Oscar Wilde, suppose there was documentary proof to show that Shakespeare in real life was a sober, staid, unemotional person. Yet *Romeo and Juliet* would still remain a subjective record of Shakespeare's soul, revealing the potential man of passion in him, his latent capacity for soaring emotion which was never realized in real life. Or suppose there was definite proof to show that he was a cheerful man in real life with a serene outlook on existence. Yet the melancholy of Hamlet could not have been created if the artist did not have a deep-seated potentiality for melancholy which was not revealed to the world, and remained concealed under other elements, perhaps contradictory, of his character. A work of art may not and need not reflect the biography of an artist; but, however objective, it cannot escape reflecting biography of another sort—the inner biography of the artist of which nobody knows, not even perhaps the artist himself.

It may be of some interest to note in passing that much the same view of the writings of Shakespeare was expressed by Tagore in a letter written

much about the same time (the nineties of the last century) to his friend, Loken Palit. An extract is quoted below in translation:

You ask: if literary creation is the self-expression of the writer, what about the plays of Shakespeare? It is not possible to answer in brief. Let me go into some detail. . . .

There is a human nature inside a writer, and a human nature in the society outside him. The two are united through experience, through love; and through a profound power. Of this union are born new offspring in literature. In those offspring both the writer's subjective self and objective human nature are fused together; otherwise no living creation could have been possible. The main reason why the *Dushmanta-Sakuntala* of Kalidasa and those of the author of the *Mahabharata* are not the same is that Kalidasa and Vedavyasa are not the same persons. Their inner selves are not exactly of the same mould; hence the *Dushmantas* and *Sakuntalas* that they have fashioned from the human nature inside and outside their own selves come to differ in shape and kind. This is not to say that Kalidasa's *Dushmanta* is a facsimile of his creator. But it must be said that there is something of Kalidasa in him; else he would have been different. Similarly, just because the numerous literary offspring of Shakespeare have each a distinct individuality, I cannot admit that there is nothing, therefore, of Shakespeare in them. That would be a line of argument that would lead to the dissociation of most children in this world from their paternal heritage. In a good poetic drama the writer's subjective self and objective human nature are fused into such an organic unity that it is impossible to separate the two.

Without this integration of the subjective and the objective one can only produce expert essays in the manner of Rochefoucauld and others about human character and affairs through prolonged observation and penetrating judgement. It was because Shakespeare made the characters of his plays live in his own life, nourished them on the milk of the genius that flowed in the veins of the inner man, that they came to be living humans; else they would have been mere essays. Hence, in a sense, Shakespeare's writings are also self-expressions, though highly mixed, large-scale, and multifarious.

The great virtue of literature is its connexion with human life. Where is the inner life of man? There where our brain and heart, impulse and experience, all dissolve and fuse into an organic unity; where our intelligence, instinct, and taste operate in unison; where, in a word, is the essential man. It is there that literature is born. In different states man manifests himself in fragments. These fragments produce science, philosophy, etc. The observant man composes science; the thinking man composes philosophy; the total man creates literature.

Goethe has written on botany. His botanical writings reveal the mystery of plant life, but nothing of Goethe himself—at most an insignificant fraction. But his literary creations reveal the basal man, with whom is interfused the scientist Goethe, too, as an invisible

ingredient. Whatever one might say, there is at the core of Shakespearean poetry an incorporeal *eidōs* of Shakespeare whence all the philosophy and science and history of his life, all its sympathies and antipathies, all its faith and experience, radiate like a stream of light in different directions and in varied rays and colours; whence aversion for Iago, pity for Othello, love for Desdemona, amused friendship for Falstaff, sympathy and reverence for Lear, profound affection for Cordelia, lay bare and make known for all time the human heart of Shakespeare<sup>59</sup>

JYOTSNA BHATTACHARJEE

#### NOTES & REFERENCES

1. *Romeo and Juliet*, I. i: Public place in Verona.
2. *The Nineteenth Century*, Dec. 1884 (XVI. 94): p. 886, f. n.
3. *The Truth of Masks* (*Intentions*, p. 230—Methuen's edn., London, 1947).
4. The point is dealt with in detail in a paper elsewhere in this volume.
5. *The Truth of Masks* (*op. cit.*, p. 222).
6. *Reliquiae Wottonianae* (cited by Oscar Wilde in the article in the *Nineteenth Century*).
7. *The Truth of Masks* (*op. cit.*, pp. 221-2).
8. *Ibid.*, p. 234.
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 223-8.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 224.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 232-3.
12. See, for instance, Wilson Knight's *Principles of Shakespearean Production* (Pelican edn., 1949), p. 98.
13. *The Truth of Masks* (*op. cit.*, pp. 230-2).
14. *Ibid.*, p. 233.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 228.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 232.
17. Caesar Vecellio, author of *Habiti Antichi e Moderni di diverse Parti del Mondo* (*Ancient & Modern Costumes of different parts of the World*), Venice, 1590.
18. *The Truth of Masks* (*op. cit.*, pp. 240-1).
19. *Shakespeare's England* (Oxford, 1917), Vol. II, p. 268.
20. *The Truth of Masks* (*op. cit.*, p. 229).
21. On June 29, 1613, during a performance of a new play, *All is True* (Shakespeare's *Henry VIII*), "set forth with many extraordinary circumstances of pomp and majesty", as Sir Henry Wotton says, the "thatch" caught fire from the firing of "cannon" on the stage in accordance with the stage-direction in the scene of the play where the King arrives at Wolsey's house to take part in a masque and is received with a salute of cannon. The theatre was burnt to the ground, says Wotton, "within less than an hour", the actors and the auditors escaping with difficulty through two narrow doors.
22. *The Truth of Masks* (*op. cit.*, pp. 234-5).
23. Modernized from Appendix II (pp. 317-18) of *Henslowe's Diary*, ed. Foakes & Rickert (Cambridge, 1961).

24. *Op. cit.* (Works of Thomas Kyd, ed. F. S. Boas, Oxford, 1901), Act V, Sc. iii, ll. 13-15.
25. *IV. i.* 123.
26. *Othello*, I. i. 25.
27. *Op. cit.* (ed. R. J. L. Kingsford, Cambridge, 1952), Act IV, Sc. iv.
28. *The Truth of Masks*, (*op. cit.*, pp. 236-7).
29. *Ibid.*, p. 239.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 237.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 243.
32. *Ibid.*, pp. 244-6.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 246.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 247.
35. *Ibid.*, pp. 247-9 & 254-6.
36. *Ibid.*, pp. 249-50.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 254.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 253.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 256.
40. A. H. Thorndike, *Shakespeare's Theater* (New York, 1916), p. 397.
41. It may be noted in passing that the "doublet" referred to is in a scene that is described, not presented on the stage, and there is nothing in the play to prove conclusively that Shakespeare's Caesar appeared on the stage as gallantly dressed as a Leicester or an Essex.
42. "Abode at home, spun wool".
43. *The Truth of Masks* (*op. cit.*, pp. 244-5).
44. Thorndike, *op. cit.*, p. 136.
45. A. Nicoll, *The Development of the Theatre* (New York, 1937), p. 225.
46. *The Truth of Masks* (*op. cit.*, p. 255).
47. *Life of Oscar Wilde* (Penguin edn., 1960), pp. 142-3.
48. It may be noted in this connexion that there are a number of rather interesting changes in the article in its final form from what it was in its first publication in the *Nineteenth Century*. For instance, Romeo's last speech as he lays Paris in the vault of the Capulets, transformed by Juliet into "a feasting presence full of light", was first described in the article as the "triumph of Love over Life", and was later changed to "the triumph of Beauty over Death". Both are so beautifully put that to choose between them is rather difficult. In another connexion Wilde reminds us that "the whole Philosophy of Clothes is to be found in Lear's scene with Edgar—a passage which has the advantage of brevity and style over the grotesque wisdom and somewhat mouthing metaphysics of *Sartor Resartus*". In *Shakespeare and Stage Costume*, Carlyle's work had been characterized as "that prolonged struggle between the Scotch dialect and the German irregular verbs which is such an exciting quality in *Sartor Resartus*".

We find Wilde not only polishing or toning down his writing, but changing statements to fit in with his later convictions about art and life. The creed of realism in art is not in keeping with the critical theories of Oscar Wilde, and so we find him replacing the words *reality*, *realism*, etc. wherever they had been used in *Shakespeare and Stage Costume*. For instance, where we now have in *The Truth of Masks* (in connexion with the artistic use of archaeology in drama): "Art, and art only, can make archaeology beautiful; and the theatric art can use it most directly, and most vividly, for it can combine in one exquisite presentation *the illusion of actual life with the wonder of the unreal world*", the italicized portion was originally, "absolute reality with the grace and charm of the antique world".

49. Part I (*op. cit.*, p. 145).
50. *The Decay of Lying* (*op. cit.*, p. 27).
51. *Ibid.*, p. 28.
52. *Ibid.*, p. 28.
53. *Ibid.*, pp. 28-29.
54. Shelley: *A Defence of Poetry* (ed. H. F. B. Brett-Smith, Percy Reprints, Oxford, 1921, p. 37).
55. *Op. cit.*, p. 13.
56. *Letters of Oscar Wilde*, ed. Rupert Hart-Davis, London, 1962, pp. 504-5.
57. Italics mine.
58. *The Critic as Artist*, Part II (*op. cit.*, pp. 183-5).
59. Translated by Prof. T. N. Sen from Tagore's *Sahitya* (Tagore had written to Loken Palit, claiming that literary creation is an act of self-expression. Palit had dissented, citing the plays of Shakespeare in support of his dissent. The extract quoted is Tagore's answer. The letter was written in 1892. *The Critic as Artist*, Part II, was written in September, 1890).



## *Shakespeare in Yeats's "Last Poems"*

"SUPREME art is a traditional statement of certain heroic and religious truths, passed on from age to age, modified by individual genius, but never abandoned," Yeats wrote in his autobiography.<sup>1</sup> In part of *Last Poems* (1936-39), he modifies by his genius the traditional statement of heroic truths set down in Shakespearean tragedy. That he remembered Shakespeare is straightforwardly recorded:

Grant me an old man's frenzy,  
Myself must I remake  
Till I am Timon and Lear  
Or that William Blake  
Who beat upon the wall  
Till Truth obeyed his call;

—"An Acre of Grass" (13-18).

All perform their tragic play,  
There struts Hamlet, there is Lear,  
That's Ophelia, that Cordelia;  
Yet they, should the last scene be there,  
The great stage curtain about to drop,  
If worthy their prominent part in the play,  
Do not break up their lines to weep.  
They know that Hamlet and Lear are gay;  
Gaiety transfiguring all that dread.  
All men have aimed at, found and lost;  
Black out; Heaven blazing into the head:  
Tragedy wrought to its uttermost.  
Though Hamlet rambles and Lear rages,  
And all the drop-scenes drop at once  
Upon a hundred thousand stages,  
It cannot grow by an inch or an ounce.

—"Lapis Lazuli" (9-24)

"I was educated upon Balzac and Shakespeare and cannot go beyond them," he wrote to Joseph Hone in 1932.<sup>2</sup> In 1934 he told Pound that he was re-reading Shakespeare. Mr. T. R. Henn also mentions that, towards the end of his life, Yeats turned to Shakespeare.<sup>3</sup>

I feel that my essay cannot be on Yeats's "debt" to Shakespeare, or merely on the Shakespearean echoes in the *Last Poems*. Yeats invites us to a more interesting speculation: how did he use Shakespeare; and how does his poetic perception of Shakespeare in the *Last Poems* enrich our

perception of the plays? I shall look at these questions in the following pages.

## II

"Myself must I remake:" this is a good line with which to start my discussion. In a very elementary sense, Hamlet could not remake himself in Shakespeare's play, but Lear and Timon succeeded; of the other great heroes, Antony failed, so did Othello, Macbeth not only did not remake himself but slowly broke into pieces before the playgoers' eyes. So Yeats of the *Last Poems*, the old man seeking to be remade, chooses Timon and Lear.

In *A Vision*, Yeats divides human personality into twenty-eight phases according to the twenty-eight phases of the moon.<sup>4</sup> His central distinction is between the "primary" (solar) and "antithetical" (lunar) personalities. We would call them "objective" and "subjective" respectively. The ideal is the fifteenth phase, where antithetical and primary merge. Thus does Yeats begin writing about phase fifteen: "No description except that this is a phase of complete beauty."<sup>5</sup> All the other phases are illustrated by historical examples. No man or woman can illustrate phase fifteen. I find myself in complete agreement with Mrs. Helen Hennessy Vendler's argument that this is the phase of artistic creation and that the entire *A Vision* seems to be written for the sake of the fifteenth phase.<sup>6</sup> Earlier on, Yeats had found a symbol of artistic creation in Byzantium. In the *Last Poems*, one symbol at least of the condition of the fifteenth phase is the tragic hero, more especially the hero of Shakespearean tragedy. When he wrote "Sailing to Byzantium" (*The Tower*, 1928) and "Byzantium" (*The Winding Stair and Other Poems*, 1933), knowing that "profane perfection of mankind"<sup>7</sup> is impossible, Yeats had still wanted to travel to Byzantium and be a golden bird there, and, at least in poetry, had achieved it. The pattern repeats itself with the *Last Poems*. Knowing that man is only man, the poet must still aspire to be the hero. Therefore his desire to remake himself.

What the hero shares with phase fifteen is primarily the balance between antithetical and primary—subjective and objective. A hint of this is buried in

A mind Michael Angelo knew  
That can pierce the clouds,  
Or inspired by frenzy  
Shake the dead in their shrouds.

—"An Acre of Grass" (19-22)

What pierces the clouds? The sun, in Yeats the symbol of objectivity. (A mind piercing the clouds is a mind travelling outwards, an objective mind.) By contrast, the dead in the *Last Poems* live in the human mind.<sup>8</sup> "The dead in their shrouds" may be read as descriptive of subjective depth. These four lines of poetry suggest, then, that the new mind of the old poet must be in control of both subjective and objective vision.<sup>9</sup>

\* \* \* \*

The cord that binds Yeats, Timon, and Lear, is the cord of frenzy. "Grant me an old man's frenzy, Myself must I remake." "Or inspired by frenzy Shake the dead in their shrouds." To wrench your soul into another shape, to remake yourself, involves a pain that leads to frenzy, to anger. Virginia Moore writes:

Section 3 [of "Under Ben Bulben"] affirms the mission of anger: how violent emotion can cure a man of blindness.

He completes his partial mind,  
For an instant stands at ease,  
Laughs aloud, his heart at peace.  
Now at last he can "accomplish fate."<sup>10</sup>

There is also terror, not of death or the tragic end, but of the dark night of purgation that the soul must climb through to arrive there. "I *would not* be mad!" Lear says.<sup>11</sup> And when the hero arrives at the final vision, it has the terrible quality of something totally true.

It must be that terror in their eyes  
Is memory or foreknowledge of the hour  
When all is fed with light and heaven is bare.  
—"Phases of the Moon" (72-74)

### III

How did Timon remake himself? For him, as for Yeats, remaking involved a complete reversal of the fabric of the soul—a turning inside out. Ape-mantus rebukes Timon: "The middle of humanity thou never knewest, but the extremity of both ends."<sup>12</sup> But to Yeats and Timon, this truth is relevant not as a rebuke. Knowing both ends is a remaker's job. He must go from "dream" to "rag-and-bone shop," from "faery bride" to "raving slut;"<sup>13</sup> from quietened temptation to inspired frenzy.<sup>14</sup>

Timon started with these assumptions: all men are good, all friendship is true, to give is noble. This was his "dream." As it shatters, his

anger grows. But you must be very angry before your anger can fulfil its mission.

Know that when all words are said  
And a man is fighting mad,  
Something drops from eyes long blind,  
He completes his partial mind, . . .

—"Under Ben Bulben" (27-30).

When a man is fighting mad, he is fully frenzied. Timon, like Yeats's Crazy Jane, like his statesman on holiday, his "crazed" girl, "wild" men ("Because I am *mad* about women/I am *mad* about the hills,"),<sup>15</sup> his Roaring Tinker, and Henry Middleton, goes outside colloquial sanity.

Through his frenzy, Timon learns to hate, so that he may be wise, may know the truth.<sup>16</sup> "Till Truth obeyed his call"—that is the important thing. The truth that goodness is rare in this world and yet must be recognized when it happens; Timon learns to admit the goodness in his Steward when he is up in arms against the rest of the world. The truth that to assume goodness in everybody is a very immature "love," much less worthy than proper hatred.

Yeats had shown the first flashes of this hatred in *Responsibilities* (1914). In that book he applauded individuals—Hugh Lane in "To A Shade," John Synge in the example below; and hated the foul mob. Here is the Synge example, written after a crowd had rioted and broken up a performance of *The Playboy of the Western World*:

Once, when midnight smote the air,  
Eunuchs ran through Hell and met  
On every crowded street to stare  
Upon great Juan riding by:  
Even like these to rail and sweat  
Staring upon his sinewy thigh.

—"On Those That Hated 'The Playboy of the Western World', 1907"

This quality, of appreciating the one good person and hating the many, had shown itself in a fantastical guise—a poet's choice—in "The Fisherman" (*The Wild Swans At Coole*, 1919):

The living men that I hate,  
The dead man that I loved,  
The craven man in his seat,  
The insolent unreprieved,  
And no knave brought to book  
Who has won a drunken cheer,

The witty man and his joke  
 Aimed at the commonest ear,  
 The clever man who cries  
 The catch-cries of the clown,  
 The beating down of the wise  
 And great Art beaten down.

Maybe a twelvemonth since  
 Suddenly I began,  
 In scorn of this audience,  
 Imagining a man, . . .  
 A man who does not exist,  
 A man who is but a dream;  
 And cried, 'Before I am old  
 I shall have written him one  
 Poem maybe as cold  
 And passionate as the dawn.'

(13-28, 35-40)

The hatred of the crowd emerges in "Leaders of the Crowd" in *Michael Robartes and the Dancer* (1921). But already in the last poem of that book—"A Prayer for My Daughter" (first printed in 1919)—he rejects hatred:

My mind. . . . .  
 . . . knows that to be choked with hate  
 May well be of all evil chances chief.

(49, 52-53)

Fifteen years later, in 1934, he discovers a new justification for hatred. Ribh, the old sage, muses:

Why do I hate man, woman or event?  
 That is a light my jealous soul has sent.  
 From terror and deception freed it can  
 Discover impurities, can show at last  
 How soul may walk when all such things are past,  
 How soul could walk before such things began.

—"Ribh Considers Christian  
 Love Insufficient" (7-12)

In 1938, in "An Acre of Grass," this hatred is prayed for—the sort of disdain that could produce "On Those That Hated the 'Playboy' ". We have seen why *Timon of Athens* is a fit authority to invoke in this context. It need also be said that his prayer was granted.<sup>17</sup>

To arrive at proper hatred you must travel through cosmic hatred, as Timon notoriously does. (I cannot agree with Benjamin Lawrence Reid that "it is this cosmic enmity to man which defined full evil for Yeats."<sup>18</sup> That would be like calling a bitter medicine "wrong."). After all the "incomparable invective,"<sup>19</sup> Timon thinks in terms of casting off exter-

nalities. He is "beating upon the wall" now.

Nothing I'll bear from thee  
But nakedness, thou detestable town! (IV. i. 32-33)

Let it go naked, men may see't the better.  
You that are honest, by being what you are,  
Make them best seen and known. (V. i. 66-68)

Here he stands,

A dedicated beggar to the air,  
With his disease of all-shunn'd poverty,  
Walks like contempt, alone. (IV. ii. 13-15)

The hatred that Timon learns is not a thing of an ivory tower, it has moral effect in a "real" social context.

*Third Bandit* : H'as almost charm'd me from my profession, by persuading me to it.

*First Bandit* : 'Tis in the malice of mankind that he thus advises us; not to have us thrive in our mystery.

*Second Bandit* : I'll believe him as an enemy, and give over my trade.

*First Bandit* : Let us first see peace in Athens. There is no time so miserable but a man may be true. (IV. iii. 453-60)

This is a momentary hesitation, but in the minds of bandits! No one is converted, but three acts of a Shakespearean play have been hammering it into our heads that society is corrupt! I think if someone *had* been converted we would have doubted the play's seriousness. As it stands, the episode above arrests any easy dismissal of Timon's purgation. There is perhaps less need for bandits to be hypocritical among themselves.

Timon's last words in the play are a message to Athens:

... tell my friends,  
Tell Athens, in the sequence of degree,  
From high to low throughout, that whoso please  
To stop affliction, let him take his haste,  
Come hither, ere my tree hath felt the axe,  
And hang himself. I pray you, do my greeting. ...  
Come not to me again; but say to Athens,  
Timon hath made his everlasting mansion  
Upon the beached verge of the salt flood,  
Who once a day with his embossed froth  
The turbulent surge shall cover. Thither come,  
And let my grave-stone be your oracle.  
Lips, let four words go by and language end:

What is amiss, plague and infection mend!  
 Graves only be men's works and death their gain;  
 Sun, hide thy beams, Timon hath done his reign.

(V. i. 206-11, 213-22)

"Friends," "stop affliction," "Graves only be men's works and death their gain," can no longer be read commonsensically. This man has been able to say unironically for himself, some twenty lines back:

... My long sickness  
 Of health and living now begins to mend,  
 And nothing brings me all things.

(V. i. 185-7)

He has seen for himself the worthlessness of life and the value of death. His contempt for the senators is put into three words: "Go, *live* still" (V. i. 187; italics mine). At this point to send back to the Athenians the advice that to rid themselves of affliction they must die is not an empty gesture of venom. He recommends for the Athenians the "nothing" that brings him "all things:" he that hath ears to hear, let him hear. The message has at least the paradoxical quality of a vision; of course a death-wish seems negative by ordinary light. This is the paradoxicality of "Send war in our time, O Lord!";<sup>20</sup> or of "We Irish... Climb to our proper dark."<sup>21</sup> Timon's complex attitude to death exposes the senators as pusillanimous and improper haters of men. "By decimation and a tithed death," they say, cowards all,

If thy revenges hunger for that food  
 Which nature loathes, take thou the destin'd tenth,  
 And by the hazard of the spotted die  
 Let die the spotted.

(V. iv. 31-35)

Timon, preparing for death himself, had offered to others gravely and bitterly, the choice of embracing death. These men, clinging to life, would save their lives by the random death of others.

And of such is the kingdom of Athens. For Timon to realize that society is rotten, is the obverse of his personal vision of readjustment between good and evil. The two realizations—personal and social—together complete the balance of subjective and objective attitudes that I mention in section II.

Although the power of his own invective carries him away, the beginning of the speech of grace before the mock banquet in Act III, Sc. vi, is a convenient measure of his purged social vision:

*You great benefactors, sprinkle our society with thankfulness. For your own gifts, make yourselves prais'd; but reserve still to give, lest your deities be*

*despis'd. Lend to each man enough, that one need not lend to another; for were your godheads to borrow of men, men would forsake the gods.*

(III. vi. 69-73)

Timon is now in a fit position to direct the social conduct of the gods. He has arrived here from the first act: "Nay, and you begin to rail on society once, I am sworn not to give regard to you. Farewell, and come with better music" (I. ii. 245-7). Timon's final social vision is close to that which the hero of the *Last Poems* has earned:

And I beat up the common sort  
And think it is no shame.

—"Three Songs to the One Burden" I (3-4)

I pity all the young,  
I know what devil's trade they learn  
From those they live among,  
Their drink, their pitch-and-toss by day,  
Their robbery by night;  
The wisdom of the people's gone,  
How can the young go straight?

—"Three Songs to the One Burden" II (11-17)

Those cheers that can be bought or sold,  
That office fools have run,  
That waxen seal, that signature,  
For things like these what decent man  
Would keep his lover waiting?

—"A Model for the Laureate" (19-23)

This is one reason why the Timon-mask is useful for Yeats, a believer in the old social values pitted against a new, mercenary, materialistic society.<sup>22</sup>

Irish poets, learn your trade,  
Sing whatever is well-made,  
Scorn the sort now growing up  
All out of shape from toe to top,  
Their unremembering hearts and heads  
Base-born products of base beds.

—"Under Ben Bulbin" (68-73)

Why should not old men be mad?  
Some have known a likely lad  
That had a sound fly-fisher's wrist  
Turn to a drunken journalist;  
A girl that knew all Dante once  
Live to bear children to a dunce;  
A Helen of social welfare dream,  
Climb on a wagonette to scream.



.....  
 Young men know nothing of this sort,  
 Observant old men know it well;  
 And when they know what old books tell,  
 And that no better can be had,  
 Know why an old man should be mad.

—“Why Should Not Old Men Be Mad?” (1-8, 16-20)

\* \* \* \*

Much of this vision of a corrupt society is given in terms of money in *Timon of Athens*. Apart from the well-known tirades against gold (IV. iii. 26ff., 384-95), very often money is established as the social centre of reference by the minor characters who form the fabric of society. The “artists,” the servants of Timon’s so-called friends, and of course the bandits, almost unconsciously betray the language of their universe:

*Lucius’s Servant*: Ay, and I think  
 One business does command us all; for mine  
 Is money.

*Titus*: So is theirs and ours. (III. iv. 3-5)

The Old Athenian in Act I, Sc. i, is, as critics have noted, the mercenary man in contrast to Timon, the man whose standard of reference is feelings. The standard of money determines people’s notation in the play. Apemantus and the Steward refuse to acknowledge money as kingpin of meaning. However far the two characters might be from each other, they still belong to the camp of the redeemed Timon.

On one level, the play is about man and money. First money misconceived as instrument, then rejected when found to be master. Critics have seen *Timon* as a note on usury in a disintegrating feudal society.<sup>23</sup> I would give to the theme of money a complementary rôle. Timon’s personal vision is a vision of good and evil (the remaking). His social vision is a vision of man and money. This is the subjective-objective balance.

What does Yeats write about the place of money in society?

All neighbourly content and easy talk are gone,  
 But there’s no good complaining, for money’s rant is on.  
 He that’s mounting up must on his neighbour mount,  
 And we and all the Muses are things of no account.

—“The Curse of Cromwell” (9-12)

I lived among great houses,  
 Riches drove out rank,  
 Base drove out the better blood,  
 And mind and body shrank.

—“The Statesman’s Holiday” (1-4)

Against this background, Timon is the hero.

By aristocracy he [Yeats] meant the proud, the heroic mind. This included a furious attitude toward the cheap, the trashy, the ill-made. And he certainly deplored the passing of the stately homes, and the gradual effacement of the well or highly born. Finally I [Dorothy Wellesley] asked: . . . "What then is your solution for all these ills?" Dropping his hand which was never still, the brown hand with symbolic ring, upon his knee, in a gesture which to me revealed his moods of despair, he replied: "O my dear, I have no solution, none."<sup>24</sup>

This is also Timon's cry of heroic despair. A man who easily belongs in this despairing world is Yeats's Colonel Martin. The Colonel—a happy travelling man (Timon had been a happy "giving" man)—has been deceived by his wife and a "rich" (significant?) man. But it is the final gesture of the Colonel that is Timon-like.

The Judge at the Assize Court,  
When he heard that story told,  
Awarded him for damages  
Three kegs of gold.  
The Colonel said to Tom his man,  
'Harness an ass and cart,  
Carry the gold about the town,  
Throw it in every part.'  
*The Colonel went out sailing.*

.....  
'And did you keep no gold, Tom?  
You had three kegs,' said he.  
'I never thought of that, Sir.'  
'Then want before you die.'

—"Colonel Martin" (46-54, 64-67)

Timon at the close of the play is a figure throwing gold in every part. What if the ordinary poor construed the Colonel's gesture to be only generosity? So had the Steward construed Timon's unwise giving as an excess of goodness. We must concentrate on what the Colonel says: "Want before you die." This has the ambiguity of Timon's death wish for the Athenians. The Colonel has learnt, bitterly, to want. And if we believe in tragedy we must say that he is the better for it. What other wish can he have for his faithful retainer?

This faithful retainer who takes his master's part belongs also to the old aristocratic scene.

*First Servant:*

Such a house broke?  
So noble a master fall'n, all gone, and not

One friend to take his fortune by the arm,  
And go along with him. . . .

*Third Servant:*

Yet do our hearts wear Timon's livery,  
That see I by our faces; we are fellows still,  
Serving alike in sorrow. Leak'd is our bark,  
And we, poor mates, stand on the dying deck,  
Hearing the surges threat; . . .

*Steward:*

Wherever we shall meet, for Timon's sake  
Let's yet be fellows. Let's shake our heads, and say,  
As 'twere a knell unto our master's fortunes,  
"We have seen better days." (IV. ii. 5-8, 17-21, 24-27)

and,

*Flaminius:* Is't possible the world should so much differ,  
And we alive that lived? (III. i. 46-47)

In Yeats,

You ask what I have found, and far and wide I go:  
Nothing but Cromwell's house and Cromwell's murderous crew,  
The lovers and the dancers are beaten into the clay,  
And the tall men and the swordsmen and the horsemen, where are they?  
And there is an old beggar wandering in his pride—  
His fathers served their fathers before Christ was crucified.

*O what of that, O what of that,  
What is there left to say?*

—"The Curse of Cromwell" (1-8)

In this poem the servant and the master have merged. He is also the wandering old man, the hero of the *Last Poems*, who can say "we and all the Muses" (1.12). And, most important, he has the knowledge that this hero searches and finally possesses: "What can they know that we know that know the time to die?" (1.14).

\* \* \* \*

Knowing the time to die—for Yeats the most valuable knowledge. As with all fellow-Platonists, death was for him the most "real" thing in life, in a rather precise sense. For death is in a general sense one of the most real things in life for serious artists, philosophers, theologians, humanists, scientists. But for Plato death heralds the time when the Idea can be perceived without the refracting Real. And Yeats played happily with this notion, that death makes all meanings clear, makes the ideal available.

Casting esotericism aside, read Yeats's many treatments of death and commerce with the dead as metaphors of writing and art, and nothing (except the esotericism of course) is lost. But working back, add to these passages the Platonic significance of death and you gain an edge, a good gain that gives particular meaning even to lines as common and intelligible as the following:

Have I, that put it into words,  
 Spoilt what old loins have sent?  
*Eyes spiritualised by death can judge,*  
*I cannot, but I am not content.*

—"Are You Content?" (5-8; italics mine)

To know the time of death is the greatest control, the greatest triumph of poet or hero over life. To know, therefore to circumscribe, reality-burgeoning death. It is also the archetypal activity of the poet in beatitude, one in a million. The moment this life-in-art complex is scented around the corner, one exclaims "Paterism!" But this specialized artification of life surely takes much more into account than what is commonly meant by that word.

If life is seen as art, it is now seen as a symmetrical preparation for death. (This is not to deny that in many and more early moods Yeats leans on the side of Pater, engages in that other life-art programme.)

No longer in Lethean foliage caught  
 Begin the preparation for your death  
 And from the fortieth winter by that thought  
 Test every work of intellect or faith,  
 And everything that your own hands have wrought,  
 And call those works extravagance of breath  
 That are not suited for such men as come  
 Proud, open-eyed and laughing to the tomb.

—"Vacillation" III (27-34)

This is from *This Winding Stair and Other Poems* (1933). By the time he was writing the *Last Poems* Yeats had found the image of an activity which contained all the important things in the life-as-art, life-as-preparation-for-death, supreme-'poet'-ness-as-control-over-death chain of 'idea's: choosing your own epitaph.

It is the most detached symbolic gesture of the artist as artist. Since writing the epitaph is a form of poetic creation the poet cannot but feel joy at what he has produced. This joy is sublime, for it is joy at the only really joyful thing in life—death. It is also sublime because it is difficult to be so much a poet as to be able to be thus joyful.

...when Lucifer stands among his friends, when Villon sings...when Timon makes his epitaph, we feel no sorrow, for life herself has made one of her eternal gestures, has called up into our hearts her energy...the imagination of personality...drama, gesture.<sup>25</sup>

*Timon:* ...I am sick of this false world, and will love nought  
But even the mere necessities upon't.  
Then, Timon, presently prepare thy grave;  
Lie where the light foam of the sea may beat  
Thy grave-stone daily: make thine epitaph,  
That death in me at others' lives may laugh.  
(IV. iii. 378-83)

The passage goes on to a bitter rejection of life, a vision of human society as a society of beasts. The gesture of embracing death, by contrast, becomes more gay, more dramatic, more of a gesture.

Timon says:

Lie where the light foam of the sea may beat  
Thy grave-stone daily:

and Yeats:

Under bare Ben Bulben's head  
In Drumcliff churchyard Yeats is laid.  
—"Under Ben Bulben" (84-85)

Invoking sea and mountain to keep watch. But, in the spirit of Goethe, I would say that the difference between light foam and bare mountain marks the difference between Timon and Yeats at this stage. Timon at the end is still unquiet: "that death in me at others' lives may laugh." But it is Timon's *frenzy* that is to Yeats valuable. Learning Timon's frenzy, he himself goes beyond it, to a theophany.<sup>26</sup> This is the distinction between character in drama circumscribed by act and scene, and poet commanding word.

Timon's epitaph comes up again in Act V, Sc. i. The angry Timon is scornfully refusing the offers made by the Athenian senators. In doing so he is Yeats's proper laureate:

Those cheers that can be bought or sold,  
That office fools have run,  
That waxen seal, that signature,  
For things like these what decent man  
Would keep his lover waiting?  
—"A Model for the Laureate" (19-23)

To write your epitaph is to entertain your best lover at this stage of

disenchantment.

*Timon*: Why, I was writing of my epitaph;  
It will be seen to-morrow. My long sickness  
Of health and living now begins to mend,  
And nothing brings me all things. (V. i. 184-7)

As I have noted before, his most disdainful dismissal now is "live still." This is casting a cold eye on life and death (Yeats's self-composed epitaph: "*Cast a cold eye On life, on death*"<sup>27</sup>). The "hot" eye, so to speak, is to feel attracted towards life and to fear death; but now Timon is attracted by death, repelled by life. This reversal brings me to the opening of Section II of this paper, where I say that remaking involves reversal. The reversal here, demanded by Yeats's and Timon's visions of death, is the remaking of the very human mould of a man. Now, like the makers of history in "The Long-legged Fly," his mind moves upon nothing, silence.

Then the unfolding of the epitaph itself after Timon's death. At first, "*Timon is dead.*" Very precisely speaking, this is the most Godlike thing a poet can do, use the present perfect tense with respect to death, round off syntactically his own life, "*In Drumcliff churchyard Yeats is laid.*"<sup>28</sup> Then,

*Here lies a wretched corse, of wretched soul bereft:  
Seek not my name. A plague consume you, wicked caitiffs left!  
Here lie I, Timon, who, alive, all living men did hate.  
Pass by and curse thy fill, but pass and stay not here thy gait.*  
(V. iv. 70-73)

Full of frenzy. But, chastening away the hatred, down to the imperative "pass by!", what is the message?

By his command these words are cut:

*Cast a cold eye  
On life, on death.  
Horseman, pass by!*  
—"Under Ben Bulbin" (91-94)

Yeats wrote these lines upon the margin of an essay on Rilke, which its author had sent him. Though the immediate occasion of their composition is so remote from *Timon of Athens*, I would still emphasize the resemblance.

#### IV

The parallel [of *Timon of Athens*] with *King Lear* has been most often mentioned. Like Lear, Timon takes at their face value protestations

of love; just as Lear overlooks Cordelia's worth because of her plain bluntness, so Timon disregards the warnings of the unsociable Ape-mantus; and just as Kent is the one man true to Lear, so the Steward is true to Timon, and each has to hear his protests against his master's folly over-ruled. In a sense, the Steward, like Kent, accompanies his master into the wilderness when the heart breaks and the reason almost gives way at the shock of human unkindness; and the curses which the two tragic heroes hurl at mankind share not only their power but also, often, their details. Nor is it quite true to say, as some have said, that where Lear is redeemed by suffering, Timon goes unchanged to his grave.<sup>29</sup>

I think these words are eminently reasonable. Up to a point, Lear and Timon can be taken to be simply two examples of the same argument. One can say that Yeats wanted to be like one or both of them.

But in some ways of course *Lear* is significantly different from *Timon*. The *Last Poems* exhibit an awareness of some of these differences. By and large, this section of this paper notices those differences, sees if it can also be said that Yeats wanted to be like each of them separately.

To do this I shall first look at something which is basically a similarity between the two heroes: remaking by reversal. As we asked with *Timon*, so with *Lear*—how does Lear remake himself?

"Lear," says Muir, "has reached the age when he should 'renounce love, choose death, and make friends with the necessity of dying.'"<sup>30</sup> Actually, Lear's final lesson in the play is not to renounce love at all. Rather to recognize proper love and learn proper hate, like Timon. After all, Lear judges Goneril and Regan, he does not forgive them.

In fact, Lear's own intellectual notion about his status at the beginning of the play is close to the sentence I have quoted above.

... and 'tis our fast intent  
To shake all cares and business from our age,  
Conferring them on younger thoughts, while we  
Unburthen'd crawl towards death. (I. i. 38-41)

It is as if Yeats had prescribed for himself the condition described below:

Picture and book remain,  
An acre of green grass  
For air and exercise,  
Now strength of body goes;  
Midnight, an old house  
Where nothing stirs but a mouse  
—"An Acre of Grass" (1-6)

or as if he had deleted the negative from the last of the lines below:

Infirm and aged I might stay  
In some good company,  
I who have always hated work,  
Smiling at the sea, . . .  
But I am not content.

—“Are You Content?” (17-20, 24)

Cordelia did not openly contradict this view of Lear held by himself. But in refusing to hoodwink him, she contradicted it indirectly. From this point on in the play, Lear’s idea of royal old age clashes with his two daughters’. We begin to realize that to say he should not cling to life is to side with the bad daughters.

*Regan:* O, Sir! you are old;  
Nature in you stands on the very verge  
Of her confine: you should be rul’d and led  
By some discretion that discerns your state  
Better than yourself. (II. iv. 147-51)

I pray you, father, being weak, seem so. (II. iv. 203)

Lear himself is to an extent incapable of shaking off his old ideas. He fights the daughters, yet tells himself repeatedly that he must be patient, must endure—precisely what his daughters tell him.<sup>31</sup> He fights his madness very hard.

O! let me not be mad, not mad, sweet heaven;  
Keep me in temper; I would not be mad! (I. v. 47-48)

(Here too Yeats learns Lear’s lesson and does not make Lear’s “mistake”; his contention is rather “Why Should Not Old Men Be Mad?”)

Slowly Lear’s attempt at patience fails. His duty becomes clear: to acknowledge his passionate heart. The pride that he must learn to subdue is the false pride that he has shown in the face of Cordelia’s love, not the pride that he shows to Goneril and Regan. The dream of kingship with all the necessary accoutrements (“additions”) had kept him enchanted. *That* had been wrong. Now he must discover, not how not to be a king, but how to be a king even when additions are not available, how to be able to say, “Ay, every inch a king” (IV. vi. 110), even in the garb of a madman. It is in a sense also a poet’s lesson that he must learn: to construct the vision of truth out of “nothing” (Cordelia’s answer to him in the first act), not to be taken in by the “hollow, sounding” words of his two daughters.

To describe the frenzy of Lear in the storm scene would be to labour



the obvious. There anger fulfils its mission (cf. Section 3 of 'Under Ben Bulbin': see *ante*), forcing privilege of self-realization out of contending nature. Yeats writes, "Hate is a kind of 'passive suffering' but indignation is a kind of joy,"<sup>32</sup> and this is indignation grimly rejoicing in what ordinary men would call insanity. The scene is the answer to a prayer, which the play shows to be a better one than a prayer for patience:

You see me here, you Gods, a poor old man,  
As full of grief as age; wretched in both!  
If it be you that stirs these daughters' hearts  
Against their father, fool me not so much  
To bear it tamely; touch me with noble anger,  
And let not women's weapons, water-drops,  
Stain my man's cheeks! (II. iv. 274-80)

The gift that Yeats begs of Shakespeare in his last book of poems is the gift of this "noble anger"; anger, not so much against the gods, but like Lear's anger or Timon's, largely a personal anger against equals, or, more significantly, inferiors, against a society beneath oneself.

\* \* \* \*

Another feature of the tragic attitude that Yeats perceives in Shakespeare is "tragic joy." The joy is not a forced conscious stand—we *must* be joyful. It is rather a natural prerogative that accrues to the man who has taken the trouble to become right. Here it must be said that Yeats conceives of man much less as the archetypal human sufferer than as the archetypal artist. All men should aspire to the condition of the artist. It is not a preached dogma in Yeats, but there it is. You are invited all the time to be one of the gods, someone with a vision large enough to encompass all reality, and coupled with the invitation there are very often terms connected with art—"tragic joy", "gaiety transfiguring all that dread."<sup>33</sup>

A reference is invited in this connexion to lines 9-17 of "Lapis Lazuli", quoted earlier in Section I. What play is he writing about there? Life conceived as drama as well as the actual *Hamlet* and *King Lear*. The two plays do not merely "stand for" life. Drama is contrapuntally spoken of on both levels in this passage, as life, as art. The first three lines, with the two "there's" and the two "that's's" that serve to fix the actors on the stage, are also about life, of course a tragedy because it ends in death. But when the lines are about life ("All perform..."), what does one make of the pointing gestures, of a word like "perform" or like "struts?" (Incidentally, that "strut," remembering *Macbeth*, is another "proof" that the passage is about life.) One must assume, I think, the existence of a

spectator even on the stage of life. This is the archetypal artist figure. For to be able to *see* the play is to perceive its form, by vision "understand" it, almost foreknow it, and therefore, as out of a tragic drama, to get joy. We have noticed another way of suggesting this artistic control over life—the choice of one's own epitaph.

In the lines of poetry that we are discussing the lesson life must learn from art becomes even more explicit. Having made the point that the performance of a life is like the performance of a play, he distinguishes between actual rôles in life and idealized rôles in art. If the four characters in life, observed by the poet, seem to be Hamlet and Lear, Ophelia and Cordelia, they must emulate the Hamlet, Lear, Ophelia, Cordelia that are set down in art. This distinction between the two sets of characters is noticeable in "Yet they...". Then, "prominent part in the play" sets us thinking of actors and drama. The poet is *now* talking not even about the characters of drama but of good actors and actresses who play the parts of these characters. If they are competent, they do not break up their lines. The lines are of course the poet's. They are worthy because they have understood art, the nature of the tragic hero ("they *know* that Hamlet and Lear are gay"). Here again is another image suggesting man modelling life after art. Then the culminating aperçu—that the tragic hero is gay, and indeed made by the poet-playwright in his own image, for he knows that tragedy transfigures sorrow into gaiety: "I will die bravely, Like a smug bridegroom."<sup>34</sup> Not merely sorrow but dread is transfigured—Hamlet's dread in the famous soliloquy, Lear's dread of *hysterica passio*. Then through all the desperate jesting irony to the final true gaiety of "the readiness is all," in Hamlet a disregarding of the pre-saging melancholy! In *Lear*, through the grim gaiety of, for example, "I remember thine eyes well enough. Dost thou squiny at me?" (IV. vi. 138) to the clear joy of "Look there, look there!" (V. iii. 311).

These are the two concepts, then, that Yeats looks for in Shakespeare, at the stage of the *Last Poems*: anger and joy.

Now Yeats's mention of both Timon and Lear takes on relevance. For Timon has more of the frenzied anger, and Lear more of the theophanic joy. Between these two is the struck balance of the *Last Poems*. Yeats is less militant than the Timon of the last stages, and more militant than the Lear of the last stages.

I have stressed the importance of anger-frenzy-hatred in the section on *Timon of Athens*. Here I stress the importance of tragic joy. The lines we have just discussed, with their counterpointing structure, are representative. For in that context, what can "transfiguring" mean but the imposing of form by the artist-creator, the perception of form by the artist-spectator, the realization of form by the artist-actor, the embodying of form by the

artist-*persona*; and therein a joy? This is the thing that is the saving grace of the last darkness, the sign of victory in defeat. And this mark of the artist is what Yeats found in Shakespeare's heroes.

\* \* \* \*

In *King Lear*, the king's repeated exhortations to himself for self-control would seem to indicate a sort of foreknowledge of what the soul must go through. Finally, when he gives up patience, his resistance to Kent's offer of help, "Wilt break my heart?" (III. iv. 4), shows almost a blind instinctual knowledge of how much he *must* undergo, that to keep his heart unbroken he *must* endure the physical storm. Someone who has not this instinct, this knowledge, is celebrated in Yeats's poem "A Bronze Head":

Here at right of the entrance this bronze head,  
Human, superhuman, a bird's round eye,  
Everything else withered and mummy-dead.  
What great tomb-haunter sweeps the distant sky  
(Something may linger there though all else die;)  
And finds there nothing to make its terror less  
*Hysterica passio* of its own emptiness?

No dark tomb-haunter once; her form all full  
As though with magnanimity of light,  
Yet a most gentle woman; who can tell  
Which of her forms has shown her substance right?  
Or maybe substance can be composite,  
Profound McTaggart thought so, and in a breath  
A mouthful held the extreme of life and death.

But even at the starting-post, all sleek and new,  
I saw the wildness in her and I thought  
A vision of terror that it must live through  
Had shattered her soul. Propinquity had brought  
Imagination to that pitch where it casts out  
All that is not itself: I had grown wild  
And wandered murmuring everywhere, 'My child, my child!'

Or else I thought her supernatural;  
As though a sterner eye looked through her eye  
On this foul world in its decline and fall;  
On gangling stocks grown great, great stocks run dry,  
Ancestral pearls all pitched into a sty,  
Heroic reverie mocked by clown and knave,  
And wondered what was left for massacre to save.

I think the seventh line establishes that he was thinking of *King Lear*

when he wrote this poem:

*Lear*: O! how this mother swells up toward my heart;  
*Hysterica passio*! down, thou climbing sorrow!  
 Thy element's below. (II. iv. 56-58)

Yeats liked the term, used it many times, and seemed to like the Lear-associations that went with it.

The figure in the poem is terrified of its own emptiness. The word reminds us of "Buddha's emptiness" in "The Statues" (24). There it is the emptiness of fulfilment and here the emptiness of negative connotation. The word "nothing" plays, as I have noted, a large part in *Lear*. At first Cordelia's avowal of nothingness makes him angry. Then he thinks that those daughters who professed all things also have nothing for him after all, and Cordelia, on her own showing, has nothing. His terror at this emptiness then starts. In the end, he finds out the meaning of this nothingness, and he is saved. But even when he meets Cordelia in the flesh, signs of his questionings, indeed of his terror, now accepted, remain:

If you have poison for me, I will drink it.  
 I know you do not love me; for your sisters  
 Have, as I do remember, done me wrong:  
 You have some cause, they have not. (IV. vii. 72-75)

The heroine of "A Bronze Head" has only terror at emptiness, outside and in. She is kin to the unresurrected Lear.

In the opening of the second stanza she is Cordelia. "No dark tomb-haunter once"—"You do me wrong to take me out of the grave" (IV. vii. 45). Then,

...her form all full  
 As though with magnanimity of light,  
 Yet a most gentle woman.

...Her voice was ever soft,  
 Gentle and low, an excellent thing in woman.<sup>35</sup>

"Which of her forms has shown her substance right?" And France in the play, "if aught within that little-seeming substance,..." (I. i. 198).

We go on to the next verse. There we find that Lear has become a counter to signify a condition—perhaps a state to which all fine souls are doomed, a sort of inevitable *angoisse*. For the woman who was Cordelia is now also Lear:

A vision of terror that it must live through  
 Had shattered her soul.

...man's nature cannot carry  
Th' affliction nor the fear. (III. ii. 48-49)

And then a still more peculiar thing. You cannot make out if lines 18 to 20 are spoken of the poet himself or of the original of the statue, of Yeats or of Maud Gonne. The lines are

...Propinquity had brought  
Imagination to that pitch where it casts out  
All that is not itself.

With "*hysterica passio*" eleven lines above, it seems safe to conjecture that "propinquity" also reflects a Lear-association:

Here I disclaim all my paternal care,  
Propinquity and property of blood,  
And as a stranger to my heart and me  
Hold thee from this for ever. (I. i. 113-16)

Do Yeats's lines apply to the poet or his subject?

If they refer to the heroine of the poem, "propinquity" (=nearness, closeness, proximity in space, blood, nature)<sup>38</sup> can only mean the absence of anything propinquitous, the search for propinquity and the inevitable negative result, or even merely the search for propinquity, for that would finally bring things down to only oneself. The lines from "A Bronze Head" would then be a picture of "wild" egocentrism. And of course, although the word "propinquity" is there used with the opposite notation, the lines from *Lear* are also a picture of extreme egocentrism. Therefore, according to this meaning, the poet grows wild because he sees that for Maud Gonne, confined within the circle of her own self, the terror of emptiness is not likely to be dispelled.

Now our second sense. This is more straightforward. Yeats's imagination, undergoing a sort of rarefaction, casts off all that is not "itself" (I think the peculiar construction of the sentence in the poem would make "itself" equal to "propinquitous to itself"). Only Maud Gonne remains—she is of the same substance as his imagination. Then, realizing her predicament from the very centre of his soul, he grows wild and wanders. How does this fit the Shakespearean situation? Lear disclaimed true propinquity when he banished Cordelia. Thus, when he was wandering in the storm he was "reclaiming propinquity," discovering to whom he was truly closely related, through the gradual discovery of self.

...I had grown wild  
And wandered murmuring everywhere, 'My child, my child'—

is Yeats's equivalent of the storm scene.

There is a Lear-association, too, about that "My child, my child":

Do not laugh at me;  
For, as I am a man, I think this lady  
To be *my child* Cordelia. (IV. vii. 68-70: italics mine)

"Or else I thought her supernatural"—"Thou art a soul in bliss" (IV. vii. 46).

As though a sterner eye looked through her eye  
On this foul world in its decline and fall;  
On gangling stocks grown great, great stocks run dry,...

Cordelia, stern in her unflinching "plainness", did look upon this foul world.

The jewels of our father, with wash'd eyes  
Cordelia leaves you: I know you what you are.  
(I. i. 268-9)

In the last three lines of the poem there is a description, in little, of the complete play. It is also part of what Cordelia "sees" and by her actions and her goodness "judges." "Ancestral pearls all pitched into a sty"—the royal inheritance given, for deplorably wrong reasons, into the wrong hands; "heroic reverie mocked by clown and knave"—a description roughly of Lear, Fool, Oswald:

...And wast thou fain, poor father,  
To hovel with swine and rogues forlorn, ... (IV. vii. 38-49).

"And wondered what was left for massacre to save"—" 'Tis wonder that thy life and wits at once Had not concluded all" (IV. vii. 41-42).<sup>37</sup>

\* \* \* \*

The mind or imagination or the consciousness of man may be said to have two poles, the personal and the impersonal, or, as Blake preferred to call them, the limit of contraction and the unlimited expansion. When we act from the personal we tend to bind our consciousness down as to a fiery centre. When, on the other hand, we allow our imagination to expand away from this egoistic mood, we become vehicles for the universal thought and merge in the universal mood.<sup>38</sup>

Here in essence is Yeats's distinction between the two types of personality—antithetical and primary, subjective and objective, self and universe. We have seen how Timon achieves the balance of the two. Lear finds it too.

But there is a difference. In *Timon* the distinction between the subjective and the objective is kept clear. The objective is his vision of society, the subjective his personal vision of good and evil. With Lear the two extremes are telescoped to give us the true fusing flash of the divine fifteenth phase.

Before the full [moon of phase 15]  
It [the soul] sought itself and afterwards the world.<sup>39</sup>

This becomes, at the full, a double united seeking and finding of self and world.

Antithetical man (Lear as a whole personality does not fit the antithetical bill exactly, but in the tortured scenes the flame has surely burnt to nothing but itself) realizes God/Self through world-awareness:

Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are,  
That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,  
How shall your houseless heads and unfed sides,  
Your loop'd and window'd raggedness, defend you  
From seasons such as these? O! I have ta'en  
Too little care of this. Take physic, Pomp;  
Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel,  
That thou mayst shake the superflux to them,  
And show the Heavens more just. (III. iv. 28-36)

Lear's epiphany undoubtedly illuminated for Yeats another important theoretical belief: the "distinction . . . between Character and Personality." I shall continue with Mr. Engelberg's lucid description:

In essence, Personality was the core of a man, unindividual to the point where it shared with the core of mankind; untypical, too, shorn of locality and public masks.<sup>40</sup>

We already notice the affinity between this passage and the one quoted earlier from Yeats's edition of Blake (there "vehicles for the universal thought," here "shared with the core of mankind"). But now the operative word is "unindividual."

... It is not until near the end of the second act that he [Lear] experiences an emotion not purely egotistical—when he argues the difference between the bare animal necessities and human needs. In the storm, more sinned against than sinning, Lear learns "the art of our necessities," and so becomes aware of the common humanity he shares with the poor naked wretches.<sup>41</sup>

Professor Muir here draws a distinction between egotistical emotion and an awareness of common humanity. It is a valid distinction. But I imagine

Yeats at this stage, with the fifteenth phase in his mind, would say that the moment of widest awareness is at the same time the moment of sharpest "egotism"<sup>42</sup> (in a special sense, of course, Bishop Butler's "selfishness," if you like, meaning self-realization of personality, not character). The most celebrated gesture of disindividualization is Lear's:

Unaccommodated man is no more but such a poor, bare, forked animal as thou art. Off, off, you lendings! Come; unbutton here.  
(III. iv. 109-12)

But this is when he sees Edgar to be "the thing itself" and desires himself to become the thing itself as well. The universal truth of human nature becomes the unindividualized but still personal truth for Lear alone—otherwise the truth would have remained a philosopher's abstraction. Yet he learns the universal truth by literally "embodying" it, through his five senses:

They flattered me like a dog, and told me I had the white hairs in my beard ere the black ones were there. To say "ay" and "no" to every thing that I said! "Ay" and "no" too was no good divinity. When the rain came to wet me once and the wind to make me chatter, when the thunder would not peace at my bidding, there I found 'em, there I smelt 'em out. Go to, they are not men o' their words: they told me I was every thing; 'tis a lie, I am not ague-proof.  
(IV. iv. 97-108)

Who brought him to this sure centre—I am not ague-proof and yet every inch a king? Edgar. Here again a thing after Yeats's own heart, another dimension of the poet, deliberately trying on the mask of madman. Professor Muir quotes William Empson about the first sign of Lear's madness in III. iv. 48: "Madness has come. No doubt the appearance of the wild Edgar . . . is the accident that made him unable to shun it any longer."<sup>43</sup> By now we know how Yeats would comment on this situation: it is the poet initiating the hero.

Lear: . . . [To Edgar.] Thou robed man of justice, take thy place;  
[To the Fool.] And thou, his yoke-fellow of equity,  
Bench by his side. [To Kent.] You are o'th' commission,  
Sit you too.  
(III. vi. 36-40)

At this mock trial things get very close to Yeats. It is well-known to readers of Yeats that his world is peopled by phase-types. The madman (perhaps because of traditional associations with inspiration) is an important *persona*, so is the Fool, and we encounter the serving-man as well. Remembering all this, look again at the judgment scene and you see the purged soul (Lear) surrounded by masks, judging humanity. Masks—because Edgar is



madman by choice, Kent is disguised, and jesting is the Fool's profession, not his nature. "Let us deal justly" (III. vi. 41).

Edgar's act is the best kind of counterfeiting, art in the face of the grimmest reality. "Poor Tom, thy horn is dry" (III. vi. 75) he says, but it never is, to the end. Leading his poor blinded father, knowing his despair, he can still change instantly into stage funny-man, with his rustic speech—another example of "Lear and Hamlet are gay."

We know that in the first part of the play Edgar is nothing but a gullible young man; that from the moment of his assumed madness he gradually becomes the prophet of the play. That also would seem to testify to the importance of the mask. Lear and Gloucester attain wisdom through him. And of course he says the central thing in the play about preparation for death—"ripeness is all". Death is as inevitable as birth but if you are ripe for it you cheat it of its inevitability—choosing your epitaph again.

Without ever expressing a hasty death-wish, Lear accepts death so much as to feel his vision as the throes of death and his post-visionary sleep as death itself. Actual life is seen as hell.

You do me wrong to take me out o'th' grave;  
Thou art a soul in bliss; but I am bound  
Upon a wheel of fire, that mine own tears  
Do scald like molten lead. (IV. vii. 45-48)

That he was attracted to life again when faced with the prospect of imprisonment with Cordelia does nothing to contradict this. From what he says, Cordelia is still a soul in bliss and life a calm preparation for death. At the close (the speech beginning "no, no, no life!", V. iii. 305ff.), death, longing for life, bliss, vision are all called together in a brilliant flash with that "common-life" request bridging two Acts: "Pray you, undo this button": and, "Come; unbutton here" (III. iv. 111-12).

I have said that in general tone the *Last Poems* occupies a position between the frenzy of *Timon* and the theophany of *Lear*. We have seen how the epitaph in *Timon* bears this out. Come now to the closing words of *King Lear*:

The oldest hath borne most: we that are young  
Shall never see so much, nor live so long. (V. iii. 325-6)

Here's Yeats:

Young men know nothing of this sort,  
Observant old men know it well;  
And when they know what old books tell,  
And that no better can be had,  
Know why an old man should be mad.<sup>44</sup>

## V

As noted earlier, Yeats does not want to become Hamlet in the *Last Poems* because Hamlet did not succeed in remaking himself. Goethe's words on Hamlet found favour in the nineteenth century that the young Yeats inherited:

...to me it is clear that Shakespeare sought to depict a great deed laid upon a soul unequal to the performance of it.... A beautiful, pure, and most moral nature, without the strength of nerve which makes the hero, sinks beneath a burden which it can neither bear nor throw off.<sup>45</sup>

And thus Coleridge:

...in the healthy processes of the mind, a balance is constantly maintained between the impressions from outward objects and the inward operations of the intellect;—for if there be an overbalance in the contemplative faculty, man thereby becomes the creature of mere meditation, and loses his natural power of action...we see a great, an almost enormous, intellectual activity, and a proportionate aversion to real action, consequent upon it, with all its symptoms and accompanying qualities.<sup>46</sup>

And again:

Shakespeare wished to impress upon us the truth, that action is the chief end of existence—that no faculties of intellect, however brilliant, can be considered valuable,...if they withdraw us from...action.<sup>47</sup>

By and large it will be just to say that in Yeats's terms Hamlet lacks something that a "hero" must possess. Yet with the nineteenth-century view that Hamlet's was a soul unequal to a great deed Yeats was distinctly out of sympathy. For Yeats Hamlet is not a great enough soul, who fails, not because life must be a balance of thought and action (Yeats actually liked Hamlet's rash unpremeditated acts), but because he cannot engage in "proper" thought, "proper" reverie. I shall presently enlarge upon this.

\* \* \* \*

Hamlet does not finally live in a world that makes the "coarse" ("conduct and work grow coarse, and coarse the soul What matter?")<sup>48</sup> world seem irrelevant and out of context, rejected; as Timon does, and Lear. Hamlet's projected atonement is fully comprehensible in the terms of reference of the coarse world. He *craves* engagement—but cannot fully engage himself. Engagement may be a cathartic way of purging yourself

of the world, but Hamlet does not get even to the first step. Lear and Timon gain objective stature from a world encompassed, superseded. Hamlet's saving grace as a tragic hero, in Yeats's eyes, is that at least finally he says "the readiness is all." Otherwise his well-advertised conscientiousness is for Yeats only another sign of that absolute craving for engagement in this world. Even Horatio must absent himself from felicity awhile to clear Hamlet's name here below. I think the fact that his feigned madness is put off at the first encounter with "urgent life," his conversation with Gertrude in Act III, Sc. iv, would be proof to Yeats of the lack of detachment from, and control over, life. Hamlet does not qualify as a poet as Edgar does.

This involvement with the world's standards makes his "frenzy" suspect. He is too much a reformer—there to set someone else's guilt right. It is the concern with someone else's acts as centrally as with one's own—this is Yeatsian frenzy *manqué*, not the complete objectivity of a Timon's social vision. Hamlet's agitation is because of Gertrude's sin. With Lear and Timon, in the final analysis, self had been the issue. Lear did not care if Regan and Goneril mended their ways; Timon had no concern for the Senators. But for Hamlet something is wrong with himself because he cannot punish another's wrong.

If it is the *process* leading to self-realization and an acceptance/embracing of death that are attractive to Yeats, the tragedy of *Hamlet* would not satisfy him. There is no gradual dawning of the value of death but only, in the end, a lightning acceptance. Hamlet does not "prepare" for death as the others do, but ever questions himself. In the great "To be or not to be . . ." soliloquy death is seen as a sin, as something that is not a complete end, also as an unknown quantity. But otherwise death is to Hamlet a grotesque and reprehensible thing. He cannot sing at gravemaking.<sup>49</sup>

*Hamlet:* Not where he eats, but where he is eaten; a certain convocation of politic worms are e'en at him. Your worm is your only emperor for diet; we fat all creatures else to fat us, and we fat ourselves for maggots: your fat king and your lean beggar is but variable service, two dishes but to one table; that's the end.  
(IV. iii. 20-27)<sup>50</sup>

*Hamlet:* Alas, poor Yorick!—I knew him, Horatio; a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy; he hath borne me on his back a thousand times; and now, how abhorred in my imagination it is! my gorge rises at it. . . . Now get you to my lady's chamber, and tell her, let her paint an inch thick, to this favour she must come; make her laugh at that.  
(V. i. 202-6, 212-15)

In all Timon's fumings there is not one such caustic word about death; and Lear's lament over Cordelia does not remind us of the worm. After all, death cannot carry a full positive notation in his universe, for that is the "wrong" he must avenge.

Finally, in the very broadest sense, the Hamlet figure does not suit Yeats. Hamlet is a *young* man. And look where the only old man stands in the play:

*Hamlet:* These tedious old fools! . . . that great baby you see there is not yet out of his swaddling-clouts.

*Rosencrantz:* Happily he's the second time come to them; for, they say, an old man is twice a child. (II. ii. 225, 406-10)

\* \* \* \*

How is it that Yeats has, here and there, written appreciative things about *Hamlet*? It is because Yeats's previous judgments of the play show a satisfaction with it as an example of tragic drama. But in the *Last Poems* the question is much more specific. Hamlet does not satisfy the poet's demands upon a *persona* at this stage. This is by no means a condemnation of the play, but merely a decision about its particular relevance. He can therefore retain his consistency and write "Hamlet is gay." For Hamlet is gay, of course. When Hamlet falls into his ironical jesting mood, so much his mood in the play, after his first encounter with the Ghost, Yeats would again not agree with Coleridge:

...after the mind has been stretched beyond its usual pitch and tone, it must either sink into exhaustion and inanity, or seek relief by change...the terrible by a law of the human mind always touches on the verge of the ludicrous. Both arise from the perception of something out of the common order of things—something, in fact, out of its place; and if from this we can abstract danger, the uncommonness will alone remain, and the sense of the ridiculous be excited. The close alliance of these opposites...appears from the circumstance, that laughter is equally the expression of extreme anguish and horror as of joy: as there are tears of sorrow and tears of joy, so is there a laugh of terror and a laugh of merriment.<sup>51</sup>

But for Yeats, if this reckless gaiety were only a therapeutic relief, Hamlet would not be "worthy his part in the play." It is a triumph over sorrow, or even something induced by the right kind of sorrow—"tragic" sorrow.

In one sense joy was what the hero experienced when he had partially renounced the reality preying on his soul; it is an emotion of relief: "the readiness is all." . . . Gaiety, likewise, is a strong emotion which, even unconsciously, "leapt up before danger. . . ." When the messenger

brings Hamlet Laertes' challenge, Hamlet's mood confirms this special gaiety.<sup>52</sup>

Also, speaking generally, *Hamlet* belongs to the Yeatsian stance of lamenting the passing of a heroic world. Does not Hamlet say:

He was a man, take him for all in all,  
I shall not look upon his like again (I. ii. 187-8)

and Yeats: "All the Olympians; a thing never known again?"<sup>53</sup> Thus, tenuously, there is indeed a common world that *Hamlet* inhabits with *King Lear*, *Timon of Athens*, and even the *Last Poems*.

\* \* \* \*

Hamlet is mentioned twice in the *Last Poems*: once in "Lapis Lazuli", lines 9-17 (quoted in Section I and commented on in Section IV); again in "The Statues":

Pythagoras planned it. Why did the people stare?  
His numbers, though they moved or seemed to move  
In marble or in bronze, lacked character.  
But boys and girls, pale from the imagined love  
Of solitary beds, knew what they were,  
That passion could bring character enough,  
And pressed at midnight in some public place  
Live lips upon a plummet-measured face.

No! Greater than Pythagoras, for the men  
That with a mallet or a chisel modelled these  
Calculations that look but casual flesh, put down  
All Asiatic vague immensities,  
And not the banks of oars that swam upon  
The many-headed foam at Salamis.  
Europe put off that foam when Phidias  
Gave women dreams and dreams their looking-glass.

One image crossed the many-headed, sat  
Under the tropic shade, grew round and slow,  
No Hamlet thin from eating flies, a fat  
Dreamer of the Middle Ages. Empty eyeballs knew  
That knowledge increases unreality, that  
Mirror on mirror mirrored is all the show.  
When gong and conch declare the hour to bless  
Grimalkin crawls to Buddha's emptiness.

When Pearse summoned Cuchulain to his side,  
What stalked through the Post Office? What intellect,  
What calculation, number, measurement, replied?

We Irish, born into that ancient sect  
 But thrown upon this filthy modern tide  
 And by its formless spawning fury wrecked,  
 Climo to our proper dark, that we may trace  
 The lineaments of a plummet-measured face.

"No Hamlet thin from eating flies." On eating flies, thus Engelberg: "He is 'thin' because he feeds on nothing—flies; his energy consumes him away; . . . the nervous anxiety of freedom . . . makes Hamlet self-conscious of the awful implications of being free."<sup>54</sup> And thus Vivienne Koch: "... intellectual Western psyche represented by a Hamlet eating flies—that is, feeding on the pestilential parasites of intellect."<sup>55</sup> I think one can push the flies too far, but, looking at the syntax of the lines, the more conservative reading of Koch seems to me more valuable. First, the phrase "no Hamlet thin from eating flies," is used to emphasize the "roundness" of the image that crossed the many-headed. The implication is as follows: when Yeats says the image grew "slow," he expects his reader to recollect the most available image of slowness (sitting under shade) and bring Hamlet to mind. He forestalls that: no, Hamlet was thin; my image is fat. Further, *thin from eating flies*; correspondingly, *fat from being a dreamer*. One can by inference imagine a contrast between eating flies and dreaming, remembering always that a distinction is being made between two kinds of slowness. Here Koch's interpretation becomes useful. But I do not find her deductions from this fully satisfactory:

It is typical of the tortuous processes of Yeats's thinking that he should write a poem in dispraise of intellect or "abstractions" and, in the end, arrive at an endorsement of that which he had thought to despise.<sup>56</sup>

One should not equate "intellect" and "abstractions" in this context, for precisely those two things are here being differentiated.

Hamlet seeks to reject reality because he finds it unsavoury:

O! that this too too solid flesh would melt,  
 Thaw and resolve itself into a dew;  
 Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd  
 His canon 'gainst self-slaughter! O God! O God!  
 How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable  
 Seems to me all the uses of this world!  
 Fie on't! O fie! 'tis an unweeded garden  
 That grows to seed; things rank and gross in nature  
 Possess it merely. That it should come to this! (I. ii. 129-37)

. . . the whips and scorns of time,  
 The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,

The pangs of disprized love, the law's delay,  
 The insolence of office, and the spurns  
 That patient merit of the unworthy takes, . . . (III. i. 70-74).

Of course, he cannot thrust reality away. Rather does he seek to correct it on its own terms, by plunging himself into moral action. This also he fails to achieve.

What I have described here thus crudely is a confused and unsatisfactory relationship with reality. In "The Statues" this sentence is contrasted to it: "Empty eyeballs knew That knowledge increases unreality." We have too easily read this sentence as a verdict against knowledge. And therefore Miss Koch can say that the poem dispraises intellect. "The Statues' . . . , complex though it is, nevertheless finds its centre in the antithesis Yeats makes between thoughtlessness and abstraction."<sup>57</sup> But look at the next line: "Mirror on mirror mirrored is all the show." Unless you are obfuscating your judgement with preconceptions, it is not easy to miss the Platonic cast of this last line. As, for example, Professor M. H. Abrams notices in his *The Mirror and the Lamp*, the most common Platonic metaphor for reality is the mirror.<sup>58</sup> In this context to say "knowledge increases unreality," to say that the eyeballs "*knew* that mirror on mirror mirrored is all the show" (*obviously* the eyeballs are a positive counter) is not to despise knowledge. Knowledge is to know that the real is Unreal—"mirror on mirror mirrored is all the show;" or knowledge is to go closer to ("increases") the Unreal—the Platonic Ideal. As opposed to Hamlet's, this is the satisfactory relationship with reality. My interpretation—that the poem celebrates proper intellectual activity—is borne out by the rest of the poem. "Planned it," "numbers," "plummet-measured," "calculations," "plummet-measured" (lines 1, 2, 8, 11, 26, 27, 32); these words, by themselves, stand for "abstract" intellectual activity, if you like. If we look again at the placing of these words in the poem, we shall find that in each case the abstract intellectual activity is qualified.

In the first stanza, abstract activity led to art that, "though . . . [it] moved or seemed to move," appeared unrealistic (surely this is what the colloquial "lacked character" means in line 3) to "real" people. Only people who had not actually consummated their love, but had "imagined" it, knew that their passion would be requited by the plummet-measured face.

But boys and girls, pale from the imagined love  
 Of solitary beds, . . .

is ambivalent exactly after the fashion of "knowledge increases unreality." That is to say, we would ordinarily attach pejorative significance to both "boys and girls" and knowledge." But the poem wrenches them out of

the stock response and difficultly makes them laudable. "Unreality" and "imagined love" are approved by the poetic context. In the second stanza, "calculations that looked but casual flesh" is parallel to "numbers... [that] moved or seemed to move" in the first. No doubt "casual" flesh would have seemed lacking in character to "staring" people. But not so to women who took from Phidias "dreams" (the boys and girls "imagined" love). More, Phidias gave women's dreams their looking glass. This would seem to mean that Phidian sculpture provided the image of the ideal of beauty ("[Phidias gave] dreams their looking-glass") that his art itself awoke in women ("Phidias gave women dreams"). "Looking glass" says Yeats. Read this with a little hindsight offered by the mirrors of the next stanza, and you see that the connection between mirror and ideal is not tenuous at all.

Now we see that in the fourth stanza the "formless" modern tide is connected to "imagined" in the first stanza and "dreams" in the second. All three words carry connotations of art. Cuchulain is "calculation, number, measurement." We Irish are born into that ancient sect of Cuchulain but are wrecked by formlessness, cannot imagine, dream. The Irish must learn to trace the lineaments of a plummet-measured face, fulfil calculations with "formful" imaginings.

Coming back now to the third stanza, I would say that the fat dreamer is a picture of fulfilled intellection. His dreaming connects him to the boys and girls, to the Phidian women, and the resurrected Irish. Another link that we have already noticed: looking-glass and mirror. The boys and girls had imagined *love* and passion. The women with the looking-glasses had inferentially dreamed of *beauty*. In the third stanza, the dreamer sees a vision of *truth*, knows the meaning of knowledge. He finally achieves the ideal of *goodness*—vision of ideal truth leading to "Buddha's" emptiness. (I take Grimalkin to be an obscure description of round slow fat dreamer sitting under tropic shade; he would most appropriately "crawl.") He becomes a Buddha; in Yeats's language "he is blessed and can bless."<sup>59</sup>

Putting all this together, then, the dreamer embodies proper intellection, a proper attitude to reality, and he dreams; and since Hamlet is put up as a contrast to him, following the line of my argument, he stands for wrong intellection, a defective attitude to reality.<sup>60</sup>

\* \* \* \*

There is a curious example of a "debt" to *Hamlet* in the *Last Poems*. So far in this essay I have implied that the "plot" of a play is not what Yeats is interested in. He is rather trying out the personality of the hero. But in "The Man and the Echo" we encounter an exception to this. The



first half of the poem is a replica of Hamlet's soliloquy in Act III, Sc. ii.

The Man in the poem is troubled by his conscience and wishes to die. This is also the Prince's position in his soliloquy ("To be or not to be..."). This is what Yeats writes:

All that I have said and done,  
Now that I am old and ill,  
Turns into a question till  
I lie awake night after night  
And never get the answers right.  
Did that play of mine send out  
Certain men the English shot?  
Did words of mine put too great strain  
On that woman's reeling brain?  
Could my spoken words have checked  
That whereby a house lay wrecked?  
And all seems evil until I  
Sleepless would lie down and die. (6-18)

Now Hamlet reasons with himself thus and banishes thoughts of committing suicide:

For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,  
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,  
Must give us pause: (66-68).

This may be read as an unesoteric description of the state of the soul after death, which Yeats cloudily describes in *A Vision* as follows:

...the *Spirit* finds the *Celestial Body*, only after long and perhaps painful dreams of the past, and it is because of such dreams that the second state is sometimes called the *Dreaming Back*. . . . In the *Dreaming Back* the *Spirit* is compelled to live over and over again the events that had most moved it. . . . The more complete the *Dreaming Back* the more complete the *Return* and the more happy or fortunate the next incarnation. After each event of the *Dreaming Back* the *Spirit* explores not merely the causes but the consequences of that event.<sup>61</sup>

Yeats seems to believe that after death we "dream back" our past actions and finally resolve them into "knowledge." That is given as an argument against lying down and dying:

... That were to shirk  
The spiritual intellect's great work,  
And shirk it in vain. There is no release. . .  
Nor can there be work so great  
As that which cleans man's dirty slate. . . .  
... body gone he sleeps no more,

And till his intellect grows sure  
 That all's arranged in one clear view,  
 Pursues the thoughts that I pursue,  
 Then stands in judgement on his soul,  
 And, all work done, dismisses all  
 Out of intellect and sight  
 And sinks at last into the night. (19-21, 22-24, 29-36)

The general similarity with the Hamlet soliloquy is clear. I imagine Yeats was aware of this similarity. Hamlet says,

For who would bear the whips and scorns of time, . . .  
 When he himself might his quietus make  
 With a bare *bodkin*? (70, 75-76; italics mine).

And Yeats:

. . . There is no release  
 In a *bodkin* or disease. . . (21-22; italics mine).

This is the only use of "bodkin" in all his poetry.<sup>62</sup>

## VI

Because there is no direct impress of *Richard II* on the *Last Poems*, this brief concluding note needs to be accounted for.

Yeats added this postscript to a note to Lady Gerald Wellesley on 27 September, 1937:

I have no news except that I went to *Richard II* last night, as fine a performance possible considering that the rhythm of all the great passages is abolished. The modern actor can speak to another actor, but he is incapable of revery. On the advice of Bloomsbury he has packed his soul in a bag and left it with the bar-attendant. Did Shakespeare in *Richard II* discover poetic revery?<sup>63</sup>

And, "near the end of his life, he wrote to Ethel Mannin, 'Blessed be heroic death (Shakespeare's tragedies), blessed be heroic life (Cervantes), blessed be the wise (Balzac)'. "<sup>64</sup>

"Poetic revery" and "heroic death"—these two phrases make *Richard II* pertinent to this essay. For it is in the visionary contemplation of death that *Richard* excels, and qualifies for Yeats as a hero.<sup>65</sup>

"Black out; Heaven blazing into the head:"—this Yeats applauds in Shakespeare's heroes, as we have seen (see Section I). This line is, among other things, a description of Death and Vision. Since tragedy transmutes

the misery of death into a rejoicing, Yeats says in the next line, describing *Hamlet* and *King Lear*, "Tragedy wrought to its uttermost." I do not arbitrarily say that the first of these two lines is a description of death and vision. Yeats used this very same image more explicitly, twenty years before he had written "Lapis Lazuli", in his superb elegy, "In Memory of Major Robert Gregory" (1918):

Some burn damp faggots, others may consume  
The entire combustible world in one small room  
As though dried straw, and if we turn about  
The bare chimney is gone black out  
Because the work had finished in that flare. (81-85)

"Black out" and "work had finished in that flare" are here, I think, much more clearly suggestive of death and vision—"heroic death." The poem is in fact a song about a heroic death (Major Gregory was killed in action in 1918) in the "normal" sense.

But 'frenzy', in the *Lear-Timon* sense, is absent in Richard. Perhaps that is why Yeats does not choose this young king as one of his models in "An Acre of Grass." Richard is proud, but his pride centres around his kingship. This is not being "enchanted with a dream";<sup>66</sup> it is a valid pride, for it leads him to reverie on death (as I shall now show). This is essentially a different pattern from *King Lear* and *Timon of Athens*. But there is a clear place for pride in Yeats's eschatology.

Notice how conscious pride of kingship brings on reverie, and also something ever remarkable in Richard, a completely detached perception of himself as third person:

What must the king do now? Must he submit?  
The king shall do it. . . .  
. . . a God's name, let it go.  
I'll give my jewels for a set of beads;  
My gorgeous palace for a hermitage;  
My gay apparel for an almsman's gown;  
My figured goblets for a dish of wood;  
My sceptre for a palmer's walking staff;  
My subjects for a pair of carved saints,  
And my large kingdom for a little grave,<sup>67</sup>  
A little little grave, an obscure grave,  
Or I'll be buried in the king's highway,  
Some way of common trade, where subjects' feet  
May hourly trample on their sovereign's head  
(III. iii. 143-4, 146-57).<sup>68</sup>

Here is the beginning of a certain positive attraction towards death, the beginning of the "pass by!" attitude towards those who pass one's own

grave. This death-wish ("And my large kingdom [I'll give] for a little grave,") makes him finally attach little importance to his kingdom as an object of dispute. It is only as an idea, a rôle, that he prizes his kingship.

The contemplation of death brings him closer to the universal thought (see Section IV) and makes him realize his common humanity. Below is the sort of reverie Richard responds with when "actions" are called for. He is discovering his own heart, man's limitations. To transcend these realized circumscriptions by composing epitaphs and wills is an act worthy of the tragic hero, here the approved archetype of the artist.

...of comfort no man speak.  
 Let's talk of graves, of worms, and epitaphs,  
 Make dust our paper, and with rainy eyes  
 Write sorrow on the bosom of the earth.  
 Let's choose executors and talk of wills.  
 And yet not so—for what can we bequeath  
 Save our deposed bodies to the ground?  
 Our lands, our lives, and all, are Bolingbroke's,  
 And nothing can we call our own but death;  
 And that small model of the barren earth  
 Which serves as paste and cover to our bones.  
 For God's sake let us sit upon the ground  
 And tell sad stories of the death of kings:  
 How some have been depos'd, some slain in war,  
 Some haunted by the ghosts they have deposed,  
 Some poisoned by their wives, some sleeping killed,  
 All murdered—for within the hollow crown  
 That rounds the mortal temples of a king  
 Keeps Death his court, and there the antic sits,  
 Scoffing his state and grinning at his pomp,  
 Allowing him a breath, a little scene,  
 To monarchize, be fear'd, and kill with looks;  
 Infusing him with self and vain conceits,  
 As if this flesh which walls about our life  
 Were brass impregnable; and, humour'd thus,  
 Comes at the last, and with a little pin  
 Bores through his castle wall, and farewell king!  
 Cover your heads, and mock not flesh and blood  
 With solemn reverence; throw away respect,  
 Tradition, form, and ceremonious duty;  
 For you have but mistook me all this while.  
 I live with bread like you, feel want,  
 Taste grief, need friends—subjected thus,  
 How can you say to me, I am a king? (III. ii. 144-77)

If you realize the universality of death, you also realize the common humanity of man. Knowing that death is all-powerful, Richard makes the controlling artistic request—let us tell sad stories; it is a curiously urgent

request—"for God's sake." His common humanity is gradually unfolded—first, he shares a common fate with all kings, then with all men. "Subjected thus"—yet he says "Let's choose." If Richard is "worthy his prominent part in the play," he will "tell stories," "write sorrow," not "break up his lines to weep." "Nothing can we call our own but death." Again and again in the play he understands the place of death in the design of life, the worthlessness of worldly standards in the face of this final reality:

Strives Bolingbroke to be as great as we?  
 Greater he shall not be. If he serve God,  
 We'll serve Him too, and be his fellow so.  
 Revolt our subjects? that we cannot mend;  
 They break their faith to God as well as us.  
 Cry woe, destruction, ruin, and decay—  
 The worst is death, and death will have his day.

(III. ii. 97-103)

Slowly Richard gives up his "additions"—"painted forms and boxes of make-up"<sup>69</sup>—and "undoes himself." Slowly he makes his peace with "nothingness;" his desire for the grave rises.

Now mark me how I will undo myself  
 I give this heavy weight from off my head,  
 And this unwieldy sceptre from my hand,  
 The pride of kingly sway from out my heart,  
 With mine own tears I wash away my balm,  
 With mine own hands I give away my crown,  
 With mine own tongue I deny my sacred state,  
 With mine own breath release all duteous oaths;  
 All pomp and majesty do I forswear;  
 My manors, rents, revenues, I forgo;  
 Make me, that nothing have, with nothing griev'd,  
 And thou with all pleased, that hast all achiev'd.  
 Long may'st thou live in Richard's seat to sit,  
 And soon lie Richard in an earthly pit.

(IV. i. 203-12, 216-19)

There is not a little pride in these lines. He is most kingly in the giving up of kingship, as it were. Richard's impracticality has often been remarked upon. Precisely, it is a complete lack of interest in action. Self-detachment finally carries him to this pitch:

*Richard:* Good sometimes queen, prepare thee hence for France.  
 Think I am dead, and that even here thou takest,  
 As from my death-bed, thy last living leave.  
 In winter's tedious night sit by the fire  
 With good old folks, and let them tell thee tales  
 Of woeful ages long ago betid;

And ere thou bid good-night, to quite their griefs  
 Tell thou the lamentable tale of me,  
 And send the hearers weeping to their beds. (V. i. 37-45)

What was implicit in the request "For God's sake let us sit upon the ground And tell sad stories of the death of kings", has been fulfilled. He sees his own fate as part of a pattern.

He goes a step farther from this in his prison cell. He knows there that it is not enough only to see yourself with an artist's detachment. You must realize that character itself is a mask that may be put on and off, exchanged for other masks. At the same time, on the eve of death, he concerns himself with the problems of the world, participates in the heart of the universe, enters the emotion of the multitude. In the end he says that only he who is eased with being nothing is a proper man. But above all he behaves like a poet, creating a world out of his thoughts.

I have been studying how I may compare  
 This prison where I live unto the world;  
 And, for because the world is populous  
 And here is not a creature but myself,  
 I cannot do it. Yet I'll hammer it out.  
 My brains I'll prove the female to my soul,  
 My soul the father, and these two beget  
 A generation of still-breeding thoughts,  
 And these same thoughts people this little world,  
 In humours like the people of this world. . . .  
 Thus play I in one person many people,  
 And none contented. Sometimes am I a king,  
 Then treasons make me wish myself a beggar,  
 And so I am. Then crushing penury  
 Persuades me I was better when a king;  
 Then am I king'd again, and by and by  
 Think that I am unking'd by Bolingbroke  
 And straight am nothing. But what's'er I be,  
 Nor I, nor any man that but man is,  
 With nothing shall be pleas'd, till he be eas'd  
 With being nothing. (V. v. 1-10, 32-42)

And then "black out."—the murderers enter. Yet heaven blazes into Richard's head:

Mount, mount, my soul! Thy seat is upon high,  
 Whilst my gross flesh sinks downward, here to die.  
 (V. v. 108-12)

GAYATRI CHAKRAVORTY

## NOTES &amp; REFERENCES

1. Yeats, William Butler, *The Autobiography of William Butler Yeats* (New York, 1953), p. 298.
2. Engelberg, Edward, "Passionate Reverie: W. B. Yeats's Tragic Correlative": *University of Toronto Quarterly*, XXXI. 2, January, 1962, p. 202.
3. Henn, Thomas Rice, "The Accent of Yeats' 'Last Poems'": *Essays and Studies*, New Series, vol. 9, pp. 62-63.
4. Yeats, William Butler, *A Vision*: a reissue with the author's final revisions (New York, 1961), pp. 105-84. (Hereafter cited as *Vision*.)
5. *Ibid.*, p. 135.
6. Vendler, Helen Hennessy, *Yeats's VISION and the Later Plays* (Cambridge, Mass., 1963), pp. 20-30.
7. "Under Ben Bulben," 1. 52.
8. See, for example, "The Spirit Medium," "Under Ben Bulben," ll. 23-24. Also interesting is the myth of Yeats's "instructors," who dictated *A Vision* "through" Mrs Yeats.
9. It is also possible that in these lines Yeats is thinking of the Sistine Chapel. There are two other places in the *Last Poems* where Yeats mentions Michelangelo, both times remembering only the Sistine Chapel:

That girls at puberty may find  
The first Adam in their thought,  
Shut the door of the Pope's chapel,  
Keep those children out.  
There on that scaffolding reclines  
Michael Angelo.  
With no more sound than the mice make  
His hand moves to and fro.

—"Long-legged Fly" (21-28)

and,

Michael Angelo left a proof  
On the Sistine Chapel roof,  
Where but half-awakened Adam  
Can disturb globe-trotting Madam  
Till her bowels are in heat.

—"Under Ben Bulben" (45-49)

These two bits are descriptions of the Creation of Adam on the ceiling. If the lines from "An Acre of Grass" are indeed about the Sistine Chapel, it is likely that they describe the Last Judgement on the wall. God, Christ, and the Angels (the artist's mind "can pierce the clouds"); the awakened dead and the cowering sinners in Hell (the artist's mind can "inspired by frenzy Shake the dead in their shrouds"). This is Michelangelo's vision of Truth, as it is, broadly speaking, Blake's: contemplation of Heaven, Hell, and Resurrection.

10. Moore, Virginia, *The Unicorn: William Butler Yeats's Search for Reality* (New York, 1954), p. 445. For a different view of the complete process of remaking for an old man see Jeffares, A. Norman, *W. B. Yeats: Man and Poet* (London, 1949), pp. 294-5.
11. I. v. 48; italics mine. All quotations from *King Lear* are from the New Arden edition of the play, ed. Kenneth Muir (London, 1961).

12. IV. iii. 301-2. All quotations from *Timon of Athens* are from the New Arden edition of the play, ed. H. J. Oliver (London, 1959).
13. "The Circus Animals' Desertion," ll. 28, 40, 16, 37.
14. "An Acre of Grass," ll. 7, 21.
15. "The Wild Old Wicked Man," ll. 1-2.
16. Knowing that Yeats included William Blake with *Timon* and *Lear* in "An Acre of Grass," it is interesting to see what he writes of men in Blake's "phase":  

"At one moment they are full of hate...and their hate is always close to madness... There is always an element of frenzy." *Vision*, p. 138.
17. See, for example, "The Curse of Cromwell," the Roger Casement poems, "A Model for the Laureate," "The Old Stone Cross," "Three Songs to One Burden" II, "A Bronze Head," "Why Should Not Old Men Be Mad?," "The Black Tower."
18. Reid, Benjamin Lawrence, "Yeats and Tragedy": *Hudson Review*, XI. 3, Autumn 1958, p. 408.
19. *Timon of Athens*, ed. H. J. Oliver (New Arden edition, London, 1959), "Introduction," p. 1. (Hereafter cited as *Oliver*.)
20. "Under Ben Bulbin," 1.26.
21. "The Statues," ll. 28, 31.
22. Yeats had of course not read up "notes and materials" on *Timon of Athens* before writing the *Last Poems*. But the dirge of a Great House can be sensed even after an ordinary reading of *Timon*: a dirge for all the "lofty" things, the "heroic" things, the passing of which Yeats deplored. Although the actual historical situations of Jacobean England and Ireland at the turn of the century are not fully comparable, the similarity between Yeats's notion of the old dying Ireland ('gangling stocks grown great, great stocks run dry': "A Bronze Head," 1.25) and the background of *Timon of Athens* may be sensed from, for example, the following passage:  

"In the Elizabethan age, the old feudal nobility had reached an economic impasse that might well arouse one's sympathy and that produced overwhelming social changes.... The final abandonment of the feudal military system during the 1590's...and the substitution of professional soldiers ended the military power of the aristocracy; and the romantic independence of knight-errantry degenerated into Falstaffian escapades... James I capitalised and encouraged it by selling patents of nobility and creating the new rank of baronet. So the old aristocracy was threatened with 'loss of all distinction'; and their place was taken by merchants who looked to their tenants for income rather than for feudal services, who dismissed superfluous retainers, enclosed the common lands, increased the rents, and spent a large part of their time away, in London". (Draper, John W, "The Theme of *Timon of Athens*": *Modern Language Review*, XXXI. 1, January 1934, pp. 23, 25).
23. See, for example, Draper, *op. cit.*; and, Pettet, E. C., "Timon of Athens: the Disruption of Feudal Morality": *Review of English Studies*, XXIII. 92, October 1947, pp. 321-36.
24. *Letters on Poetry from W. B. Yeats to Dorothy Wellesley*, ed. Kathleen Raine (London, 1964), p. 178. (Hereafter cited as *DW*.)
25. Yeats, William Butler, *Plays and Controversies* (London, 1923), p. 115.
26. Reid, *op. cit.*, p. 410.
27. "Under Ben Bulbin," ll. 92-93.
28. *Idem*, 1. 85; italics mine.



29. Oliver, p. xli.
30. *King Lear*, ed. Kenneth Muir (New Arden edition, London, 1961), "Introduction," p. liii. (Hereafter cited as *Muir*.)
31. This endurance is different from Edgar's "We must endure..." later in the play.
32. *DW*, p. 114.
33. "The Gyres," 1.8; "Lapis Lazuli," 1.17; the italics are mine. The first quotation is preceded in the poem by an allusion to a work of art: "Hector is dead and there's a light in Troy." *Iliad* or *Troilus and Cressida*?
34. *King Lear*, IV. vi. 199-200. Yeats has spoken elsewhere of Cleopatra's death in this light.
35. V. iii. 272-3. There is another, fainter, echo of these Shakespearean lines in Yeats: "The women that I picked spoke sweet and low And yet gave tongue" ("Hound Voice," ll. 8-9).
36. According to the *OED*, all these senses were established by Shakespeare's time.
37. There are many passages in Yeats that would seem to ascribe to Maud Gonne a Cordelia-like personality. I quote here an entry in his diary for 21 January, 1909:  
 "Of old she was a phoenix and I feared her, but now she is my child more than my sweetheart. . . . She would be cruel if she were not a child who can always say, 'You will not suffer because I will pray.'"  
 I should also like to say here that my Lear-oriented reading of "A Bronze Head" does not seek to ignore the biographical reading of the poem—in the light of Yeats's hopeless love, the dissipation (thought Yeats) of Maud's life in politics, her "senseless" marriage.
38. *The Works of William Blake*, ed. E. J. Ellis and W. B. Yeats, I, 242. Quoted in Engelberg, Edward: *The Vast Design: Patterns in W. B. Yeats's Aesthetic* (Toronto, 1964), p. 7. Also see Yeats's essay "Emotion of Multitude", written as early as 1903.  
 I have profited much from Mr. Engelberg's excellent and stimulating discussion of Yeats's aesthetic.
39. *Vision*, p. 62.
40. Engelberg, *op. cit.*, p. 153.
41. Muir, p. liii.
42. Cf. ll. 19-22 of "An Acre of Grass" and my comments thereon in Section I of this paper.
43. Muir, p. 116.
44. "Why Should Not Old Men Be Mad?" ll. 16-20. The theme of youth and age in *Lear* has relevance to the *Last Poems*. The poet contrasts today's young and today's old, usually to the disadvantage of the former. He also contrasts his own dream-ridden youth to his heart-confronting old age—a contrast that started as early as *Responsibilities*, 1914. See especially I. ii. 71ff., III. iii. 27, IV. i. 11-12. Lear also establishes himself repeatedly, in several well-known passages, as an old man, as does Yeats in this volume.
45. *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, Bk. V (tr. Carlyle).
46. *Essays and Lectures on Shakespeare* (Eveymans' Library edition, 1926), pp. 136-7.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 479.
48. "The Gyres", ll. 17-18.
49. Ophelia can. Her last words in the play are the most universal epitaph, in song:

*He is gone, he is gone,  
 And we cast away moan:  
 God ha' mercy on his soul!  
 And of all Christian souls, I pray God.*

(IV. vi. 196-9)

A sensitive girl, maddened under sorrow, and then her sorrow changes into song; she goes adorned to death. She has not the strength of a heroine, but she is acceptable.

50. All quotations are from the old Arden Edition of *Hamlet*, ed. Edward Dowden (London, 1928).
51. Coleridge, *op. cit.*, p. 147.
52. Engelberg, p. 213.
53. "Beautiful Lofty Things," 1. 12.
54. Engelberg, p. 203.
55. Koch, Vivienne, *W. B. Yeats: The Tragic Phase: A Study of the Last Poems* (London, 1951), p. 60. Hereafter cited as *Koch*.
56. Koch, pp. 73-74.
57. Koch, p. 62.
58. Abrams, Meyer Howard, *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition* (New York, 1958), pp. 30, 34.
59. "Vacillation," IV, 1. 44.
60. For another view see Engelberg, p. 193. He sees Hamlet as the "medieval man of action." Then the antinomy is of course between action and dreaming, parallel to the actual fighters and Phidias in the second stanza.
61. *Vision*, pp. 224, 226, 227-8.
62. *A Concordance to the Poems of W. B. Yeats*, ed. Stephen Maxwell Parrish, programmed by J. A. Painter (Ithaca, N. Y., 1963).
63. *DW*, p. 145.
64. Reid, *op. cit.*, p. 410.
65. If in *Richard II* poetic reverie is discovered, it was *Shakespeare* who was the discoverer. Of Act III, Sc. ii, for example, the New Arden editor writes: "His [Richard's] melancholy and despair are immensely expanded and vivified from Holinshed's account" (p. 94).
66. "The Circus Animals' Desertion," 1.28.
67. The construction and sense of these lines seem to suggest the figure of the statesman turned hermit in "The Statesman's Holiday":
 

With boys and girls about him,  
 With any sort of clothes,  
 With a hat out of fashion,  
 With old patched shoes,  
 With a ragged bandit cloak,  
 With an eye like a hawk,  
 With a stiff straight back,  
 With a strutting turkey walk,  
 With a bag full of pennies,  
 With a monkey on a chain,  
 With a great cock's feather,  
 With an old foul tune. (27-38).
68. All quotations are from the New Arden edition of *Richard II*, ed. Peter Ure (London, 1961).
69. "The Gyres", 1.13.

## Shakespeare's Short Lines

Since Cassius first did whet me against Caesar,  
*I have not slept.*  
Between the acting of a dreadful thing  
And the first motion, all the interim is  
Like a phantasma, or a hideous dream:

THE early printed texts of the plays of Shakespeare abound in short verse-lines like the one in italics in the passage quoted above—lines falling short of the blank-verse norm of ten syllables or five feet. It is the object of this paper to show that these short lines are one of the beauties of Shakespeare's maturer art, and that we must think thrice before interfering with them in any manner. Unfortunately they have often been misunderstood by generations of Shakespearean editors from Nicholas Rowe downwards as blemishes of Shakespeare's verse and sought to be emended as such by being filled out with additional words or syllables or by re-lineation of the passages in which they occur. To save Shakespeare's reputation, the responsibility for these supposed blemishes has sometimes been shifted to transcribers, compositors, interpolators and the like. Some editors have tended to regard them as relics of cuts in the text—the stumps, so to speak, of truncated lines or passages. Where possible, they have been sought to be explained away as prose, not verse, lines. Round about 1912 George Gordon, while editing *Coriolanus*<sup>1</sup>, was impressed by the dramatic quality of some of the broken, irregular lines in the F1 text of the play, instancing as a parallel *Macbeth* II. ii. 1-8. Such lines, he observed, are meant for the ear, not the eye, and Shakespeare wrote for the ear. But he did not think that this explanation would cover more than a small proportion of such lines. In 1939, in his Clark lectures at Cambridge, Greg declared that 'no great importance attaches to the line division in early printed texts'<sup>2</sup>; a little earlier McKerrow had stated that 'there appears nothing to be gained by too slavish an adherence to the line distribution of the early editions'.<sup>3</sup> Appreciation of the value and significance of these short lines of Shakespeare has been dawning only in recent years. In *Shakespeare's Producing Hand* (London, 1948) Richard Flatter touched on, among other things, some of these short lines and made out an impressive case for each; his book bore a highly appreciative introduction by Nevill Coghill. In a paper published in 1948 G. B. Harrison defended the F1 lineation of *Coriolanus* against Chambers, Greg, and hosts of editors, and, taking the short lines in the earlier part of I. ix for

a sample, showed their dramatic value and significance<sup>4</sup>. In 1949, in *Shakespeare Survey*, James G. McManaway sought to justify the F1 lineation of *Macbeth* II. ii. 64-74 and questioned accordingly the wisdom of the attempt at regularization of the F1 lineation in the New Shakespeare (hereafter referred to as NS) edition of that play.<sup>5</sup>

These re-appraisals, however, have hardly yet affected editorial practice. Kenneth Muir, for instance, in the New Arden (hereafter referred to as NA) *Macbeth* (first published in 1951), finds himself unable to accept all the lineations of the F1 text, and reproduces most of the 'rectifications' of the short lines of that text done by earlier editors. Dover Wilson in the NS *Coriolanus* (1960) is not convinced by Harrison's defence of what he regards as 'a strange malady' in the Folio arrangement of the verse, and finds it 'safer in general to follow the traditional arrangement in the *Cambridge Shakespeare* (1892)'. While certain features of the F1 text of the play—the stage-directions, for example, or the spelling—strike him as due to Shakespeare, in what he calls the 'spasmodic misdivision of the verse-lines' he finds not Shakespeare's hand but the compositor's—a conclusion he came to earlier in 1950 while editing *Antony and Cleopatra*.<sup>6</sup>

In thus making the compositor responsible (McKerrow and Greg, too, speak of typographical reasons in a similar context), editors and bibliographers have usually in mind the narrowness of the F1 column. We are asked to assume that the F1 compositors, faced with a verse-line which they could not squeeze into the width of the column, broke it up and so came to disturb the lineation of many a passage. Hence the crop of short, imperfect lines. This explanation, however, cannot apply to a short broken line where it occurs in a good Quarto text, nor to those cases where a full line would have been well within the compass of the F1 column but what we get is either two consecutive part-lines or a part-line followed by a full one or even one longer than the norm<sup>7</sup>. The explanation also overlooks the simple fact that verse-lines which could not be accommodated into the width of the F1 column could very well have been printed with a turn-over; turn-overs of verse-lines are by no means unknown in F1<sup>8</sup>. Referring to the F1 practice (which he describes as 'curious') of printing the first line of a speech as two part-lines even though the preceding speech has ended with a complete one, McKerrow remarks that the compositor 'may for some reason have disliked the appearance of a turn-over in the first line of a speech'<sup>9</sup>. This attribution of short lines to the personal idiosyncrasies of compositors is carried farther by Alice Walker who says: 'Compositor B's<sup>10</sup> pages have a much trimmer look than A's, partly because his tendency was to avoid turn-overs in verse by arranging a single line as two lines.'<sup>11</sup> Are things really explained

by assumptions so large as these? There is much sense in what G. B. Harrison says on the point:

But a compositor setting up verse as verse is not likely to attempt a verse pattern of his own; nor is he likely to print a short line at the beginning, middle, or end of a verse speech unless he finds it before him in his copy; and if it occurs in the copy, then it is likely that the author intended it to be a short line. We should therefore assume as a matter of common sense that the arrangement of the verse lines in the Folio follows the original copy unless some very good reason can be found for supposing otherwise.... Once... we can rid ourselves of the prejudice that the modern (or rather eighteenth-century) editor is better equipped to reproduce what Shakespeare intended than the original editors and compositors of the First Folio it will be seen that many of the so-called errors and mislineations are in fact not errors at all but have been created by the editors themselves because of a fundamental misunderstanding of Shakespeare's manner of writing dramatic verse...<sup>12</sup>

I hope to be able to show that Shakespeare's short lines are not really so fortuitous as generally made out. It was my most revered teacher, the late Professor Praphullachandra Ghosh, sitting at whose feet I had one of the richest experiences of my life, who first opened my eyes, nearly forty years ago, to the beauties and significances of a number of short lines in certain plays of Shakespeare. Since then these short lines have come to strike me more and more as demanding and rewarding attention. Experience over the years with the plays of Shakespeare has gone to strengthen and confirm that impression; and this, with the support provided by Flatter *et al.*, emboldens me, though up against high authorities, to commit to paper all that I am going to say below. In the maturer plays of Shakespeare, at any rate, the short, broken, imperfect lines, I am increasingly convinced, must be taken seriously; they are meant and are highly significant. They are far from being casual or capricious or products of carelessness<sup>13</sup> or relics of truncation or unauthorized tinkering with the Shakespearean text by compositors or other 'outsiders'.

If a blank-verse line in a drama falls short of the norm or otherwise exhibits a metrical gap, there is, arguably, a break, a pause in speech, somewhere about it, either before or after or within the line itself; in appropriate cases the break or pause may be distributed over all the three places or any two of them. In the maturer plays of Shakespeare these breaks are more than mere breaks, the pauses more than mere pauses. It is not merely that a void is created and left unfilled. The breaks would appear on examination to be highly meaningful, the pauses highly significant.

Fairly regular in his earlier blank verse, Shakespeare takes increasing

liberties with it as he progresses. At times he exceeds the norm of ten syllables, and so what are called double or feminine endings go on increasing in frequency. Sometimes the pentameter lengthens into a hexameter. Sometimes he does the opposite: he curtails his blank verse lines, but, as will be presently shown, always to a good purpose. By curtailing his lines he leaves room for a good many things ranging from some gesture or movement on the part of the actors or some necessary action to be performed on the stage at the moment to subtle suggestions and intimations of a great variety.

Thus, in *Coriolanus* V. iii. 76,<sup>14</sup> we have a short line of four syllables (two feet) only, "That's my brave boy!", spoken by Coriolanus, and preceded and followed by full verse-lines. A significantly short line, for the context (spoken by Volumnia) is: "Your knee, sirrah." The metrical gap is partly before the line, and partly after. In the gap before, the boy goes down on his knees; in the gap after, Coriolanus raises him and hugs him close. In *Hamlet* III. iv. 26, there is the short line "Nay, I know not: is it the king?"<sup>15</sup>—two syllables (one foot) short of the blank-verse norm<sup>16</sup>. Shakespeare leaves a gap after "king" to provide room for Hamlet lifting up the arras and discovering the corpse of Polonius—which is what lends point to the "this" in the next line (spoken by the Queen): "O! what a rash and bloody deed is this!". Capell, therefore, was right when he placed the s-d, *Lifts up the arras and* . . ., after l. 26, and Dyce, Staunton, and the Globe editors were wrong when they placed it after l. 30, where, however, there is no short line. Because of lack of understanding of Shakespeare's short lines, quite a few later editors have followed the misdirection of Dyce *et al.* The s-d, *Lifts up the arras* . . ., incidentally, is modern and occurs nowhere in either Q2 or F1. In the original text the shortness of the line does duty for the stage-direction. This brings out (and the examples that follow will bring it out further) a valuable function of these short lines of Shakespeare. They serve the purpose of built-in stage-directions—stage-directions which are not extra to the text but are built into the very structure of the verse by simply curtailing it. Modern drama often goes in for elaborate stage-directions; but these, however useful or well-done, stand apart, after all, and cannot claim to be an organic part of the text proper of the drama—which is exactly what the stage-directions of Shakespeare can very often claim to be, not being expressed but simply implied in the shortness of a verse-line and so becoming a component part of the verse-structure itself. In this way (as the examples to follow will further show) Shakespeare, it may be added, has interspersed his plays with valuable hints for actors in the shape of short lines—hints which are unfortunately lost on them in modern times in most cases.

In the light of these points it may not be paradoxical to claim that these lines of Shakespeare are, in one sense, full lines at the same time. The two lines quoted in the foregoing paragraph, though short of the norm, can claim to be really full lines, partly spoken and partly acted—4 syllables of speech + 6 syllables of action in the one case, 8 syllables of speech + 2 syllables of action in the other. Regarded in that way, these short lines of Shakespeare turn out to be extraordinarily live, dramatic lines—more live and more dramatic than those metrically complete lines which are simply spoken all throughout. The examples that follow will throw further light on this aspect of Shakespeare's short lines. All editorial emendations and re-lincations, therefore, which seek to 'redeem' these short lines into metrically complete verses (many instances are quoted below), have really the effect of converting live lines into dead ones—saving the metre by killing the drama of the lines concerned.

In *Othello* V. ii. 221, Iago threatens Emilia: "Be wise, and get you home.", and Emilia replies: "I will not." Even if the two lines are read together, the verse will still be short of the norm by half a foot. This is how Shakespeare has left room for the stage-action indicated by the modern s-d: *Iago offers to stab Emilia*. This s-d was inserted here by Rowe; neither it nor any other s-d occurs at this point either in the Q or the F text of the play. In the original text the action is implied in the shortness of the line, and the two speeches plus the action make up the complete verse-structure. Capell, without knowing what he was doing, wiped out the room Shakespeare had left for the action by separating "Fie!" from the next line (spoken by Gratiano as a single line in Qq and Ff): "Fie! Your sword upon a woman?"; so that "Be wise . . . Fie!" might form a complete blank-verse line. Capell's mislineation, unfortunately, has been reproduced by a long line of subsequent editors down to Dover Wilson and Alice Walker in the NS edition and Ridley in the NA edition of the play.

Here are further specimens (out of an immense number) of how Shakespeare's short lines are often misunderstood by editors. *As You Like It* II. iii begins with the short line (spoken by Orlando): "Who's there?". It is an evening scene, and Shakespeare gives the sense of darkness without the aid of any stage-direction simply by curtailing his verse by eight syllables. The actor playing Orlando, who started speaking right away on entrance in this scene, would entirely miss the intention of the Folio text. Orlando enters and goes on scanning for eight syllables a figure he sees but cannot recognize in the gathering darkness. Then follows the query: "Who's there?". The point is missed by Dover Wilson who says: "This abrupt opening to the scene, with a short line, suggests adaptation!"<sup>17</sup> Three short lines in *The Merchant of Venice*, involving necessary stage-action, are similarly misinterpreted by Wilson. (i) II. vii. 1-3:

"Go, draw aside the curtains, and discover / The several caskets to this noble prince. / Now make your choice. /". The third line is a short line and is followed by a full one spoken by the Prince of Morocco. The metrical gap is at the beginning of the line, leaving room for the curtains being 'drawn aside' and the caskets 'discovered'. This obvious point is missed by Wilson who says that there is possibly a 'cut' here!<sup>18</sup> Incidentally, the s-d, *Three Caskets are discovered*, which was inserted by Rowe at the end of the short line, was misplaced; it should have been put at the beginning.

(ii) II. vii. 62-64: "(Portia) Then I am yours. / (Morocco) O hell! what have we here? A carrion Death, / Within whose empty eye there is a written scroll. / I'll read the writing. /". This is the lineation in Ff and Qq; the first and the fourth line (which, incidentally, is omitted by Ff 2-4) are short. The point of the shortness is obvious in both cases. In the first case, room is left for the Prince of Morocco opening the golden casket; in the second, for taking out the scroll and proceeding to read it. But to Wilson this lineation 'suggests marginal revision, and possibly abridgment'!<sup>19</sup> Following in the wake of numerous predecessors, both he and the NA editor, J. R. Brown, adopt Capell's re-lineation which eliminates the short lines: "Then...here? / A carrion...eye / There...writing." At the same time they, like many another editor, follow Rowe in inserting after "yours" the s-d, *He unlocks the golden casket*, though the lineation adopted leaves no room for the action! (iii) II. ix. 84: "Come, draw the curtain, Nerissa." The entire scene is in verse and this is, of course, a verse-line (though not iambically perfect), left short for the obvious purpose of providing room for an action: the drawing of the curtain by Nerissa (*she does so* is the s-d after the line in the NS text). But Wilson takes it for a line of prose 'which suddenly crops up in the middle of a verse-scene' and so 'points to a "cut"'!<sup>20</sup> The NA editor almost agrees: 'The metre is broken and this may be a single line of prose...; as such it might be evidence of a cut or alteration during composition'!<sup>21</sup>

The glib assumption that a short line is the residue of adaptation, abridgment or revision, as well as the other one that a short line is a fault calling for rectification, can only make us miss many a beauty of Shakespeare's workmanship. That a short line is the stump of a longer line or passage can be conceded only in those cases where a good Q text shows words or lines having been omitted in F1 or *vice versa*. For instance, *Hamlet* I. ii. 58 sqq., where Q2 reads: "Hath my Lord wrong from me my slowe leave / By laboursome petition, and at last / Upon his will I seald my hard consent, / I doe beseech you give him leave to goe."; and F1 reads: "He hath my Lord: / I do beseech you give him leave to go." In this case, of course, no special significance attaches to the F1 short line "He hath my Lord:".



In the above instances of short lines (all illustrations in this section of the paper are just a few specimens taken at random out of many such in the plays of Shakespeare) the metrical gaps are filled in with some action or other. Often they are filled in with some kind of movement or other. Thus, in *As You Like It* I. ii. 286-87, Orlando asks Le Beau "Which of the two was daughter of the duke, / That here was at the wrestling?" The second line is short to permit of Le Beau's coming closer to Orlando to say what he does, which cannot be spoken aloud: "Neither his daughter if we judge by manners:". Or, for just another specimen, Hamlet to Horatio in the Graveyard Scene: "Couch we awhile, and mark."; the line is left short to permit of their moving off to 'couch' behind the tombs. There is no stage-direction here in either Q2 or F1, for none is necessary; the shortness of the verse does duty for a stage-direction. All modern stage-directions hereabouts, like *Retiring with Horatio* (Capell) or *They lie down behind the tombs unnoticed* (Harrison and Pritchard)<sup>22</sup> or *They sit within the shade of a cypress* (Dover Wilson), are superfluous. A short line spoken by Lorenzo in *The Merchant of Venice* (II. vi. 24), "I'll watch as long for you then. Approach; / Here dwells my father Jew. Ho! who's within?", obviously filled out with movement lending life and stage-point to the word "Approach", is misunderstood by Dover Wilson as a likely indication of a 'cut'!<sup>23</sup> The NA editor thinks that it may suggest a pause in delivery or may be due to a 'cut' or 'foul-paper copy'!<sup>24</sup>

Very often a short line leaves room for and is completed by the entry or exit of a character or characters. Thus Viola's exit in *Twelfth-Night*, I. v, is preceded by the full line (spoken by her): "Plac'd in contempt! Farewell, fair cruelty.", and followed by the short line (spoken by Olivia): "What is your parentage?" The metrical gap in this short line is before it; here Viola goes out and Olivia keeps on looking at the receding figure. In *The Merchant of Venice* I. iii. 41, Antonio's entry precedes and completes the short line (spoken by Bassanio): "This is Signior Antonio."—a simple point that is missed by Dover Wilson who suspects the 'broken line' to be a sign of 'revision'!<sup>25</sup> Two simple cases in the same play of an exit following and completing a short line are similarly misinterpreted by Wilson:—(i) II. ii. 218-19: *Bassanio*—"...But fare you well: / I have some business." The second line is short (preceded and followed by full lines) because Bassanio turns to go after speaking it. (ii) II. iii. 15: *Jessica*—"Farewell, good Launcelot.", the remainder of the line being Launcelot's exit. No. (i), suggests Wilson, points to abridgment; no. (ii), to revision (the preceding speech, which is prose, seems to have been, he says, verse in an earlier draft)!<sup>26</sup> From what has been said it follows that a short line might be very useful in determining the exact point where a character or characters enter or go out.

Short lines, indicating an entry or exit, are so frequent in the plays of Shakespeare that examples need not be multiplied. What about those cases where a full blank-verse line goes with the exit of a character? Thus *Hamlet* III. i ends with the line (spoken by the King): "Madness in great ones must not unwatch'd go." The line, which is followed by the usual s-d *Exeunt*, is a complete verse. Where, then, is the room for the departure of the characters? No room is left because the speech and the action (of departure) are intended to be simultaneous. Not that the King speaks the line and then starts going. He speaks as he goes and goes as he speaks (Polonius following him). For another example (among many), *Othello* IV. i. closes with the full line (spoken by Lodovico): "I am sorry that I am deceiv'd in him.", followed by the s-d *Exeunt*. This is preceded by a short line (spoken by Iago): "And mark how he continues." In the gap after the short line Lodovico starts going, and as he goes he speaks slowly and regretfully the line quoted. Each scene of Shakespeare's that ends with a verse-line, winds up with either a short or a full one. If short, the speech is intended to be anterior to the exit; the line is to be spoken first on the stage, and then the character or characters start going. If full, the speech and the exit are intended to be coincident with each other. An actor doing the reverse—speaking a short line as he is leaving the stage or speaking a full line on the stage and then starting to go—is missing a valuable acting hint embedded in the very structure of Shakespeare's verse. Valuable, because it makes a palpable difference whether a line is spoken the one way or the other—before or along with an exit. It is worth observing that in many cases where a full line coincides with an exit, the line gains distinctly in effect if spoken slowly and deliberately as the speaker moves out of the stage. Thus, the line quoted above from *Hamlet*, "Madness...go", is all the more impressive if spoken by the King in slow and deliberate accents half to himself as he goes out. So too, for instance, the closing line of *Macbeth* I. ii (spoken by Duncan): "What he hath lost noble Macbeth hath won.", or that of *Twelfth-Night* I. i (spoken by Orsino): "Love-thoughts lie rich when canopied with bowers.", or that of *Antony and Cleopatra* IV. xiii. (spoken by Cleopatra): "...Come, we have no friend / But resolution, and the briefest end."

In certain cases a full line going with an exit implies that the exit is so quick that there is hardly any time-gap between the speech and the departure. In such cases, of course, the speaker or speakers dash out of the stage, leaving scarcely an interval between the speech and the exit: hence the fullness of the line. Thus, in *Hamlet* I. iv. 84-86, Hamlet speaks:

Still am I call'd. Unhand me, gentlemen,  
By heaven! I'll make a ghost of him that lets me:  
I say, away! Go on, I'll follow thee.

As he speaks these full lines (full in both Q2 and F1), Hamlet struggles and frees himself from Horatio and Marcellus (simultaneous speech and action)<sup>27</sup>, and immediately he has spoken the last line, he rushes out of the stage. The scene closes thus (in both Q2 and F1): "*Hor.* Heaven will direct it. *Mar.* Nay, let's follow him.", the two speeches together forming a complete verse, which is no sooner spoken than Horatio and Marcellus dash out after Hamlet. In *Othello* I. i, to cite another random example, Iago is eager to leave before Brabantio arrives on the scene (ll. 145-8), and so the last line spoken by him, "And there will I be with him. So, farewell.", is a full line (in both Q and F), indicating a hurried exit. Similarly, Brabantio speaks a full line at the close of the scene, "On, good Roderigo; I'll deserve your pains.", and hurries out to "apprehend" Desdemona and the Moor. Similarly, in *Macbeth* II. iii. 80, Macduff speaks: "See, and then speak yourselves. Awake! awake!"—a full line which is followed in the F text by the s-d: *Exeunt Macbeth and Lenox*, and then by another full line. No gap is left for the exit because Macbeth and Lenox rush out as Macduff speaks.

This kind of quickness or immediacy of action conveyed through the very structure of the verse is at times turned by Shakespeare to a rather subtle significance. Here is an instance from *As You Like It* where a facet of the character of Celia and her difference from her cousin are brought out by this very means. In I. ii, after she has, with impulsive suddenness, given away her neck-chain to Orlando, Rosalind turns to Celia and asks "Shall we go, coz?". The staid Celia, scandalized by her cousin's latest behaviour, says at once "Ay. Fare you well, fair gentleman.", and whisks her off from the spot. The action is so quick that no gap is left between it and the speech. The way she hustles Rosalind off is a good measure of her dislike of her cousin's conduct. The point is missed in the stage-direction in the NS *As You Like It* which makes Rosalind turn and walk away after her question and Celia follow her. There can be no room for any stage-action between Rosalind's question and Celia's answer, since the question and the answer are two parts of a single verse-line, and Celia's "Ay" would not be what Shakespeare intended it to be unless it was spoken as soon as Rosalind had put her question (see below on 'speech-endings').

Simultaneity of speech and action or gesture is to be presumed in all cases where an action or gesture is obviously called for and yet there is no short line to provide room for the same. Thus, in *Othello* III. iii. 284, Othello beats his forehead as he says "I have a pain upon my forehead here" (a full line in both Q and F). In *Macbeth* V. vii. 32, Macbeth speaks: "Do better upon them.", and Macduff: "Turn, hell-hound, turn!". In between the two speeches is the F s-d: *Enter Macduff*. The two

speeches, however, form, together, a complete verse. It is clear, therefore, that Macduff enters (from behind) *while* Macbeth speaks (and not after Macbeth has spoken), and Macbeth turns round *while* Macduff speaks. Coriolanus kneels *as* he says "Leave unsaluted. Sink, my knee, i' the earth;" (V. iii. 50); the actor who goes down on his knees *after* speaking the full line does not know his Shakespeare.

A good many of these cases of simultaneity in the plays of Shakespeare have been spoiled by misleading modern stage-directions. Thus (just for a few examples out of many), in *Hamlet* II. ii. 76, Voltimand, speaking to the King on his return from the mission to Norway, says "With an entreaty, herein further shown,"—a full line in both Q2 and F1. There is no s-d here either in Qq or in Ff. Malone inserted the s-d (reproduced by many subsequent editors), *Gives a paper*, after the line. This is misleading; it would suggest that the paper is handed over after the line is spoken. That cannot be as the line is a full one; the paper must be handed over *as* the words "herein further shown" are spoken. Again, in the same play III. iv. 23, Hamlet exclaims: "How now! a rat? Dead, for a ducat, dead!"—a full line in both Q2 and F1. There is no s-d here in either Qq or Ff. Most modern editions of the play have the s-d, *Makes a pass through the arras*, after the line. This s-d is modern, dating from Capell, and misleading; the line being a full one, the 'pass through the arras' cannot be after it but must be simultaneous. In point of fact, the grim alliteration in *d's*, combined with the guttural in *ducat*, more than suggests an accompanying thrust of a sword. In the same play, again, in V. i, Hamlet leaps into Ophelia's grave *as* he exclaims: "...this is I, / Hamlet the Dane.", and Laertes seizes him by the throat *as* he exclaims at once: "The devil take thy soul!". Since "Hamlet the Dane." and "The devil...soul!" go together to make a full line, action and speech must be simultaneous in either case. There are no s-d's hereabouts in either Qq or Ff. Those inserted by Rowe and repeated in modern editions, *Leaps into the grave* after "Dane" and *Grappling with him* after "soul", misleadingly suggest that the actions are subsequent to the speeches. In *Othello* I. ii. 57, Roderigo speaks: "Signior, it is the Moor.", and Brabantio: "Down with him, thief!". Neither Q1 nor F1 has any s-d here. Rowe inserted the s-d (reproduced in most modern editions), *They draw on both sides*, after Brabantio's speech, as if they drew after the words quoted had been spoken. The fact of the matter is that they draw *while* the words are being spoken, for the two lines taken together constitute a complete verse. In the same play, V. ii. 198, Emilia: "That e'er did lift up eye.", and Othello: "O! she was foul."; no s-d in either Q1 or F1. Theobald inserted the s-d (reproduced in many modern editions), *Rising*, before Othello's speech, as if Othello rose before he had started speaking. Since the two speeches together form a full line of

blank-verse, it is clearly intended that Othello should be speaking as he rises and be rising as he speaks. That makes for a stage-effect different from what it would be if Othello was to rise before he started speaking. In *Twelfth-Night* IV. i. 28, the action is simultaneous with the speech and also continues after it. The line, "Why, there's for thee, and there, and there", is short in F1; while it is being spoken, as the very words suggest, Sebastian goes on beating Sir Andrew, and the drubbing continues in the gap after the line. This point was missed by Capell who half spoiled the line by regularizing its metre with the addition of a third instalment of 'and there'. His 'emendation' has been followed by quite a few editors!

To return to short lines. In *Hamlet* I. v. 117-19, Horatio asks "What news, my lord?", but Hamlet refuses to tell it: "No; you will reveal it."—a short line, standing by itself; in the gap after it we almost visualize the speaker closing his lips tight. A few lines later, flustered and agitated, he says: "Look you, I'll go pray."—and the remainder of the line is a gesture: he folds his hands helplessly. In the same play, IV. vii. 94, Laertes speaks: "And gem of all the nation."—a short line that leaves room for a sweep of the hand to emphasize the "all": a gesture that makes up for the two metrical feet missing after "all". In *King Lear* II. i. 65, Gloucester, declaring Edgar an outlaw, says "He that conceals him, death.", and fills in the metrical void after the line with a peremptory gesture. In *Othello* V. ii. 155-57, Emilia speaks: "She was too fond of her most filthy bargain.", and Othello: "Ha!", and Emilia: "Do thy worst:". Between Othello's "Ha!" and Emilia's second speech is a long metrical gap, filled in, of course, with threatening looks and gestures on Othello's part, which Emilia defies with the words "Do thy worst". In *Coriolanus* I. ix. 11-13, Titus Lartius bursts into praise of Coriolanus: "Oh general: / Here is the steed, we the caparison: / Hadst thou beheld—", and Coriolanus, ever impatient of praise, stays his effusions with a petulant gesture: "Pray now, no more:". This is the Folio lineation; the two lines, "Hadst thou beheld" and "Pray . . . more", even when taken together, fall short of the norm; the metrical gap is, of course, between the two lines, filled in in the manner just indicated. Editors down to Dover Wilson have devitalized the text here by tacking on "my mother" from the next line (which happens to be longer than the norm in F1) to "Pray . . . more" and so eliminating the short line. In *The Merchant of Venice* II. ii. 213, after Gratiano has promised in a lively speech to behave at Belmont, Bassanio speaks a short line: "Well, we shall see your bearing."—an extremely live line if we think of it. We might quite imagine Bassanio giving Gratiano a hearty pat on the back as he speaks that word "Well", and Gratiano filling in the gap after the line with a gesture of negation prefacing his speech that follows: "Nay, but I bar to-night. . .". All this drama of the line is missed by Dover

Wilson who thinks that the 'broken line' is 'possibly due to some abridgment at the end of the scene'!<sup>28</sup>

A bow or a gesture of greeting, filling out a short line, as in *The Merchant of Venice* I. i. 65 ("Good morrow, my good lords."), is exceedingly common.

In these instances (just a few out of many in the plays of Shakespeare) a curtailed verse is completed and brought to life on the stage by a gesture. In this way, what would otherwise have been merely a line of verse turns into a highly dramatic and dynamic one, thanks to the shortness of the line. In many such instances the shortness of the line serves to lend point to a particular word or group of words in the line, e.g., the word *all* in the third quotation from *Hamlet* in the foregoing paragraph but one. In certain cases the gesture at the end of a short line will be found to be prelude to the statement to follow, lending point and stage-life to a word or group of words therein; e.g., in *Hamlet* I. ii. 235, where Horatio says to Hamlet "It would have much amaz'd you."—a short line that is completed with a gesture of assent on Hamlet's part, which lends point to his reply that follows: "Very like, very like...". Elsewhere it may be just a look or a change of facial expression that is provided for by a short line, which it completes and vivifies. Thus, in *The Merchant of Venice* II. vi. 28, in reply to Jessica's query "Who are you?...", Lorenzo answers: "Lorenzo, and thy love." (a short line), whereupon Jessica: "Lorenzo, certain; and my love indeed,". In the gap after the short line Jessica, of course, takes a close look at the masqued figure of Lorenzo to be sure that it is he. This simple point is missed by the NA editor who thinks that the short line may suggest a pause in delivery or be due to a 'cut' or 'foul-paper copy'.<sup>29</sup> In *Twelfth-Night* I. v. 261-3, Viola (in the guise of Cesario) speaks thus to Lady Olivia, praising her beauty: "Lady, you are the cruell'st she alive, / If you will lead these graces to the grave / And leave the world no copy. /"; the last line is short to allow for a blush to spread on Olivia's cheeks on hearing all that. In *Othello* III. iii. 44, after Desdemona has said "I have been talking with a suitor here, / A man that languishes in your displeasure.", Othello asks "Who is't you mean?" and Desdemona answers (in a full line) "Why, your lieutenant, Cassio...". Desdemona's answer is, of course, immediate; hence the pause involved in the short line spoken by Othello cannot be after but is before it. In that pause we almost watch a frown grow on Othello's brow for six syllables. Hamlet, in the course of his conversation with the Captain in IV. iv, asks: "Goes it against the main of Poland, sir, / Or for some frontier?", and the Captain answers: "Truly to speak, and with no addition, / We go to gain a little patch of ground / That hath in it no profit but the name." In the gap after the short line, "Or...frontier?", we almost detect a derisive smile in the Captain's face preluding his reply. Again, Hamlet:

"Why, then the Polack never will defend it.", and the Captain: "Yes, 'tis already garrison'd.", whereupon Hamlet: "Two thousand souls and twenty thousand ducats / Will not debate the question of this straw:". Room is left after the short line, "Yes...garrison'd", for the look of surprise with which Hamlet must receive the Captain's statement.<sup>30</sup> Again, in *King Lear* I. iv. 368-70, Goneril to Albany: "You are much more attask'd for want of wisdom / Than prais'd for harmful mildness.", to which Albany replies: "How far your eyes may pierce I cannot tell:". In between, in the gap after the short line, "Than...mildness", are a look of reproach on Goneril's part, reinforcing her statement, and a dubious shake of the head on the part of Albany, leading up to his reply. As in the case of gestures, the look or facial expression at the end of a short line may in certain instances be prelude to the line following, to which it lends stage-life accordingly; e.g., *Hamlet* I. iii. 99-101, where Ophelia speaks to Polonius: "He hath, my lord, of late made many tenders / Of his affection to me. /". In the gap after the short line, "Of. . . me", we almost envisage Polonius growing a superior look of contempt for the 'greenness' of Ophelia's utterance, which leads up to and vivifies his speech that follows: "Affection! pooh! you speak like a green girl,".

That *some* short lines may indicate a pause or that the blank after a short line may in *some* cases be filled with some action or gesture or movement has been vaguely recognized by different editors and critics at different times, and also by Abbott.<sup>31</sup> Not much is gained, however, by a vague recognition of the possibility of a pause. The question that has to be faced is why there should be a pause at the particular point where it occurs. And it hardly does justice to Shakespeare's short lines to say or think that only some of them may have a significance of sorts and the rest, presumably, are suspect, and that the significance, if any, is limited to a few things like action or gesture or movement (or, as Chambers adds, meditation or reversion to the business in hand<sup>31</sup>, or, as Harrison says, emotion, doubt or meditation<sup>32</sup>). It is the case of this paper that these short lines of Shakespeare are capable of performing a large variety of important functions and do cover a wide range of significance and suggestiveness—much wider, and finer, than what has been recognized so far; and that each short line in his plays should be carefully pondered before it is dismissed as a prosodic or a typographical aberration or a residual vestige.

Sometimes the gap involved in a short line is filled in with some sound or other. For example, *Twelfth-Night* II. iv. 50: "(Clown) Are you ready, sir? (Duke) Ay; prithee, sing." Even if the two speeches are taken together, the verse will be short by one syllable; in the gap, the instruments strike up. *Hamlet* V. ii. 375: "(Hor.) Why does the drum come hither?"—a

short line filled out with the sounds of a military march as Fortinbras and the English ambassadors come in. *Othello* V. ii. 114: "(*Oth.*) And sweet revenge grows harsh./ (*Des.*) O! falsely, falsely murder'd. (*Emil.*) Alas! what cry is that?"; the blank after "harsh" is filled in with the groans of the dying Desdemona. *King Lear* I. iv. 7: "Shall find thee full of labours."—a short line filled out with the sound of horns as Lear returns from hunting. The storm-scenes in *King Lear* have short lines that have their blanks filled in with the sounds of the raging storm—e.g., III. ii. 9: "That make ingrateful man!"<sup>33</sup>; III. ii. 73: "That's sorry yet for thee."; III. iv. 36: "And show the heavens more just."; III. iv. 74: "Those pelican daughters." (The sounds of the blast that fill in the gap after the last quotation are imitated in Tom o' Bedlam's speech that follows: "Pillicock sat on Pillicock-hill: / Halloo, halloo, loo, loo!"). *Coriolanus* III. i. 258-60: "(*Men.*) And, being angry, does forget that ever / He heard the name of death. / Here's goodly work! (*Sec. Pat.*) I would they were a-bed!"; the second verse is short, the remainder being 'a noise within' as the Folio s-d has it—the clamour of the returning rabble.

Often an exclamation occasions a short line for the simple reason that the force of the exclamation—its reverberation, so to speak—is enough to fill in the void involved. Moreover, the force of an exclamation often enhances the value of a syllable, making one syllable the equivalent of more than one or sufficient to constitute a foot by itself. Here are a few specimens (each line quoted is a short one): "Saw who?" (*Hamlet* I. ii. 190); "O! 'tis too true," (*Ibid.* III. i. 49)<sup>34</sup>; "O! fie upon thee, slanderer." (*Othello* II. i. 113); "What! of Venice?" (*Ibid.* V. i. 91); "Till it cry sleep to death." (*King Lear* II. iv. 120)<sup>35</sup>; "Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks! rage! blow!" (*Ibid.* III. ii. 1—Capell was meddling with the line to no purpose when he sought to regularize it by expanding the last two syllables into four: 'blow! rage! and blow!').

The same consideration applies to shouts; short lines like "Hillo, ho, ho, my lord!" or "Hillo, ho, ho, boy! come, bird, come." (*Hamlet* I. v. 115-16), or "Treason! treason!" (*Ibid.* V. ii. 337) are so common in the plays of Shakespeare that further citations are hardly necessary. It may be noted in passing that the two Folio lines spoken by the First Guard after Cleopatra's death in the last scene of *Antony and Cleopatra*, "Approach ho, / All's not well: Caesar's beguiled. /", are short because they are shouted out—a simple point missed by editors who, since Theobald, have been treating the two lines as one<sup>36</sup>.

In certain cases the exclamation or shout may combine with something else to fill in the void involved. Thus, in "Peace, Kent!" (*King Lear* I. i. 123), the vehemence of the exclamation plus an imperious



gesture make up for the four missing feet; the line would have lost more than half its life had it been a complete verse<sup>37</sup>. Similarly, in *Coriolanus* V. ii. 86, after Menenius has made his appeal to Coriolanus, a single word, "Away.", makes a line by itself in the Folio text; the vehemence of the exclamation plus a violent gesture of repulsion on Coriolanus's part more than make up for the missing feet. For another specimen, in *Othello* II. i. 20, the force of the exclamation combines with the flurry it causes all about to fill out the short line "News, lads! our wars are done." In *The Merchant of Venice* I. i. 46, the emphasis of the exclamation "Fie!" plus an impatient gesture on Antonio's part are enough to fill in the gap of two syllables after the short line: "(Salarino) Why, then you are in love. (Antonio) Fie, fie!"—a point that escapes Dover Wilson who remarks: "...since 'Anth. o no' might easily be read as 'Anthonio' perhaps what Shakespeare intended Antonio to say was 'O no! fie, fie!'"<sup>38</sup>. Hammer's attempt to normalize the verse by reading 'Fie, fie, away!', or Dyce's, for that matter, by reading 'In love! fie, fie!', was entirely misdirected.

In all these instances the pause involved in a short line is an eloquent one—eloquent of some action or gesture or look or the like. At times it may be eloquent even of unspoken words. Thus, in *Twelfth Night* I. ii. 26-27, Viola speaks: "Orsino! I have heard my father name him: / He was a bachelor then." The pause after the second line (a short one) seems to spell the unspoken question: "Is he so still?"; hence the Captain's speech that follows: "And so is now, or was so very late;". Or consider the pause after *Hamlet* V. ii. 55. Hamlet speaks: "...Now, the next day / Was our sea-fight, and what to this was sequent / Thou know'st already." How the pause after the third line (a short one) suggests Horatio's remark that follows, "So Guildenstern and Rosencrantz go to't.", and accentuates the "So" therein!

A common type of short line is the one caused by a shocked or startled pause, or a pause of wonder or surprise, or one of bewilderment or stupefaction or embarrassment. Orlando returning home in *As You Like It*, II. iii, is so bewildered by Adam's outburst of fourteen lines, "What! my young master? O my gentle master!...", that a few moments of puzzled silence must pass before he can ask "Why, what's the matter?"; hence the shortness of the concluding line of Adam's speech: "Envenoms him that bears it!". Viola, taken aback by Antonio's request in *Twelfth Night* III. iv. 376, "I must entreat of you some of that money.", speaks a short line: "What money, sir?"—a line with metrical lacunae before and after: preceded by an amazed pause on Viola's part and followed by an amazed look on the part of Antonio. The shock of the Ghost's revelations in *Hamlet*, I. v, produces a crop of short lines: "What?" (l. 8),

"O God!" (l. 24), "Murder!" (l. 26). In each case, the force of the exclamation combines with the startled pause preceding it to make up for the missing eight or nine syllables. The Ghost's announcement, "The serpent that did sting thy father's life / Now wears his crown.", ends in a short line that leaves room for a shocked pause on the part of Hamlet, followed by his exclamation "O my prophetic soul! mine uncle?"—a line which, being slightly short of the norm, serves to lengthen the pause after the previous short line. The shock produced by the Ghost's disclosure thus leaves its impress on the very structure of the verse—an impress which has unfortunately been wiped out by numbers of modern editors (including Dover Wilson) following a suggestion made by Walker who divided the line spoken by Hamlet at "soul!"<sup>80</sup>, thus regularizing the short line "Now . . . crown". Towards the end of the scene the astonishment caused by the Ghost's booming command, "Swear.", combines with the reverberation to fill in the metrical hiatus. The short line in II. ii. 592, "For Hecuba!", leaves room for the wondering pause that must succeed it. The Queen's amazement in III. iv, as she finds Hamlet 'holding discourse' 'with the incorporal air', his looks distempered and his hair standing on end, is well reflected in two short lines: "Alas! he is mad!" (l. 105) and "Alas! how is't with you," (l. 115), each preceded by moments of speechless astonishment. The King's reaction to the Messenger's announcement in IV. vii. 36, "Letters, my lord, from Hamlet:", is significantly embodied in a short verse: "From Hamlet! who brought them?", to which question the Messenger replies, of course immediately, "Sailors. . .". A flabbergasted pause in the middle of the line, between "Hamlet" and "who", is clearly intended. ". . . Are they married, think you?" Brabantio asks Roderigo in *Othello* I. i. 168, and Roderigo replies "Truly, I think they are."—a short line followed by a full one spoken by Brabantio; in between, a shocked pause on Brabantio's part as he comes to learn what he does. Similar specimens of shortness of verse serving for a measure of the shock produced on a character by the speech or behaviour of another are *Othello* V. ii. 139-40 ("Emil. My husband! / Oth. Thy husband. / Emil. That she was false to wedlock?": a seven-syllable-long pause on Emilia's part after "Thy husband."); *ibid.* V. ii. 176-8 ("Emil. But did you ever tell him she was false? / Iago. I did. / Emil. You told a lie, an odious damned lie;": an eight-syllable-long pause on Emilia's part after "I did"); *ibid.* V. ii. 296-8 ("Lodovico. Did you and he consent in Cassio's death? / Oth. Ay. / Cas. Dear general, I never gave you cause.": a nine-syllable-long pause on Cassio's part before he speaks); *Hamlet* IV. vii. 166 ("Laer. Drown'd! O, where?": a shocked pause after "Drown'd!" combines with the exclamation to fill out the short verse); *King Lear* I. i. 90 (Lear's exclamation,

"Nothing?"<sup>40</sup>, even if it is read with the lines preceding and following, makes for a short line that leaves room for a shocked pause preceding the exclamation). As Othello departs with a gesture of repulsion in III. iv. 97, "Away!", the stupefaction his behaviour causes to Desdemona and Emilia is similarly indicated in the shortnesses of the lines spoken by them: "*Emil.* Is not this man jealous? / *Des.* I ne'er saw this before." The stunned silence with which Othello's announcement in V. ii. 41, "Ay, and for that thou diest.", is received by Desdemona, is betokened by the very shortness of the verse.

A short line may sometimes mark a pause of revulsion, disgust, and the like; e.g., *Hamlet* I. v. 73: "And a most instant tetter bark'd about, / Most lazar-like, with vile and loathsome crust, / All my smooth body." After the short line, "All...body", the speaker pauses in revulsion, as if he were having that gruesome experience over again. And so the dead past becomes the living present, and narrative is transformed into drama. (More about this conversion of narration into drama through a short line in Section II of this paper.)

One of the finer uses to which Shakespeare puts his short lines is the expression of anguish through a silence of which it might be said, to adapt certain words of Cicero<sup>41</sup>, that it intimates a degree of anguish that no words perhaps could express. Such short lines (which also leave room for agonized looks and gestures) are, for example, Othello's "O misery!" in the Temptation Scene (III. iii. 171) and "Ay, there, look grim as hell!" (IV. ii. 63); Laertes's "Do you see this, O God?" after the exit of mad Ophelia in *Hamlet* IV. v, and the Queen's "Drown'd, drown'd" in IV. vii (l. 185). To Laertes's query, "What ceremony else?", in the Graveyard Scene in *Hamlet*, the hide-bound Priest replies with a rather harsh speech; the pained silence that ensues is well indicated by the shortness of the concluding line, "Of bell and burial." In *King Lear* III. vii. 85, after he has been blinded by Cornwall, Gloucester speaks a couple of broken lines in Ff: "All dark and comfortless. / Where's my son Edmund?" —lines broken with agony, marked by excruciating pauses filled with writhing pain<sup>42</sup>. Cleopatra's speech in the last scene of *Antony and Cleopatra*, "Give me my robe, put on my crown....", ends in a short line, "It is not worth leave-taking", which leaves room for an anguished silence on the part of Charmian before she speaks the lines that follow: "Dissolve, thick cloud, and rain; that I may say, / The gods themselves do weep...". Once more the mute testimony of a metrical hiatus proves more potent than words.

A verse-line may sometimes be cut short by the fact that the character concerned is choked with grief or some other emotion or passion, or is otherwise unable to speak out of fullness of heart. Thus, in *Othello* V. ii. 173,

the line breaks off as Emilia says (to Iago) "Speak, for my heart is full." In IV. ii. 75-79 Othello speaks: "...What committed! / Heaven stops the nose at it and the moon winks, / The bawdy wind that kisses all it meets / Is hush'd within the hollow mine of earth, / And will not hear't. What committed! /"<sup>43</sup> The last line is short<sup>44</sup>; evidently Othello, choked with rage, pauses after "hear't". Editorial attempts to fill out the line (e.g., Capell's, by inserting 'Committed!' before "What") are misdirected. In *King Lear* II. ii. 76, Cornwall asks Kent "Why art thou angry?", and Kent answers "That such a slave as this should wear a sword....". The gap of five syllables between the two speeches shows that Kent is so choked with indignation that it is some time before he can speak. In the scene in *The Merchant of Venice* where Launcelot bids farewell to Jessica (II. iii), the latter speaks: "And so farewell: I would not have my father / See me in talk with thee. / ". The clue to the shortness of the second line is supplied by Launcelot's speech (prose) that follows: "Adieu! tears exhibit my tongue....". He struggles with his tears, and it is some time before he can speak; hence the gap after "thee". Once more Dover Wilson opines that the short line suggests that Launcelot's speech was originally verse and so points to revision!<sup>45</sup>

On a lower level is the short line expressive of concern, worry, anxiety, and the like. Thus, in *Hamlet* IV. i, the Queen enters and says: "Ah! my good lord, what have I seen to-night.", which makes the King ask: "What, Gertrude? How does Hamlet?"—a short line followed by a full one spoken by the Queen, a worried pause intervening between the two questions. Seymour's interposition of four syllables (*hast thou seen? and*) between "Gertrude" and "How" was good prosody but bad drama. In *Othello* II. i, Cassio's announcement, "For I have lost him on a dangerous sea" (l. 46), draws from Montano the anxious query "Is he well shipp'd?". But it would be bad acting if the query were put immediately; for the line is short, preceded, of course, by a pause of concern (there can be no pause after "shipp'd?" since the question is answered at once by Cassio: "His bark is stoutly timber'd....").

A common type of a short line is one involving a pause of reflection or brooding or the like. In *As You Like It* I. iii. 129, Rosalind asks Celia as they plan their journey to Arden: "But what will you be call'd?"—a short line followed by a full one in which Celia replies, but not immediately: she takes a little time to think out; in the pause after "called?" we can almost see her screwing up her brows in thought. Again, in *Twelfth-Night* I. ii. 1-2, Viola asks "What country, friends, is this?", and the Captain answers "This is Illyria, lady."—two separate lines, each short. The first leaves room for Viola to look round and point the "this" with an appropriate gesture. The gap after the second allows her time to accommodate

herself to the fact that she is in a strange country; she thinks over the name: Illyria? is it any good for her being in Illyria? Hence the query of hers that follows: "And what should I do in Illyria?". All these points have been missed alike by those editors who have tried to force the two lines into a hexameter, by Pope *et al.* who have had recourse to mutilation to save the metre by dropping "This is", and by Morton Luce who seeks to explain by saying that often in Shakespeare the exigencies of dialogue break up the normal metrical arrangement.<sup>46</sup> In the same play, in II. iv. 46-48, the Duke thus describes the song they had last night: "...it is silly sooth, / And dallies with the innocence of love, / Like the old age. /". The last line, a short one, is succeeded by a nostalgic pause, and the Clown has to recall his master from his dreamy contemplation of the golden past by asking "Are you ready, sir?", and the Duke, waking up from a reverie, as it were, answers "Ay; prithee, sing." A series of short lines with reflective pauses mark the dialogue (described as rapid by Dover Wilson<sup>47</sup> but, as will presently appear, not really so rapid as he seems to think) towards the close of the second scene in *Hamlet* after the Prince has been informed by Horatio and Marcellus of what they had seen the previous night. Almost each question that Hamlet puts is preceded by a meditative pause as he turns the matter over in his mind; *e.g.*, "Arm'd, say you?"<sup>48</sup>, "Then saw you not his face?", "What! look'd he frowningly?", "Pale or red?", "Very like, very like. Stay'd it long?" (pause between "like" and "Stay'd"). It is perhaps worth remarking in passing that there is no such pause and consequently no short line where no reflection is required; *e.g.*, "From top to toe?", and Marcellus and Bernardo answer immediately "My lord, from head to foot.", the two speeches together forming a perfect blank-verse line. No pause need precede the question here, for it is induced at once by the previous answer of Marcellus and Bernardo: "Arm'd, my lord." In the course of the soliloquy that closes the first act in *Othello* Iago speaks: "And will as tenderly be led by the nose / As asses are. /". The second line is short<sup>49</sup> with a long pause after it, the clue to the purpose of which is furnished by the line following: "I have't; it is engender'd...". Evidently Iago pauses after speaking the short line and thinks over his diabolical plan as it comes to birth. Here is a bit from the dialogue between Othello and Iago in IV. i (64-66): "(Iago) There's many a beast then, in a populous city, / And many a civil monster. / (Oth.) Did he confess it? (Iago) Good sir, be a man;". The short line "And... monster" makes for a brooding pause on Othello's part before he speaks; the actor playing Othello must speak accordingly. A short line involving a reflective pause may serve to indicate that an answer is not spontaneous, and so subtly betray its insincerity or falsity. Thus, King Lear turns to Goneril to ask how much

she loves him: "Our eldest-born, speak first.": a short line<sup>50</sup> followed by a full one, the first line of Goneril's reply. The gap after "first" well shows that Goneril's speech takes a little time coming. Not being meant, it does not come at once: she has to think before she speaks. In the same play, II. ii. 121, Cornwall asks Oswald: "What was the offence you gave him?"—a short line<sup>51</sup> followed by another as Oswald replies "I never gave him any:"<sup>52</sup>. The pause after "him?" well shows that Oswald is going to tell a lie; and the one after "any", that he takes some time concocting the story he puts out in the speech that follows. These fine points of the original text were completely missed by Hanmer and Steevens who sought to normalize the verse by dropping "I", "gave", and "him".

A short line will occur where a character pauses to recall something. Thus, in *Twelfth-Night* I. ii, Viola asks "What is his name?" and the Captain answers "Orsino.", whereupon Viola: "Orsino! I have heard my father name him:". The first two speeches would be short of the norm even if they were taken together. The name stirs Viola's memories, and the metrical gap is filled in with her effort to remember. The dialogue here would be spoiled if Viola, on the stage, spoke immediately after the Captain's reply. Hanmer, Capell *et al.* had no idea of the damage they were doing to the text when they tried by re-lineation to convert the short line into a part of a longer one. In *Hamlet* IV. vii. 90, Laertes asks "...A Norman was't?", and the King answers "A Norman."; whereupon Laertes: "Upon my life, Lamord.", and the King: "The very same."—a bit of verse-dialogue that leaves the line "A Norman" short by seven syllables. In other words, an interval passes before Laertes says "Upon... Lamord"—an interval of effort on his part to remember what Norman could it have been. The point was missed by Theobald, Warburton, and Johnson who sought to force the three speeches following Laertes's query into a pentameter framework by omitting "very".

A short verse would be an appropriate vehicle for a speech that by its very nature is bound to be punctuated with breaks and pauses: *e.g.*, a faltering or embarrassed speech, the speech of a character fumbling for words or trying to collect himself or his thoughts, and the like. Hesitation, too, on the part of a character or characters may well be suggested by a short line preceded or followed by a pause. Thus, at the beginning of *The Merchant of Venice* II. iv. Gratiano, Salarino, and Salanio appear to be not very enthusiastic about the masquerade proposed by Lorenzo: "(Lor.) Nay, we will slink away in supper-time, / Disguise us at my lodging, and return / All in an hour.<sup>53</sup> / (Gra.) We have not made good preparation. /". Both the third and the fourth line are short, the latter by just one syllable (the fifth line is a complete verse). Between the two, therefore, is a considerable pause, marking vacillation on the part of Lorenzo's

listeners. Dover Wilson misreads the short line, "All...hour", when he treats it, once again, as a sign of a 'cut'<sup>54</sup>, and the editor of the NA *Merchant of Venice* labours round the point only to miss it when he says: 'If the line is an imperfection, it could equally well be a sign of foul-paper copy... but Shakespeare may have adopted an indirect exposition to stimulate interest or give the illusion of casual conversation.'<sup>55</sup> A short line spoken by Rosalind in *As You Like It* I. iii. 109, "Why, whither shall we go?" (which is preceded by a full line spoken by Celia: "Say what thou can'st, I'll go along with thee."), shows how she takes time to look up from the grief and confusion that overtake her on being suddenly banished by her uncle. The point is missed alike by Steevens who would set the verse right by omitting the last five words from Celia's reply that follows ("To seek my uncle in the forest of Arden."), and by Dover Wilson who thinks that the fact that the verse comes out right if these words are dropped points to 'adaptation'<sup>56</sup>. The shortness of the first line of Jaques's speech in *As You Like It* II. vii. 70-87 ("Why, who cries out on pride, / That can therein tax any private party?..."), is a good measure of the embarrassment caused to him by the Duke Senior's home-thrust (which ends in a full line) in 64-69. As the debunker himself stands debunked, he can start his reply only after a squirming pause and the reply turns out to be no real answer to the Duke's point. No wonder Jaques finds the Duke "too disputable for his company". It shows poor appreciation of the subtleties of Shakespeare's workmanship to read into the short line, as Dover Wilson does<sup>57</sup>, evidence of a 'cut', or to regard it as an imperfection and try to fill it out to metrical correctitude as Keightley, for instance, did by reading 'pride of bravery' for "pride" or Walker, by ending the first line at "therein"<sup>58</sup>. The King's masterful handling of the irate Laertes in *Hamlet*, IV. v, proves itself in, among other things, the way the latter falters after the short lines "Speak, man."<sup>59</sup>, "Let him demand his fill.", and "Winner or loser?", and before the short line "My will, not all the world:" (a line that betrays itself by its shortness, its 'bravery' notwithstanding). The stuff of which Roderigo is made is well exposed by, among other things, a few revealing short lines in *Othello* I. i, which show him faltering at Brabantio's challenges: "(Bra.) Not I, what are you? / (Rod.) My name is Roderigo. (Bra.) The worsen welcome." (the first line is short); "(Bra.) Upon malicious knavery dost thou come / To start my quiet. / (Rod.) Sir, sir, sir! (Bra.) But thou must needs be sure" (the second line is short; the third, a little short, just by a syllable; which shows that Roderigo's "Sir, sir, sir!" is not only preceded by a faltering pause but is itself falteringly spoken; Steevens did not know how he was spoiling the text when he sought to add a fourth 'sir' to Roderigo's stutter). About to tell a lie, in the same play, in answer to

Desdemona's enquiry in III. iv. 24, "Where should I lose that handkerchief, Emilia?", Emilia fumbles before and as she speaks: "I know not, madam."—a significant short line (followed by a full one, spoken by Desdemona). Kent's wrath in *King Lear*, II. ii, is well measured by a couple of short lines. As he ends his furious speech in ll. 77-89 with a full line, "I'd drive ye cackling home to Camelot.", Cornwall asks: "What! art thou mad, old fellow?"; then Gloucester: "How fell you out? say that."; and Kent answers "No contraries hold more antipathy....". It is not metrically possible to run the lines spoken by Cornwall and Gloucester into each other; both stand short, each with a pause after it; which shows that Kent is so overcome with anger that he takes a little time to collect himself before he can speak again. Moments pass as he stands fuming with rage and Cornwall and Gloucester wait for his answer. Steevens's re-lineation, dividing Gloucester's question at "out?", saves metre at the expense of drama. Fortunately it has not found more than a few followers.

A panting or gasping pause may well occasion a short line, as it does, for instance, in *Hamlet* II. i. 76, where Polonius asks "With what, in the name of God?"<sup>60</sup>: a short line preceded and followed by full ones, both spoken by Ophelia. She has run in in fright and is panting, and pauses for breath before she can answer her father's question. (More examples will be found in Section II of this paper.) The speech of a dying or wounded person, with its breaks and pauses, would naturally call for a short line. Hence the short lines spoken in *Othello*, V. i, by the wounded Cassio and Roderigo ("O, help, ho! light! a surgeon!", "O wretched villain!", "O! help me here."<sup>61</sup>). Hence, again, the short lines spoken by the dying Desdemona: "A guiltless death I die." and "Nobody; I myself; farewell:". Between the two short lines is a third one, spoken by Emilia: "O! who hath done this deed?"—short partly because of a shocked pause on the part of Emilia and partly because of the exclamation "O!". Capell (followed by several editors) thought he was improving the text when he divided Emilia's speech at "done" to restore the metre!

A short line preceded or followed by a pause may indicate waiting or watching on the part of a character—quite a common use of a short line. Thus, in *Hamlet* II. i, Reynaldo, knowing full well that his master is by no means a man of a few words, does not go as soon as Polonius says "...fare you well." (l. 69), but waits: hence the shortness of l. 70, "Good my lord!". (The point was missed by editors like Rowe and Capell who substituted a dash for the full-stop after "lord" in both Q2 and F1, as if Reynaldo were going to say something more but were interrupted by Polonius!). L. 72, "I shall, my lord.", is short for the same reason. Again, in V. i, Laertes twice asks "What ceremony else?" (a short line),



and waits for an answer; it is some time before the glum priest deigns to reply. (Capell made short work of the two short lines by splitting a full line, spoken by Hamlet, which comes in between: "That is Laertes, a very noble youth: mark." This, a single line in both Q2 and F1, was divided by Capell at "Laertes", and he has found numerous followers down to Dover Wilson!). Iago speaks a short line as he watches people coming in *Othello* I. ii. 33: "By Janus, I think no." In the Temptation Scene he shows his cunning in, among other things, the way he waits for the storm to abate, so to speak, after Othello's 'Farewell' speech ("Farewell the tranquil mind; farewell content!..."). The speech ends in a full line, and, after a pause, Iago asks "Is't possible, my lord?"—a short line that leaves room, on the one hand, for a supreme gesture of despair on Othello's part and, on the other, for waiting on Iago's. He waits again, in a similar manner, before the short line, "My noble lord,—" (l. 368), which is preceded and followed by stormy passages spoken by Othello, the one ending and the other beginning with a full line.

Thanks to the pause or pauses it involves, a short line might well be used to create suspense, and would come in handy where one character intends to keep another on tenterhooks: witness the way the King plays with Laertes in *Hamlet* IV. vii, and Iago with Othello in the Temptation Scene through short lines with tantalizing pauses. In l. 95 the King intrigues Laertes with the statement: "He made confession of you,"—a short line that cannot go either with the preceding or with the following line. The pause—a masterly one—is, of course, after the line; while Laertes is dying to know what kind of a confession—pro or con—of his merits or of his youthful escapades in Paris?—, the King keeps mum! "These stops of thine", says Othello to Iago in the Temptation Scene (l. 120), "fright me the more." Here are some of those calculated stops that keep Othello on the rack:—"(*Oth.*)...If thou dost love me,/Show me thy thought. / (*Iago*) My lord, you know I love you. (*Oth.*) I think thou dost;" (ll. 115-17: pause of six syllables after 116); "(*Iago*) But some uncleanly apprehensions / Keep leets and law days, and in session sit / With meditations lawful? /" (ll. 139-41: pause of three syllables after 141); "(*Oth.*) Dost thou say so? / (*Iago*) She did deceive her father, marrying you;" (ll. 205-6: pause of six syllables after 205); "(*Iago*) I am to pray you not to strain my speech / To grosser issues nor to larger reach / Than to suspicion. (*Oth.*) I will not. / (*Iago*) Should you do so, my lord," (ll. 218-21: pause of six syllables before 221<sup>62</sup>); "(*Oth.*) Give me a living reason she's disloyal. / (*Iago*) I do not like the office; / But..." (ll. 410-12: pause of two syllables before 411 and of one syllable after it). A similar adroit pause, extremely tantalizing for Othello, occurs in IV. i. 33: "(*Iago*) Faith, that he did—I know not what he did. / (*Oth.*) What?

what? / ". Each "what?" in Othello's frenzied interrogation is, of course, equivalent to more than one syllable; all the same, the line leaves a gap after it: it is some time before Iago starts speaking. These short lines alone, in the scenes referred to, are a tribute to the 'craftsmanship' of Claudius and Iago. Iago alone knows how to use a short line as an instrument of torture.

The pause involved in a short line may be used sometimes to indicate a transition—from one topic or tone or mood to another. It may well give us the sense of a person preparing to speak at length or to do something: bracing himself or herself for an effort, so to speak. Thus, Hamlet, in his two speeches on "this heavy-headed revel" in I. iv. passes from a sarcastic to a serious tone *via* a short line: "Ay, marry, is't:". In *Othello* I. i. 75-77, Iago asks Roderigo to rouse Brabantio "...with like timorous accent and dire yell / As when, by night and negligence, the fire / Is spied in populous cities. /", and Roderigo proceeds to 'yell' accordingly: "What, ho! Brabantio! Signior Brabantio, ho!". There is a pause after "cities" to allow for Roderigo bracing himself for the shouting. Bracing of another kind occurs in I. iii, where Othello, starting in a quiet key his famous speech on how he "did thrive in this fair lady's love", pauses at the end of the fourth line, a short one: "That I have pass'd.", just before he rises to the splendours of the oration that follows. In the last scene of the play Cassio, speaking of the contents of "Roderigo's letter", ends his speech with a short line: "Iago set him on." Then Lodovico to Othello: "You must forsake this room and go with us; / Your power and your command is taken off. . .". There is a clear change of topic, and the pause after the short line ending Cassio's speech facilitates the transition.

A short line involving a medial pause may at times make for an emphasis on the part following the pause that could not possibly have been achieved by any other means. Thus, in the fifth scene of *Twelfth-Night*, to the question Olivia asks Viola "...How does he love me?", the Folio text supplies this answer: "With adorations, fertill teares, / With groanes that thunder love, with sighes of fire." The first line is short by two syllables. Place the metrical gap between "adorations" and "fertill", and the resultant pause allows for a fine emphasis on "fertill teares", which would not have been possible if the line had been a full one: witness the second line, where no such emphasis falls on the second part of the statement in the absence of a preceding metrical gap. All attempts to fill out the short line<sup>63</sup> (e.g., 'faithful adoration's fertile tears') must therefore be condemned outright. Fortunately such monstrous readings have not found much of a following. Unfortunately, however, Pope's version of the line is widely followed: he thrust an unwelcome 'with' on the line (before "fertile") on the analogy of the line following! The assumption that "adorations" is to be pronounced as five syllables and "tears" as two, is gratuitous.

A rather fine aspect of Shakespeare's short lines is their impact on significant words containing long vowels. The metrical voids in such lines provide room for drawing out the long vowels as much as possible; while the consequent resonance helps to fill in the voids, the words concerned are definitely intensified. To enhance the value of a word is no mean achievement for a short line. Thus, in *Othello* II. i. 103, to Desdemona's plea for Emilia: "...Alas! she has no speech.", Iago retorts with a short line: "In faith, too much;". The three-foot gap after the short line provides room not only for appropriate gestures and looks on the part of husband and wife but also for drawing out the long vowel in "too"—a word which Iago, of course, means to emphasize as much as he can. A fine example occurs in *Twelfth-Night* IV. iii, where Olivia enters with a priest and says to Sebastian: "Blame not this haste of mine. . . . / Plight me the full assurance of your faith; / That my most jealous and too doubtful soul / May live at peace. He shall conceal it /". The last line, being short by one syllable, allows for drawing out the long vowel in "peace". How Olivia must dwell on the word, linger on it, prolong it, till it becomes the equivalent of two syllables! This is a particularly rich use of a short line that brings out the soul of pathos behind all finer laughter. Comic as has been Olivia's fate, there is a pathos about it too. How she must have been tormented with her fruitless yearning after Cesario: what a pain it must have been to her as if she had been tied to a stake and "baited. . . with all the unmuzzled thoughts That tyrannous heart can think"! How, then, she must have been hungering for this peace, this rest, that she speaks of here! One can well imagine the expression in her face and eyes as she lingers on the word. To a talented actress the gap in the short line offers an opening, indeed, to show her powers in the way she fills it in on the stage. Hanmer's attempt to close the gap by interposing 'henceforth' between "May" and "live" was almost an act of unconscious vandalism. Walker thought that something 'perhaps' had dropped out of the line<sup>64</sup>, while Keightley, who added 'still' to it, described it as 'imperfect'. Imperfect, indeed! Further examples of a short line enriching a long-vowelled word will be found in Section II of this paper.

If a short line could be made to operate as a vehicle of what might be called poetic truth, that would be a remarkable use of it indeed. That is how Shakespeare does use it several times in his plays. In each such case the content of the line becomes a matter of immediate experience through its very shortness, the pause involved serving to give us the very sense of the thing, so to speak. Thus, in *Hamlet* II. i, Ophelia, describing Hamlet's strange visit to her in her closet: "He falls to such persual of my face / As he would draw it. Long stay'd he so; /". The second line,

short by a syllable, has a pause after it that gives one the sense of time passing while somebody stays long. In *King Lear* I. i, the speech in which Cordelia bids her sisters farewell, asking them to "use well our father", ends in a short line: "So farewell to you both." The stony silence with which her speech is greeted is immediately realized in the silence after the short line.<sup>65</sup> Again, in *Coriolanus* V. i. 71-74, Cominius: "So that all hope is vain, / Unless his noble mother and his wife, / Who, as I hear, mean to solicit him / For mercy to his country. . . ."<sup>66</sup> The blank after the first line (a short one) seems to reflect a corresponding blankness of despair. This aspect of Shakespeare's short lines is further considered and illustrated in the next paragraph and in Section II of this paper.

A particularly striking use of short lines is where Shakespeare builds up an entire atmosphere with their aid. It has not been generally noticed that much of the fineness of his handling of the supernatural in the opening scene of *Hamlet* is due to these short lines. The opening dialogue of the two sentinels, let it be noted, is not prose, but verse—metrical verse at that. Shakespeare is going to build up a scene of high tension. Prose cannot serve his purpose here, for it has no 'solicitude' about it and so is a more relaxed medium than metrical verse, which wears a kind of 'anxiety' about it—a reflection of the writer's solicitude for keeping up a pattern—and so automatically makes for tension. *Hamlet*, it is worth observing, opens with a silence (and would have ended with another—"The rest is silence"—if only the Elizabethan stage had made it possible for a tragedy to end on the catastrophe). For both Q2 and F1 start with a short verse-line: "Who's there?"—only two syllables of speech preceded by eight syllables (so to speak) of eerie silence. In the darkness the two sentinels 'explore' each other—man or shade? With just a short line—in other words, by the very structure of his verse—it was possible for Shakespeare to conjure up a sense of darkness in an unroofed theatre on a summer afternoon. The line following is a full line followed by three part-lines (in both Q2 and F1):

Bar. Long live the King.  
 Fran. Barnardo?  
 Bar. He.

Even if we take the three lines together to form a single verse-line, it remains short of the norm by two syllables (Francisco's speech, following "He", is a full line). The gap here cannot be before "Long . . . King": Bernardo's response must be immediate since he has been challenged. Nor is there any reason why his reply, "He", should be delayed. The pause is therefore after "King"—two syllables of effort on Francisco's part to identify the man by his voice; he cannot identify him by sight

in the darkness. The next short line, "And I am sick at heart", common to both Q2 and F1, is followed by an uneasy hush—"sick at heart" indeed! The lines that follow are arranged in Q2 thus: "*Bar.* Have you had quiet guard? / *Fran.* Not a mouse stirring. / *Bar.* Well, good night: / If you doe meete Horatio and Marcellus, / The rivalls of my watch, bid them make hast." Bernardo's query and Francisco's reply, which follows immediately, go together to form one complete blank-verse line. "Well, good night" is left short, but not in F1 which turns the three lines of Bernardo's speech into prose. We must here prefer the Q2 to the F1 arrangement (on this question of preference between the lineations of the early texts, in relation to short lines, I have something more to say in Section III of this paper). The prose here does not fit in for reasons already explained. We do need that short line "Well, good night". The pause here precedes the line. Once more, an eerie silence. The hush that falls after "sick at heart" is broken only to fall again. The silence referred to in "Not a mouse stirring" becomes a live reality, succeeding the statement for direct and immediate realization. Another fine short line, common to both Q2 and F1, is Francisco's "Give you good night" preceded by Horatio's and Marcellus's responses to the sentry's challenge (which together form a complete verse) and followed by Marcellus's "O farewell honest soldier, who hath reliev'd you?" (which is a full line). The gap, of three feet, is here after the line, and it would be bad acting on the part of the player playing Marcellus if he spoke immediately. An interval passes; Marcellus is understandably pre-occupied, and he seems to wake up with a start as he says "O farewell...". All this fine effect has been spoiled by editors from Capell down to Dover Wilson who have re-lineated the speeches here to get rid of short lines, thus killing the drama to save the metre. Three successive short lines, also spoiled by this re-lineation, follow presently in both Q2 and F1: "*Mar.* Holla *Barnardo.* / *Bar.* Say, what is Horatio there? / *Hor.* A peece of him. /". Metrically it is difficult to take the last two lines together. As it is, each of the three lines stands by itself—a significantly short verse-line. In the darkness Bernardo has not seen Marcellus and Horatio coming. Room is left after the first short line for Bernardo to turn round at the call and for Marcellus and Horatio to approach nearer. In the gap between the second and the third Horatio, coming nearer, extends a hand ("a piece of him", indeed, in another sense) towards Bernardo. The handshake follows "him". Accept the original lineation and each line thus becomes a live one, made up of speech and action. Try to have the lines re-done after later editors into complete verses, and they become dead. Similar live lines are Bernardo's "I have seen nothing" and "Last night of all", both short in Q2 and F1, preceded and followed by full lines. "I... nothing", followed as it is by Marcellus's "Horatio says 'tis but our fantasy",

is short to a good purpose; in the pause after it one almost senses an expression of scepticism growing on Horatio's face. "Last...all" consists of two feet of speech and three of necessary action. The pause here is partly before and partly after the line. The cue to its shortness is partly provided by the context and partly by what follows. Horatio says "Well, sit we down", and in the gap before the line they sit down and Bernardo strives to rise to the solemnity of the occasion as he starts his narrative. The gap after the line well permits us to visualize the speaker raising a finger towards "yond same star that's westward from the pole", and thus lends life and meaning to the word "yond".

When the ghost appears, F1 has three consecutive broken lines preceded and followed by full lines: "*Barn.* The Bell then beating one. / *Mar.* Peace, breake thee of: / *Looke* where it comes againe. /". The last two lines form a single verse-line in Q2. In breaking up the Q2 line F1 is dramatically right. This is just the moment for broken speeches. The first line breaks off as the ghost glides in and Marcellus interrupts with his "Peace". A slight pause after "Peace", and you can almost see the speaker lift a finger towards his lips. Yet another pause after "of" provides room for the speaker to point fearfully towards the apparition, and thus dramatizes the succeeding word "Looke". After the third short line, tense silence as all three of them gaze awe-struck at the apparition<sup>67</sup>. The ghost vanishes, in both Q2 and F1, amidst short lines preceded and followed by full ones: "*Hor.* Stay: speake; speake: I Charge thee, speake. / *Mar.* 'Tis gone, and will not answer. / *Bar.* How now Horatio? You tremble and look pale:". There are plenty of factors available to fill out the first short line—the emphasis with which the imperatives are spoken (this is well seen in the F1 text, which has been quoted, in "charge" being printed with a capital); accompanying gestures; the three of them gazing at the vanishing apparition after the line. The cue to the shortness of the second line is well supplied by the full line that follows. In the gap after "answer" Bernardo turns towards Horatio and finds him—even the sceptic Horatio—"trembling" and 'looking pale', 'harrowed with fear and wonder'. The effect of the visitation, thus well conveyed by a short line, comes out again in another. Bernardo asks Horatio: "What think you on't?", a line which is short in both Q2 and F1, preceded and followed by full lines. Shakespeare seemed to have tried to make it as short as he could: witness the abbreviation "on't" (common to both Q2 and F1). Six syllables of silence after the line before Horatio answers; the experience has proved too overwhelming for the erstwhile sceptic to make an immediate reply. The next short line (Horatio: "As thou art to thyself") ends in F1 with a comma and in Q2 with a full-stop. The Quarto punctuation is more appropriate, for there is a distinct pause

after the line, filled in with the speaker's effort to recall the past. As the line breaks off, one almost envisages Horatio screwing up his brows in an effort to remember: "Such was the very Armor....". The whole episode is wound up in both Q2 and F1 with a short line (just as it starts with one in either). Horatio says: "'Tis strange.": two syllables of speech followed by eight syllables of silence. What better expression of wonder could there be than silence?

Shakespeare's use of short lines can be so subtle at times that even shades of character are brought out with their aid. An example occurs in *Hamlet*. As Shakespeare's power over character grows, he would not leave even his minor characters unindividualized. Even when they are members of a class or type, of a piece with each other, and could very well have been left at that, he would not leave them undifferentiated. Witness his treatment of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Few would have complained if he had left them undistinguished, alike each other. But Shakespeare individualizes them, introducing subtle nuances of distinction between the characters and making us feel that, between the two, Guildenstern is a knave of a deeper dye. This he does, not merely by means of their speeches and behaviour, but by what is more remarkable, a deft use of short verse-lines. Thus in the scene where they make their début, Guildenstern's first speech ends in both Q2 and F1 with a short line, but not Rosencrantz's. I quote the Q2 text:

*Ros.* .....  
           Then to entreatie.  
*Guyld.* But we both obey.  
           And heere give up our selves in the full bent,  
           To lay our service freely at your feete  
           To be commaunded.  
*King.* Thanks *Rosencraus*, and gentle *Guyldensterne*.

In the gap after the last line of Guildenstern's speech Shakespeare has of course left room for a profound obeisance on the part of the speaker, almost enacting what he has just spoken ("in the full bent", "to lay...at your feete"). Not merely his speeches but his manners too are definitely more unctuous than those of Rosencrantz. No wonder the King is so impressed as to place the epithet "gentle" invidiously before "Guyldensterne," though he could very well have placed it before "Rosencraus" so as to make it appear to apply to both. Accordingly we must here prefer the Quarto to the Folio reading, which omits the "But" at the beginning of Guildenstern's speech. There must be no gap between the speeches of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

In III. i, there are two short lines in Rosencrantz's speeches in both

Q2 and F1. In the pause after the second of these ("Most free in his reply.") the King and the Queen ponder over the matter, the latter taking time to frame her question: "Did you assay him to any pastime?" (it will be bad acting accordingly if the question is put immediately on the stage, and bad editing if it is so re-lineated, as it has been by many later editors including Dover Wilson, as to make "Did you assay him" go with "Most free in his reply"). The first of the two short lines is a much subtler affair; the subtlety, however, concerns not Rosencrantz but Guildenstern. The text here, in both Q2 and F1, goes as follows: "*Ros.* Most like a gentleman./ *Gyl.* But with much forcing of his disposition." There cannot be a pause before "Most". Trying to put the best colour he can on his old friend's behaviour, Rosencrantz immediately answers the Queen's question ("Did he receive you well?"—which, incidentally, goes with the last line of the preceding speech, to form a complete verse). The gap is after "gentleman", and it enables the next speaker to space his words. Guildenstern chips in with his "But" at once. Then there is a subtle pause filled in with an expressive gesture. Thus, without appearing to contradict Rosencrantz outright, the sly Guildenstern scores his point. These short lines would do for an answer to the question posed in *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*<sup>68</sup> whether the two characters of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern could with advantage be compressed into one.

In some of the instances quoted above the metrical hiatus in a short line is found to provide room for more than one thing. In fact quite a number of Shakespeare's short lines are ambivalent, significant of two things at a time. Here is a specimen: "...and, like the famous ape, / To try conclusions, in the basket creep, / And break your own neck down."/ So Hamlet mocks the Queen in III. iv. 194-6. The third line is short (the line that follows, spoken by the Queen, is a full one), with a pause after it expressive, on the one hand, of contempt on Hamlet's part and, on the other, of anguish on the Queen's. Not a few of Shakespeare's short lines are rich enough to be multivalent, significant of more than two things at a time—fine specimens of 'plurisignation'. Such, for instance, is the short line, "Chaos is come again.", in *Othello* III. iii. The shortness of the line provides room, on the one hand, for an anguished pause on Othello's part and, on the other, for movement on Iago's—he comes closer to Othello, as the latter stands gazing at the receding figure of Desdemona, to speak as he does in the next line: "My noble lord,—". At the same time it makes for poetic truth, the chaos it speaks of being realized immediately in the line itself in the way chaos comes over the verse, disrupting its normal structure. All these beauties of a short line are lost in the NS *Othello* through a misconceived lineation that eliminates the gap after "again".<sup>69</sup>



A short line that embodies a single thought or emotion (most short lines do) has the inevitable effect of isolating that thought or emotion and so throwing it into relief. Many of the instances cited above also illustrate this function of a short line. Here is an additional specimen taken at random: *Coriolanus* I. ix. 14-15: "My mother, who has a charter to extol her blood, / When she does praise me, grieves me. /". This is the Folio lineation, which leaves the second line short. The idea of praise grieving Coriolanus even when it comes from his mother is thus made to stand out by itself—a conspicuity it deserves. Editors generally 'rectify' the short line by bringing up "I have done" from the next line and re-lineating the rest of the speech accordingly. In this 'rectified' version the idea loses the individuation that the Folio short line gives it. Making a thought or emotion shine in isolation was a use to which short lines were put in the verse of irregular line-lengths in which the Greeks used to write the choric odes and other lyrical and semi-lyrical passages in their plays. Milton made fine and repeated use of this feature of the Greek practice when imitating it in *Samson Agonistes*. Though Shakespeare was not writing plays in the Greek manner, he demonstrated this capacity of the short line over and over again. The practice of isolating and relieving a single thought or emotion by means of a short line did not become general in European poetry till *vers libre* came into vogue in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Shakespeare anticipated this feature of modern verse by nearly three hundred years.

The dramatic pause involved in a short line is, of course, not to be confused with the prosodic (caesura). Nor should short lines be confused with what are called 'speech-endings'—that is to say, part-lines ending a speech and beginning another: e.g., *Antony and Cleopatra*, V. ii. 344-6: "...tremblingly she stood, / And on the sudden dropp'd. (Caes.) O noble weakness! / If they had swallow'd poison...". Here "And...dropp'd." and "O noble weakness!" are not two short lines but two parts of a single blank-verse line. These 'speech-endings', which are of increasing frequency in the later plays of Shakespeare, constitute another valuable hint for actors conveyed through the structure of the verse. Since a single verse-line is split between speakers in 'speech-endings', it follows that the second part must be spoken immediately after the first; an actor doing otherwise will be missing Shakespeare's intention. Where immediacy of speech is the aim, Shakespeare has recourse to 'speech-endings'. For a quick, unhesitating answer, a flashing rejoinder, a sharp riposte, a rapid or excited dialogue, an exchange of repartees, a heated argument, 'speech-endings' are an appropriate vehicle, and they are put to all these and similar uses in the plays of Shakespeare. At times they perform even subtler functions. Here is an instance in passing from *The Merchant of Venice* where

'speech-endings' help in the revelation of character. In the opening scene Salarino<sup>70</sup> shows himself much more imaginative than Salanio<sup>71</sup> in the manner they attempt to explain Antonio's melancholy. He leads the way with a fine speech: "Your mind is tossing on the ocean....". Salanio follows up with a more matter-of-fact one: "Believe me, sir, had I such venture forth...." (no part-line between the two speeches). Salarino at once takes up the point made by Salanio and develops it, much more imaginatively, into another fine speech: "My wind, cooling my broth...." —a speech that not only bears further testimony to the power of his imagination but also demonstrates its quickness, for it begins with a part-line, "My...broth", as soon as Salanio ends his speech with another: "Would make me sad."

## II

The multifarious rôle of short lines in Shakespeare's workmanship, and the subtleties and depths they are capable of in his hands, come out best on a scrutiny of all the short lines in one of his maturer plays. Such a scrutiny also reveals the extent and enormity of editorial misunderstanding of these short lines. Here I choose *Macbeth* for the purpose. From the study that follows I leave out some half a dozen short lines of the play which have already been dealt with by Flatter (*op. cit.*) and on which I have nothing to add to his comments. I also leave out those short lines (of which, of course, there are quite a number in the play) which are short just to provide room for the exit of a character or characters.<sup>72</sup>

I choose *Macbeth* for the special reason that the F1 text of the play, the earliest available, is particularly rich in short lines. *Macbeth* happens to be the most concentrated tragedy Shakespeare ever wrote, and the numerous short lines with their vibrant pauses and taut silences contribute materially to the intensity of the tragedy. The common editorial attitude to this feature of the text of the play is, however, more or less deprecatory, directly or by implication, as if it was a misfeature which called for special explanation. 'The text', says Kenneth Muir, 'is disfigured by mislineation.'<sup>73</sup> And the explanation for this supposed misfeature generally tends to be either that the abundance of incomplete verses is a by-product of hurried composition (some editors even love to conjure up an image of Shakespeare racing against time to produce a play for a special court performance in connexion with the coming visit—July-August, 1606—of King Christian IV of Denmark, brother-in-law of King James<sup>74</sup>), or that the truncated lines are relics of cutting. Thus Greg of *Macbeth*: '...it is almost certain that the text as we have it has undergone at least some cutting. It has,

for instance, many short lines; and while some of these may be, and probably are, original, others, either by their own awkwardness or by concomitant obscurity, suggest interference with the text, as for example at I. ii. 20, 51, III. ii. 32, iv. 4, IV. iii. 28, 44'.<sup>75</sup> So, too, said Chambers earlier: '...a few [short lines] (i. 2.20, 51; ii. 3.109; iii. 2.32, 51; iii. 4.4; iv. 3.28, 44) are abrupt or accompanied by obscurities, and may indicate cuts. Any substantial cutting may have involved partial transcription, and this may, as Wilson thinks, explain the mislineated passages, which are rather numerous in i-iii, although rare thereafter.'<sup>76</sup>

Let us see.

**Act I, Scene ii.**—A number of editors have condemned this scene as spurious. A part of the evidence they cite to show that it is beneath Shakespeare is the fact that it happens to contain quite a few imperfect verse-lines, short of the norm—so many tell-tale signs, so to speak, of crude workmanship. I, for one, should think that if any proof were needed of the scene's genuineness, it might well be just these short lines. They are so good that they could have come only from Shakespeare's hand. It does them palpable wrong to regard them either as products of inferior workmanship or as merely fortuitous, due to the error or caprice of some transcriber or compositor or to cutting.<sup>77</sup>

Of the short lines in the scene, ll. 3 and 5, the shortness of which has drawn emendations from Hammer and Walker, have already been ably defended in their histrionic aspects by Flatter.<sup>78</sup> I shall concern myself here with ll. 7, 19, 20, 34, 35, 38, 42, 43, 46, 47, 49, 51, 60, 61, and 68. It must not be forgotten that the Captain, badly wounded, has dragged himself all the way from the battlefield to Fores to report "of the revolt The newest state". He can only speak gaspingly as he delivers his message, and his speeches are bound to be broken by frequent pauses for breath. Appropriately, therefore, the Folio makes him start with a short line:

*Mal.* .....

As thou didst leave it.

*Cap.* Doubtfull it stood,

The verse would be short by one syllable even if the two lines were taken together. A gasping pause intervenes between the two speeches—a point missed by Pope and Steevens when they sought to fill out the verse, the former by reading 'Doubtful long' and the latter by reading 'Doubtfully'. Even in the full lines that follow the syntax leaves the impression of a broken kind of syntax, broken in upon by frequent parentheses. Hence the value of the three pairs of brackets used in the Folio text here: they underline the parenthetic effect. Editors down to Dover Wilson and Kenneth Muir omit, as a rule, the third pair even if they retain the first

two. Wilson spoils the text further by not merely omitting the third pair of brackets but reading 'carvéd' for "carv'd" in the line: "(Like Valours Minion) carv'd out his passage,". That is how the line runs in F1; the missing syllable after "carv'd" marks a gasping pause. To do away with the parenthesis and to supply the missing syllable to facilitate the iambic scansion of the line would kill all its vivid drama. It is a strange choice—to prefer missing a gasping pause to missing an unaccented syllable.

The next line—"Till he fac'd the slave" (just five syllables)—is apparently so irregular that it has induced most editors to suspect a mutilation. 'Half a line, and probably more,' says Kenneth Muir, 'seems to be missing here, perhaps deliberately cut.'<sup>79</sup> Chambers, in the Warwick edition of the play, thinks that the line points to mutilation, and both he and Greg instance it as one of those short lines in *Macbeth* that 'may indicate cuts'<sup>80</sup> or 'suggest interference with the text'<sup>81</sup>. I should rather think that Shakespeare wrote the line just in that shape, with a long pause after it. Sheer poetic truth demands this pause. It is not merely that the speaker is panting for breath. What is more is that a crucial moment in the history of the battle is being described (or rather, presented on the stage). The rebel chieftain and the leader of the royal army are come face to face. It is a moment of great suspense, and the verse-line goes into corresponding suspension. And thus the past becomes the present and we feel the suspense of the moment in the text itself. Where a narrative of past events has to be fitted into a play, the essential problem for the playwright is how to transform a historic past into a dramatic present. For Shakespeare simply a short line solves the problem magnificently. What more or what less could poetic truth demand than this—that what is spoken of in the text should be immediately experienced in the text itself: not a matter of remote reference or second-hand information but one of direct and immediate apprehension? To seek to wipe out this short line in the way suggested by H. N. Paul,<sup>82</sup> by substituting 'Like Valour's minion' for 'Disdaining Fortune' two lines above, and reading 'Carv'd out. . . , the slave' as one line, would amount almost to an act of sacrilege.

A similar short line that means itself occurs in 42-43: "I cannot tell: but I am faint, / My Gashes cry for helpe. /". So the lines run in F1, both short: the first by two syllables, the second by four. In the first Shakespeare seems to have left room for two pauses: a pause of exhaustion after "tell", and a fainting pause after "faint". The bleeding sergeant says "I am faint", and the line faints correspondingly. The second line consists of six syllables of speech and four of action; in the void after the line we can well visualize the people present on the stage rushing in to help as the bleeding sergeant staggers to a fall. These fine points about

the original lineation were missed by Nicholas Rowe who re-lineated the two lines so as to get rid of at least one short line ('I...tell—/ But...help.'). Most unfortunately, he has been followed for two centuries and a half by numbers of succeeding editors down to Wilson and Muir<sup>83</sup>. Evidently they have all thought that one short line is a lesser evil than two!

The lines following the entry of Rosse and Angus offer another instance of a statement coming to be a live reality through the very structure of the verse—spoiled, once more, by editorial interference. The Folio text runs thus:

[*King*] Who comes here?

*Mal.* The worthy *Thane* of Rosse.

*Lenox.* What a haste looks through his eyes?

So should he looke, that seemes to speake things strange.

*Rosse.* God save the King.

*King.* Whence cam'st thou, worthy *Thane*?

*Rosse.* From Fiffe, great King,

Where the Norweyan Banners flowt the Skie,  
And fanne our people cold.

*Norway* himselfe, with terrible numbers,  
Assisted by that most disloyall Traytor,

There are four short lines in this extract: "The worthy...Rosse" (short by one syllable even if it is read with the previous line), "What a haste...eyes?", "From Fiffe...King", and "And fanne...cold". A pause precedes the first of these short lines, and for a good reason: Malcolm scans the approaching figure, makes sure of his identity, and then answers "The worthy...Rosse" (compare the third line of the scene). The shortness of the line is thus a hint for the actor, playing Malcolm, that he must not be guilty of bad acting by answering the King's question immediately. For a similar reason an interval must pass before Lenox exclaims "What a haste...eyes?": the figure must come closer and be more clearly visible and Lenox should be scanning him all the while, and so his exclamation starts with a pause of three syllables. Once more it will be bad acting if Lenox speaks immediately after Malcolm. Then the "haste", to which Lenox refers, begins to speak through the structure of the verse as Rosse answers the King's question with a short line (of just four syllables) broken by three panting pauses: one before the line, one in the middle, and one at the end (each pause the equivalent of, say, two syllables). As Rosse delivers himself of the full line and a half that follows, that evidently costs him some effort, and he once more pauses for breath after "cold". One who speaks in that manner must indeed have come in great "haste".

Hanmer's attempt to reduce the number of short lines in this extract

made havoc of all these finenesses of the Folio text. Lenox's speech was thus re-lined by Hanmer: 'What...look / That...strange.' This had the necessary effect of tacking on 'From Fife...King' to 'Whence cam'st...Thane' and so making it a part of a full line, but at what cost! Much to Shakespeare's misfortune, this outrage on the text has been perpetuated by most succeeding editors down to Wilson and Muir. Muir remarks: 'Hanmer's arrangement of these lines is probably correct'.<sup>84</sup> Very correct, indeed! A number of editors, including Muir, have gone a step further by making 'And fan...cold' and 'Norway himself' form a single line, leaving 'With...numbers' a short line. This re-arrangement may offer a slight metrical advantage, but if we must have a short line hereabouts, involving a pause, it should be "And fan...cold" rather than "With...numbers".

Two other instances where a panting pause in the Folio text has been cut out by blind editorial interference, may be noted. Fl reads:

*Cap.* .....  
           Began a fresh assault.  
*King.* Dismay'd not this our Captaines, *Macbeth* and *Banquo*?  
*Cap.* Yes, as Sparrowes, Eagles;  
           Or the Hare, the Lyon:

Duncan's speech, printed as prose in Ff, is turned by Pope into verse thus: 'Dismay'd not this / Our...Banquo?'. This is quite acceptable. There is no particular occasion for prose at this point, and the speech turns so easily into blank verse, with no other change than the split into a couple of lines, that verse seems to have been intended. Not so acceptable, however, is Pope's re-lineation of the lines following as 'Yes;/ As sparrows... lion' ('Yes' going with the second line of Duncan's versified speech). This re-arrangement (followed unfortunately by a succession of editors down to Wilson and Muir) destroys the impression of a panting speech which the short, broken lines of the Folio text are intended to convey.

This speech, being the Captain's last one before his breakdown, must in the nature of the case, be a gasping speech, and so it is in the Folio text, beginning and ending with pairs of short lines, and with a markedly short line in the middle<sup>85</sup>: each involving significant pauses for breath. This aspect of the matter is entirely missed equally by those who seek to 'improve' the verse of the passage by re-lineation or otherwise, and by those who, like Muir, suspect that 'a line or more is missing'<sup>86</sup> or, like Wilson, think that 'the whole speech, a number of verse-scrap...seems the ruin of a longer one'.<sup>87</sup>

Rosse's last speech but one in the scene has been similarly maltreated

by editors. F1 reads: "That now *Sweno*, the Norwayes King, / Craves composition. / ". Pope sought to reduce the two short lines to one full line by omitting "That", and Steevens, by omitting "*Sweno*", which he regarded as a marginal reference 'injudiciously thrust into the text' ('which seems likely', according to Wilson<sup>88</sup>). Dr. Johnson (followed by a host of editors down to Wilson and Muir) sought to curtail the number of short lines by re-lineating thus: 'That now / *Sweno*...composition'. All these editors miss the primary fact, which the Folio text stresses over and over again, that Rosse is speaking pantingly, frequently pausing for breath, and that the lines concerned must be delivered on the stage accordingly.

Rosse's last speech, "Ile see it done", is short for obvious reasons; in the remainder of the line he bows and 'goes' as bidden by Duncan. It would be missing Shakespeare's intention if the actor playing Rosse were to leave with the other characters at the end of the scene.

Dover Wilson holds that 'the scene has undoubtedly been drastically and crudely cut', a proof of which is furnished for him by 'the broken lines, the irregular metre and lineation', which, according to him, 'tell a tale which can have but one interpretation.'<sup>89</sup> I am afraid he will have to do without this particular proof of his theory. The short, broken, irregular lines in the scene tell a tale which can and does have another and a better interpretation.

**Act I, Scene iii.**—The few lines of blank verse that start this scene provide, as they stand in the Folio text, adequate room for such sinister gestures, grimaces, movements and actions as must intersperse a witches' conversation. Accordingly, Steevens's suggestion about omitting "thou" and "sister", so that the three short opening lines may be lumped into one full line, is altogether unacceptable. Lines 5 & 6 in F1 run thus: "And mouncht, & mouncht, and mouncht:/ Give me, quoth I./". Most editors, down to Wilson and Muir, have followed Pope in running the two lines into one. The Folio text leaves room for each of the three "mouncht"s being brought to vivid life by being munched on the stage. Pope *et al.*, it seems, would not allow this to happen, nor would they allow "Give . . . I" to be followed by such gestures as would lend point to both "Give" and "Aroynt"!

The short lines where the 'weird sisters' hail Macbeth and/or Banquo have their gaps naturally filled with the force of the exclamations (a single 'hail', appropriately spoken, can be the equivalent of more than one syllable) and the gestures and flourishes with which the lines must be delivered. The passage where Banquo asks them to speak to him, ends with a short line: "Your favors, nor your hate."; the gap is made up as Banquo waits for them to speak. The antithesis in each of the three prophecies

they make to Banquo becomes all the more pronounced because of the shortness of the line in each case. "Lesser then *Macbeth*, and greater."—a pause after *Macbeth*, which allows for an emphasis on the succeeding part of the statement that would not otherwise have been possible and that serves to accentuate the contrast between the two parts of the statement. The medial pauses in the next two short lines, "Not so happy, yet much happier./ Thou shall get Kings, though thou be none:/", perform a similar function.

Line 78, in most modern editions (including NS & NA), runs 'With such prophetic greeting?—Speak, I charge you.' But that is Pope. Ff have two short lines ending *greeting? you.*, and that is just as it should be. After "greeting?", Macbeth pauses for an answer to his question, and in the metrical void after "you" the weird sisters vanish, leaving Macbeth and Banquo wondering.

Macbeth's speech that follows is marked in the Folio text, as it should be, by wondering pauses ("Into the Ayre: and what seem'd corporall,/ Melted, as breath into the Winde./ Would they had stay'd./"), which were wiped out by Capell who reduced the three lines (one full and two short lines) to two full lines ending *melted stay'd*. Most modern editions (including NS) prefer Capell's reading to the Folio one!<sup>90</sup>

"Looke how our Partner's rapt": that is how Banquo describes Macbeth subsequently. Accordingly, there is silence after the line, "That takes the Reason Prisoner?"—a short line spoken by Banquo. Macbeth's 'raptness' already shows itself in the very structure of the verse. The next line, "Your Children shall be Kings", is spoken by Macbeth, but it would be bad acting, contrary to Shakespeare's intention, if it were spoken immediately after "That takes . . . Prisoner?".

Angus thus speaks in F1: "Onely to harrold thee into his sight,/ Not pay thee./". The short line, "Not pay thee", leaves room for an appropriate gesture of either compliment or negation—room which is not allowed by Singer *et al.* who read the two lines as one, Steevens even omitting "Onely" to facilitate the merger!

The next short line in the scene belongs to Macbeth: "The *Thane* of Cawdor lives:/ Why doe you dresse me in borrowed Robes?". So Ff, showing that while Banquo's exclamation at the sudden fulfilment of the second prophecy is immediate, Macbeth is for a few moments speechless with astonishment; and so his speech begins with four syllables of puzzled silence. The Folio lineation necessarily leaves the first line of Angus's reply ("Who was the Thane, lives yet") short, and so provides room for a preceding gesture denying that the robes are borrowed. The whole effect was destroyed by Capell when he wiped out the short lines by reading 'The Thane . . . me/In . . . robes?', the second line going with the first line of the



next speech. Nearly all modern editors follow Capell in saving the metre but killing the drama of the speeches.

Angus's speech in Ff has two more short lines: the third ("Which he deserves to loose.") and the seventh ("In his Countreyes wracke, I know not:"). The statement with which Angus starts—that Cawdor bears his life under heavy judgment—is exactly such as to invite an interrogative look from Macbeth: a look that seems to ask 'What could be wrong with that "prosperous gentleman"?' That fills in the gap after the third line. As for the seventh, Shakespeare seems to have felt that the statement was such as to call for a shrug to complete it, and to have left room for that accordingly. Thus the pauses preceding or following the three short lines in the speech serve the purpose of built-in stage-directions, which were eliminated by the re-lineation of the passage done in two slightly different ways by Pope and Malone so as to convert the short lines into full ones. Malone's re-lineation has been widely followed. Dover Wilson not only reproduces Malone's re-lineation but adds the note: 'F. mislines, which suggests adaptation'!<sup>91</sup>

Presently a moment arrives in the scene—and a right moment, too—when short lines begin to come 'as thick as tale'. F1 reads:

[*Banq.*] And oftentimes, to winne us to our harme,  
The Instruments of Darknesse tell us Truths,  
Winne us with honest Trifles, to betray's  
In deepest consequence.  
Cousins, a word, I pray you.

*Macb.* Two Truths are told,

The last three lines are successively short. Capell *et al.* spoiled the first two by reading them as one line, and modern editions usually spoil the last two by printing them in such a manner as if they were parts of one blank-verse line (though not even metrically is the merger a happy one). It is imperative that the three lines should be short. Banquo's words are almost an unconscious prophecy of the course of the tragedy itself, and the "consequence" is very "deep" indeed. The line as spoken by Banquo is a premonition of the depth to come. The epithet "deepest" calls accordingly for particular emphasis, suggesting a depth beyond measure. The shortness of the line serves this purpose excellently. The resultant void about the line allows the long vowel in "deepest" to be drawn out as much as possible, and is filled in with its resonance. The line must be delivered accordingly, and its shortness is a hint of Shakespeare's intention as to how it should be spoken. The word "deepest" thus becomes the equivalent of more than two syllables. Very 'deep' indeed! How the short lines of Shakespeare can enhance the values of words—make them express much more than what they ordinarily do in the language!

The next line is short with built-in stage-directions. The resultant gap may be distributed on either side of the line, so that room is provided for necessary action at either end. Banquo turns to Rosse and Angus and then speaks the line, and then the three retire to talk apart. Meanwhile Macbeth stands 'rapt' in thought, and so his soliloquy starts, as it must, with a short line preceded by six syllables of brooding silence. It would be bad acting if Macbeth were to start speaking immediately after the last line of Banquo's speech.

Macbeth's soliloquy is rich, as it should be, in short, broken verses which have not escaped the usual editorial interference. One such is: "Cannot be ill; cannot be good". A pause intervenes between "ill" and the second "cannot", during which a whole movement of thought works itself out. 'If it cannot be ill, then is it good?', Macbeth's mind seems to ask itself. From the depths of his soul comes the shattering answer: "cannot be good." The whole drama of the line was spoiled by Rowe (followed by a long line of editors down to Dover Wilson<sup>92</sup>) who transferred here "If ill?" from the next line and so wiped out the metrical gap. These two words, "If ill?", are printed in Ff with a full blank-verse line, which makes it clear that they are really intended to stand apart, forming a short line by themselves, preceded, as it should be, by a long pause of anguished bewilderment—the natural aftermath of the previous line.

The last three lines of the soliloquy, "Shakes so my single state of Man, / That Function is smother'd in surmise, / And nothing is, but what is not. /", followed by Banquo's remark "Looke how our Partner's rapt", were spoiled by Pope (followed once more by a whole host of editors down to Wilson<sup>92</sup>) who sought to regularize the short lines by reading 'Shakes...function / Is...is, / But...rapt.' There is no doubt that the Folio lineation is the right one. As for the first of these four lines, sheer poetic truth demands that it should be short; the disintegration of being that it speaks of is reflected in a corresponding disintegration of verse. As for the second, it is possible to treat it as a full line since Elizabethan usage would permit "function" to be taken as a trisyllable.<sup>93</sup> But the line gains immeasurably if "function" is pronounced as a disyllable, so that the disintegration of the verse continues, and we feel the 'function' of the verse itself to be 'smothered' as the line falls short of the norm by one syllable. As for the third, the shortness of the line allows for a 'rapt' pause after it, lending point to Banquo's remark that follows, and the non-existence that the line speaks of is experienced immediately in the structure of the verse as it is cut off after "not". "Looke...rapt" is necessarily a short line, being preceded by four syllables of action, Banquo observing Macbeth. Meanwhile Macbeth goes on speaking spasmodically as before: "If Chance will have me King, / Why Chance may Crowne

me, / Without my stirre." While the third line goes with the first line of Banquo's next speech ("New Honors come upon him"), the first two are short in the Folio version. They were, however, lumped into one by Rowe, which gives Macbeth a smooth, running utterance that belies itself. This false reading has been followed, deplorably enough, by numbers of succeeding editors down to Wilson and Muir. The broken verses of the Folio version vividly reflect Macbeth's self-struggle—a struggle so violent that it disrupts the very unity of his being ("Shakes so my single state of Man"). It is just in the fitness of things that it should correspondingly disrupt the verse-structure. It is imperative that the successive short lines must not be marred by being spoken immediately after each other. The Folio text shows that a troubled pause intervenes between them, as it must. Each short line in its turn should be spoken not 'trippingly' but with a brooding slowness, the shortness of the line allowing for a longer interval between words than would otherwise have been possible.

More short lines follow in Ff and have been 'corrected' as usual by editors since Pope's time. Yet all of them, as we shall see, are necessary.

*Banq.* Worthy Macbeth, wee stay upon your leysure.

*Macb.* Give me your favour:

My dull Braine was wrought with things forgotten.

Kinde Gentlemen, your paines are registred,

Where every day I turne the Leafe,

To reade them.

Let us toward the King: thinke upon

What hath chanc'd: and at more time,

The *Interim* having weigh'd it, let us speake

Our free Hearts each to other.

*Banq.* Very gladly.

*Macb.* Till then enough:

Come friends.

As Banquo speaks out, Macbeth wakes up from his reverie and apologizes. A gap is accordingly left before his apology: "Give. . . favour". The fourth line of his speech, short by two syllables, has a brief pause at either end. The one before the line almost spells the word "Here" through an appropriate gesture. Another appropriate gesture fills in the one after the line, lending point to the phrase "turne the Leafe". After "To reade them", he starts going; and as he goes, he turns to Banquo between "King" and "thinke" in the next line, which accordingly is short by one syllable. A sombre pause intervenes between "chanc'd" and "and" in the line following, which is short by three syllables. Banquo's 'heart' being 'free', there need be no faltering about his response ("Very gladly") which accordingly is immediate, going with the last line of Macbeth's speech to form one

complete verse. "Till then enough" is short for obvious reasons—Macbeth turns from Banquo to Rosse and Angus. Unable to realize the dramatic necessity of the short lines, Pope thought the two speeches of Macbeth to be mislineated, and so reduced the first one to five lines ending *wrought pains turn King, time*. Logically enough, since he was converting short lines into full ones, he dropped the Folio comma after "Leafe". In Macbeth's last speech he simply made the two lines one. Nearly all editors since have followed blindly in his footsteps.

**Act I, Scene iv.**—Editorial mauling of short lines in this scene starts right from the beginning. Capell and Pope between them (followed, again, by a long line of editors down to our time) made short work of the five short lines which occur in Ff in the first two speeches, spoken respectively by Duncan and Malcolm. The opening line in Ff is appropriately short, preceded by two syllables of necessary action; the King enters, turns to those following him, and asks "Is execution done on Cawdor?". Capell, without knowing what he was doing, made it a full line by transferring two syllables from the line following. What the second line thus came to lose by way of two syllables was made up by "My liege", with which Pope had started his recast of Malcolm's speech—a recast in which all the short lines of the speech as it stands in Ff are eliminated. The first line of Malcolm's speech in Ff is appropriately short, preceded once again by two syllables of necessary action; as the King puts his question, Malcolm comes forward, bows, and answers "My Liege, they are not yet come back." Again, in the middle of the speech, describing Cawdor's behaviour on the scaffold, are three consecutive short lines. F1 reads:

Confess'd his Treasons, implor'd your Highnesse Pardon,  
And set forth a deepe Repentance:  
Nothing in his Life became him,  
Like the leaving it. Hee dy'de,  
As one that had beene studied in his death,

Modern editors who, with Pope, have re-lineated the passage to eliminate the short lines, have of course done away with the commas between "him" and "Like" and between "dy'de" and "As". Yet this is a passage that, by the very nature of its subject-matter, must involve solemn pauses. They seem to be all the more solemn as Cawdor's execution on a charge of treason, very possibly, puts Shakespeare in mind of Essex's (1601). The latter's behaviour on the scaffold, as reported by Stowe, was similar.<sup>94</sup> As he writes each short line, Shakespeare himself seems to be pausing, his memories stirred, his mind travelling back to an event that must have left a deep impression on his mind. The shortness of the first of the three lines is of particular value in this connexion. It was quite possible

for Shakespeare to complete this line by starting it with the last word ("Pardon") of the previous line which has twelve syllables: an arrangement that would have normalized the length of both the lines. That he did not do so shows that he was deliberately leaving it short. It seems that he wanted to leave a void about the line to permit the long vowel in "deep" to be drawn out as much as possible (was he thinking of Essex's repentance on the scaffold?). Those who seek to regularize the short lines of the passage by re-lineating it rob that word "deep", without knowing it, of half the depth intended by Shakespeare.

It was Pope again who laid hands on the Folio lineation of Macbeth's first speech in the scene because it happens to contain a couple of short lines, which in Pope's re-lineation were converted to full ones. Once more he has found a large following down to the present day. The first two lines of the speech run thus in F1: "The service, and the loyaltie I owe, / In doing it, payes it selfe. /". The second line is short because it must leave room for a bow—a profound one, as a matter of fact, the insincerity of Macbeth's speeches being proportionately reflected in the profundity of his gestures of obeisance. For the same reason the last line of Macbeth's speech, "And Honor", is short; it would be short even if it were taken with the next line, "Welcome hither," spoken by the King. There is a pause after "And Honor", filled in with another profound bow; a pause again after "Welcome hither", filled in with a gushing gesture of welcome on Duncan's part.<sup>95</sup> These simple points have been missed by Pope *et al.*

The next short line in the scene is the third line of Duncan's speech proclaiming Malcolm Prince of Cumberland: "In drops of sorrow. Sonnes, Kinsmen, Thanes." Because the line is short by one syllable, Hanmer would supply an 'and' before "Thanes" and B. Nicholson, the epithet 'noble',<sup>96</sup> while Cuninghame thinks that 'it is extremely probable that an "and" coupling "sons" and "kinsmen" was inadvertently omitted by the Folio printers'.<sup>97</sup> Muir, while admitting that there must be a pause for Duncan to master his emotion, suspects a cut.<sup>98</sup> The simple fact of the matter, of course, is that there must be a break between "sorrow" and "Sonnes" to allow for the speaker's turning to address the entire gathering and passing from one theme to an altogether different one.

The last line of this speech of Duncan's, "And binde us further to you", is significantly short. The pause after the line not only leaves room for an effusive gesture to enhance the heartiness of Duncan's statement but also indicates some faltering on Macbeth's part before he makes his response. For one thing, Macbeth has once more to fabricate a speech that does not mean itself. For another, the fact that the "murder" of

his "thought" suddenly and so soon gets to be less "fantastical" than it seemed, takes him by surprise.

Those who, like Bradley or Wilson or Muir, suspect cuts or abridgments hereabouts, will have to do without the two short lines of Duncan's speech for a proof.

**Act I, Scene v.**—Lady Macbeth's first speech in the scene has in Ff three consecutive short lines, which have invited the usual editorial attention: "... would'st not play false, / And yet would'st wrongly winne. / Thould'st have, great Glamys, that which cries, / Thus thou must doe, if thou have it; / And that...". Pope (followed by nearly all subsequent editors) reduced the three short lines to two full ones thus: 'And yet... Glamys, / That which... it;', and so destroyed the life of these lines. Each of the pauses that the short lines necessarily involve seems to spell 'How absurd!'. As she balances the one thing against the other, the short lines seem to make her make that comment to herself on her husband's "nature". The emendators have missed all that fineness of the Folio text.

Three of the first five lines of Lady Macbeth's great invocation in the scene, as it stands in Ff, are short: "He brings great newes. / The Raven himselfe is hoarse, / That croakes the fatall entrance of *Duncan* / Under my Battlements. Come you Spirits, / That tend...". Nearly all editors have unfortunately followed Rowe in combining the first two short lines into a full one and thus wiping out the room that the Folio text leaves, through pauses after "newes" and before "The Raven" (the two pauses, running into each other, making for a long one), for the messenger leaving after "newes" and the Lady waiting for him to be out of hearing and then starting her grim comment on Duncan's coming, in slow, deliberate, muffled accents, hoarse as the raven's croaking. As she passes from that to her invocation to the powers of darkness, the transition calls for a pause from more points of view than one; and so the line, "Under... Spirits", is one-syllable short of the norm, the pause being, of course, between "Battlements" and "Come". As she pauses, she seems to gather herself up for the frenzied mood and utterance to follow, and her voice gradually rises from this point till it reaches the eldritch cry of "Hold, hold!". Fortunately for the line and its author, not all editors have followed those who have sought to do away with the gap between "Battlements" and "Come" by reading 'all you spirits' (D'Avenant, Pope, and Capell) or 'spirits of evil' (Keightley) or 'ill spirits' (Cunningham) or 'Come, Come, you spirits' (Stevens).

The line, "To cry, hold, hold", stands by itself in the Folio text—a short line followed by another: "Great Glamys, worthy Cawdor,". Editors have a way of treating the two lines as parts of the same

verse, whereas the Folio text plainly intends a break after "hold, hold" as the Lady is taken by surprise by the sudden entry of Macbeth, to whose arrival she has been eagerly looking forward ("Hie thee hither"), and an enraptured gesture of welcome must precede the exclamation "Great...Cawdor".

The next short line in the scene is "Shall Sunne that Morrow see." The clue to the pause after "see" is given by the lines that follow: "Your Face, my *Thane*, is as a Booke, where men / May reade strange matters,". The pause enables us to visualize the sudden change of expression that comes, as it must, over Macbeth's face as the Lady gives him her first hint of murder which 'shakes so his single state of man'. Thanks to the short line, Shakespeare need not insert a stage-direction in the margin, standing apart and forming no organic part of the dramatic text, to inform the reader that this is what happens. The Lady, observing Macbeth's strange reaction to her words, comes up closer, peers into his face, and says reprovingly: "Your face....".

**Act I, Scene vi.**—Lines 3-4 of Banquo's speech run thus in Ff: "...the Heavens breath / Smells wooingly here: no Jutty frieze, /". "Smells...frieze" is short by half a foot, a slight pause—a pause of pleasure, coming in between "here" and "no". This pause is so very much in the fitness of things; yet there are editors, ranging from Hanmer to Dover Wilson, who suspect that a word or two have dropped out of the line! Hanmer, for one, suggested the reading 'sweet and wooingly'; Dr. Johnson, 'wooingly: here is no'; Cuninghame, 'wooingly: there is no'. Fortunately these readings have not found many followers.

A similar pause of pleasure follows the last line of Banquo's speech: "The ayre is delicate." The shortness of the line almost makes one imagine the speaker pausing and sniffing the 'delicate' air. Such pauses of pleasure enhance the irony involved in investing the house of death with loveliness of season and site. Editors, unfortunately, have a way of spoiling the effect by reading this line with the next one (spoken by Duncan): "See, see, our honor'd Hostesse". But the two lines taken together would be a good deal longer than the blank-verse norm<sup>99</sup>. Obviously they are meant for two separate lines, each short (the one spoken by Duncan being preceded by the speaker pointing enthusiastically to Lady Macbeth as she enters). Steevens gets rid of all these short lines by drastically re-lineating the last five lines of Banquo's speech!

The fourth, fifth, and last lines of Lady Macbeth's first speech in the scene, as it stands in Ff, are slightly short: "Against those Honors deepe, and broad, / Wherewith your Majestie loades our House: /"; "Heap'd up to them, we rest your Ermites." Short, too, is the first line of Duncan's speech that follows: "Where's the thane of Cawdor?". Editors from the

eighteenth to the present century have generally followed Pope in re-lineating the last four lines of Lady Macbeth's speech so as to get rid of the four short lines. Yet the Folio short lines have a good *raison d'être* in each case. To keep up the appearance of a profound gratefulness and complaisance, Lady Macbeth must emphasize the words "deepe", "broad", and "loades", and the gaps after the first two short lines leave just the room for appropriate gestures to lend stage-life to these words. To the same end, she needs to draw out the long vowels in the three words as much as she can, and the metrical gaps afford her the opportunity to do so. By the phrase "your Ermites" in the third of these short lines she means, of course, 'hermits bound to pray for you', and the gap after the line leaves room for just that gesture that would bring the phrase to life on the stage. As for the short line spoken by Duncan, there is a gap preceding the line and providing room for necessary action—Duncan looking round for his host and, not finding him there, putting the question he asks.

**Act I, Scene vii.**—Macbeth's great soliloquy ends in Ff with a couple of short lines: "And falls on th'other. / How now? What Newes? /". They would remain short of the norm (by one syllable) even if they were taken together. Beginning with Hanmer and Steevens, editors have not been wanting who would make a full line out of the two by inserting 'side' after "other" (as Hanmer did) or by breaking up the Folio synaeresis, "th'other", into 'the other' (as Steevens did). The synaeresis itself is a definite proof that the two lines were not intended to form a complete verse. They must be taken as the Folio prints them—two separate short lines. A metrical void follows "th'other"; another, "How now?" (there can be none after "Newes", since the 'news' is immediately supplied by the Lady: "He has almost supt"). The first void would provide room for the Lady's sudden entry, which startles Macbeth, and her reproachful looks (has he not deserted his 'office' of a host by slinking out of the banquet-hall, unable to face his victim-to-be?); the second, for the speaker's nervous looks and gestures (he is afraid he has been sent for).

Lady Macbeth's speech, "He has almost supt: why have you left the chamber?", is printed in F1 as a twelve-syllabled line of prose. Pope sought to turn it into a blank-verse line by reading 'He's' for "He has". As there is no special occasion for prose hereabouts, it is clear that what was really intended was a couple of verse-lines, each short, ending respectively "supt:" "chamber?". The metrical hiatus after "supt" almost spells the stage-direction: '(looking hard at Macbeth as she approaches closer)'. The Lady's stern and reproving looks form a fitting prelude to her sharp query: "Why...chamber?". The gap after the question marks a pause during which Macbeth fumbles for an answer.



Three famous lines in the scene have suffered grievously from editorial interference:

[*Lady*]. And dasht the Braines out, had I so sworne  
 As you have done to this.  
*Macb.* If we should faile?  
*Lady.* We faile?  
 But screw.....

That is how the lines stand in F1—the first and the third one short (“As . . . should faile?” forms a complete verse). In the former, the absence of one syllable leaves a needed gap after “out” to make room for an appropriate gesture to lend stage-life to the awful words spoken. In the latter, the force with which the two words are spoken seems to reverberate through the eight-syllable-long pause—a pause that almost spells ‘What an idea!’. Moreover, the metrical void after the two words enables the speaker to draw out the long vowel in “faile”, as it should be drawn out, to the fullest extent possible. All this was spoiled by Steevens who attempted a metrical correction through re-lineation, reducing the three Folio lines to two ending ‘as you’ ‘We fail?’. Unfortunately for the lines and their author, this re-lineation has been widely followed down to our own times<sup>100</sup>, and modern readers of *Macbeth* usually read here, without knowing it, Steevens and not Shakespeare.

**Act II, Scene i.**—The Folio version of the scene contains some good short lines: the target, once more, of unwelcome editorial attention. It opens with a short line, spoken by Banquo: “How goes the Night, Boy?”. Fleance speaks a full line in reply: “The Moone is downe: I have not heard the Clock.” The metrical gap in between is of course filled in by Fleance looking up at the sky. Banquo’s remark “And she goes downe at Twelve” and Fleance’s “I take’t, ’tis later, Sir” are usually so printed in modern editions as to appear to be parts of the same verse-line. But the two lines together would run into twelve syllables even with the contractions “take’t” and “’tis”. The intention of the Folio text seems to be to take them as two separate lines, both short, with a pause after “Twelve”—Fleance thinks a little before he replies—and another after “Sir” to allow room for necessary stage-action, the next line being “Hold, take my Sword”. Banquo’s speech that begins with this line, consists, as it stands in Ff, of eight lines, of which five are short:—

*Banq.* Hold, take my Sword:  
 There’s husbandry in Heaven,  
 Their Candles are all out: take thee that too.  
 A heavie Summons lyes like Lead upon me,  
 And yet I would not sleepe:

Mercifull Powers, retrain in me the cursed thoughts  
That Nature gives way to in repose.

*Enter Macbeth, and a Servant with a Torch.*

Give me my Sword: who's there?

*Macb.* A Friend.

A metrical gap after the first line and another before the second<sup>101</sup> combine to make for a considerable pause as Fleance takes the offered sword and Banquo watches the sky—an effect which is lost in Rowe's re-lineation of the speech (followed, unfortunately, by nearly all subsequent editors) in which the two lines are lumped into one full line.<sup>102</sup> The crucial pause of the passage is after the fifth line: "And yet. . . sleepe". An unquiet, deeply disturbing pause (comparable with the one after *Julius Caesar* II. i. 62: "Since Cassius first did whet me against Caesar, / I have not slept. / "). Here is a passing glimpse of that "nature's mischief" of which Lady Macbeth speaks in I. v, and of which "the weird sisters" are sinister symbols. So pervasive is it in the play that even Banquo has his dark unconscious a little stirred by his meeting with the weird sisters, and he shudders at the shapes that emerge from there in his sleep.

A pause of such tragic moment we can ill afford to lose as we do in Rowe's re-lineation: 'And yet. . . Powers, / Restraine. . . nature'. There is some case for editorial interference with the line "Mercifull. . . thoughts", since it runs into thirteen syllables, but certainly not at the cost of the pause after "sleepe". If words have to be transferred from the offending line, it must be downwards, not upwards. A better re-lineation would be: 'Mercifull. . . me / The cursed. . . way to / In repose. . . Sword. / Who's . . . A Friend. / '. On this reading, 'Merciful. . . me' would be short by half a foot and so have just the room after "Powers" for an appropriate gesture of invocation, and the speech would break off after "repose" as a light is seen and footsteps are heard. The line 'Who's. . . A Friend' would have a metrical gap before and after (but none in between, since Macbeth's response to Banquo's challenge must be immediate); the sword is offered and taken before "Who's", and after "Friend" Macbeth approaches closer till Banquo recognizes him: "What Sir, . . .".

A series of short lines follow in F1:

[*Banq.*] This Diamond he greetes your Wife withall,  
By the name of most kind Hostesse,\*  
And shut up<sup>103</sup> in measurelesse content.

*Mac.* Being unprepar'd,\*  
Our will became the servant to defect,  
Which else should free have wrought.

*Banq.* All's well.\*  
I dreamt last Night of the three weyward Sisters:  
To you they have shew'd some truth.\*

- Macb.* I thinke not of them:\*
- Yet when we can entreat an houre to serve,  
We would spend it in some words upon that Business,  
If you would graunt the time.
- Banq.* At your kind'st leysure.
- Macb.* If you shall cleavè to my consent,\*  
When 'tis, it shall make Honor for you.\*
- Banq.* So I lose none,\*  
In seeking to augment it, but still keepe  
My Bosome franchis'd, and Allegiance cleare,  
I shall be counsail'd.
- Macb.* Good repose the while.
- Banq.* Thanks Sir: the like to you.\* *Exit Banquo.*

The lines marked with an asterisk are short ones. Pope, followed by nearly all subsequent editors, gets rid of the first two short lines by transposing "And shut up" to the previous line. For "All's well" Hanmer and Capell read 'All's very well' and Steevens suggested 'Sir, all is well', so that the two lines "Which else...well" might combine to form a complete blank-verse line. To the same end, Pope read 'they've' for "they have" in "To you...some truth"—a reading which has found a few followers. As for the short lines "If you...none", Rowe normalized them by transposing "When 'tis" to the preceding line—a re-lineation adopted since by a long line of editors down to our own day. Yet in each case the attempted re-lineation or emendation gives a poorer text. After the first of these short lines, "By the name...Hostesse", Banquo holds out the diamond, and Macbeth takes it and says "Being unprepar'd, etc.": hence the two short lines. The two-syllable gap after "All's well" is filled in as Banquo comes up closer to Macbeth and drops his voice to impart a confidence. The short line "To you...some truth" is filled out with a deprecatory gesture on Macbeth's part, prefacing his statement "I...them". Between this denial and what he says in the lines following there is such a marked contradiction that the transition from the one to the other has to be carried over a pause: hence the shortness of the line. When Macbeth next proceeds to make a significant 'proposal', he must of course broach it slowly: hence a speech punctuated with pauses, "If you...for you"; a pause after "'tis" is especially demanded. Banquo's condition, "So I lose none", is so emphatic that it calls for appropriate gestures to point it: hence the line is significantly short.

The famous 'Vision of the Dagger' speech has two short lines. After the first of them, "As this which now I draw", room is left for Macbeth drawing his own dagger and comparing the reality with the vision. Even this simple point was missed by Walker and Keightley who would fill out the line by bringing up "Thou marshall'st me" from the next line

and re-arranging the sequent lines accordingly! The other short line, "The Curtain'd sleepe: Witchcraft celebrates", described by Alexander Dyce as 'a manifestly imperfect line', lacks an unstressed syllable after "sleepe". The gap makes for a sombre pause after "sleepe" that enriches the line substantially. The reference to "wicked Dreames" abusing "the Curtain'd sleepe" reminds the reader of Banquo's confession earlier in the scene about the "cursed" dreams that make him recoil from sleep. The line is thus vivified by the actual experience of someone who spoke of it just a while ago. Further life is lent to the line when one thinks how the speaker is on the way to murdering sleep and losing it for ever. The word "sleepe" thus serves as a valuable link integrating the past, present, and future. It is, therefore, of especial significance that the metrical void after "sleepe" enables the speaker to draw out the long vowel in that word and so enhance its intensity. Rowe and Steevens had little idea of the damage they were doing to the line when they sought to regularize it, the former by putting in 'now' before "Witchcraft" and the latter by reading 'sleeper' for "sleepe". Both 'emendations' have found a number of followers!<sup>104</sup>

In places in the passage there are full lines where short ones were expected. These require some consideration in passing:—

(1) The question, "Is this a dagger . . . ?", is preceded by "She strike upon the Bell. Get thee to bed." The line is spoken by Macbeth to his servant, but, unlike as in the case of Banquo's exit earlier, no gap is left after the line to provide for the servant's departure though the s-d *Exit* is there in the margin of the Folio text. This shows that all the action involved in the line is meant to be so quick as to be almost simultaneous with the speaking of it. Hurriedly beckoning his servant out of the stage, Macbeth sharply turns round to be confronted immediately with the vision of the dagger. Any other way of rendering the lines (*e.g.*, the dagger slowly gliding into view) is belied by the structure of the verse. All this speed is symptomatic of the convulsion inside Macbeth on the brink of the murder.

(2) "Mine Eyes are made the fooles o'th'other Sences, / Or else worth all the rest: I see thee still;". Macbeth shuts his eyes and opens them again: a test to find out whether they are "worth all the rest". As the lines are full ones, the action must accompany the speaking of the second line. An actor shutting and opening his eyes after "rest" will be missing the intention of the text.

(3) Similarly, in "The Handle toward my Hand? Come, let me clutch thee: / I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.", the clutching action is simultaneous with the speech "Come . . . thee", not subsequent. The actor who clutches at the dagger *after* speaking these words does not know his Shakespeare.

**Act II, Scene ii.**—If ever there was a scene in drama calling for broken utterances and vibrant pauses, this is one. The Folio text provides these here in discriminate profusion, inviting the usual indiscriminate editorial interference, which is so outrageous in certain cases as to border on unconscious vandalism. There are pauses in the Folio text of the scene that drop anguish and bring out the whole history of a soul at a crucial moment simply through taut silence, and the good editors have just wiped them out. Deplorably enough, such editorial interferences have come to form the standard modern text of the scene, so that what modern readers or auditors read or hear in a good many parts of the scene is editor A or editor B and not necessarily Shakespeare. The great Murder Scene of *Macbeth* has itself been murdered in several parts by a whole host of editors ranging from Nicholas Rowe to those of our own day.

Hardly has the scene begun in Ff when short lines start cropping up. This is the F1 version of the opening speech:

*La.* That which hath made them drunk, hath made me bold:  
 What hath quench'd them, hath given me fire.  
 Hearke, peace: it was the Owle that shriek'd,  
 The fatall Bell-man, which gives the stern'st good-night.  
 He is about it, the Doores are open:  
 And the surfeted Groomes doe mock their charge  
 With Snores. I have drugg'd their Possets,  
 That Death and Nature doe contend about them,  
 Whether they live, or dye.  
*Macb.* Who's there? what hoa?

Lines 2, 3, 5 and 7 are short. Line 2 is followed by a violent start on the part of the speaker as a sound is heard, belying the "fire" she speaks of and so lending some irony to that word. In line 3 she pauses after "Hearke", listening intently: a tense pause that dissolves after "peace" into a pause of assurance. In line 5 a stressed syllable is missing after "it", allowing for the Lady to pause to look for indications that he is indeed "about it". Line 7 has a distinct pause after "Snores", as if the speaker was trying to catch the sound of these snores. All this intense drama of the passage was killed by Rowe, who reduced lines 2-7 to five lines ending 'peace:' 'bellman,', 'it,' 'grooms' 'possets,'. With all the short lines thus metamorphosed into full ones, this continues to be the standard version of the opening speech down to our own day!<sup>105</sup>

Short lines crop up again as the Lady speaks:

...Had he not resembled  
 My father as he slept, I had don't.  
 My Husband?

*Macb.* I have done the deed:  
Didst thou not heare a noyse?

A metrical gap is left after "don't" for good reasons. Macbeth enters the lower stage, and the Lady, startled as she is suddenly confronted in the semi-darkness by Macbeth with his blood-stained hands, exclaims "My Husband?". Note the query after "Husband".<sup>106</sup> 'That is the question'—is it the same man after "the deed" as before it, or the same woman for that matter? There can be no answer at the moment to that question—no guarantee of their identities. Follows, accordingly, a great silence. Great silence over again after "deed"<sup>107</sup>—the kind of silence in which the entire biography of a soul is unmade and re-made. The Rubicon has been crossed at last—the fatal Rubicon of the soul which, unlike the one in history, once crossed, cannot be recrossed. At this great juncture, as they stand on the other shore—the slaughtered selves of a man and a woman awaiting re-incarnation (for this Murder Scene of *Macbeth* is the story not so much of the murder of Duncan, which as a matter of fact is not shown at all, as of the self-slaughter of a man and a woman), the prodigious suspense of the moment is reflected in a corresponding suspension of speech and verse. Hence the short lines, which also allow room for a groping pause between "done" and "the", Macbeth simply being unable at the moment to define either to himself or to his wife the precise nature of what he has done.

And now for the sorry tale of editorial vandalism. All these crucial pauses in and about these short lines were eliminated by Rowe who recast the passage thus: 'My father...husband? / I have...noyse?'. And that still continues to be the standard text hereabouts!<sup>108</sup>

Equally tremendous short lines follow in Ff: "*Lady*. I. / *Macb.* Hearke, who lyes i'th'second Chamber? / *Lady*. *Donalbaine*. / *Mac*. This is a sorry sight. / *Lady*. A foolish thought, to say a sorry sight." Four successive short lines. The Lady's "I" [Ay] does not go with Macbeth's "Hearke...Chamber?", for Macbeth's query is no answer at all to the Lady's "Did not you speake?". Silence falls after the Lady's "I", as it must, for Macbeth's mind is far away: he is not really attending to the Lady's words and questions of far greater magnitude wipe out from his mind the one just asked by her. Then he hears a noise, or imagines he does, and a violent start precedes the exclamation: "Hearke". Another pause after "Hearke", Macbeth listening nervously. Then his query, "who...Chamber?", followed immediately, of course, by the Lady's answer, "*Donalbaine*", which is a line by itself, with a seven-syllable-long gap after it, which goes and joins a gap of four syllables before "This...sight". Thus results a long pause of eleven syllables—an extremely suggestive

one that almost leads us to visualize a pair of hands slowly rising in the silence and semi-darkness. Macbeth slowly raises his blood-stained hands to his eyes, contemplates the horror painted thereon of his self-slaughter in colours that not even the multitudinous seas can wash out, and comes to speak one of the most tremendous meises of literature<sup>109</sup>: "This is a sorry sight." Steevens separated "Hearke" from "who...Chamber?", and thus wiped out the gap of seven syllables after "*Donalbaine*". It is a pity this re-lineation has been widely followed down to this day.

The pause involved in the next short line, "There's one did laugh in's sleepe", cannot be after it, for the line following is "And one cry'd Murther...". The pause must be before the line, filled in as the raised hands slowly come down while Macbeth's mind travels back to the scene of which they are a ghastly reminder. Short lines recur presently: "I stood, and heard them: But they did say their Prayers, / And adrest them againe to sleepe. / *Lady*. There are two lodg'd together. /". The last two lines are short. There is a break after "sleepe" as Macbeth pauses to contemplate the horror of the double contrast: while they did say their prayers, he could not, and while they went to sleep, he lost his. The Lady's words must have a break after them, for they are lost on Macbeth who strives with the word stuck in his throat ("One cry'd God blesse us, and Amen the other,..."). What a pity that the standard text of these two speeches continues to be Rowe's recast of them which makes for a passage of four full lines, the first ending 'Murther' and the last, 'together'!

The next two short lines, "When they did say God blesse us. / Consider it not so deeply. / ", are so printed in many modern editions (including OA and NA) as if they ran together. How could they, one wonders, when, together, they would total fifteen syllables? Unmistakably each stands by itself, each a short line. The clue to the shortness of the first one is furnished by the line preceding, "Listning their feare, I could not say Amen,". The break after "us" does give the sensation of something sticking in the throat—struggling to come out but failing to. As for the Lady's admonition (which is at the same time an anguished appeal), "Consider...deepely", it must have a break after it, since, as before, it is lost on Macbeth, an agonized gesture on whose part preludes his all-time question "But wherefore could not I pronounce Amen?".

It is worth noting in passing that Shakespeare does not start Macbeth's refusal to go back to re-place the daggers with a short line. "Ile go no more" goes with the concluding line of the previous speech, "The sleepe Groomes with blood", to form a perfect blank-verse line. Accordingly, "Ile go no more" is and must be spoken immediately after Lady Macbeth's speech. This, significantly enough, is a firm, determined refusal; whatever the wavering on Macbeth's part about other things, there is none about

it: it is absolutely impossible for him to re-visit the place where he slaughtered Duncan and his own self. Shakespeare gives the sense of all this simply through the structure of the verse in the shape of a 'speech-ending'. On the other hand, the concluding line of this speech of his seems to be a short one: "Looke on't againe, I dare not." Editors generally have a way of making this line appear to go with the next one, "Infirm of purpose", spoken by Lady Macbeth. Together, however, they run into twelve syllables. It is better to take them as two short lines, each standing by itself. Macbeth says "Looke...dare not" and shuts his eyes in horror. The Lady starts with a reproachful look, says "Infirm of purpose", and imperiously stretches her hand towards Macbeth before she says "Give me the Daggers".

The last line of this speech of Lady Macbeth's, "For it must seeme their Guilt.", and the first of Macbeth's speech that follows, "Whence is that knocking?", are of course metrically capable of being taken with each other, and editors generally take them so. But, in that case, no room is left in between for Lady Macbeth's exit, the "Knocke within", and the start it causes on Macbeth's part. It is much better, therefore, to regard them as two separate short lines.

"Making the Greene one, Red.", is short for obvious reasons. The Lady returns, finds Macbeth contemplating his hands again and 'lost poorly in his thoughts', and rebukes him: "My hands are of your colour: but I shame / To weare a Heart so white. /". A knock and a start on the part of either fills in the gap after "white". As many as eight other short lines occur in Ff, and to good purpose, as the scene closes:—

	I heare a knocking at the South entry:	
	Retyre we to our Chamber:*	
	A little Water cleares us of this deed.	
	How easie is it then? your Constancie	
	Hath left you unattended.*	<i>Knocke.</i>
	Hearke, more knocking.*	
	Get on your Night-Gowne, least occasion call us,	
	And shew us to be Watchers: be not lost	
	So poorely in your thoughts.*	
<i>Macb.</i>	To know my deed,*	<i>Knocke.</i>
	'Twere best not know my selfe.*	
	Wake Duncan with thy knocking:*	
	I would thou could'st.	<i>Exeunt.</i>

The asterisked lines are short. The second of these is, of course, filled out with the sound of the knocking and Macbeth's and Lady Macbeth's reactions thereto. A taut, nervous pause, filled out with intent listening on the part of the two characters, follows the first and the third. Silence



falls after the fourth as Macbeth continues to be lost poorly in his thoughts despite the Lady's admonition. The silence is broken as the knocking at the gate is repeated and wakes up Macbeth from his "thoughts" to say "To know my deed".

What is the subject of Macbeth's "thoughts"? In anguished despair he has been exploring the nature and meaning of his "deed"—hence the pause after "deed", a groping pause of the same nature as the one I have suggested above between "done" and "the" in "I have done the deed". As in the course of the groping he comes to sense vaguely the equivalence of the "deed" with self-slaughter, the words that come from him next are "'Twere... selfe", followed of course by a horrified pause. At this point the knocking at the gate is repeated (the Folio s-d should be re-aligned accordingly), and as he starts, he finds himself madly wishing that it might help to undo it all—to wake Duncan back to life and to redeem his own slaughtered self. Hence the pause after "knocking"—a vain, agonized wait for the redemption to come about. The shortness of the last line is justified not merely by the room it leaves for the departure of Macbeth and the Lady. It is just as well that it stands by itself; its immense tragic anguish demands that isolation and relief.

All this was lost when Pope re-lineated lines 2-8 of Lady Macbeth's speech into five full lines, and the four short lines of Macbeth's speech into two full lines. That *coup de grâce* to the Folio text still continues to be the standard version of the close of the Murder Scene!

**Act II, Scene iii.**—Macduff's question, addressed to the Porter, "Is thy Master stirring?", should not be mistaken for a short line; it is not verse but a part of the preceding prose dialogue. Verse begins with the next line "Our knocking has awak'd him...". The first short line to occur shows that the s-d, *they move towards the inner door*, which Dover Wilson places hereabouts in his edition of the play, is a little misplaced. Macduff says, "I know this is a joyfull trouble to you: / But yet 'tis one. /", and Macbeth rejoins, "The labour we delight in, Physicks paine:". The gap after the short line, "But...one", almost spells that s-d, *they move towards the inner door*; in placing it two lines above, as he does, Wilson misses the inherent intention of the Folio text.

Macduff goes in, and Lenox asks "Goes the King hence to day?", and Macbeth answers "He does: he did appoint so." Numbers of modern editions (e.g., the OA and the NA) print the lines so as to make them look like parts of the same verse-line. But taken together, they make for thirteen syllables. Evidently they are meant for two separate lines, each appropriately short. Lenox's query must have a gap before it to allow for Macbeth to turn back after having led Macduff to the inner door. The shortness of Macbeth's answer allows for a subtle pause between

"does" and "he". The irony of the present tense in "does" is so grim that it pulls up the speaker himself and induces the spontaneous correction, "did". The attempt of certain editors to normalize the two lines must therefore be discounted; Pope and others, for instance, omitted "He does", while Steevens tried to save metre by re-lineation and reading 'From hence' for "hence"!

Lenox's next speech contains, as it should, several short lines. He goes on to describe the "unruly" night he has been through, the like of which his "young remembrance cannot parallell", and it is in the fitness of things that he should be speaking with hushed pauses as he does in Ff:

*Lenox.* The Night ha's been unruly:  
Where we lay, our Chimneys were blowne downe,  
And (as they say) lamentings heard i'th'Ayre;  
Strange Schreemes of Death,  
And Prophecying, with Accents terrible,  
Of dyre Combustion, and confus'd Events,  
New hatch'd toth' wofull time.  
The obscure Bird clamor'd the live-long Night.  
Some say, the Earth was fevorous,  
And did shake.

*Macb.* 'Twas a rough Night.

*Lenox.* My young remembrance cannot parallell  
A fellow to it.

An uneasy hush appropriately precedes and follows "The Night . . . unruly". "Strange . . . Death" claims a line by itself; in the context of the night's happening it calls for that isolation and relief. A similar consideration would apply to the idea of the sickness of the earth in "Some . . . fevorous". The contraction in "New . . . time" points to a deliberate attempt to lengthen the pause after it—a pause that reinforces the epithet "wofull" as nothing else perhaps could. "And did shake" goes with "'Twas a rough Night" to form a short line; the brevity of Macbeth's comment combines with the pause after it to indicate that his mind is elsewhere, thinking of the coming discovery of the murder and all that would follow. "A fellow to it" is short for obvious reasons: to allow for Macduff's frantic re-entry.

As for the apparent shortness of Macduff's "O horror, horror, horror", it would suffice to note that room is required for the gestures that must punctuate an outburst like this, not to speak of the force and intensity with which each word in the line must be spoken and which make it acquire more than its ordinary syllabic value. Macbeth and Lenox ask "What's the matter?"—a short line, short because Macduff is too overcome to answer immediately: which is also the explanation of the shortness of Lenox's query a little later: "Meane you his Majestie?". (The

actor playing the part of Macduff must speak accordingly: he must not miss the 'message' of the short lines). Capell's attempt at 'rectification' by tacking on "Tongue nor Heart" from the next line to Macduff's "O... horror" and leaving "cannot conceive, nor name thee" to form a full line with "What's the matter?", though widely followed down to our own day, was merely gratuitous; and the attempt made in a number of modern editions<sup>110</sup> to complete "A fellow to it" and "O... horror" by tacking them on to each other, is misconceived.

The next short line comes in with the entry of Lady Macbeth: "What's the Businesse? / That such a hideous Trumpet calls to parley / The sleepers of the House? speake, speake. /". The construction shows that there can be no break after "Businesse". The metrical gap is before the line, providing room for the alarum-bell to go (following Macduff's command, "Ring the Bell") and for the Lady's 'anxious' entry. The third line of her speech is significantly short (by a foot); after "House" she pauses for a moment, waiting for an answer. Receiving none, she adds "speake, speake". Macduff's speech in response begins with a short line: "O gentle Lady". Appropriately. Struggling with his own grief, he hesitates to break the stunning news to a woman—a "gentle" lady.<sup>111</sup> The last line of Banquo's speech that follows, "And say, it is not so", is of course cut off by the frantic entry of Macbeth, Lenox, and Rosse.

The editors, as usual, have been at these short lines in one way or another. Theobald, for one, would 'redeem' Lady Macbeth's "What's the Businesse?" by excising "Ring the Bell" (which he would treat as a stage-direction) from the preceding line (spoken by Macduff): "To countenance this horror. Ring the Bell." And Pope would take all the dramatic life out of the next two short lines by excising the second "speake" from "The sleepers... speake", and "O" from "O gentle Lady", so that the two might form a complete verse. Theobald has found quite a number of followers including Wilson and Muir; Pope, fortunately, not many outside his own century. Quite a few modern editors (*e.g.*, Craig, Cuninghame, Wilson, Muir, etc.), while not accepting Pope's excisions, treat the two lines at the same time as parts of the same verse!

Macbeth's speech, "Had I but dy'd an houre...", ends with a short line: "Is left this Vault, to brag of." There is a gap after the line, filled in, as in three previous instances, with the hurried entry of Malcolm and Donalbain. But there is also a pause—a fine, rhythmic one—after "Vault"; the whole statement reaches its climax with that word and then falls away in despairing accents in "to brag of".

The next two short lines in the Folio text of the scene are: (*Macduff*) "Looke to the Lady", and (*Malcolm*) "Why doe we hold our tongues,". Editors generally treat the two as parts of the same verse. It is not

metrically impossible to take them together, but a full line here would be out of keeping with the drama of the moment. It would be much better to treat them as two separate short lines. "Looke to the Lady" obviously requires a gap after it for necessary stage-action. As obviously, "Why... tongues" requires a gap before it; while the other characters 'look to the lady', Malcolm draws closer to Donalbain and they confer in confidence.

A number of short lines that follow have invited the usual editorial maltreatment: "(Donal.) What should be spoken here, / Where our Fate hid in an augure hole, / May rush, and seize us? Let's away, / Our Tears are not yet brew'd. / (Mal.) Nor our strong sorrow / Upon the foot of Motion. / (Banq.) Looke to the Lady: /". The first, second, third and the last two lines are short. The clue to the shortness of the first one is furnished by Malcolm's question "Why doe we hold our tongues?" There is a pause before the line; Donalbain continues to 'hold his tongue': overcome, he takes time to recover from his amazement. For the same reason, the next line begins with a slight pause, prepared for by the comma after the previous line. The Folio text, it is clear, does not intend these asides between the brothers to be a rapid, continuous dialogue, which, of course, they cannot (or, at any rate, should not) be, having regard to the state of their minds. Cuninghame's suggestion about reading 'whereout' for "Where" (he has no doubt that this is 'the true reading')<sup>112</sup> is accordingly unacceptable. The pause or pauses involved in the next line are similarly explained, and they leave room, moreover, for an appropriate gesture to lend life to "Let's away". The lacuna after "Our Teares...brew'd" almost spells the stage-direction, *enter waiting-women*, which Dover Wilson puts in here in the margin, while the one after "Looke to the Lady" seems to spell *Lady Macbeth is carried out*, which successive editors led by Rowe have put in here in the margin for two centuries and a half. Needless to add, there are no stage-directions hereabouts in the Folio text, simply because they are immanent in the short lines and need not be separately specified as such. This is yet another instance in passing of how a stage-direction that would otherwise stand isolated from the drama proper is run by Shakespeare into the text itself to form an organic part of the verse-structure simply by curtailing his lines. All editorial attempts that have been made since Pope's time to get rid of one or more of these short lines by various re-arrangements<sup>113</sup> must, therefore, be discounted. Equally to be discounted is the common editorial tendency to treat the last two short lines as parts of the same verse (Pope even going so far as to retrench "Upon" to 'On!'). Apart from the considerations just urged, the fact that together they would total twelve syllables<sup>114</sup> must give us a pause before we maltreat them in that fashion. It is strange that they should lead Muir to suspect a cut hereabouts!

Another crop of short lines towards the end of the scene has provided further embarrassment for the editors.

- Malc.* What will you doe?  
 Let's not consort with them:  
 To shew an unfelt Sorrow, is an Office  
 Which the false man do's easie.  
 Ile to England.
- Don.* To Ireland, I:  
 Our seperated fortune shall keepe us both the safer:  
 Where we are, there's Daggers in mens Smiles;  
 The neere in blood, the neerer bloody.
- Malc.* This murtherous Shaft that's shot,  
 .....

So Fl. Malcolm waits for the other characters, who have just left, to be out of hearing, and then turns to Donalbain and asks: "What...doe?". Hence the shortness of this line. The next one, too, begins with a pause; Malcolm pauses for an answer to his question, and receiving none, speaks again. After "easie" there is a pause again; Malcolm pauses to think it out and then announces his plan: "Ile to England". Donalbain similarly thinks out his before announcing it: hence the gap between "England" and "To Ireland". The line, "Our seperated...safer", is so much longer than the norm (14 syllables) as to suggest the extreme likelihood of two short lines ("Our...fortune / Shall...safer:") having been mistakenly run into each other. The first of the two short lines is preceded by a gap filled in with a questioning look or/and gesture on Malcolm's part ("Why to Ireland? Why not to England with me?"), which leads to Donalbain's explanation: "Our seperated fortune, etc.". After "safer" a solemn pause would form a fitting prelude to the matter and tone of the next statement, and perhaps offer room at the same time for an appropriate gesture presaging the word "Daggers". The pause before the short line "This murtherous...shot" provides room for a nod of concurrence on the speaker's part, Malcolm fully agreeing with what Donalbain has just said. Starting with Rowe, editors down to this day have taken all this life out of the three speeches by re-lineating them thus:...*them*:...*office*...*England*...*fortune*...*are*,...*blood*,...*shot*. And readers of *Macbeth* have still been reading this debased and insipid version under the impression that they are reading Shakespeare.

**Act II, Scene iv.**—Editorial impercipience has eliminated some fine pauses of wonder from this scene of portents. "And *Duncans* Horses, / (A thing most strange, and certain) /"—so Rosse in Ff. Both lines being short, a pause starts after "Horses" and extends into the next line—a long wondering pause as Rosse thinks of the strangeness of the pheno-

menon he is going to speak of—a fitting prelude to the parenthesis (what better expression of the sense of strangeness than silence?). Rosse ends with another short line “Make Warre with Mankinde”, followed by two others in succession: (*Old Man*) “ ’Tis said, they eate each other.” / (*Rosse*) “They did so: / To th’amazement of mine eyes that look’d upon’t.” Another long wondering pause, this time on the part of both speakers, starts after “Mankinde” and extends into the next line. A break after “said” reinforces the marvel of the next statement. There is no pause after “other”, “They did so” following immediately and being followed by a long pause once again, providing room for that kind of look and gesture that would lend truth and life to the word “amazement” in the next line. (To take the two lines, “ ’Tis...other” and “They did so”, together is metrically possible but dramatically inadvisable.) The next short line in the scene, “Heere comes the good *Macduffe*”, hardly needs an explanation.

Pope and Steevens between them have seen to it that not a single short line occurs between “And *Duncans* Horses” and “Heere...*Macduffe*”, and, deplorably as ever, their combined re-lineation<sup>115</sup> is still the standard text of this part of the play.

The next short line, “Carried to Colmekill”, is another fine specimen of one. Spoken by Macduff in response to Rosse’s query, “Where is *Duncans* body?” (which goes with the previous line, “To be invested”), it begins with a pause because it is spoken with a gulp, the pause being thus a fine measure of the silent sorrow of this loyal liegeman of Duncan over the death and burial of his master.

Towards the end of the scene we have Rosse’s “Farewell, Father”: a line by itself. Preceded by a valedictory gesture on Rosse’s part, it ends with one of benediction on the part of the Old Man, prefacing his words in the next line “Gods benyson go with you...”.

**Act III, Scene i.**—When Lady Macbeth says on her entry that if Banquo had been forgotten, it would have been “as a gap in our great Feast, / And all-thing unbecomming. /”, Macbeth must of course show complete agreement with the sentiment expressed, and so the line “And ...unbecomming” is left short to provide room for a gesture of approval on the part of Macbeth, who speaks next, “To night we hold a solemne Supper sir”, which is a full line.

Banquo’s speech that follows ends with a short line: “For ever knit.” Having regard to the sentiment he expresses—how his duties are for ever knit to the royal command “with a most indissoluble tye”—, he must of course finish up with an appropriate bow. Hence the shortness of the line, the length of the gap (six syllables) being a good measure of the deference he shows.

The next short line in the scene occurs in a significant context: (*Mac. to Banquo*) "We should have else desir'd your good advice / . . . / In this dayes Councell: but wee'le take to morrow. / Is't farre you ride? /". The question forms a line by itself: a short line with a gap of six syllables. The gap cannot be after it, since Banquo's reply, "As farre, my Lord, as will fill up the time. . . .", is immediate. The pause, therefore, must be before the line; it seems that the irony of the last word of the preceding line, "to morrow", is so ghastly that it makes even Macbeth pause for a moment or two before he puts his meaningful question. A highly subtle pause, linked to a significant sequel, occurs after Banquo's promise, "My Lord, I will not"—a hemistich spoken in reply to Macbeth's "Faile not our Feast" (which, incidentally, goes with the previous line to form a complete verse). Preceded and followed by full lines, it stands by itself and necessarily involves a five-syllable-long pause, which cannot be before it since the promise is made in immediate response to Macbeth's "Faile not our Feast". Little does Banquo know at the moment how true he is speaking; he does not, indeed, fail: his ghost attends the banquet. The pause after the promise serves to give it a vaguely ominous feel. That is all we sense and need to sense at the moment; the significance of it we realize only three scenes later. The actor playing Macbeth, who speaks the next line immediately after Banquo's promise, misses Shakespeare's intention altogether.

Of these four short lines, the first and the fourth have been, mercifully enough, let off unscathed by editors—as, perhaps, unredeemable. Not so the second and the third, nor those that follow. Pope disposed of the second and the third by a re-lineation<sup>116</sup> which, rather fortunately, has found few followers outside his own century. The reverse, however, has been the case with what he did to the following short lines (spoken by Macbeth): "Adieu, till you returne at Night. / Goes Fleance with you? /". The first one leaves room for an obvious gesture. The second is preceded<sup>117</sup> by a sinister pause, of which Pope would deprive us by transferring "Adieu" to the previous line<sup>118</sup> and reducing the two lines to one: "Till . . . you?". That deprivation still continues for the reader of the play, for Pope's re-lineation has since been followed down to this day by nearly all editors. And the deprivation extends to the auditor if the actor speaks the line according to Pope's re-lineation, without the sinister pause before "Goes" which Shakespeare so clearly intends.

Macbeth's next speech in the Folio text contains as many as four short lines, and editors have not of course let it pass untreated:

.....  
Farwell.

Let every man be master of his time,

Till seven at Night, to make societie  
 The sweeter welcome:  
 We will keepe our selfe till Supper time alone:  
 While then, God be with you.  
 Sirrha, a word with you: Attend those men  
 Our pleasure?

The gap after "Farwell" provides not only for a suitable gesture and the exit of Banquo but also for Macbeth turning round thereafter to address the rest of the gathering. As he politely dismisses them, the pause after "welcome" almost enables us to visualize him beaming graciously as he does so. *Exeunt Lords* is the Folio s-d against the next short line "While... you", but this is not the only action that fills in the gap after it; there are in addition Macbeth beckoning to his servant and the latter coming up to him. The shortness of the last line leaves room for an affirmative gesture on the part of the servant, preluding his words "They are, my Lord, without the Pallace Gate". Editors since Rowe have been re-arranging these lines in different ways, all evidently agreeing with Muir that 'the Folio arrangement of these lines cannot be right'!<sup>119</sup>

Macbeth's next speech has in Ff short lines at the beginning and at the end, and editors have been at them as usual.

Bring them before us.  
 To be thus, is nothing, but to be safely thus:  
 Our feares in Banquo sticke deepe,  
 And in his Royaltie of Nature reignes that  
 Which would be fear'd. 'Tis much he dares,

.....

The first line is short for obvious reasons, while the third would permit a gesture to bring the phrase "sticke deepe" to life on the stage. Even without the gesture, the line would still bring that phrase to life by its very shortness which would permit the drawing out of a significant long vowel: the fears stick very *deep* indeed. How deep is shown by the next short line, "Which...dares", involving, as it does and should, a distinct pause of unease after the word "fear'd". Between them, this pause and the enhancement of the word "deepe" bring out the "feares" of Macbeth in a way which words, however many, could, perhaps, hardly do. Of all this dramatic potency the passage has been robbed by Rowe and Pope, who, between them, have eliminated all the three short lines by re-lineation, and editors have still been reproducing their lifeless version (...nothing,...Banquo...nature...dares,).<sup>120</sup>

Macbeth ends this speech of his with a pair of short lines: "And champion me to th'utterance. / Who's there?". Editors since Pope have



of course promptly coupled the two lines together to form a complete verse; but two separate short lines are more in keeping with the expected stage-action hereabouts. Macbeth pauses after "utterance" as approaching footsteps are heard. He calls out "Who's there?", and enter, bowing, the servant and the two murderers—a sufficient equivalent for the four feet wanting after "there".

As Macbeth proceeds to sound the murderers, it is only to be expected that, initially, he would speak slowly and deliberately, with pauses, speeding up as he gets to be surer of his hirelings. Ff provide just such a text of the dialogue, rich in short lines in the initial speeches of Macbeth, not so in the later ones. Thus Macbeth's speech beginning "Well then", totalling eleven lines plus part of a twelfth, has as many as seven short lines; his next one, nine lines in all, has as many as six. But all his subsequent speeches in the dialogue, totalling fifty-eight lines, yield not more than five short lines. Editors since Rowe have spoiled this significant text by so re-lineating the two earlier speeches of Macbeth as to rob them of all their short lines.

The short lines in the later speeches may now be considered. The contractions in the line "Not i'th'worst ranke of Manhood, say't" show that the line has been deliberately shortened so as to give Macbeth the opportunity for a pause after "say't" as if he were waiting for a response to his challenge. Rowe set the bad example, followed since by a long line of editors, of killing the drama of the line to save the metre by expanding the contractions. Cuningham describes the Folio line as 'very faulty'!<sup>121</sup>

Macbeth's last speech but one in the scene begins in Ff with these lines: "Your Spirits shine through you. / Within this houre, at most, /". The first line is preceded by and goes with "Though our Lives—", spoken by the First Murderer. The two lines taken together would still be short of the norm by one syllable, and scansion would show that the missing syllable is exactly where it should be in this line, viz, after "Lives". The First Murderer has not completed his statement (the dash after "Lives" is the Folio punctuation) when Macbeth butts in with a gesture of hearty approval (doing duty for the missing syllable), which he backs up with the words "Your...you". Then, coming closer to the murderers (hence the shortness of the second line), he proceeds to confide to them his secret instructions. This dramatic structure of the verse was destroyed by Pope who put the two lines together, curtailing "Within" to 'in'<sup>122</sup> and making the First Murderer's "Though our Lives—" go with the previous line (spoken by the Second Murderer): "Performe what you command us." Editors since Pope have been, more or less, following in his footsteps.

Significant short lines also occur in the Folio text of the speeches of the murderers. Thus the Second Murderer ends one of his speeches with "To spight the World", and the First Murderer follows up with "And I another,". The two lines of course go with each other; even then, they are a little short of the norm, leaving room for a gesture of spiting in between. Several modern editors (including Wilson and Muir) would have a full line here by bringing down "I doe" from the preceding line. The Folio lineation (with a vivid gesture constituting the third foot) is much better.

The speech beginning "And I another" ends in Ff with a short line, "To mend it, or be rid on't.", which is followed by a full line (spoken by Macbeth): "Both of you know *Banquo* was your Enemye." The short line leaves room for just that kind of prelusive gesture that would lend added vigour to Macbeth's assertion. A similar purpose is served by the next short line, "True, my Lord.", which is followed by Macbeth's "So is he mine: and in such bloody distance,". Editors since Rowe have seen to it that both the short lines are completed by dividing Macbeth's "Both ... Enemye" between them!

The Second Murderer's "Performe what you command us", already quoted, is short in Ff, leaving room after it, as needed, for a gesture on the part of the two murderers placing themselves at Macbeth's command. Pope's re-lineation, referred to earlier, cuts out that room.

Two successive short lines crop up towards the close of the scene in Ff. Macbeth speaks: "...resolve your selves apart, / Ile come to you anon.", and the Murderers: "We are resolv'd, my Lord." Editors have a way of treating the two short lines as parts of the same verse, even though that makes for a hexameter (which Hanmer, for one, forestalls by dropping "my Lord"). The context ("resolve...apart"), however, makes it clear that two separate short lines are intended. After "anon" the two murderers go "apart" and confer together. Presently they come forward and announce: "We...Lord."

**Act III, Scene ii.**—The scene well illustrates the subtlety and depth of Shakespeare's short lines, showing how he can and does bring out states of mind and soul and unfold whole chapters in the spiritual history of a character simply by curtailing his verse. Lady Macbeth enters and asks "Is *Banquo* gone from Court?", but the actress playing that character would miss Shakespeare's intention absolutely were she to start speaking immediately on entry. For the line is short, which shows that the Lady enters in silence—a brooding silence that reveals more than words could the crisis her soul has been passing through. The vacuum before the line almost spells the next short one: "Nought's had, all's spent". In this latter the shortening has been carried further by means of contractions, leaving

a six-syllable-long lacuna, which we might cut up into three pauses (each a foot long): one before the line, one in the middle, one at the end—a “nought” before, a “nought” after, a “nought” in between. There could hardly be a finer case of correspondence of form and content—of coincidence of metrical and spiritual voids. Editors to this day have an obtuse way of making this line go with the preceding part-lines (“For a few words, / Madame, I will.”) to form a hexameter, not even allowing a metrical hiatus for the servant’s exit. Steevens, for one, goes even so far as to suggest omission of “Nought’s had” to keep the verse within the limits of a pentameter!

Macbeth’s first speech in the scene contains in Ff a number of excruciating short lines. The first two, “But let the frame of things dis-joynt, / Both the Worlds suffer, /”, underline the paradox of defiance<sup>123</sup> to which he is driven by the very anguish of his despair. The first one is completed by a gesture of tearing things apart, the disintegration in his own self being thus projected outside. The second would permit part of the five-syllable-long gap being placed before it and part after, a gesture prelude to “Both” starting the line and one expressive of the word “suffer” ending it. No words, perhaps, could express the speaker’s soul-torment as well as the anguished pause after the next short line: “Then on the torture of the Minde to lye / In restlesse extasie. /”. Two intensely wistful pauses come to mark the next two short lines as Macbeth’s whole being hungers for the peace his victim has found in the grave; the lines are “*Duncane* is in his Grave:” and “Can touch him further.”. The latter goes with “Come on:” (spoken by Lady Macbeth) to form a line short of the norm by three syllables. Another wistful pause occupies this three-syllable-long gap, and almost enables the reader to visualize the speaker’s “rugged Lookes” to which Lady Macbeth refers presently.

Macbeth’s next speech has two consecutive short lines: “Unsafe the while, that wee must lave / Our Honors in these flattering streames, /”. A pause of unease before “Unsafe”; a pained gesture of laving after “streames”. Editors led by Rowe, Pope and Steevens have been struggling with these lines, trying to get rid of the one or the other or both the pauses, Muir (who follows Steeven’s re-lineation<sup>124</sup>: . . . *we . . . streams*) declaring that ‘the Folio line-division is wrong here, and something may be missing’!<sup>125</sup>

The next short line (also spoken by Macbeth), “Hath rung Nights yawning Peale”, has something of a pealing sound about itself, enough to fill in with its reverberation the gap of two feet after it. The consequent pause on the speaker’s part intensifies the terror of his announcement: “There shall be done a deed of dreadfull note.” A good measure of the frightfulness of this line is the shortness of the one that follows (spoken

by Lady Macbeth): "What's to be done?". Macbeth's announcement, with its *d*'s of death and destruction<sup>126</sup>, reduces the Lady to bewildered silence for quite a few moments. It is a pity that all these finenesses of the Folio text should be lost on the editors who have still been repeating the outrage done to these lines by Rowe who transferred "There shall be done" to the previous line. Rowe, too, they have still been preferring to Shakespeare in their dealings with the last short line in the Folio text of the scene: "Which keepes me pale. Light thickens, / And the Crow makes Wing toth' Rookie Wood:". Rowe transferred "And the Crow" to the line preceding. This of course facilitates the iambic scansion of the two lines, but a pause after "pale" would be more natural and more to the point than one after "Wood". Macbeth pauses after "pale" and turns his gaze towards the scene as visible through the windows of the room where they are talking. Pointing to it, he resumes: "Light thickens. . . .".

**Act III, Scene iii.**—The Folio text of this scene of action provides short lines just where the action requires them. Thus: "3. Hearke, I heare Horses. / *Banquo within.* Give us a light there, hoa. / 2. Then 'tis hee:". "Hearke. . . Horses" goes with the previous line "The subject of our Watch" to form a full one; "Give. . . hoa" with "Then 'tis hee" to form a line short of the norm by a foot ("Then 'tis hee" is best treated as an anapaest). After "Horses" they of course listen when Banquo's voice is heard within; the line "Give. . . hee" should begin therefore with a natural pause. Hence the shortness of the Folio line, which seems to me to be preferable to Pope's re-lineation (almost universally followed) which seeks to regularize the verse into a complete hexameter by bringing up "The rest" from the next line, "The rest, that are within the note of expectation", and expanding "'tis" into 'it is'. There seems to be no particular metrical necessity to subtract syllables from "The rest. . . expectation"; it is not at all impossible to make it an iambic hexameter by pronouncing "expectation" as a trisyllable, and an alexandrine is by no means an unusual variation on an iambic pentameter.

Three short lines follow each other when Banquo is set upon by the murderers: "O, Trecherie! / Flye good Fleans, flye, flye, flye, / Thou may'st revenge. O Slave! /". The context has Banquo speaking: "It will be Rayne to Night.", to which the First Murderer immediately adds "Let it come downe.", the two speeches together forming a complete verse. The blows start 'raining' before "O Trecherie!": hence the metrical gap; besides, the force and intensity of the "O" give it the value of more than one syllable. In the next line Banquo should speak each of the three *flye*'s closing the line with all the strength that is left him yet, so that each becomes the equivalent of two syllables; the shortness of the line makes this possible, and as a result, each *flye* comes to constitute a foot by itself,

and the line becomes the equivalent of a pentameter. The next line has a gasping pause between "revenge" and "O", and a metrical gap after "Slave" filled in with Banquo's death and Fleance's escape. Needless to add, the Folio text contains no stage-directions hereabouts; the short lines have, by their very shortness, the effect of suggesting and incorporating the necessary stage-directions. Hammer spoiled the passage by coupling the first two lines together, and here editors have still been bearing him company. Pope, in addition, dropped the word "good" so that the two lines might well go together metrically, and he too found a few followers in his own century. Pope and a few eighteenth-century editors, moreover, were inclined to regard "Thou...Slave!" as going with the next line ("Who did strike out the Light?") to form a complete verse.

The way the scene ends in Ff is worth a passing notice:

3. There's but one downe: the Sonne is fled.
2. We have lost  
Best halfe of our Affaire.
1. Well, let's away, and say how much is done.

"There's...lost" forms a complete verse. "Best...Affaire" is short, followed by a pause: the murderers stand crestfallen for a moment or two. The last line is a full, not a short, one, which shows that the interval between the speech and the action of departure is almost nil; in other words, hardly has the line been spoken (and it is spoken fast) when the murderers dash out of the stage, as they should. Muir misses these subtleties of the Folio text when he re-lineates thus: 'Best...away, / And ...done.' So did Pope and Malone who, by two different kinds of re-lineation, got rid of the short line "Best...Affaire". Both have had followers.

**Act III, Scene iv.**—Ff start the scene right away with a series of short lines, and the editors have been after them as usual:

- Macb.* You know your owne degrees, sit downe:\*
- At first and last, the hearty welcome.\*
- Lords.* Thanks to your Majesty.\*
- Macb.* Our selfe will mingle with Society,\*
- And play the humble Host:\*
- Our Hostesse keepes her State, but in best time
- We will require her welcome.\*
- La.* Pronounce it for me, Sir, to all our Friends,
- For my heart speakes, they are welcome.\*

The asterisked lines are all short, each serving an obvious stage-purpose. After the first one the guests "sit downe" as bidden. A hearty gesture of welcome fills out the second. A ceremonial bow precedes the third, after which, moreover, Macbeth starts moving round the table "to mingle

with Society", as he says. He continues doing so along with and after the fourth, and along with the fifth. The clue to the shortness of the fifth one is furnished by the next statement, "Our Hostesse keeps her State". After "Host" Lady Macbeth 'ascends to her throne', as Dover Wilson has it in his edition of the play. But this extraneous stage-direction is a poor substitute for the organic one that in the Folio text is built into the very structure of the verse-line "And...Host". As the Lady seats herself in her 'chair of state', Macbeth points to her and speaks again: "Our Hostesse...". He pauses after "her welcome" and beams at her. As for the short line spoken by Lady Macbeth, she and her guests of course complete it, the former with an appropriate gesture of welcome and the latter by rising and bowing to her.

Even short lines so necessary as these from the simple stage point of view have not escaped editorial interference. Johnson, Capell, and Delius made short work of the first three short lines, the first two by ending the first line with 'first', Delius by ending it with 'last'. They have had a host of followers down to the present century: thus, Cuningham follows Delius; Wilson and Muir, Johnson and Capell. Keightley, for another, tried to get rid of the fifth and sixth short lines by making one line of "And...keeps".

The Folio text of the remainder of the scene is rich in short lines. The next two are of more than ordinary significance:

- [*Macb.*] Be large in mirth, anon wee'l drinke a Measure  
The Table round. There's blood upon thy face.  
*Mur.* 'Tis *Banquo's* then.  
*Macb.* 'Tis better thee without, then he within.  
Is he dispatch'd?  
*Mur.* My Lord his throat is cut, that I did for him.  
*Macb.* Thou art the best o'th'Cut-throats,  
Yet hee's good that did the like for *Fleans*:

"'Tis *Banquo's* then" is a short line of two feet only with the pause—a considerable one—entirely after it (for the murderer's speech must be in immediate response to Macbeth's remark: "There's...face"). The F text evidently intends that Macbeth should be contemplating aghast that blood-mark on the murderer's face for quite a few moments before he speaks again. It is highly important for the sequel that he should be doing so. This fine intention of the F text is missed by Muir who re-arranges the lines thus:...*measure*...*round*...*face*...*then*. 'It is better', he writes in justification of his re-lineation, 'to have the metrical gap before these words ["There's...face"] than after. A pause is necessary while Macbeth goes to the door, and one is undesirable either before or after the speech of the murderer.'<sup>127</sup> Muir's lineation is quite a possible one, but the F one

undoubtedly makes for much the more significant text. As for Macbeth's going to the door, action and speech here are of course simultaneous. Macbeth makes towards the door, half turning towards his guests, as he speaks the words "Be large . . . round."

Having missed all this significance of the F text, it is no wonder that Muir should find it in himself to do away with the next two short lines in the extract quoted by ending the lines thus: . . . *within*. . . *cut*; . . . *cut-throats*; . . . 'This arrangement of the lines', he says, 'eliminates the superfluous break after *dispatch'd*.'<sup>128</sup> The fact of the matter is that the break intended by the F text is not after but before the query; it cannot be after, for the murderer's reply is immediate and unhesitating. As a break it is not 'superfluous' at all. After "within" Macbeth falls to contemplating that blood-mark over again. Once more, it is of crucial importance for the sequel that he should do so. As for the line, "Thou . . . Cut-throats", it should remain short as in the F text (which, it may be noted, seeks to make it as short as possible by deliberate contractions that numerous editors led by Pope and Capell have been unable to stand), leaving room, as it should, for a commendatory gesture either before or after it.

The murderer's next speech, announcing the escape of Fleance, begins in FF with a short line of two feet only: "Most Royall Sir". Most appropriately, for, being a confession of failure, it must be an embarrassed speech, falteringly spoken. "Fleance is scap'd", says the murderer, on the heels of which statement comes Macbeth's, "Then comes my Fit againe:", the two together forming a complete verse. This leaves the next line, "I had else been perfect", short. The pause of two feet that intervenes between it and the preceding line is a good measure of the "Fit" that Macbeth speaks of, betokened by some appropriate gesture. Pope made the two lines, "Then . . . againe" and "I . . . perfect", one, and Rowe disposed of both the short lines, "Thou . . . Cut-throats" and "Most Royall Sir", by ending the lines . . . *good . . . it, . . . Non-pareill*. Both have had to this day a large following!

The next two short lines in the F text are generally treated by editors as parts of a single hexameter, but it is much better that they should be taken as two separate lines. The lines are "Meeting were bare without it." (spoken by Lady Macbeth) and "Sweet Remembrancer:" (spoken by Macbeth). Between them comes in the Folio s-d, *Enter the Ghost of Banquo, and sits in Macbeth's place*. It is not that a metrical gap is needed for the entry of the Ghost, which of course is simultaneous with the speeches. A metrical gap is required after "it" for a gesture of amends on Macbeth's part, and another after "Remembrancer" for an appropriate gesture to prelude the lines that follow: "Now good digestion waite on Appetite. . . ."

The entry of the Ghost leads up to a number of vivid short lines with built-in stage-directions:

- Macb.* The Table's full.  
*Lenox.* Heere is a place reserv'd Sir.  
*Macb.* Where?  
*Lenox.* Heere my good Lord.  
 What is't that moves your Highnesse?  
*Macb.* Which of you have done this?  
*Lords.* What, my good Lord?  
*Macb.* Thou canst not say I did it: never shake  
 Thy goary lockes at me.

The pauses before "Where?" and after "Lord", "Highnesse" and "me" are so suggestive as to render comments on their significance—the "flawes and starts" they find room for and the speechless horror they evoke—superfluous. Equally superfluous would be comment on such a hectic short line as "Behold, looke, loe, how say you:". The speech of Macbeth where this line occurs, ends with a short line: "Shall be the Mawes of Kytes." After "Kytes" he keeps on looking at the apparition till it vanishes. Lady Macbeth speaks next: "What? quite unmann'd in folly."—a short line that begins with a reproachful pause.

Even short lines so obviously necessary as these have not escaped mauling at the hands of editors. Thus Capell joined "Heere...Lord" and "What...Highnesse?" into one line (Steevens going even so far as to drive out "good" to find room for "Where?" in the line). This re-lineation by Capell still provides the standard text of this speech of Lenox. Dover Wilson, once more, would have it both ways by adopting Capell's re-lineation and putting in at the same time four dots between "Lord" and "What" to indicate 'a long pause'! It was Capell again who spoiled "Behold...you" by tacking it on to the previous line "Prythee see there:", which, however, the Folio text intends to go with the line preceding, "You looke but on a stoole." Here, again, Capell has to this day a large following (which, however, just for once, excludes Muir). As for the two short lines, "Shall...Kytes" and "What?...folly", the fact that in combination they would run into thirteen syllables has not prevented most editors from treating them as parts of the same verse (Steevens suggests omission of "in folly" to facilitate the process!).

The re-appearance of the Ghost occasions similar short lines. There are pauses before and after "What man dare, I dare:"—pauses eloquent of Macbeth's looks and behaviour at the moment. Pauses, again, before and after Lady Macbeth's reproach "You have displac'd the mirth,"—she comes closer to Macbeth, reproves him aside<sup>129</sup>, and follows up after "mirth" with a censorious pause. Macbeth's answer to her reproach



begins with a short line, "Can such things be," preceded by a long pause of wonder that serves for a very appropriate prologue to the passage he speaks. The metrical hiatus here becomes thus an organic part of the verse-structure, throwing out one filament towards "admir'd" in the line immediately preceding ("Broke the good meeting, with most admir'd disorder"—spoken by Lady Macbeth), and another towards "wonder" and "strange" in the passage spoken by Macbeth. It is such a pity that this fine Folio text should be murdered by Rowe and successive editors down to our own day with this obtuse re-lineation: 'You...meeting, / With...be,'.

The short lines we next come across in the Folio text of the scene are four consecutive ones:

[La.]	But go at once.	
Len.	Good night, and better health	
	Attend his Majesty.*	
La.	A kinde goodnight to all.*	<i>Exit Lords.</i>
Macb.	It will have blood they say:*	
	Blood will have Blood:*	

The asterisked lines are short. Editors have a standard way of treating the first and the second as parts of a hexameter. It is much better, however, dramatically, to take them as separate lines, each short. After "Majesty", the 'Lords' rise and bow; after "all" they go out. The next two short lines are punctuated, as they should be, with sombre pauses. The shortness of the last one, moreover, permits of each of the two *Blood's* being dwelt upon by the speaker as they should be. The lines, therefore, are definitely spoiled if they are coupled together as, unfortunately, they have been by editors since Rowe.

**Act III, Scene vi.**—Ff start the scene with a couple of short lines: "My former Speeches, / Have but hit your Thoughts / Which can interpret farther...". Editors since Rowe have been making one pentameter line out of the two. It is perfectly possible to do so, but that does not necessarily prove that the Folio lineation is wrong. There is quite a case for it. The intention to treat the two lines as separate short lines with a definite break in between, comes out clearly from the Folio punctuation: a comma after "Speeches", which is grammatically unnecessary and even undesirable. The punctuation is dramatic rather than grammatic, and the lineation similarly is governed by dramatic rather than metric considerations. The scene is supposed to open in the midst of a dialogue which has already started off the stage, and we must assume the first line to start at a moment of silence in that dialogue. For the moment both the speakers, Lenox and the Lord, are thinking over what they have said to and heard from

each other so far. Accordingly the first line begins with a pause, and Lenox on the stage would very probably miss Shakespeare's intention if he did not observe this pause and started speaking right away on entrance. Another pause begins after "Speeches" and extends into the next line, where the entire pause must be before the line and none after it since there is no punctuation after "Thoughts" (though one might have been normally expected) and the verse runs on to the next line. The two pauses, the one after the first line and the one before the second, combined, make for a long break which enables the second line to be spoken with a force and emphasis that would not have been possible if the line had been a part of a longer one. Moreover, the idea of the second line gains in relief from its isolation; it would shrink in importance if the line had to merge itself into a longer one as it has to in Rowe's re-lineation.

The next two short lines in the scene, (*Lord*) "Prepares for some attempt of Warre." / (*Lenox*) "Sent he to *Macduffe*?", are commonly regarded by editors as parts of a single verse. So too the two concluding lines: (*Lenox*) "Under a hand accurs'd." / (*Lord*) "Ile send my Prayers with him." The fact that in each case the two lines together run into thirteen syllables makes it likelier that two separate short lines are intended. In the first case Lenox has just had from the Lord a mixture of news good and bad: Malcolm and Macduff have been trying to mount an invasion of Scotland with English help, and Macbeth has been preparing "for some attempt of Warre"; the prospect of deliverance is there, but at the cost, it seems, of a bloody war. Quite a moment for an anxious pause in the conversation, and the Folio text does provide it in the shape of two consecutive short lines with a gap between them (there is none, incidentally, either before the first line or after the second; the former is preceded by a run-on line, and the query in the latter is immediately answered by the Lord). In the second case, a gesture of invocation on the part of Lenox (he invokes "some holy Angell" to "flye to the Court of England...") and one of prayer on the part of the Lord complete the line "Under...accurs'd".

**Act IV, Scene i.**—Macbeth says to the Second Apparition "Had I three eares, Il'd heare thee."—a line short of the norm by a foot and a half. Evidently it is intended that the Apparition's speech that follows (beginning "Be bloody, bold, and resolute:") must not start immediately after "thee", but that a few moments of tense silence should intervene between the two speeches, Macbeth on the *qui vive* all the while for the prognostications to come. This intention of the Folio text is entirely missed in the Steevens-Reed and the Malone-Boswell Variorum and in Singer's edition, where the first line of the Apparition's speech is made to end at "bold," consequential re-adjustments being made in the

lineation of the remainder of the speech—all which dilutes the dramatic tension of the moment and, in addition, destroys the rhymes of the Apparition's speech.

The next short line in the scene, "And sleepe in spight of Thunder." (also spoken by Macbeth), is actually completed with a clap of thunder (*Thunder* being the Folio s-d in the margin). Rowe spoiled the line by turning it into a complete verse with the addition of the words "What is this" imported from the next line: "What is this, that rises like the issue of a King." This re-lineation, unfortunately, has since become the standard text of this part of the scene. The fact that the Folio line "What. . . King" totals thirteen syllables is hardly a reason why we should split it up in this manner and so spoil the drama of the Folio short line. The line "What. . . King" may be easily reduced to a hexameter (not an unusual variation on a pentameter) by pronouncing "What is" as "What's". Editors show no awareness of the fact that the conversion of the Folio short line into a complete verse would necessarily make the thunderclap simultaneous with the speech. But a thunderclap simultaneous with a speech would drown the speech itself!

A previous short line, "More potent then the first." (spoken by the First Witch), is similarly completed with a thunderclap (*Thunder* being, once again, the Folio s-d in the margin). This has happily escaped editorial interference. Not as fortunate has been the short line, spoken later by Macbeth, "Horrible sight: Now I see 'tis true." Just one syllable short of the norm, the line is evidently intended to be spoken with a gesture of repulsion after the word "sight". Completed in that fashion, the line lives in the Folio version, whereas the way Pope and Steevens sought to normalize it by inserting an unstressed syllable (Pope: 'Nay'; Steevens: 'Ay') amounted to robbing it of life. Pope's version found a few followers (including Capell), but, fortunately, not many outside his century.

After "the Witches Dance, and vanish" Macbeth speaks in Ff a couple of short lines: "Where are they? Gone? / Let this pernicious houre, /". It has been the standard editorial practice since Rowe to combine the two lines into a complete verse. That is metrically feasible, but dramatically inadvisable. Speaking is not the only thing Macbeth should be doing here for the moment; amazed, he looks all about him for the vanished witches. The Folio text provides room for this by means of two successive short lines.

The next short line in the scene, "I [Ay], my good Lord" (spoken by Lenox in reply to Macbeth's query, "Fled to England?") has been adequately dealt with by Flatter<sup>130</sup>.

A note must be added on the editorial maltreatment of the speeches of the first two Apparitions in the scene. The First Apparition speaks

thus in Ff: "*Macbeth, Macbeth, Macbeth: / Beware Macduffe, / Beware the Thane of Fife: dismisse me. Enough.*"; and thus the Second: "Be bloody, bold, and resolute: / Laugh to scorne / The powre of man: For none of woman borne / Shall harme *Macbeth.* /". Nearly all editors follow Rowe in getting rid of four of the five short lines in the two speeches by coupling the first two lines of each speech into a single line. They thus miss the fine intention of the Folio text, which is that the speeches should be punctuated with tantalizing breaks and pauses that leave Macbeth on tenterhooks.

A reference has been made above to a relineation of the Second Apparition's speech by certain editors that destroys its rhymes while normalizing the short lines. It is essential that the rhymes in the Folio text of the speeches of the three Apparitions should be preserved. For one thing, just as in the case of the Weird Sisters, the speeches of beings belonging to a different order of existence should be differentiated by being put in a different kind of verse. For another, prognostications such as those made by the Apparitions should be made to have an air of finality about them as if it could not be or happen otherwise. Rhyme has a feel of finality about it, for, as soon as one hears the rhyme, one knows for certain that the verse has come to an *end*; one cannot have the same feeling of finality from unrhymed verse.

**Act IV, Scene ii.**—Three consecutive short lines occur in Ff where Rosse is about to take his leave. "Blessing upon you.", he says, addressing his "pretty Cosine"—a short line which is immediately followed by this speech of Lady Macduff's: "Father'd he is, / And yet hee's Father-lesse. /". The first short line comes to life with a gesture of benediction (which completes it), and the next two come to life through pauses of pity. Rosse, as his parting speech shows, is too moved to speak immediately after "Father-lesse". Most of these effects are lost by Rowe's re-lineation of Lady Macduff's speech, which combines the two lines into one. The fact that this re-lineation has become the standard text of this speech is only to be deplored.<sup>131</sup>

The Folio text of the dialogue between Lady Macduff and her son is interspersed with pauses of pity which definitely enhance the pathos of the conversation, but most of which have been victims of the usual editorial impatience of short lines. Thus, Rosse speaks a short line before he goes: "I take my leave at once.", and then Lady Macduff another: "Sirra, your Fathers dead,.". The gap after the former plus the one before the latter provide enough room for Rosse's departure and Lady Macduff's turning round to her son and pausing for pity before she starts speaking. The common editorial practice of treating the two lines as parts of a single hexameter hardly merits approval. Far less deserving of approval

is the way editors have interfered with a number of subsequent short lines spoken by Lady Macduff and wiped out the pauses of pity and strokes of caress for her child with which the Folio text punctuates the speeches concerned. Thus, "Poore Bird, / Thou'dst never Feare the Net, nor Lime, /" were by Theobald combined into a single verse-line. So were "Yes, he is dead: / How will thou do for a Father? /" by Rowe. The lines, "Every one that do's so, is a Traitor, / And must be hang'd. /" and "Now God helpe thee, poore Monkie: / But how will thou do for a Father? /", were turned into prose by Pope. In each case the wrong arrangement has, once again, become the standard text! As for the lines "Thou speak'st with all thy wit, / And yet I'faith with wit enough for thee.", Pope re-divided them after "faith" and so substituted a full line followed by a short one for the Folio arrangement of a short line followed by a full one. This reversal of the Folio arrangement has been adopted by several succeeding editors (including Dover Wilson), but what is gained by it is not clear.

The short line, "Poore Birds they are not set for:", spoken by Macduff's son, leaves fine scope for acting talent in regard to the manner the line is filled out on the stage. Unlike modern playwrights Shakespeare does not circumscribe histrionic originality by indicating the precise nature of the expression, gesture, and / or movement with which he wants the pathos of this line to be vivified on the stage. All that he does is to drop a subtle hint by means of a shortened verse that the line must be brought to life on the stage by being completed not metrically but histrionically.

The effect on Lady Macduff of the appearance of the murderers is suggested not merely by her words, "What are these faces?", but also, and more, by the stunned silence that precedes and follows this exclamation of hers; for Ff assign her here a couple of short lines: "To say I have done no harme? / What are these faces? /". Rowe, therefore, was wrong when he made the two lines one—an error perpetuated to this day by succeeding editors.

The Murderer's query, "Where is your Husband?", is another short line—short for an obvious purpose. On entry the Murderer must look all about himself before he speaks; the entire gap is before the line and none after it since Lady Macduff's spirited reply ("I hope in no place so unsanctified. . .") must follow immediately.

Ff conclude the scene with three consecutive short lines: (*Mur.*) "Yong fry of Treachery?" / (*Son.*) "He ha's kill'd me Mother, / Run away I pray you. /". The shortness of the last line needs no word of explanation. As for the first two, it is the standard editorial practice to treat them as parts of a hexameter. It is much better, however, to take them as two separate short lines, room being needed for the stabbing and all that.

In fact, the shortness of the Folio line "Yong... Treachery?" renders unnecessary the s-d, *Stabbing him*, which has been gratuitously put in the margin by editors since Rowe.

**Act IV, Scene iii.**—The first short line in the scene, "T'appease an angry God.", spoken by Malcolm, is followed by shocked silence on the part of Macduff, who is of course taken aback by Malcolm's distrust of him. It would be bad acting if the actor playing Macduff spoke the next line, "I am not treacherous.", immediately after "God". On the other hand there is no break between "I... treacherous" and the next line "But Macbeth is."; Malcolm's riposte, to be effective, must be immediate, and the two speeches go together to constitute a single blank-verse line.

Two short lines crop up presently in Ff: (*Malc.*) "Yet Grace must still looke so." / (*Macd.*) "I have lost my Hopes." / (*Malc.*) "Perchance even there / Where I did finde my doubts. /". It is the standard editorial practice to treat the first two lines as parts of the same verse, and to follow Rowe in conjoining the next two into one line. This elimination of short lines results, once again, in a much poorer text. As before, Malcolm's riposte must be immediate; "I... Hopes", therefore, goes with the next line, "Perchance... there", rather than with the preceding one, which, accordingly, should be regarded as a short line. And short it must be, for Malcolm's speech is such as to leave Macduff speechless with amazement for a few moments. This reading of the text leaves "Where... doubts" a short line—short to a good purpose, the pause after "doubts" reinforcing the pointedness of the question that follows: "Why in that rawnesse left you Wife, and Childe?". One can almost visualize Malcolm pointing an accusing finger in the gap between the two lines. Having put the pointed question, Malcolm pauses for an answer from Macduff; hence the shortness of the line "Without leave-taking. I pray you,."; the pause is of course after "-taking". There is no need, therefore, to fill out this line by inserting words like 'so much as' after "Without" or "O Macduff" before "I" or (as Cuninghame suggested<sup>132</sup>) 'in your thoughts' either before "I" or after "you".

Malcolm's next speech has a short line in the middle: "Of goodly thousands. But for all this,"—just one syllable short of the norm, the gap being between "thousands" and "But". The first half of this speech is rather encouraging for Macduff; the second distinctly discouraging. The transition from the one to the other is marked by the pause just noted. Hanmer's attempt to regularize the line by inserting 'yet' after "But" was certainly misdirected.

Macduff's speech beginning "This Avarice" ends with a short line: "With other Graces weigh'd." The line following is a full one: "But I have none. The King-becoming Graces,.". Room seems to have been

left between the two lines for a gesture prelude to the negative in "But...none".

The short line, "Dy'de every day she liv'd. Fare thee well," in Macduff's next speech but one<sup>133</sup>, has been ably dealt with by Flatter<sup>134</sup>. It is amusing to watch the ways successive editors have wrestled with the line to make it full. Numbers of them from Capell down to Dover Wilson have read 'liv'd' for "liv'd"; Pope and others inserted an 'Oh' before "Fare" (much virtue, it seems, in that interjection); Walker would pronounce "Fare" as a disyllable<sup>135</sup>; while Cuninghame, remarking that the line 'must be regarded as faulty in metre', suggests that the missing word is 'Then'.<sup>136</sup>

Ff have three consecutive short lines at the point where the Doctor enters. Macduff says, "Such welcome, and unwelcome things at once / 'Tis hard to reconcile. /"; and Malcolm, "Well, more anon. Comes the King forth / I pray you? /". The metrical gaps involved in these short lines are needed for obvious stage-purposes. Room is required after "reconcile" for the appropriate expression on the stage of more than one thing—Macduff's joy and relief after excruciating moments of frustration and the ardour of his response to Malcolm's invitation: "Now we'll together". Muir's re-lineation, "'Tis...anon. / Comes...you?", is therefore unacceptable; it damages the text by doing away with the metrical void after "reconcile". 'The pause', says Muir, in justification of his re-lineation, 'comes better after this phrase ["Well, more anon"] than before it, for during the pause the doctor comes down stage'.<sup>137</sup> The fact of the matter is that a pause is needed both before and after the phrase, and the Folio text supplies it at both places—after "reconcile", as we have already seen, and again after "anon". As the Doctor is seen coming, Malcolm says to Macduff, *sotto voce*, "Well, more anon." After "anon" the Doctor arrives, and Malcolm turns to him and asks, raising his voice as he does so, "Comes the King...?"; hence the shortness of the line "Well... forth". The Doctor, of course, bows to the Scottish prince and takes a look at the stranger Macduff before he proceeds to answer "I Sir..."; hence the shortness of the line "I pray you?". Accordingly, Rowe's re-lineation (which has been followed by numerous editors down to this century), making one line out of the two, "Well...forth" and "I pray you?", is unacceptable.

It is strange that editors should re-lineate where re-lineation is uncalled for and injures the text, and fail to do so where it is necessary. An allergy to short lines is the common factor in both cases. Here is an instance. The speech of Macduff's quoted above, "Such welcome... reconcile", is preceded in Ff by a thirteen-syllable line spoken by Malcolm: "Be like our warranted Quarrell. Why are you silent?". While editors

have bothered a good deal about the wording of the line, none appear to have thought of re-lineating it. Yet the unusual length of the line makes it very likely that two separate short lines are really intended.: "Be... Quarrell. / Why...silent? /". And it is imperative that the lines here should be short, for Macduff's silence must form an organic part of the verse-structure. Here it comes in in the seven-syllable-long (two syllables after the first short line and five before the second) void between "Quarrell" and "Why", leading up to Malcolm's query "Why are you silent?".

The dialogue that follows the entry of Rosse offers just the occasion for short, broken lines. Rosse's recital of the woes of Scotland ends in Ff with a short line: "Dying, or ere they sicken."; the succeeding pause testifies to the overwhelming effect of the recital. The actor playing Macduff would miss Shakespeare's intention if he spoke the line that follows, "Oh Relation; too nice, and yet too true.", immediately after "sicken".

The next short line to occur in Ff offers an instance of quite a subtle use of a short line. Malcolm asks "What's the newest griefe?", and Rosse starts his answer with a full line; in between is a gap of five syllables. Clearly the intention of the Folio text is that Rosse should fumble with his answer, as he has much reason to. "The newest griefe" is the massacre of Macduff's family, and Rosse cannot bring himself to break the terrible news at once. He seeks to get away from it by generalizing his answer ("That of an houres age, doth hisse the speaker, / Each minute teemes a new one."), which touches on no particular grief. Naturally he takes a little time to do so: hence the metrical gap after "griefe". On the stage, therefore, it would be bad acting if Rosse answered Malcolm's question immediately. Equally, it would be bad editing if the two short lines were normalized after Theobald: 'Dying...relation / Too nice...grief?'. Unfortunately, Theobald's re-lineation still continues to be the standard text of this part of the scene. Walker, for one, would even read "newest" as 'new'st'<sup>138</sup> to make the re-lineation metrically perfect!

Seeking to hide "the newest griefe", Rosse falls back on a lie when directly asked by Macduff "How do's my Wife?". The lie half sticks in his throat, and the answer, "Why well.", is of course spoken with a gulp. So, too, the answer, "Well too.", in response to the further query "And all my Children?". Hence the shortness of the lines concerned; even if the three lines, "Why well.", "And...Children?", "Well too.", are taken together, as editors usually take them, the resultant verse will still be a little short of the norm. To try to normalize it either by pronouncing *children* as *childeren*<sup>139</sup> or by assuming that a second 'Why' (before "Well too") has been left out by the printers,<sup>140</sup> would amount to an outrage on an unusually fine text. It is worth remarking in passing that after having wobbled through a couple of lies Rosse finds the third one easier and



speaks, accordingly, a full line: "No, they were wel at peace, when I did leave 'em".

When, at last, the terrible news is broken, there is just the occasion for short verse, and the Folio-text does let us have so many of them: "My Children too?", "I have said.", "Be comforted.", "To cure this deadly greefe.", "Did you say All? Oh Hell-Kite! All?", "At one fell swoope?". Comment on the anguished breaks and pauses these short lines involve, is superfluous. It is such a pity that Capell should wipe out most of these breaks and pauses by so re-lineating the two full lines that follow "My Children too?" in the F text that no short lines are left between "My" and "comforted"; such a pity, too, that this unwitting vandalism should continue to this day to be the standard version of this part of the scene. This is massacre of another sort but no less atrocious; "at one fell swoop" have the editors eliminated all the tragic life from Shakespeare's text.

The other short lines, too, have come in for their share of editorial attention. Thus Hanmer sought to 'cure' the short line, "To cure... greefe.", into a full-length one by re-lineating the two lines that follow it in the F text. As for "Did you say... All?", attempts have duly been made, by a variety of insertions, to wreck the vibrant pause between "All?" and "Oh" and the room provided in the line for intoning the two *All*'s. Theobald (followed by Warburton and Dr. Johnson) sought to fill out the line by inserting 'what, all' before "Oh". Walker preferred to read 'O vulture! hell-kite!',<sup>141</sup> while Cuninghame remarks that the line is 'obviously defective' and that "there is strong probability that *my children* are the words most likely to have been carelessly left out by the Folio printers at the end of the line'.<sup>142</sup> These 'emendations', fortunately, have not found a large following.

**Act V, Scene iii.**—That the Servant, already upset by what he has seen or learnt and further put out by the way his master storms at him, should fumble and falter in his speeches is only to be expected. Hence the short lines "Where got'st thou that Goose-looke." and "The English Force, so please you." Both are preceded and followed by full verses. After the first one an interval of dithering must pass before the Servant begins his reply. The second is preceded by and interspersed with faltering pauses.

The next short line in the scene, "He put it on:", leaves a gap of six syllables after it, which offers room enough for a couple of successive gestures to impart stage-life to statements—one, a peremptory gesture of determination, with reference to what precedes; the other, a sweeping one, with reference to what follows: "Send out mee Horses, skirre the Country round,".

The next short line, "Must minister to himselfe.", is followed similarly

by a peremptory gesture of rejection on the part of Macbeth, prefacing and lending stage-point to the succeeding statement "Throw Physicke to the Dogs...".

**Act V, Scene v.**—Lady Macbeth's death is announced, appropriately enough, in a short line: "The Queene (my Lord) is dead."—a slow, halting line which is half spoiled in modern editions of the play by replacement of the Folio brackets with a pair of commas; the Folio parenthesis definitely enhances the broken character of the statement (cf. the parentheses in the F text of I. ii).

Those who discover signs of Macbeth's spiritual death in the supposed callousness of the speech that follows, miss not only the fine ambiguities of *should* and *would* but also the significance of the shortness of the opening line: "She should have dy'de heereafter;". The pause which its shortness involves cannot be after it, since the next line ("There would have beene a time for such a word:") continues its thought. The pause is entirely before the line, and significantly, too—showing that the news of the Lady's death stuns Macbeth into a moment or two of heart-broken silence before he starts speaking. The attempt of Pope, Hanmer, and Cuninghame to combine the two short lines into a complete verse, the first two by omitting "my Lord" and the last by reading "(my Lord) is" as 'm'lord's'<sup>143</sup>, must be scouted.

The speech ends, significantly enough, in another short line with a metrical gap after it of four syllables: "Signifying nothing." It is so very much in the fitness of things that a speech that describes life as a meaningless tale should end in a void; how could there be anything after this "nothing"? Here is yet another striking instance of how a short line of Shakespare's can at times serve for a guarantee of poetic truth. Yet there are editors who are unable to stand the void and must have or would rather have something after "nothing"! The fact that in the Folio text this short line is followed by a full one ("Thou com'st to use thy Tongue: thy Story quickly."), which in its turn is followed by a short one ("Gracious my Lord," spoken by the Messenger), gives these editors their opportunity. All that has to be done, it seems, is simply to split the full line, tacking on one part to "Signifying nothing." and the other to "Gracious my Lord," thus making short work of both the short lines. So Lettsom in the last century suggested the lineation: 'Signifying... use / Thy... Lord.'. This, it appears, finds followers even now. 'The text', writes Cuninghame, 'should be printed in two lines, ending respectively "tongue" and "lord".'<sup>144</sup> Mark the *should*! Muir is just a little less positive: 'The text could be printed in two lines, the first ending with "use" or "tongue".'<sup>145</sup>

The Messenger, confounded by what he has seen, would of course speak haltingly. So he starts with a short line, "Gracious my Lord,"

which we must on no account seek to regularize either after Lettsom or Cuningham or after Keightley who made one line of 'Gracious... which' (two lines in the F text). This speech of the Messenger's ends "But know not how to doo't.", and Macbeth follows up at once with "Well, say sir." The two lines together fall short of the norm by one syllable. It is a case, it may be noted, of deliberate shortening: witness the contraction "doo't". The point is of course that the Messenger falters before he speaks again: "As I did stand my watch upon the Hill..."; it would be spoiling the text entirely if he started speaking as soon as Macbeth had said "Well, say sir". That several editors headed by Steevens have tried to fill out the line by reading 'do it' for "doo't", and several others headed by Pope by reading 'say it' for "say", is just another instance of editorial obtuseness.

The staggering effect of the Messenger's announcement on Macbeth is conveyed by Shakespeare by simply dropping a syllable. "The Wood began to move.", announces the Messenger, and Macbeth explodes: "Lyar, and Slave."; an unstressed syllable is wanting between "move" and "Lyar". If Rowe's stage-direction, *Striking him*, is accepted at all<sup>146</sup>, it must be placed before "Lyar" and not after "Slave".

**Act V, Scene vi.**—The scene has a more dramatic opening in Ff than what editors have made of it: "Now neere enough: / Your leavy Skreenes throw downe,"—two short lines that were made one by Rowe—a re-lineation that still continues to be the standard version of the opening of the scene. The two short lines combined make for an iambic pentameter, but leave no room for necessary action, which the Folio lineation does; once more, the editors have saved the metre at the cost of the drama. In the Folio version, the first line starts with six syllables of action, so to speak, the army marching in headed by Malcolm. The second line has a two-syllable gap before it and another after; the first provides room for Malcolm turning towards his men to give his orders, the second for a gesture to point the phrase "throw downe". And the soldiers go on throwing down their leavy screens the while Malcolm speaks to Siward and Macduff.

**Act V, Scene vii.**—A scene of action is expected to offer plenty of occasions for short lines. This one does. The fourth line, "Am I to feare, or none", spoken by Macbeth, is short for obvious reasons; Young Siward bursts in and cuts off the speech. The fight between him and Macbeth and his death occur in the gap between two short lines: (*Y. Sey*) "Ile prove the lye thou speak'st." / (*Macb.*) "Thou was't borne of woman; /". Editors have a standard practice of treating the two lines as parts of a single hexameter; they are clearly in the wrong.

The next short line in the scene is spoken by Macduff: "Seemes

bruited. Let me finde him Fortune," short of the norm by just one syllable. A slight pause after "bruited" as Macduff looks expectantly in the direction from which the noise comes, indicating the presence of "one of greatest note". Even this simple point was missed by editors like Hanmer who (followed by Capell and Malone) filled out the line by bringing up "And" from the next one, or Steevens who suggested the addition of 'there' after "bruited" and 'but' before "finde", or, for that matter, Keightley who suggested the insertion of 'to be' after "Seemes".

The dramatic significance of the short verse "Untimely ript.", as contrasted with the full verse "To one of woman borne. / Dispaire thy Charme," has been very ably dealt with by Flatter<sup>147</sup>. It may be of some interest to compare, in passing, Macbeth's spoken reaction to "Untimely ript" and that, a little later, to "Then yeeld thee Coward. . . Heere may you see the Tyrant.". In both cases he is reacting to Macduff's words, but whereas in the former a significant interval passes before he speaks, in the latter he flares up at once with "I will not yeeld" (which goes with "Heere. . . Tyrant" to form a complete verse: no short line this time). Macduff's insulting words have the splendid effect of stinging him into an *immediate* resumption of that Promethean stance which is such a feature of Shakespeare's presentation of this character, put on, as we have seen, in the third act with his challenge to Fate, re-affirmed in the concluding couplet of V. v where the ashes of desolation suddenly burst into a flame<sup>148</sup>, affirmed over again at the very outset of the present scene<sup>149</sup>, resumed here in the manner noted above through a significant verse-structure, and maintained hence till he falls fighting (whereas in Holinshed's narrative he betakes 'him streict to flight', pursued 'with great hatred' by Macduff).

Comment is hardly needed on the shortness of the line "Then yeeld thee Coward,"; one can easily visualize the stage-action that intervenes between it and the preceding full line, "And breake it to our hope. Ile not fight with thee.", and so fills in the metrical lacuna.

The effect of the dramatic entry of Macduff "with Macbeth's head" is conveyed in Ff by means of two short lines: "Haile King, for so thou art. / Behold where stands /". The stage necessity of the metrical gaps that precede and follow the first of these short lines or of the long one that precedes the second, is so obvious as hardly to call for explanation. That editors since Rowe have been making the two lines one is only to be deplored. The fact that the two lines readily combine into an iambic pentameter does not necessarily prove that the re-lineation is right and the Folio lineation wrong.

Finally it may be noted once more, as has been noted earlier more than once, how Shakespeare's short lines gain in value not only from the way they are used but also from the way they are not used. It is worth

remarking that not a single short line occurs in the part of the scene where Old Siward comes to learn of his son's death. Nothing could be more eloquent of the unflinching manner in which the veteran warrior stands up to his bereavement than this absence of short lines.

### III

The foregoing, I believe, is enough to show the interest and importance of short lines in the plays of Shakespeare. I have space here to examine the short lines of only one of his plays in the way I have done; but any of his maturer plays, analyzed in a similar fashion, would yield equally fascinating results. Fascinating, too, might be an enquiry as to whether Shakespeare's use of short lines discloses any progress and development from the earlier to the later plays, and whether they tend to be associated with any particular period or sector of his work more than with any other. Table III in Appendix H to the second volume<sup>150</sup> of Chambers's *William Shakespeare: A Study of Facts and Problems* shows that their frequency distinctly tends to increase after the English History plays and the great comedies, followed by a drop after *Coriolanus*, and that they have a marked affinity for the great tragedies. The rationale of this association of short lines with a particular group of Shakespeare's plays is worth exploring. The rôle of short lines in the plays of other Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatists, especially in those of Shakespeare's predecessors, and the differences, if any, between their use of short lines and Shakespeare's, are also an enquiry worth undertaking.

It should be clear from all that has been said that Shakespeare's short lines must be treated with much more consideration than they have received hitherto. We must be extremely chary of interfering with them in any manner, particularly those of them that are common to F1 and a good Q. Doubt may exist where a good Q gives a full line which F1 breaks up into two part-lines or *vice versa* (e.g., *Hamlet* I. v. 29: "Haste me to know't, that I with wings as swift"—a full line in Q2, which F1 divides at "know't", reading "Haste, haste" for "Haste" and "know it" for "know't", and omitting "I"), or where short verse-lines in the one are distinctly printed as prose in the other (e.g., *King Lear* I. iv. 278: "Yet have I left a daughter."—a short verse-line in F1 which in Qq is part of a prose passage). Even in such cases there may quite be room for choice in a good many instances, on dramatic or aesthetic considerations (which certainly matter as much as bibliographical ones), as to which is the better reading—the one with short lines or the one without. Thus "Well, good night" in *Hamlet*, I. i. 11, is a short verse-line in Q2 but part

of a prose speech in F1; "Peace! break thee off; look, where it comes again!" (*ibid.* I. i. 40) is a full verse in Q2, but split at "off" in F1; "Peace, Kent!" in *King Lear*, I. i. 123, is a short verse-line in F1 but part of a hexameter in Qq. From what has been said about these three cases in Section I of this paper, it follows that intelligent editing of the plays concerned should prefer the short-lined versions to the other ones. Here are further specimens:—

*Hamlet* I. i. 130-5: "If there be any good thing to be done, / That may to thee do ease and grace to me, / Speak to me: / If thou art privy to thy country's fate, / Which happily foreknowing may avoid, / O! speak; /". Thus Horatio to the Ghost. The lineation quoted is Q2's; in F1 the two short lines, "Speak to me" and "O! speak", are printed with the preceding lines. The Q lineation is undoubtedly better: it makes for a more dramatic speech than the F one. Each of the two short lines gives the sense of the speaker pausing for a response from the Ghost and resuming when the Ghost does not speak.

*Ibid.* I. iv. 79: "It waves me still. / Go on, I'll follow thee. /": so Hamlet to the Ghost. The lineation quoted is Q2's; the first line goes with the preceding one ("And hears it roar beneath.") to form a complete verse; the second stands by itself—a short line. F1 makes the two lines one. Once more the Q lineation provides much the better text; the short line leaves just the room needed for Marcellus trying to hold Hamlet back (hence the line that follows: "(*Mar.*) You shall not go, my lord. (*Ham.*) Hold off your hands!").

*Ibid.* II. ii. 105: "Perpend". This word, spoken by Polonius, forms a line by itself in Q2 but goes with the preceding line to constitute a hexameter in F1. The Q lineation is once more distinctly better, allowing as it does for a ponderous pause on the part of Polonius after delivering himself of the sonority of "Perpend", and providing room for the reverberation of the word as it must be spoken by him. Room is left, too, for necessary stage-action: Polonius draws out the letter that he reads out subsequently.

*Ibid.* III. iii. 87: "No". Spoken by Hamlet, this monosyllable makes a line by itself in Q2 but is put by F1 in the previous line to form a hexameter. Undoubtedly the Q lineation provides much the better reading, not only isolating and so enhancing the force of the negative but also supplying room for Hamlet holding his sword with the point up and so lending stage-life to the line that follows: "Up, sword...".

*Ibid.* V. ii. 241-2: "But pardon't, as you are a gentleman. / This presence knows, /". Thus Hamlet to Laertes on the eve of the fencing match: two lines, as shown, in F1 but one line (a heptameter) in Q2. Here the F lineation is decidedly better, not only on metrical grounds,

but especially because of the room it affords for an appropriate gesture before the second line to lend stage-life to "This presence", whether that refers to the King alone or to the entire gathering. The point was missed by Rowe who re-arranged the lines hereabouts by tacking on a part of the next line to "This presence knows"; he has been followed by a number of editors including Dover Wilson.

*Ibid.* V. ii. 335-6: "The point envenom'd too!— / Then, venom, to thy work. /": two short lines, as shown, in F1 but a full line in Q2. Here too the F lineation is much better. Each of the two short lines leaves room for action that fills it out and brings it to vivid life. The metrical hiatus in the first short line is filled in with Hamlet holding his weapon in place and looking intently at its venomous point; that in the second, with Hamlet rushing forward and stabbing the king. The requisite stage-direction is thus, in each case, woven into the fabric of the verse, and need not be indicated separately.

*Othello* I. i. 4-6: "'Sblood, but you will not hear me: / If ever I did dream of such a matter, / Abhor me. /". Q1 thus reads and lineates Iago's first speech in the play. Ff 1-3 omit "'Sblood" and lineate "But... dream / Of... me.", the second line being metrically tacked on to the next one, which in Ff is "Thou told'st me" but in Qq, "Thou told'st me thou did'st hold him in thy hate." (spoken by Roderigo). The Q lineation must be preferred, since it supplies two short lines (the first and the third) that leave room (at the beginning of the line, in the first case; at the end, in the second) for a couple of expressive gestures on Iago's part. That the very first speech in the play of a consummate actor like Iago should begin and end with an expressive gesture is just in the fitness of things.

*Ibid.* I. ii. 34: "The servants of the duke's? / And my lieutenant? /". Thus F1 lineates and punctuates Othello's speech as Cassio and Officers approach. Qq make the two lines one. The F lineation is undoubtedly better; it exactly reflects the action on the stage at this point as visualized by the playwright. As Othello looks at the approaching figures, some of them seem (hence the note of interrogation) to be officers of the duke; they come closer, and one of them seems to be his lieutenant. He waits till they are near enough for certain recognition, and then he greets them as he does in the next line: "The goodness of the night upon you, friends!"<sup>151</sup>

*Ibid.* I. iii. 189: "God be with you: I have done." So Brabantio's speech in I. iii., following Desdemona's beginning "My noble father, / I do perceive here a divided duty:", starts in F1. Qq read "God bu'y, I ha done."—a version which makes it possible for the line to be taken with the concluding line of Desdemona's speech ("Due to the Moor my Lord.") to form a complete verse. Not so the F version. In other words,

the F version involves two short lines—the concluding one of Desdemona's speech and the opening one of Brabantio's—and must be preferred just on that ground. The long pause of seven syllables between the two short lines is dramatically necessary, for the world crashes about Brabantio's ears as Desdemona ends her speech.<sup>152</sup>

*Ibid.* III.iii. 93 sq.: Othello's "Chaos is come again" speech is succeeded by the following dialogue, lineated in F1 as shown: "*Iago*. My noble lord,—*Oth.* What dost thou say, Iago? / *Iago*. Did Michael Cassio, / When you woo'd my lady, know of your love? / *Oth.* He did, from first to last: / Why dost thou ask? / *Iago*. But for a satisfaction of my thought, /". Qq read "Did Michael...lady?" and "He did...ask?" as one line in each case. Once more, the F lineation, involving as it does three short lines, must be preferred, though most modern editors follow Pope in preferring the Q lineation. The F lineation makes for a much tenser dialogue. It allows for (i) one of those masterly pauses on Iago's part, of which I have spoken in Section I of this paper, after Othello's question "What...Iago?"; (ii) another slight pause (with excellent dramatic effect) after "Cassio"; (iii) a tense pause after "He did" (which two words are of course spoken immediately after Iago's query)—a pause which in its turn makes for a unique emphasis on the phrase that follows: "from first to last"; (iv) one of Iago's tantalizing pauses after Othello's question "Why...ask?".

*Ibid.* V. i. 37: (*Cassio*) "What ho! no watch? no passage? / Murder, murder. /". This is the F lineation; Qq make the two lines one. Though modern editors usually follow Rowe in preferring the Q lineation, the F one is definitely superior; the two short lines fit so well the gasping speech of a severely wounded man.

*Ibid.* V. i. 98: (*Iago*) "He, he, 'tis he: / Oh that's well said, the chair. /". Two short lines in F1; one line in Qq. The F lineation, which leaves room, between the two short lines, for the chair being brought in, is obviously the better one. Modern editors usually follow Rowe in preferring the Q lineation; some of them reproduce the Q lineation and at the same time insert a s-d after the third *he*! There is no s-d here in either Qq or Ff.

*Ibid.* V. ii. 12-13: "I know not where is that Promethean heat / That can thy light relume. / When I have pluck'd the rose, /". This is the F lineation, involving two short lines which Qq combine into one. The two short lines provide room between them for a long, anguished pause which the tragedy at this point can hardly do without, nor can the tragic actor afford to miss the opportunity the pause gives him for silent acting. It is a pity that modern editions usually follow Capell in preferring the Q lineation here; the NS edition reproduces both the Q lineation and Theobald's s-d, *sets down the taper*, after "relume"!



*King Lear* IV. vii—It would be in the fitness of things in the Recovery Scene if Lear took his first, faltering steps towards resumption of sanity in short, broken verses interspersed with pauses and intervals. Hence we should prefer the F lineation to the Q one in all these cases:—(i) “Where have I been? / Where am I? Fair daylight? / (most editors, including the NA and NS editors, adopt the Q lineation, reading the two lines as one complete verse; so, too, in regard to no. iii); (ii) “Fourscore and upward, / Not an hour more, nor less: / And to deal plainly, /” (Qq omit the second line and read the first and the third together. Knight made a complete verse out of the first two lines, and NA, NS and other editors follow); (iii) “Be your tears wet? / Yes faith: I pray weep not, /” (one line in Qq); (iv) “Pray you now forget, and forgive, / I am old and foolish.” [*Exeunt*] (prose in Q1, and in many modern editions, including NA and NS).

*Ibid.* V. ii and iii: “What in ill thoughts again? / Men must endure / Their going hence, even as their coming hither, /”; “Upon such sacrifices my Cordelia, / The gods themselves throw incense. / Have I caught thee? /”. These are the F lineations of the famous lines. The Q lineations—“What...endure”; “The gods...thee?”—are universally followed by editors as metrically better. But, poetically and dramatically, the F lineations are definitely superior. They serve to isolate the two thoughts (two major thoughts of the play) into a relief that they call for. Moreover, in the F version, the short line, “Have I caught thee?”, leaves room for Lear taking Cordelia by the hand: hence the stage-point of the line that follows, “He that parts us...”.

*Ibid.* V. iii: “Howl, howl, howl: O you are men of stones,”. Thus Ff. The Q version, which repeats “Howl” four times, is preferred by many editors as metrically better. Once more, the F version is positively superior in that it is a little short of the blank-verse norm and so leaves room for the stunned silence that must sweep the stage as Lear enters with Cordelia dead in his arms.<sup>153</sup>

In the light of all this, then, I should say that current editorial policy with regard to short lines in the plays of Shakespeare stands in need of a major revision. It is high time that the modern reader was saved from the delusion of thinking that he was reading Shakespeare whereas in fact he might be reading just a debased and devitalized text resulting from impercipient editorial interference with short lines. Once these short lines are given the recognition that is their due, the existing line numeration of the plays, too, will need re-adjustment. Their importance in the acting of the plays and in choosing between different readings hardly needs additional words.

It is worth noting in passing that Shakespeare, if he can achieve

extraordinarily fine effects by curtailing his verse-lines, can also bring off equally striking effects by drawing them out beyond the blank-verse norm. Here is a specimen: "And I—of whom his eyes had seen the proof / At Rhodes, at Cyprus, and on other grounds / Christian and heathen— must be be-lee'd and calm'd / By debtor and creditor...". Thus Iago in *Othello* I. i. 28-31. The third line of the extract is a hexameter. The extra length necessarily slows down the movement of the line and thus makes it an appropriate vehicle for the lack of motion implied. We must therefore discountenance all attempts to normalize the line by adopting different readings or emendations.<sup>154</sup>

It is impossible in this connexion to avoid the reflection that we owe all these felicities of Shakespeare's workmanship to the fact that he happened to write in metrical verse when he was not writing in prose. Imagine what we would have lost if he had chosen to write in non-metrical verse or succumbed to the fallacy that, because we do not speak verse in real life, plays should therefore be written entirely in prose.

TARAKNATH SEN

#### NOTES & REFERENCES

[Except where otherwise indicated, all quotations from and references to the plays of Shakespeare are from and to the one-volume Oxford edition (ed. W. J. Craig: London, 1935). For quotations from the First Folio and the Quartos, the F1 text as reproduced in the Nonesuch Shakespeare (London, 1953) and the Shakespeare Quarto Facsimiles issued by the Shakespeare Association, London, have respectively been used. Quotations from the Q2 and F1 texts of *Hamlet* have been taken from Viëtor's *Shakespeare Reprints—II. "Hamlet": Parallel Texts* (2nd edn.: Marburg, 1913). F1 quotations from this as well as the Nonesuch Shakespeare have, where necessary, been checked with the First Folio Facsimile published by Methuen in 1910.]

1. Oxford, 1912 (p. xx).
2. *The Editorial Problem in Shakespeare: A Survey of the Foundations of the Text* (Oxford, 1942, p. liii).
3. *Prolegomena for the Oxford Shakespeare: A Study in Editorial Method* (Oxford, 1939, p. 44).
4. *A Note on "Coriolanus"* in *Joseph Quincy Adams Memorial Studies* (Washington, 1948), pp. 239-52.
5. *Shakespeare Survey*, No. 2 (Cambridge, 1949), p. 146.
6. NS *Coriolanus*, pp. 130-37.
7. And so Dover Wilson finds it difficult to explain why the F printer 'departed from normality' in printing *Coriolanus* I. ix. 13-17 (NS *Coriolanus*, p. 136). The lines and their context run in F1 as follows:

"Titus Lartius. Oh Generall:  
Here is the Steed, wee the Caparison:  
Hadst thou beheld—

*Martius*. Pray now, no more:

My Mother, who ha's a Charter to extoll her Bloud,  
When she do's prayse me, grieves me:  
I have done as you have done, that's what I can,  
Induc'd as you have beene, that's for my Countrey:"

Like many earlier editors, led by Pope and Hanmer, Wilson re-arranges these lines thus: "O general, / Here....caparison! / Hadst thou....my mother, / Who has....blood, / When she....I have done / As you have done...induced / As you have been....country: /". Now, in the case of 'speech-endings', the second part-line is never indented in F1. There was, therefore, sufficient room in the F1 column for printing "Pray...Mother" as one line; and if that column could accommodate "My Mother....Bloud", surely it could hold "When she....I have done" as one line. The narrowness of the F1 column, therefore, does not explain why the two lines, "Pray...more" and "When...grieves me", were printed short in F1. (Both the lines have been dealt with in the course of this paper.)

8. A few examples are given in McKerrow's *Prolegomena*, pp. 97-98.
9. *Op. cit.*, p. 47 and p. 49.
10. Five different Folio compositors have been identified so far (see Charlton Hinman: *The Printing & Proof-reading of the First Folio of Shakespeare*, Oxford, 1963, Vol. I, p. 12).
11. *Textual Problems of the First Folio* (Cambridge, 1953), p. 10.
12. *Op. cit.*, pp. 240-41.
13. Speaking of the early editions, McKerrow says: "In particular, little regard, even in what is clearly verse, seems to have been paid to the formation of complete lines." (*Op. cit.*, p. 44).
14. Line numerations, wherever cited, are those of the one-volume Oxford edn. already referred to. These line numerations, however, must come in for a good deal of revision if the point of this paper is accepted.
15. *Wherever, in this paper, a short line is quoted from a play of Shakespeare's, it is to be understood (except where otherwise indicated) that the line is short in the basic texts of the play, F1 as well as Q where a good Q exists.*
16. The line, a single one in both Q2 and F1, was divided at "not" by Capell—which makes 'Is it the king?' short of the norm by six syllables (three feet).
17. *NS As You Like It* (Cambridge, 1948), p. 124.
18. *NS Merchant of Venice* (Cambridge, 1926), p. 140.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 141.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 145.
21. *Ed. cit.* (London, 1955), p. 68.
22. *Hamlet*, ed. Harrison and Pritchard in 'The New Reader's Shakespeare Series' (Harrap).
23. *The Merchant of Venice*, ed. cit., p. 140.
24. *Ed. cit.*, p. 54.
25. *Ed. cit.*, p. 129.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 136.
27. The s-d, *Breaking from them*, inserted by Rowe after "Still....gentlemen", and reproduced by many subsequent editors, is misleading, giving the impression that the 'breaking' is subsequent to the speech, whereas the two are intended by Shakespeare through the very structure of his verse to be simultaneous.
28. *The Merchant of Venice*, ed. cit., p. 136.

29. Ed. cit., p. 54.
30. These lines do not occur in Ff.
31. Chambers: *William Shakespeare: A Study of Facts and Problems* (Oxford, 1930), Vol. I, p. 230 ('a pause for meditation or gesture, or for reversion to the business in hand'). Abbott: *A Shakespearian Grammar* (London, 1894), § 511. McKerrow and Greg recognize the possibility of a pause in some cases. Referring to the 'curious' F1 practice of printing the first line of a speech as two part-lines, even though the preceding speech has ended with a complete one, McKerrow remarks: 'In a certain number of cases it seems at first sight as if this arrangement might be intentional, for there is at the end of the part-line a more than usually important pause, either for emphasis or when a new person is addressed. Consideration of a large number of cases shows, however, I think, convincingly that there is as a rule no such intention in this arrangement, and we are driven to regard it as purely typographical in origin' (*op. cit.*, p. 48).
32. *Op. cit.*, p. 246.
33. Shorter still in Qq: "Ingrateful man."
34. Even if this line were taken with the last line of the preceding speech ("The devil himself."), the verse would still be short by one syllable. Ff omit "too". Certain editors have sought to rob the exclamation of half its force by normalizing the verse—Hanmer by reading 'it is but' for "'tis", and Capell *et al.* by bringing up "How smart" from the next line. M. A. Bayfield thinks that both the Q and the F reading 'ruin the metre', and proposes to read 'The devil... O it is too true.' (*A Study of Shakespeare's Versification*, Cambridge, 1920, p. 102).
35. The force and vehemence with which Lear speaks the lines, "Or at their chamber-door I'll beat the drum / Till it cry sleep to death.", seem to reverberate in the void after "death".
36. Bayfield, too, does the same in his revised text of *Antony and Cleopatra* (*Op. cit.*, Appendix VII). In this revised text Bayfield avoids, among other things, what he calls 'a needless multiplication of short lines' (*op. cit.*, p. 412) by applying his own metrical theories.
37. See Section III of this paper.
38. *The Merchant of Venice*, ed. cit., p. 124.
39. William Sidney Walker: *Shakespeare's Versification*, § LVIII (London, 1854, p. 290).
40. Omitted in Qq.
41. "...obvolvendum caput Agamemnonis esse, quoniam summum illum luctum penicillo non posset imitari..." (*Orator*, 22).
42. This F lineation is undoubtedly better than the Q one ("All... Edmund"—one line), which, unfortunately, is generally followed by editors (including the NA and NS editors).
43. Both Qq and Ff read "hear't". Steevens *et al.* read 'hear it'.
44. Qq print the words "impudent strumpet" (which Ff omit) at the end of the line. This addition is metrically impossible, and Capell was right in separating the two words from the line.
45. *The Merchant of Venice*, ed. cit., p. 136.
46. Old Arden (hereafter referred to as OA) *Twelfth-Night* (London, 1937), pp. 8 and 10.
47. NS *Hamlet* (Cambridge, 1934), p. 153.
48. The question is answered at once by Marcellus and Bernardo: "Arm'd, my lord." The two lines, taken together, fall short of the norm by two feet, the gap being, of course, entirely before the question.

49. Qq print the two lines as one, but it is not metrically possible to have them together. The F lineation (the one quoted) is the right one.
50. It is short even in Q1 where it runs: "Gonorill our eldest borne, speake first?". The F reading (the one quoted) is better because it makes for a longer gap.
51. Shorter still in Q1 which reads "What's" and in F1 which reads "th' offence".
52. Q1 prints a part of the next line along with this, which, however, makes for a line of fourteen syllables. The F lineation (the one quoted) is undoubtedly the right one.
53. Both Qq and Ff print this line with the previous one: which, however, makes the latter run into fourteen syllables. "All in an hour" is undoubtedly a separate line.
54. *The Merchant of Venice*, ed. cit., p. 137.
55. Ed. cit., p. 47.
56. *As You Like It*, ed. cit., p. 121.
57. *Ibid.*, p. 131.
58. William Sidney Walker: *A Critical Examination of the Text of Shakespeare*, ed. W. N. Lettsom (London, 1860), Vol. III, p. 61.
59. This is spoken by the King. Laertes, rather put out by the assurance with which the King confronts him, wavers before he asks "Where is my father?", to which the King replies immediately (there is no faltering about his speeches): "Dead.", the Queen adding at once "But not by him." The reading of the second and subsequent Qq, "Where is", is to be preferred to that of the Ff, "Where's", which would wipe out the faltering pause on the part of Laertes by making "Speak... by him." a single blank-verse line. The same injury to the text is unwittingly committed by editors like Craig who follow the Q reading and treat "Speak... by him." as a hexameter.
60. Shorter still in Q2 which reads "i'th" for "in the". Ff read "Heaven" for "God".
61. In each one of these examples the exclamation "O" is, of course, equivalent to more than one syllable.
62. Editors generally treat "I will... lord" as a single verse-line. It is much better taking "I will not" with "Than to suspicion", since a pause between Iago's speech and Othello's "I will not" is not likely. L. 220, in that case, would be short by two syllables, and l. 221 by four syllables.
63. 'Surely a word or words are lost before *adorations*, involving the same metaphor as the rest of the two lines' (Walker, *A Critical &c.*, Vol. III, p. 84). The Cambridge editors, Clark and Wright, agree.
64. *Shakespeare's Versification*, § XVIII, p. 154.
65. Accordingly the Q lineation here should be preferred to the F one. Qq arrange thus: "So farewell to you both? / *Gonorill*. Prescribe not us our duties? / *Regan*. Let your study be to content your Lord, /". And thus Ff: "So... both. / *Regn*. Prescribe... dutie. *Gon*. Let your study / Be to content...". The gap after "both" is longer in the Q arrangement than in the F one. In the Q text both "So... both" and "Prescribe... duties" are short (they cannot be taken together, since, together, they run into thirteen syllables); there is a gap before "Prescribe", which adds itself to the one after "both". In the F arrangement "Prescribe... dutie" is not a short line.
66. The lineation quoted is Dr. Johnson's, which is undoubtedly the right one. The F lineation here is rather muddled: "So that all hope is vaine, unlesse his Noble Mother, / And his Wife, who (as I heare) meane to sollicite him)". This gives each line a length of thirteen syllables.
67. Flatter's suggestion (*op. cit.*, p. 90) that Horatio and Bernardo 'jump up from the

- floor where they are sitting' and 'all three retire as far as possible in a frightened scramble', is quite acceptable.
68. V. v (Carlyle's tr.).
  69. This is the NS lineation: 'Chaos...again. (*Iago*) My noble lord— / (*Oth.*) What dost thou say, Iago? (*Iago*) Did Michael Cassio, /'. "My noble lord—" must be taken with "What...Iago?" and not with "Chaos...again." This leaves "Did...Cassio" short (if the F lineation is followed; the line is part of a longer one in Qq). As shown in Section III of this paper, it is just as well that "Did...Cassio" is left short.
  70. Salanio according to the F text.
  71. Salarino according to the F text.
  72. Of the opposite type, the exit of a character or characters taking place in a full line, there are also quite a few examples in the play. See Section I of this paper.
  73. NA *Macbeth* [London, 1953 (revised edn.), p. xiv].
  74. See, for instance, Cuninghame, OA *Macbeth*, pp. xxx and 59. Fortunately, no one has yet thought of deducing from Fleay's and Dover Wilson's theory that *Macbeth* was first produced in Edinburgh where Shakespeare is supposed to have taken refuge after the fall of Essex, that the dramatist was in too disturbed a state of mind to attend to his versification with proper care!
  75. *The Shakespeare First Folio: Its Bibliographical and Textual History* (Oxford, 1955), p. 389. See also his *Editorial Problem in Shakespeare*, p. 147.
  76. *Op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 471-72.
  77. Editors like Dover Wilson and Kenneth Muir, who accept the authenticity of the scene, suspect nevertheless that it has been badly cut.
  78. *Op. cit.*, p. 97.
  79. *Macbeth*, ed. cit., p. 7.
  80. Chambers: *William Shakespeare*..., Vol. I, p. 471.
  81. Greg: *The Shakespeare First Folio*..., p. 389. Bayfield remarks: 'The passage l. 2. 19ff. appears to have lost a line after "faced the slave"' (*op. cit.*, p. 140).
  82. *The Royal Play of Macbeth* (New York, 1950). Paul regards the passage as it stands in F1 as metrically defective and thinks that it was written in haste. That there are three parentheses in one short speech is for him a sign of haste! (*op. cit.*, p. 340). "Like Valour's minion", he suggests, was really a marginal note intended to replace "Disdaining Fortune"; but Shakespeare forgot to erase "Disdaining Fortune", and the compositor put the marginal note in a parenthesis in the wrong place and so created the metrical difficulties! (*ibid.*, pp. 341-42).
  83. Muir believes that the text of his edition of *Macbeth* is 'closer to that of the First Folio than any since the seventeenth century, especially with regard to lineation' (*Macbeth*, ed. cit., p. xv).
  84. Ed. cit., p. 9. (The OA editor, though a convinced believer in the spuriousness of the second scene, and though he frequently misses the point of the short lines in the F1 text, shows himself, just for once, wiser than his NA successor in that he does not accept Hammer's re-lineation).
  85. The words "So they", which in Ff are made to begin a decasyllabic line and thus lengthen it beyond the norm, are obviously meant to stand by themselves, forming a short line. Steevens and those who have since followed him was and have been right in separating "So they" to make a short line, and the Globe editors, Abbott (*Shakespearian Grammar*) and Kittredge (edn. of *Macbeth*, 1939) were wrong in transferring the two words to the preceding line, reading 'o'ercharg'd' for "overcharg'd" if necessary.

86. *Macbeth*, ed. cit., p. 8.
87. NS *Macbeth*, Cambridge: 1960, p. 98.
88. *Ibid.*, p. 99.
89. *Ibid.*, pp. xxiv-xxv.
90. The NA edn. lineates: 'Into...corporal, / Melted...stay'd!'
91. *Macbeth*, ed. cit., p. 104.
92. In these two instances, the NA editor has shown himself wiser than his OA predecessor by retaining the F lineation.
93. Sidney in his *Apologie for Poetrie* instances *motion* and *potion* as forming a trisyllabic rhyme (*sdrucchiola*) (*op. cit.*, ed. Shuckburgh, Cambridge: 1928, p. 61).
94. The parallel was first noted by Steevens. There is nothing in Holinshed about Cawdor's behaviour on the scaffold. That Shakespeare's reminiscence of Essex's execution should affect his account of Cawdor's is only to be expected. The fall and execution of this famous nobleman of his time was an event Shakespeare had particular reasons to cherish in his memory. Apart from the fact that it was one of the greatest public sensations of Queen Elizabeth's reign, which was still fresh in the public memory, the event must have touched Shakespeare personally in other ways too. For one thing, Essex, a sonneteer himself and a patron of letters, had been a close friend of Shakespeare's patron, the Earl of Southampton, to whom Shakespeare had dedicated his *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*. Southampton, in fact, had been implicated in Essex's conspiracy and been committed to the Tower. For another, Shakespeare himself had prophesied a glorious future for Essex in the chorus to the fifth act of *Henry V*—a prophecy that had come to nothing. For a third, as the evidence of Augustine Phillips at the trial of Essex shows, it was Shakespeare's own company of players whom some partisans of Essex had approached and persuaded, on special payment, to stage a performance of *Richard II* on the eve of the rising. The players of course had no idea of what it was all about; the partisans evidently thought that a stage-presentation of the deposition of an English monarch might induce a favourable public reaction to what they were going to do.
95. Flatter suggests (*op. cit.*, p. 34) that Duncan embraces Macbeth in the metrical gap after "Welcome hither", just as he embraces Banquo a little later. Grierson and Smith, however, in their edition of the play (Oxford, 1914, p. 100), consider it significant that Duncan embraces Banquo but not Macbeth: 'He embraces Banquo. Something kept him from embracing Macbeth'.
96. *Notes and Queries*, 6.6.1885 (cited in NV *Macbeth*, revised edn. of 1903).
97. *Macbeth*, ed. cit., p. 23.
98. *Macbeth*, ed. cit., p. 25.
99. So Hanmer dropped one of the two *see's*—an omission that would definitely detract from the heartiness of Duncan's speech. One main feature of this part of the scene is the contrast between the native cordiality of Duncan's utterances and the studied effects of those of Lady Macbeth.
100. Here, at least, Muir shows good sense by refusing to follow.
101. There is none after the second, since the statement runs over into the line following.
102. Dover Wilson, it seems, would run with the Folio and hunt with Rowe. He follows the latter's re-lineation and, at the same time, marks a 'long pause' after "sword" with four dots! Where, one wonders, is the room for a long pause in a full verse-line? In the line following, "Their candles... that too", which is a full one, he similarly marks a long pause after "out" and inserts the s-d, *unclasps his belt with its dagger*. He misses the fact that whatever action is involved in the line is simul-

taneous with the speaking of it, since it is a full line. The way he edits the line destroys the intended coincidence of speech and action.

103. Ff 2 and 3 read 'And shut it up'.
104. Rowe took his cue from D'Avenant's version of *Macbeth*. "...the pause", says Muir, "was probably deliberate" (*Macbeth*, ed. cit., p. 50). Why 'probably'? The pause is so good that we must have it. It is underrating the pause to suggest that it was 'probably' intended.
105. Dover Wilson, once again, would have it both ways. He adopts Rowe's re-lineation, and at the same time puts in the s-d, *she pauses*, between 'fire' and 'Hark?' in the second line, as if Shakespeare's lines were prose or non-metrical verse!
106. The substitution here of a note of exclamation for one of interrogation in modern editions of the play is unfortunate. To say that in Elizabethan punctuation an interrogation sometimes does duty for an exclamation does not make it any the less unfortunate.
107. The silence extends from after "deed" into the next line, which—another short line—must start with a gap since there can be none after "noyse", Macbeth's query being immediately answered by the Lady: "I heard the Owle schreame...".
108. Once more Dover Wilson follows Rowe's re-lineation, and at the same time puts in four dots, indicating 'a long pause', between "deed" and "Didst"!
109. There is no alternative to an under-statement when human vocabulary fails to furnish an adequate word to express one's feelings.
110. E.g., NA *Macbeth*.
111. Lady Macbeth's "Woe, alas" is short in the Folio text because the preceding verse, spoken by Macduff, is one complete line: "O Banquo, Banquo, Our Royall Master's murther'd." The fact that this line runs into twelve syllables, itself points to the acceptability of Theobald's re-lineation: "O...Banquo, / Our...murther'd." This would complete the previous line (also spoken by Macduff), "Would murther as it fell.", as well as Lady Macbeth's "Woe, alas". The Lady's play-acting would rather gain from a speech-ending that put her exclamation in immediate sequence to Macduff's announcement.
112. *Macbeth*, ed. cit., p. 61.
113. Pope re-arranged the lines thus: ...*here*, ...*hole*, ...*tears*; the Boswell-Malone Variorum of 1821 thus: ...*spoken*...*hole*, ...*tears*; Alexander Dyce thus: *Fate... us? ...away*;. Each of these recasts has had numbers of followers down to our own day. Cunningham follows Malone; Dover Wilson, Dyce. Walker (*A Critical Examination &c.*, Vol. III, p. 254) proposed the following re-lineation (beginning with the first speech of Malcolm): ...*claim* ...*spoken* ...*hole*, ...*us?*, on which Muir offers the following variation (which, he believes, is a 'new' arrangement): ...*claim* ...*spoken* ...*hole*, ...*away*:.
114. Even thirteen, if "Motion" is taken, as Sidney in his *Apologie for Poetrie* takes it, for a trisyllable.
115. *And...certain?*: one line; *make* in *Make Warre* shifted to the previous line; *To th'amazement of mine eyes* tacked on to *They did so*.
116. At the same time, expanding "Is't" into "Is it".
117. There cannot be a pause after it, since Banquo's reply (which is a full line) must follow immediately.
118. Not that the previous line is really in need of this addition. It is perfectly possible to pronounce "joyntly" in that line as a trisyllable and thus bring it up to the norm. In the alternative, a suitable gesture to point the word "Hye" in the line would easily make up for a missing syllable.



119. *Macbeth*, ed. cit., p. 77. (Muir's re-lineation of the concluding lines of Macbeth's speech and of the servant's reply is really Walker's.)
120. Muir provides a variation on this: ...thus: ...*Banquo* ...*nature* ...*dares*; . He claims that the shortness of his line, *Our...Banquo*, 'enables a dramatic pause to be made after the key line, "To be...thus"'. Perhaps, but at the cost of the phrase "stick deep" and the important pause after "fear'd".
121. *Macbeth*, ed. cit., p. 71. Bayfield, too, would have none of the contractions because they deprive the line of a foot (*op. cit.*, p. 149).
122. Steevens suggested omission of "at most".
123. Already adumbrated in the Promethean stance of "Rather then so, come Fate into the Lyst, / And champion me to th'utterance."
124. Reed-Steevens Variorum of 1803.
125. *Macbeth*, ed. cit., p. 86. Bayfield (*op. cit.*, p. 150) suggests 'a better arrangement' which eliminates both the pauses!
126. Contrast the *d*'s of desolation in  

"Nought's had, all's spent,  
 Where our desire is got without content:  
 'Tis safer, to be that which we destroy,  
 Then by destruction dwell in doubtful joy."
127. *Macbeth*, ed. cit., p. 92.
128. *Ibid.*, p. 92. He might have added that the 'arrangement' was really Keightley's.
129. It is best to take this bit of dialogue here between Macbeth and the Lady as spoken aside. Macbeth, however, speaking hectically as he does, utters a word or two a little too loud—the word "sight", for instance, which is caught by Rosse, at any rate, among the guests.
130. *Op. cit.*, p. 26.
131. To normalize the three short lines, Walker for one suggested an extensive re-lineation hereabouts involving several lines! (*A Critical Examination* . . . , III, p. 258).
132. *Macbeth*, ed. cit., p. 111.
133. The line preceding this speech, "I am as I have spoken" (spoken by Malcolm), looks short in the Folio text but is not really so. The succeeding speech of Macduff (which is spoken immediately in reply to Malcolm's question whether "such a one be fit to governe") begins "Fit to govern? No not to live. O Nation miserable!"—a line much longer than the norm. The lineation intended is, of course, "I am . . . govern? / No . . . miserable!"
134. *Op. cit.*, p. 43.
135. *Shakespeare's Versification*, pp. 139-40.
136. *Macbeth*, ed. cit., pp. 115-16.
137. *Macbeth*, ed. cit., p. 134.
138. *Op. cit.*, § XXIII, p. 170.
139. Walker, *op. cit.*, § II. III, p. 7; Abbott: *Shakespearian Grammar*, § 477.
140. So Cunningham (*Macbeth*, ed. cit., p. 119).
141. *A Critical* . . . , Vol. II, p. 15.
142. *Macbeth*, ed. cit., pp. 121-22.
143. *Ibid.*, p. 140.
144. *Ibid.*, p. 142.
145. *Macbeth*, ed. cit., p. 161.
146. It was adopted by several subsequent editors, but no less an actor than Kemble found it unacceptable.

147. *Op. cit.*, p. 27.

148. "I 'ginne to be a-weary of the Sun, / And wish th' estate o'th'world were now undon. /" followed immediately by "Ring the Alarum Bell, blow Winde, come wracke, / At least wee'l dye with Harnesse on our backe. /"—a statement couched appropriately in the finality of rhyme, which gives it the ring of an irrevocable determination. (A similar finality of rhyme is the significant vehicle chosen by Shakespeare for Macbeth's last utterance in the play.)

149. "They have tied me to a stake, I cannot flye, / But Beare-like I must fight the course."

150. P. 400 (Oxford, 1930).

151. Following Rowe, most modern editions of the play (including NS and NA) reproduce the Q lineation and, rather obtusely, replace the two notes of interrogation with a comma and a full-stop. The NS *Othello* even transmogrifies the second note of interrogation (which in Q1 is a comma but in Q2 and Q3, the same as in F) into one of exclamation.

152. The point, unfortunately, is missed by the editors of NS and NA *Othello*, who prefer the Q version (the NS text reads *I've* for the Q *I ha*).

153. See also Notes 42, 49, 50, 52, 59, 65.

154. Pope adopted the Q1 reading "be led" for "be be-lee'd" (Ff, Q2, Q3), which Warburton corrected to 'be let' and Malone to 'be lee'd'—an emendation which has been adopted by a number of editors (including the editor of the NA *Othello*). For "Christian" (Q1, F3, F4) F1 and F2 read "Christen'd" and Q2 and Q3, "Christn'd". NS *Othello*, which reads "Christian" and "be be-lee'd", adds the note with regard to the former: "The dissyllabic pronunciation is, of course, wanted here" (p. 142). I think I have given a sufficient reason to say that we must not seek to reduce "be be-lee'd" to two syllables, nor go in for a syncope in either "Christian" or "heathen".

## *The Contributors*

SM. JASODHARA BAGCHI, M.A. (Oxon.)—Lecturer in English, Jadavpur University. A former pupil of the Department of English, Presidency College.

SHRI PRIYATOSH BAGCHI, M.A.—Assistant Professor of English, Presidency College.

DR. SRIKUMAR BANERJEE, M.A., PH.D.—Formerly Professor and Head of the Department of English, Presidency College, and Ramtanu Lahiri Professor of Bengali, University of Calcutta. Author of *Critical Theories and Poetic Practice in the "Lyrical Ballads"* (London, 1931) and of *Studies in the Poetry of Coleridge and Keats* (Calcutta, 1965), besides several books and papers on Bengali literature.

SM. KAJAL BASU (SEN-GUPTA), M.A. (Cal. et Oxon.)—Assistant Professor of English, Presidency College.

PROF. AMAL BHATTACHARJI, M.A.—Professor of English, Presidency College.

SM. JYOTSNA BHATTACHARJEE, M.A.—Lecturer in English, Jadavpur University. A former pupil of the Department of English, Presidency College.

SM. GAYATRI CHAKRAVORTY-SPIVAK, M.A. (Cornell)—Lecturer in English, Iowa University. A former pupil of the Department of English, Presidency College.

PROF. SUJATA CHAUDHURI, M.A.—Professor and Head of the Department of English, Lady Brabourne College, Calcutta. A former pupil of the Department of English, Presidency College.

SHRI ARUN KUMAR DAS-GUPTA, M.A.—Assistant Professor of English, Presidency College. Has contributed articles on Shakespeare to *Shakespeare Quarterly* and *Notes and Queries*.

SHRI ASOKE KUMAR MUKHERJI, M.A. (Oxon.)—Assistant Professor of English, Presidency College.

SHRI NARAYAN CHANDRA SAHA, M.A.—Assistant Professor of English, Presidency College.

DR. SAIENDRA KUMAR SEN, M.A., D. LITT.—Professor of English, Presidency College. Author of *Capell and Malone and Modern Critical Bibliography* (Calcutta, 1960). Has contributed articles on Shakespeare to *Shakespeare Quarterly*, *Notes and Queries*, and *The Indian Journal of English Studies*.

DR. SUBODH CHANDRA SENGUPTA, M.A., PH.D.—Professor and Head of the Department of English, Jadavpur University. Formerly Professor and Head of the Department of English, Presidency College and University of Jabalpur. Author of *The Art of Bernard Shaw* (London, 1936), *Shakespearian Comedy* (Calcutta, 1950), *Towards A Theory of the Imagination* (Calcutta, 1959), *The Whirligig of Time: An Enquiry into the Problem of Duration in Shakespeare's Plays* (Calcutta, 1961), and *Shakespeare's Historical Plays* (London, 1964), besides several books and papers on Sanskrit Poetics and Bengali Literature.

## CORRIGENDA

<i>Page</i>	<i>Line &amp;c</i>	<i>For—</i>	<i>Read—</i>
94	20	15	14
105	14	easy	ease
111	34	28	20
117	3	make sno	makes no
127	27	ourselves	our selves
196	No. 20	1925	1952
206	14	readylvictim	ready victim
„	15	articuate	articulate
207	last line	rust city	rusticity
208	do	he	the
221	16	Richard	Richmond