

SEEING AND PERCEIVING:

**A STUDY OF THE USE OF DISGUISED PERSONS
AND WISE FOOLS IN SHAKESPEARE**

By

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INTRODUCTION

That the disguised person--one whose exterior aspect is misleading--was used in Shakespeare for purposes such as plot structure and for the appeal of deception and verbal irony has been widely recognized. That disguise serves also in ways even more vital to the play's import is the proposal of this present study. The device will be found to have a far wider relevance to the structure of the play than merely as a contrivance to produce a beginning and a conclusion. Disguise will be found to constitute an expression of Shakespeare's characteristic ways of looking at things--at a character or an incident or a concept--both as he shared in the Elizabethan view of nature and as he participated in the development of the more complex vision which puts him in company with Donne and other articulate voices of the seventeenth century. Disguise will appear as Shakespeare's way of expressing, not only in comedy but in more sober contexts, the more inclusive perspectives¹ observable in the thought and art of his time. Disguise emerges as a mode of oblique dramatic statement, oblique but productive of the economy that is paradoxically the effect of poetic artifice. At its economical best, disguise enlarges the statement of character and becomes a mode of meaning in a play. Specifically, it is one of the ways in which he conveys the proposition that truth may lie not in one of two apparently

¹The word "perspective" in this study is used consistently to mean a conceptual point of view, a way of observing. More colloquially, it means a way of looking at things. The word as we use it, however, does not involve the aspect of a natural object, as it appears to the eye, but a mental object.

contradictory alternatives but in the consequence of their mutual dependence.

Whether Shakespeare's disguises reasonably justify these findings is dependent, of course, upon the possibility of Shakespeare's having had at his disposal these uses of disguise as part of his dramatic vocabulary and upon the probability that an Elizabethan audience would have been responsive to the meanings. The special significance of his masquerading character, which will not be broached directly until Chapter III, will be there more readily intelligible if we first remind ourselves of those modes of expression and interpretation current in the Elizabethan period--modes through which disguise might naturally arouse a degree of attention it would not so inevitably elicit from a modern audience. This preliminary discussion--the province of Chapters I and II--will provide for the modern reader the framework in which that earlier audience could take disguise as a symbol, either representing some aspect of a character or standing as the epitome of a situation whose scope may encompass a character's mistakes in judging as well as his mistakes in perceiving persons and objects. Thus, a justification for conceiving disguise as the visual statement of a fundamental issue of a play will be demonstrated by appeal to the thinking of the period: there is historical precedent for our construing disguise as the vehicle of a complex statement.

But even before we proceed to the business of Chapters I and II it will be helpful to examine more closely the ways in which disguise has already been investigated by the critics who have most directly and

conspicuously attended to disguise in Shakespeare: Victor Oscar Freeburg in Disguise Plots in Elizabethan Drama (1915);¹ P. V. Kreider in "The Mechanics of Disguise in Shakespeare's Plays" (1934);² John W. Draper in "Mistaken Identities in Shakespeare's Comedies" (1934);³ and John V. Curry in Deception in Elizabethan Comedy (1955).⁴ We shall briefly examine the approaches of these earlier treatments both for the purpose of canvassing the values of Shakespeare's disguise which will not be dwelt upon elsewhere in my study and also for the purpose of suggesting limitations in these viewpoints. This review of scholarship will be directed towards a more exacting definition of my own approach and objects of study.

Because so many of the Elizabethan disguises were borrowed from their Plautine and Italian predecessors, they have been studied in relation to their sources. Through such an approach Freeburg⁵ not only demonstrates the debt of the Elizabethans to their predecessors, but he also establishes the genuine interest of the English in the disguise convention. Where disguise was not already supplied in the source

¹Victor Oscar Freeburg, Disguise Plots in Elizabethan Drama (New York: Columbia University Press, 1915).

²P. V. Kreider, "The Mechanics of Disguise in Shakespeare's Plays," Shakespeare Association Bulletin, IX (1934), 167-180.

³John W. Draper, "Mistaken Identity in Shakespeare's Comedies," Revue Anglo-Americaine, IX (avril, 1934), 289-297.

⁴John V. Curry, Deception in Elizabethan Comedy (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1955).

⁵Draper also is concerned with Shakespeare's use of his sources for disguise situations.

material, it was frequently added by the Elizabethans, indicating the fondness of the English for the tradition.¹ Shakespeare implements plot with disguise--in King Lear, The Winter's Tale, Much Ado About Nothing, and Measure for Measure, for example.

Shakespeare's use of his sources, with respect to disguise, has served as one of Freeburg's points of departure for examining the dramatist's technique. In comparison to its source (The Taming of A Shrew) Shakespeare's The Taming of the Shrew provides motivation for disguise. In A Shrew Aurelius, a nobleman in love with Philema, masquerades as a son of a rich merchant, but, as Freeburg rightly observes, there seems to be no reason for assuming this disguise, nor for the servant's assuming a pose as his master.² My purpose in later chapters is not to enumerate these many changes of or additions to the sources. However, mention will be made of Shakespeare's addition of disguise to King Lear and the de-emphasis of the twin Sebastian in Twelfth Night inasmuch as both the addition and the de-emphasis are means of focusing attention upon aspects of the character of Lear and Viola which it is my purpose to discuss.

A conspicuous aspect of disguise is deception. Shakespeare's disguises have been approached through the perspective of Elizabethan fondness for deception; Curry maintains its strong appeal for the

¹Whether borrowed or added, "disguise occurs with important dramatic function in more than two hundred extant plays," according to Freeburg, p. 1. Twenty-five of Shakespeare's plays employ disguise.

²Ibid., p. 180.

Elizabethan audience. Disguise is thus set into a framework of the trickery and duplicity which flourished from Roister Doister and Gammer Gurton's Needle to the more verbal, sophisticated level of Jonsonian intrigue and counter-intrigue. The imposter, duper, and rogue were continual objects of delight to the dramatist and theater-goer, and the disguised character was an important member of this assemblage. Curry pursues his interest in disguise as an agent of deception by extensively cataloguing the variety of motives behind the use of disguise in Elizabethan comedy; there are: female pages; boys, who for differing reasons dress as women; spies; lovers in disguise; and rogues in multi-disguise.

Disguise follows its dramatic tradition in functioning primarily as the basic situation for the plot, and it has attracted critical attention largely because of this. The most complete study, the early twentieth century work of Freeburg, is concerned mainly with Shakespeare's varied techniques of initiating and resolving action through the use of disguise. Disguise proved to be a device which offered the Elizabethan dramatist an inexhaustible source of situations for plot structure. Capable of unlimited variation and ingenious manipulation, the convention was fully exploited, a fact attested to by the long lists of disguise types and plots compiled in the study of Freeburg and also in that of Curry.

Shakespeare's departure from the traditional use as simply the complicator of a comic plot is evident. Only in his early plays does Shakespeare use disguise extensively for plot structure.

Traditionally, disguise, and mistaken identity generally, was most

widely employed for comic plot structure. Especially in Plautus the motif of mistaken identity, based on identical twins and disguise, is extensively drawn upon and becomes a part of the developing comic tradition in Renaissance drama. A study of Shakespeare's sources reveals that the early comedies, The Comedy of Errors, Love's Labour's Lost, The Two Gentlemen of Verona, and A Midsummer Night's Dream all employ more instances of mistaken identity than any known sources of the plays in question.¹ When Shakespeare is interested in farce and mere fortuitous coincidence, he throws himself into it completely, actually doubling the use of mistaken identity in The Comedy of Errors over Plautus's use, clearly casting aside all thought of convincing realism or meaning.

The use of mistaken twins as the backbone of comedy has limited dramatic value even though it generates a variety of situations. Incident is dominant and the necessary emphasis on a confused situation is a deterrent to character analysis and development. The mistakes are fortuitous; disguise is not intentional. In a rapidly moving plot characters do not have time to reflect; they are primarily actors, not thinkers. Individuality must be minimized to achieve the pawn-like character who is largely acted upon by circumstance. Apart from The Comedy of Errors Shakespeare's interests lie more in characterization--individualized choices and responses to circumstance--and in thematic implications of the action. By the time of Twelfth Night, where disguise is as necessary to the over-all structural framework as in The Comedy of Errors, this

¹Draper, p. 291.

convention undergoes much change, serving heightened dramatic interests, as we shall see in Chapter IV.

Further insight into Shakespeare's use of disguise is provided by other considerations of what Shakespeare for the greater part of his career refrains from doing--what he left to his fellow dramatists, who in many ways elaborated the convention of disguise as it had appeared in earlier drama. Shakespeare does not experiment with the many possible ingenious adaptations of disguise, and he does not use it for a merely theatrically effective surprise, at the end of a play. Shakespeare is less interested in its novelty and theatricality than in its functionally dramatic and poetic values.

Freeburg analyzes the many adaptations and new uses of disguise as the convention passed through the hands of the early dramatists and was "improved" upon by later playwrights. Occasionally the device was used to parody earlier uses. Heywood, Freeburg judges, perhaps meant to burlesque female page disguises in his Four Prentices of London.¹ The heroine assumes the disguise of a page, thereby serving her lover incognito. The situation develops into a reductio ad absurdum because the page had allegedly been her lover's bedfellow for a year, without his discovering her identity or sex!

The multi-disguise was obviously fashionable, reaching its prominence in the Jacobean drama after Shakespeare.² A single character

¹Freeburg, p. 67.

²Ibid., p. 124.

assumes many different disguises during the action of the play. In the subplot of Jonson's Every Man in His Humour, it will be remembered, Brainwood dissembles as (1) an old soldier, (2) Justice Clement's man, and (3) a City Sergeant. The repeated and rapid changes of costume keep the action shifting constantly and developing episodically. The multi-disguise had little dramatic value; as William Lawrence, after studying examples of the multi-disguise, has concluded: "At best, the type is theatrically effective, never dramatically convincing."¹ Shakespeare was evidently interested in this sort of theatrical spectacle only in one bitter sequence in King Lear.

What Freeburg labels "retro-disguise" becomes an amusing variation on an old theme. Retro-disguise involves a second disguise; thus ironically the correct sex of the dissimulator is righted. That is, a woman disguised as a man may assume a second, supposedly real disguise, as a woman. Heywood in The Wise Woman of Hogsdon disguised his heroine Luce as a page and then allowed some deceived person, the Wise Woman of Hogsdon, to retro-disguise her as a lady, thereby achieving a double complication. The retro-disguise leads up to a marriage supposedly farcical, but eventually real. Shakespeare, attentive to characterization and theme, bypasses the temptations of this type of ingenuity.

Shakespeare also bypasses an exclusively English contribution to the disguise convention: the surprise disguise, such as Jonson's Epicene depends upon. In the conventional disguise plot the character who was

¹William J. Lawrence, Pre-Restoration Stage Studies (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1927), p. 292.

to disguise himself always told the audience of his intention, following the tradition established by Aristophanes' Acharnians.¹ About to assume a disguise, Dicaeopolis asks of the chorus: "Permit me, therefore, before I speak to dress in the manner most likely to draw pity."² And shortly thereafter he discusses with Euripides all the details of his disguise. Similarly, in Shakespeare's drama, either by monologue or discussion with a confidant, the intention and nature of the disguise is revealed, enabling the audience to recognize the pretender immediately upon his appearance.³

Since we will concentrate in this study upon examining Shakespeare's disguises for what they reveal to the audience about character or situation, it is important to note that Shakespeare always made sure his audience was aware of any masquerading. Contrary to the practice of his fellow dramatists, it is never the purpose of a Shakespeare disguise to mystify or deceive and later surprise the audience. This is the main point of P. V. Kreider's examination of Shakespeare's disguises to which we have earlier alluded: the audience is always in on the pose.

Novelty is again the keynote of disguise plays whose interest grows out of the fact that characters who imagine themselves or other characters to be disguised, are not. In Tomkis's Albuzazar a farmer, Trincalo, imagines himself in disguise though there has been no change

¹Freeburg, p. 12.

²Aristophanes, Acharnians, Aristophanes: The Eleven Comedies, ed. Jean de Bosschere (New York: Horace Liveright, 1928), p. 105.

³Freeburg, p. 12.

of appearance. He has been made to believe he has been magically transformed. "I am," he says, "choicely neate in my cloathes, valiant, and extreme witty."¹ (II.1) He is a sort of Malvolio, without a change of costume, who regards himself an attractive lover and acts in accord with the delusion. In Volpone Lady Would-Be sees her husband with a young man and is quick to imagine that the companion is a courtesan disguised. Suspicion of disguise where there is none amounts almost to burlesque in Fletcher's Honest Man's Fortune.²

As the convention grows older, as it becomes employed with increasing ingenuity, disguise also is used more incidentally and without much dramaturgic skill, as in Middleton and Dekker's Honest Whore (Part I), where George, a servant, masquerades as his master, Candido, to surprise his employer as he returns home. (I.vii)³

Another interest of Freeburg, which, though it conspicuously belongs to Shakespeare, will not be a part of this present study, is the value of disguise for verbal irony. Disguise is a valuable appropriation for a dramatist such as Shakespeare who is alive to the impact of irony. The dialogue of a disguised person is like that of a sane man who simulates incoherency, or of a wise man pretending foolishness--or that of any pretender--it creates an atmosphere of dramatic tension and

¹Thomas Tomkis, Albumazar: A Comedy (1615), ed. Hugh G. Dick (University of California Publications in English, Vol. 13; Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1944), p. 90.

²This has been noticed by Freeburg, p. 97.

³Thomas Middleton and Thomas Dekker, Honest Whore (1604), II, Dekker's Dramatic Works, (London: John Pearson, 1873), 47 ff.

theatrically effective double meaning. This tension within the play is, of course, satisfying to the audience. It is appealing to the theater-goer to have knowledge about the disguised character that is superior to the awareness of the deluded characters.

Shakespeare takes excellent advantage of disguise for subtle dialogue--double meanings and veiled allusions--throughout his disguise plays. In The Two Gentlemen of Verona Julia, as a page, tells Silvia that she knows Julia almost as well as herself. Scenes in which the disguised heroine appears with her beloved are fruitful grounds for irony. Viola tells the Duke that she will never love any woman, that, in fact, she will never love anybody but her master. She explains further:

My father had a daughter lov'd a man,
As it might be, perhaps, were I a woman,
I should your lordship.
(Twelfth Night. II.iv.110-112)¹

Rosalind, in disguise, also indulges in this sport. Reviving from a swoon, she insists it was counterfeited: Oliver then suggests, "Well then, take a good heart and counterfeit to be a man." Rosalind explains "So I do. But, i'faith, I should have been a woman by right." (As You Like It. IV.iii.174-177) Here, irony depends upon ambiguous language used by the character ignorant of the true situation as well as that used with knowledge and intent by the disguised character, Rosalind.

¹William Allan Neilson and Charles Jarvis Hill (eds.), The Complete Plays and Poems of William Shakespeare (Cambridge: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1942). All subsequent citations from Shakespeare will be from this text.

Previous studies of disguise, while they have contributed much, have their limitations and, in at least one point, have propagated false judgments. A limitation of Freeburg, and to a lesser degree his follower, Curry, inheres in his over-admiration of the well-constructed, Aristotelian plot. Evaluating the function of disguise in Shakespeare's plays, Freeburg has applied the touchstone of the model Aristotelian plot with its cohesive beginning, middle, and end. Disguise, of course, is traditionally associated with a comic confusion of identity, through which the plot is first set in motion and eventually brought to rest; and it functions commendably, according to Freeburg, when it is itself the means of resolving the tension it initially creates and when the dramatist honestly lets his audience in on the disguise trick.

Because they regard disguise primarily as the backbone of plot and as an agent of comedy, Freeburg and Curry misconstrue its effect in a play which has serious, even tragic, overtones. Both critics admire what they consider to be the role of disguise, structurally, in rescuing a play from a tragic ending. Curry concludes that Portia's disguise in The Merchant of Venice terminates the tragic plot and initiates the comedy in whose spirit the play finally rests.¹ And in Measure for Measure Shakespeare adds disguise to his source in order to bring "tragic complications to a happy resolution."² If this is the function of disguise in these plays, it is ineffectual. These attitudes, for one thing,

¹Curry, p. 149.

²Freeburg, p. 168.

depend upon too clear-cut an antithesis between tragedy and comedy in these plays; each of the plays actually concludes with nagging ambivalence.

Freeburg partially recognizes the value of disguise as an economical device for the "compression" of characters. By this he means that disguise brings together the fictitious and the real: it provides one character for those deluded characters in the play and yet another character for the enlightened audience. Such compression occurs in every instance of disguise. Or, he continues, disguise may be the means of reducing the number of characters found in a narrative source which contained no disguise. Thus Chapman in Widow's Tears economically reconstructed his source, which contained a dead husband, a widow, and a soldier lover, by creating a soldier lover who was actually the husband--supposedly dead--in disguise.¹ The dramatic thrift involved, in any event, has merely to do with a coalescence of the real and the fictitious personalities, with the resultant reduction of quantities of characters. He stops short of noticing other dramatic effects--mainly the enlarged statement of character, allowed through his assumption of a disguise--which are available to the hand of a competent playwright and which will be discussed in Chapter III.

There is a particularly common attitude towards Shakespeare's interest in disguise that needs rectifying. Shakespeare is wrongly thought of as having interest in disguise only during the relatively early stages of his dramatic development. This is a conclusion easily drawn by a critic who notices disguise primarily when it is the basic

¹Ibid., p. 15.

plot for a comedy of situation and overlooks its relationship to character and theme.

Draper, like Freeburg and Curry, so emphasizes the role of disguise for structural comic purposes. John James Munro, to whom Draper refers, had gone so far as to label the early period of Shakespearean comedy as the "M. I. Group"--the mistaken identity group--overlooking the assimilation of this convention into later plays. Draper does not agree to so pointed a disregard for the dramatist's later use of disguise--"the device still interests Shakespeare," he concedes--but he does agree with Munro that Shakespeare's mature works which examine a character's misunderstanding, not his misapprehension, have outgrown the use of disguise.¹ Draper tests the value of disguise in terms of its vraisemblance and thus concludes that in the mature comedies, which may contain less disguise than the early plays (such as The Comedy of Errors, Love's Labour's Lost, The Two Gentlemen of Verona, and A Midsummer Night's Dream), Shakespeare "regularly strives to give it [mistaken identity] more realism."² As Shakespeare becomes more interested in character, mistaken identity "was superseded in Shakespeare's art by subtler forms of dramatic irony, in which not the mere identity, but the acts and particularly the motives, feelings, or point of view, of a given character were misunderstood by one or more of his companions."³

¹ Draper, p. 292.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., p. 296.

It is to be granted, of course, that errors in understanding are central in Shakespeare's mature interest. However, Draper fails to perceive that misconception is dramatically stated at least partly through a subtle and ironic relationship with misapprehension (errors instigated by disguise). With his primary interest in vraie semblance, Draper judges that the errors of misunderstanding "need no obvious properties such as night and masks and dressing in disguise to make them possible."¹ This is so. Disguise is not needed to make misunderstanding probable. Gloucester misunderstood Edgar when Edgar was not in disguise, but the disguising of Edgar provided dramatic opportunities which far transcended the mere physical possibility that a father could see his son and not know him, as witness the fact that for a long time it was a blind Gloucester who was in company with his disguised son.

This discussion of Draper's bias leads to a major contention of my own study: disguise in Shakespeare's mature plays sometimes restates, as an emblem does, what the play otherwise says about human misconceptions. Disguise, when it is thus employed, involves ways of looking at things that are typically Elizabethan. It is my intention to refer disguise not only to the emblem but to a general background of those significant outward forms which would have had meaning for the Elizabethan, steeped as he was in analogical patterns of thought.

Shakespeare goes beyond the use of disguise for its value in setting up a comedy of situation, for the fascination inherent in deception,

¹Ibid.

or for irony in language, to focus some fundamental issue of the play. He also makes it yield to demands of characterization. Through disguise dramatic revelation is achieved.

A second major contention of this study is, accordingly, that disguise--a device which conceals a character from others in the play--is frequently a medium for revealing character to the audience. Disguise allows a disclosure of new facets or ambiguous qualities of character which the ordinary demands of situation render difficult to reveal.

As a means of revealing character, disguise will also be placed in its proper context with other forms of exposition which are used for characterization: the soliloquy, the aside, hallucination, dreams, and so forth. Thereby Shakespeare's disguises can be studied against his development of these techniques of exposition.

Disguise belongs to still another context. Disguise is a most obvious statement of that discrepancy between appearance and reality which has long provided the basic conflict necessary to a dramatic situation--ever since Oedipus set out to cleanse his city of its evil. Shakespeare is uncommonly concerned with the various forms expressing the relationship between the apparent and the real, and he explores these forms from diverse angles, one of which is through a form uniting the true and the false--disguise. Disguise, then, will be examined as one of numerous false forms which include, for example, hallucinations, non sequiturs, wise fools, dissimulated love.

CHAPTER I

DISGUISE AND ELIZABETHAN COSTUME

"Apparel oft proclaims the man." (Hamlet I.iii.72)

If disguise is to be regarded as a means of exposition for characterization and thematic statement--as the Introduction has proposed--then one might ask whether this extra burden of meaning would have been felt by an actual Elizabethan audience as well as by the modern interpreter with his passion for symbols and levels of meaning. Would the Elizabethan have been sufficiently attentive and responsive to disguises? In order to state fully the function of disguise in Shakespeare's plays, it is necessary to refer not only to the contexts provided by the plays themselves, but also to the then current attitudes towards clothing and costume in general and towards disguise in drama in particular. These attitudes, which will now be examined, will begin to answer the question of what sort of attention and response disguise would elicit from the Elizabethan theater-goer.

Evidence pointing to the Elizabethan's thoughtful consideration of clothing, costume, and disguise is abundant. The contemporary interest in fashions, the religious and moral concern with superficial appearances and inappropriate dress, and the dramatic tradition of symbolic costumes, colors, and materials all combine to testify that clothing evoked serious deliberation.

It is common knowledge, even to one who is only casually acquainted with Elizabethan England, that extravagance in clothing was widespread

and, of course, conspicuous. The ruff, for example, is frequently used to typify the dress of the period. Extravagant clothing was not only on constant display, but it aroused serious discussion.

Moralists of all sorts tirelessly denounced the growing worldliness of London men and women, whose preoccupation with mere adornment, such as the ruff, was regarded as morally weakening and conducive to more active forms of sinfulness. Philip Stubbes, in his exhaustive summary of current vices--gluttony, usury, whoredom, and covetousness--included pride in apparel. Typical of his attitude was his reproof of such superfluities as "great ruffes and supportasies" which, against nature, were bulwarked by "deuils liquore"--starch!¹

The deuill, as he in the fulnes of his malice, first inuented these great ruffes, so hath hee now found out also two great stayes to beare up and maintaine that his kingdome of great ruffes . . .²

Stubbes proceeded, then, to define and denounce these "stayes": the starch and the wiring that undergirded the ostentatious ruff.

It has been observed that clothing was of particular concern in Shakespeare's day because a degree of ostentation incongruous to one's position was against the sumptuary laws, which prescribed what dress was appropriate to one's "degree."³ These laws were evidently not kept strictly enough.

¹Phillip Stubbes, Anatomic of the Abuses in England, 1583, ed. Frederick J. Furnivall (London: N Trubner and Co., 1877-79), I, 70.

²Ibid., p. 52.

³Jack E. Teagarten, "Reaction to the Professional Actor in Elizabethan London" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Dept. of English, University of Florida, 1957), p. 33.

How often hath her Majestie with the grave advise of her honorable Councill, sette downe the limits of apparell to every degree, and how soone againe hath the pride of our harts overflowed the chanel?¹

Jack Teagarten, in defining the general Elizabethan feeling against inappropriate dress, also cites Stubbes in his Anatomy of Abuses:

. . . there is such a confuse mingle mangle of apparell in Ailgna, and such preposterous excesse thereof, as every one is permitted to flaunt it out on what apparell he lust himselve, or can get by anie kind of meanes.²

Clothing, according to the lay moralists, had to be congruent not only to a person's social position but also to his sex. Clothes that falsified one's nature were condemned at least as heartily as those which falsified one's status socially.

The disguise of the female as a male, including any act of simulating male attire, was regarded as a falsification of nature. It was condemned on several accounts: in the first place, for its artificiality or dishonesty. Hic Mulier: Or, the Man-Woman lashed out at the "modern" woman who "will give her honestie to haue her upper parts put into a French doublet."³ Unconfined to places of iniquitous entertainment, this sort of dissembling was alarming also for its ubiquity. The moralist directed his readers to "look if this very last edition of disguise . . . this bayt which the Diuel hath layd to catch the soules of wanton women,

¹Stephon Gosson, Schoole of Abuse, 1579, p. 39, as cited in Teagarten, p. 33.

²Stubbes, p. 34, as cited in Teagarten, p. 33.

³Hic Mulier: Or, the Man-Woman, 1620, Sig B2, as cited in Louis B. Wright, Middle Class Culture in Elizabethan England (Chapel Hill, N.C.: The University of North Carolina Press, 1935), p. 494.

be not as frequent in the demy-Palaces of Burgars and Citizens, as it is either as Maske, Try-umph, Tilt-yard, or Play-house."¹

Another criticism of women who disguised as men is that they corrupted the purity of their sex--they can no longer be regarded as females. This is another aspect of the general denunciation of clothing that falsifies. Stubbes vituperated in the name of Biblical sanction:

It is written in the 22 of Deuteronomie, that what man so ever weareth womans apparel is accursed, and what woman weareth mans apparel is accursed also. Now, whether they be within the bands and lymits of that curse, let them see to it themselves. Our Apparel was given us as a signe distinctive to discern betwixt sex and sex, and therefore one to weare the Apparel of another sex is to participate with the kinde. Wherefore these Women may not improperly be called Hermaphrodit, that is, Monsters of bothe kindes, half women, half men.²

The attitude expressed by Stubbes is typical of a medieval (and to a lesser extent, Elizabethan) interpretation of the relationship between form and the contents it embodies. The medieval belief in form as directly revelatory of content (essence) persisted. The same attitude that proclaimed the heart-shaped digitalis leaf to be remedial in heart disease, judged the "real" sex of an individual in terms of his clothing. Similarly, the outward deformation of Shakespeare's Richard III spoke to Elizabethans of intrinsic mental and moral disproportion. To cite just one other example of this mode of thinking, the emblem frequently depended for its meaning upon the viewer's allying form and content in this way. One of Wither's emblems presented spiritual

¹ Ibid., Sig C1, as cited in Wright, p. 495.

² Stubbes, p. 73.

deformity by means of a woman whose face is hideous.¹

This identification of intrinsic qualities with form is, of course, nothing new. Referred to most generally as a means of representation in art, it is a mode of stating that has been relied upon in classical periods and one that has recurred down to the present day. Form is taken as a representation of inner qualities--of content, if you will--whether that form is, for example, the statue of a Greek athlete--whose beauty of body bespoke a beautiful soul--or an even modern painting in which the relaxed position of a figure suggests repose of spirit. This tendency to impute the characteristics of form into content is not foreign to us today. But what makes it difficult for us genuinely to participate in the attitude of the Elizabethan towards clothes, and towards transvestism particularly, is the tone--foreign to us--of high moral seriousness, which accompanied their observations about the appropriateness of one's costume. Clothes in Elizabethan England cannot be regarded as the relatively arbitrary and merely conventionalized garb that is associated with the male, or with the female.

Transvestism as it occurred in Elizabethan drama was open to the general arguments against disguising one's sex, but it incurred the special attention and indignation of the moralists. It might be supposed that because the actor dissembled his appearance only within the

¹George Wither, A Collection of Emblemes, Ancient and Moderne. . . (London: Printed by A. M. for John Grismond, 1635), p. 229.

framework of a fictitious situation--a play--he would have been at least somewhat spared the usual censure. But this was not so.

Those writers attending to the special situation of the actor who was guilty of transvestism had two objects for their attack: (1) men who either enacted female parts (and dressed accordingly) or who disguised as women during the action of the play,¹ and (2) the female characters (actually represented by male actors) who disguised as males during the action of the play.

According to Theodore Komisarjevsky, the objection of the Puritans was more to the actors indicated in the latter category, to the actor impersonating the female character--as in the Travesti plays--than to the male character who disguises as a female.² The part of the female character in Elizabethan drama was, of course, always assumed by a male character; and that was reprehensible enough. But for this supposedly female character to put on the disguise of a male within the action of

¹Elbert Thompson calls attention to the fact that William Perkin's Cases of Conscience, 1595, objected to the assignment of women's parts to men. Elbert N. S. Thompson, The Controversy Between the Puritans and the Stage ("Yale Studies in English," Vol. XX; New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1903), p. 106. Also, "The Third Action" of Stephen Gosson's Plays Confuted in Five Actions and A Shorte Treatise by "I.G." deplored the appropriateness of female attire by the male. Teagarten, p. 44. While it is not my intention to canvass the effect of attitudes against disguise in the drama of the period, one example--outside of Shakespeare--which has been noted by Komisarjevsky will be mentioned. In Jonson's comedy Bartholomew Fair Puritanical objection to transvestism is made by a character whom the context of the play ridicules. Puritan Zeal-of-the-Land Busy rages at Leatherhead's puppet-show: "Yes, and my main argument against you is, that you are an abomination; for the male among you putteth on the apparel of the female and the female of the male." (V.iii) Komisarjevsky, p. 86.

²Theodore Komisarjevsky, The Costume of the Theater (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1931), p. 86.

the play doubled the wrong. The abomination in this event would seem to be doubled, Komisarjevsky observes, inasmuch as the characters of the young girls were acted by men in the first place. The Puritanical attitude described here is absurd, but the fact that the point was seriously made indicates the moral importance attached to appropriate clothing.

The criticism of transvestism in drama usually either took the approach of proclaiming the authority that condemned disguise or else described the immoral effects of the practice.

The use of Biblical authority such as Stubbes relied upon in his diatribe against transvestism in general is characteristic of the bias of other writers and reflects a long warfare between drama and the Christian church.

Elizabethan disapproval of disguising was an aspect of the recurrent animosity towards play-making, notable since the ante-Nicene church. Declaimers against actors in general and the disguising of the sexes in particular--John Northbrook, "I.G.", William Prynne, and others--found their support in the early church fathers. Thompson has noted that Tatian and Tertullian, representative second century spokesmen in this controversy, denounced the actor as a dissembler, as a man in disguise whether or not he was disguised within the framework of the play. The ancient argument against play-making as lying was implicit. Tertullian asserted in De Spectaculis--a second century Anatomie of Abuses for Rome--that "if it is prohibited under all circumstances to wear woman's garments, then surely the 'vileness . . . which the buffon in woman's

clothes exhibits' is an utter abomination."¹

Both the extent and the intense seriousness of the religious censure of disguise are suggested in the Cambridge arguments concerning plays.

Documents published in 1599, covering a series of debates occurring from 1551-1593, re-echo London sentiment against players² and included a controversy over the apparel of the players. William Gager, the Latin dramatist, clashed repeatedly with John Rainoldes, learned theologian, in a verbal battle that, according to Thompson, must have spread through much of the country.³

Like the moralist Stubbes, Rainoldes depended heavily upon Mosaic law, which forbade the wearing of garments of the opposite sex. Upon such authority Rainoldes condemned both public and private plays. This authority, however, was questioned. The dramatist Gager set aside as irrelevant the Mosaic law. He argued that in some cases a disguise of sex was lawful: to save one's life, for example, or to benefit others. Only when the disguise was made with ill intent did it become wrong.⁴

The Cambridge argument indicates that the ethics of disguise was an object of concern to lawyers as well as theologians and lay moralists. The ethics of disguise drew the attention of classical and legal scholars. Gager's case received support from John Case, Cambridge Aristotelian

¹Tertullian, De Spectaculis, Section XVII, as cited in Thompson, p. 15.

²Thompson, p. 94.

³Ibid., p. 96.

⁴Ibid., p. 97.

scholar, and Gentili, an Italian friend of Gager and an esteemed authority on international law. All three maintained that the Biblical conditions under which the exchange of costume was condemned were no longer present. The law was not to be read literally.¹

A brief review of the specific issues of the debate will help to convey its spirited tone and its assumed seriousness. Attacking one of Gager's proposals, the theologian Rainoldes insisted that even for purposes of saving his life, a man should not put on the clothing of a woman. The argument for intention, which was important to Gager, was thereby challenged. If intention were the criterion for judging the morality of an act, a man, provided his heart was right, could pray in church with his French hood on!² This refutation of intention, Thompson observes, economically took care of another of Gager's points: that wearing women's attire temporarily for stage costume could not be regarded as the same thing as wearing it on a more permanent basis off-stage. In substance, Rainoldes' response was this: "If the wearing of a garment for a single time did not count, then Nero, who according to historians never used the same garment twice, wore no clothing at all."³ Thus the battle raged, in great earnestness, with varied weapons provided by Biblical tradition and logic.

Biblical admonition received support by Ramist logic in the case

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., p. 98.

³Ibid.

against disguise and its undesirable effects. Sidney's Arcadia, as Hardin Craig has pointed out, shows the influence of Ramist logic, in which everything has its proper place.¹ Musidorus, upon discovering Pyrocles dressed as an Amazon, reprimands him. By assuming this disguise Pyrocles supposedly has done violence to nature; as a result he may suffer, Musidorus warns. Pyrocles retaliates with another argument based upon logic.

Whereas some critics of disguise approached the evil through the dictates of the authority which forbade it, others concentrated upon a description of the effects of disguise on the nature of the individual. The conviction that transvestism perverted women into hermaphrodites has already been discussed inasmuch as it is an example of the Puritanical attack against transvestism in general. The dissembling of the male as a female occasioned a corresponding perversion, according to William Prynne in Histrio-Mastix. Such masquerading was condemned as a provocation to sodomy. Prynne charged men actors with being "most effeminate, both in apparell, body, words, and workes." He uses Stubbes for support:

Than these goodly pageants being done, every mate sorts
to his mate, every one bringes another homeward of their
way verve freendly, and in their secret conclaves (covertly)
they play the Sodomist or worse.²

Disguise, as we have seen, was subjected to censure from various points. Its critics contended that a person's assuming the garb of the

¹Hardin Craig, The Enchanted Glass (New York: Oxford University Press, 1937), p. 154.

²William Prynne, Histrio-Mastix, 1633, p. 187, and Stubbes, L. verso-4 recto, as cited in Teagarten, p. 46.

opposite sex acted against Mosaic law and contaminated the purity of his particular sex by imposing upon it its opposite. What effects did this criticism have upon Shakespeare in his use of disguise?

Shakespeare seemed to have been aware of the current censorious attitudes against disguise. His habit of having his disguisers defend their action presupposes that his audience was conditioned by the philosophical and religious climate that opposed disguise as an impropriety, and that he knew it. His position appears to have been that irrespective of what the extreme Puritans said, taking a disguise may be part of a morally neutral or even praiseworthy action.

Several of Shakespeare's disguised heroines offer some sort of apologia for their dissembling garb. Rosalind, in As You Like It, denies that her disguise implies a change in her real nature as she remonstrates:

Dost thou think, though I am caparison'd like a man, I
have a doublet and hose in my disposition?

(III.ii.204-206)

Julia in The Two Gentlemen of Verona fears that the world might scandalize her for undertaking so "unstaidd" a journey in the costume of a man. (II.vii.59-60) The rightness of her disguise is thus questioned, and it goes undefended until a justification is offered, late in the play, by Julia herself. She moralizes concerning her role:

It is the lesser blot, modesty finds,
Women to change their shapes, than men their minds.

(V.iv.108-109)

The action of Proteus--the lover of Julia who "changed his mind"--is clearly exposed as wrong in this scene. Julia emerges perspectiveally as at least less reprehensible. Julia's diverting the issue from a lesser

to a greater evil was calculated to have a disarming effect upon anyone in Shakespeare's audience who was not more than mildly sympathetic with the criticism against disguising. To continue our listing of Shakespeare's heroines who offer some sort of explanation for their disguise: Imogen of Cymbeline counterbalances censure of her immodesty with the remark:

Though peril to my modesty, not death on't,
I would adventure.

(III.iv.155-156)¹

If moral controversy over transvestism and the Elizabethan custom of giving serious attention to the appropriateness of all clothing drew sharp attention to disguise when it appeared on stage, to a degree no less remarkable the history of the stage itself provided a vivid vocabulary of meaning to the device. For years in drama there had existed a tradition of meaning in clothes and in the physical appearance of the actor. Costume and various personal accoutrements in Greek and Roman drama and in the English mysteries, moralities and interludes had been a means whereby characters were more fully represented.

The Greek actor, who enacted a god or a hero, was made to appear superhuman by means of the cothurnus, padding, and mask. These aspects of his costume distinguished him from the chorus and audience and revealed his character through the concealments. The actor's physical form heightened and magnified by cothurnus, and padding, mutely testified to his relative importance. Komisarjevsky, in analyzing the import of Greek

¹Freeburg has found apologies similar to these in earlier drama, outside of Shakespeare. P. 173.

costume, defines the use of the mask. Masks were significant of character types, especially in comedy. The complexion of the devices was important: women's masks were white and the men's brownish. The features had special meaning: impudence, an attribute of the parasite, was recognizable through the hooked nose, while the snub nose designated the yokel and old housekeeper.¹

The colors of the costumes in Greek drama were carefully selected with attention to a tradition of color symbolism. Queens appeared in flowing purple dresses with a train, while other women wore red, or in Euripides' time, white. Kings wore green.²

In the New Attic Comedy (Menander) men wore the chiton, the different lengths of which signified their standing socially.³ Boys wore purple; men dressed in brown and old men in white. Black or grey pointed out parasites and toadies; slaves wore white, and eunuchs striped material. Women were differentiated by the white of the young woman, the green or sky-blue of the old woman, or the yellow or multi-colored dress of the courtesan.⁴

Roman drama continued to transmit the tradition of significant costuming. Specific aspects of the Roman costume are catalogued in Bernard Sobel's work. For Roman tragedy the long sweeping robes,

¹ Komisarjevsky, p. 39.

² Ibid., p. 34.

³ Ibid., p. 36.

⁴ Ibid., p. 37.

symmata, corresponded to the Greek chiton; for comedy various short garments recalled costumes of both the Phlyakes and the regular literary comedy of the Greeks. Wigs (galeri) were worn, and also buskins, corresponding to the Greek cothurnus.¹ The Roman comic types each had a characteristic costume:² slaves were always recognizable because of their traditionally short gowns. Similarly, the soldier wore the chlamys, and the toady a tight himation. All comic actors wore the low shoe, the soccus.³

Aspects of costume such as these are meaningful through established convention. In his listing of significant Roman costumes Komisarjevsky notes that characters in distress appeared in careless attire.⁴ Thus, it appears that costume was chosen for its intrinsic appropriateness to character or immediate situation as well as for its more prevalent uses for arbitrary, though fixed, denotation.

Roman comedy continued to attach importance to the color of the actors' dress. For example, old men wore white; procurers wore a gay-colored himation. Red portrayed wealth and dark hues poverty.⁵

The basic dramatic concept of costume--that it should help represent the character--appeared again in medieval drama. Again, not only

¹Bernard Sobel (ed.), The Theatre Handbook (New York: The Crown Publishers, 1950), p. 186

²Komisarjevsky, p. 46.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

signs that seem arbitrarily conventionalized but also symbols that are intrinsically appropriate are used. Physical props were relied upon for symbolizing character occasionally in the mystery plays. In the Coventry pageant angels, who of course enjoy a position superior to man in medieval hierarchy, wore a species of cothurnus or short stilts to appear more impressive,¹ to represent physically or spatially their metaphysical status. Since dramatic points of view and perspectives in art will frequently be compared in my study, it might be noted here that this essentially medieval hierarchial perspective persists into Renaissance painting. In Botticelli and Parmigianino, for example, there is employed "a method of scaling figures according to their psychological, social, or ritual importance, much used in romanesque sculpture."²

Masks and other physical paraphernalia which were revealing disguises were employed with increasing delicacy and intrinsic or psychological relevance. These devils were made up as snakes, sub species virginis, i.e. with the faces of virgins. The form chosen for representing the devil acknowledges his nature: a deceiver frequently poses as virtue. Similarly, in the moralities Whoredom presents herself as a smart young lady with a mask.³ Komisarjevsky points out too that various animal masks were used,⁴ thus opening rich resources of animal traits which could

¹Ibid., p. 62.

²Wylie Sypher, Four Stages of Renaissance Style (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1955), p. 28.

³Komisarjevsky, p. 62.

⁴Ibid., p. 67.

economically help to characterize the human actors.

From Komisarjevsky's listings it is apparent that color, in the mysteries and the moralities, was serviceable for characterization. White, a perennial referent for purity, as suitable for the Saved Souls of the Last Judgment (Coventry pageant), and for the Mother of God, who changed her costume from blue to white, as death grew imminent. Pieta of the moralities wore white.¹

The use of color, significant costume and appearance in general reflect the medieval dramatist's concern with forcefully exposing what the character stood for--not the character as a particular individual in a unique situation, but the character as allegorically representative of a generalized human situation, one in which metaphysical and moral realities were confronted. Because of the importance of these issues, not the specific but the general meaning of the character is essential and must be transmitted, even to the wearing of inscribed headgear, by the allegorical characters. Komisarjevsky observes that not infrequently the characters or supers who accompanied them carried boards or sticks or flags for purposes of making the meaning of these characters even more plain to the audience.²

Allegorical costumes were still seen on the Elizabethan stage, but infrequently³ and outside of the extensive framework of allegorical

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., p. 68.

significance found in the moralities. Henry IV, Part II opens with a speech by Rumour, who is represented as being "full of tongues" literally. Komisarjevsky notes that in Hans Sachs's Stultitia Stupidity wears a fool's cap.¹ The examples are not numerous.

Colors were still of significance, though the symbols frequently changed and became more complex and less conventional. The growing complexity of these symbols and the interest they aroused is, according to M. Channing Linthicum, indicated in the widespread discussion on the subject in the work of the Italians Sicile, Morato, Dolce, and Rinaldi. Although they produced no books of their own, the English "must have been familiar" with the Italian authors.²

Supposedly in keeping with a recognizable convention of the day, Jonson presented Veneration in ash, Gladness in green, Truth in blue, Affection in crimson, Safety in carnation. However, Middleton was also following a scheme of color symbolism when he attired Truth in white, Error in ash, Envy in red, Zeal in carnation, and so forth.³

Shakespeare heeded the meaning of colors. Blue, a mark of servitude in the sixteenth century, is noted in The Taming of the Shrew and Henry VI, Part I.⁴ Linthicum notes many uses of color in Shakespeare: green symbolized youth and joy; it was suitably "the colour of lovers"⁵

¹Ibid.

²M. Channing Linthicum, Costume in the Drama of Shakespeare and His Contemporaries (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936), p. 22.

³Ibid., pp. 16-17.

⁴Ibid., p. 27.

⁵Ibid., p. 31.

On the other hand the somber green of the weeping willow shared with the tree itself the symbolism of tragedy and grief.¹ (Othello) The wearing of yellow symbolized hope of marriage² and was joyfully appropriated by Malvolio.

The long tradition of expository costume was continued through the symbolic use of types of cloth in the drama of Shakespeare's day. Linthicum catalogues the various uses: Linsey-woolsey, a loosely woven plain cloth of linen yarn and wool, was always spoken of contemptuously. Sometimes it indicates confused talk, as in All's Well That Ends Well. (IV.i. 13)³ Russet stood for honesty and simplicity because this homespun, coarse cloth was not woven or dyed with any deceitfulness and the cloth was usually left undressed. It functions metaphorically in Hamlet, Love's Labour's Lost, and Patient Grissel. (I.i.166), (V.ii.413), (Sig. B4)⁴ Among the silks, sarcenet, a fine, soft, thin fabric of taffeta weave, served to suggest contemptuous slighness in Triolus and Cressida and Henry IV, Part I. (V.i.36) and (III.1.256)⁵ Velvet, used as a figure of perfection, can be found in Measure for Measure. (I.ii.35)⁶

¹Ibid., p. 34.

²Ibid., p. 48.

³Ibid., p. 81.

⁴Ibid., p. 87.

⁵Ibid., p. 122.

⁶Ibid., p. 126.

CHAPTER II

THE ELIZABETHAN DOUBLE VISION

"Methinks I see these things with parted eye,
When every thing seems double."
(A Midsummer Night's Dream. IV.i.193-194)

This chapter continues to answer the question of what sort of attention and response disguise would elicit in Shakespeare's day by defining the insistent Elizabethan habit of "seeking a further meaning"--interpreting content through form (appearance) or exploring the nature of something through analogy or paradox. We have seen that clothes, and disguises particularly, were interpreted as appearances which made a statement about their wearers. Such an interpretation represents a pervasive Elizabethan perspective commonly explained as the deeply allegorical temperament of the period. This perspective is a persistent tendency to juxtapose the outward form of anything and its content and to take a vivid interest in the relationship perceived between them. A definition of this mental habit--which we might call the Elizabethan double vision--will be undertaken in this chapter without reference to clothes or disguise in drama. We will look to other objects in the life and expression of the times in order to establish this double vision which provided a fundamental mode of response to Shakespeare's disguises. This chapter will substantiate the proposition that men's minds searched for a further meaning through the category of appearance (whether it be considered trustworthy or deceitful) and through analogy or paradox.

Appearances (outward forms) were thoughtfully considered from two biases: the medieval tradition of significant form persisted and stressed that appearances were accurate indices to content, while on the other hand there were concurrent attitudes which declared the deceitfulness of mere appearance: that which was immediately confronted.

That appearances were taken as a reliable index to their underlying content was illustrated in public displays. Spectacle and pageantry presented forms which mutely conveyed moral meanings to the public. For example, record is made of a firework display, visible to many, which included "the seven Deadly Sins in their lively colours, shape, and characters," and on top of a pinnacle 'a fierce lion couchant signifying sudden vengeance.'¹ Appearance in this instance--that is, the form of the couched lion--was intended to direct one's attention to the concept of vengeance.

In addition to directly expressive forms such as the lion, various conventionalized forms could be relied upon as signals which clearly pointed to their significance. The magnetic center of Elizabethan patriotism, Elizabeth and her court, were surrounded by an aura of significant forms. Pomp and ceremony characterized her comings and goings, sometimes directly expressive, of course, but often stylized to a remarkable degree.

In The First Night of Twelfth Night Leslie Hotson's exhaustive efforts to reconstruct the background of Twelfth Night recapture the

¹Rosemary Freeman, English Emblem Books (London: Chatto and Windus, 1948), p. 2.

formal, ritualistic character of the Whitehall festivals. The account of Mikulin, a Russian dinner-guest, portrays perhaps most specifically the stylization in eating and drinking. Following a ceremony involving five Cupbearers, these events took place:

And as we sat at dinner, the Queen sent by the Carver a gift to Grigori--a white loaf on a dish covered with a napkin, and he spoke to Grigori: "Our great Lady," quoth he, "Elizabeth the Queen, of her grace bestows on you this napkin."¹

Following this was the ceremonial eating of the bread and salt in confirmation of the treaty of peace and friendship.

Another indication of the ritualistic character of the court is that

. . . the ordinary mode of appointing an important household officer was by the delivery of a white staff, which became the symbol of his office, and which at the funeral of the sovereign he solemnly broke over his head before the bier.²

Though appearances were frequently, therefore, relied upon as guides to meaning, Elizabethan people were far from naive. They were trained skeptics. Especially suspect were appearances of virtue. Biblical admonition, certainly familiar to the Elizabethan church-goers and sermon-readers, was instrumental in conditioning minds to seek meanings other than those which outward appearance immediately suggested. Old Testament and New proclaimed that there are two ways of looking at objects. I Samuel 16:7 states that "man looketh on the outward.

¹Leslie Hotson, The First Night of Twelfth Night (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1954), p. 193.

²Shakespeare's England (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1916), I, 84.

appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." Admonishing his audience to assume a more spiritual perspective, Paul proposes that "we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen" (II Corinthians 4:18) even though, as finite beings we at best "see through a glass darkly." (I Corinthians 13:12) "Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light," (II Corinthians 11:14) while false teachers and false prophets come in Christ's name. Christ exposes false appearances: "Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity." (Matthew 23:28)

The admonition of the emblem and epigram back up scriptural warnings against deceptions. One of Wither's epigrams, for example, warns:

Bee Warie, wheresoe're, thou bee;
For, from deceit, no place is free.¹

In another of Wither's emblems a fashionably dressed woman, representing spiritual deformity, appears to be attractive since she holds before her hideous face a pleasant appearing mask. The accompanying epigram makes the meaning unmistakable:

Deformitie, within may bee,
Where outward Beauties we doe see.²

Not only were apparent virtue and superficial beauty to be scrutinized for underlying corruption, but that which was obviously secular or wicked was to be re-examined for possible spiritual meanings.

¹ Wither, p. 183.

² Ibid., p. 229.

A scratch on the surface of falseness could reveal a truth, and much classical pagan literature revealed its "sacred origins" and contained helpful admonitions. Or, as the modern critic sees, it was recast into an allegorical mold and shaped into an object fit for the edification of Renaissance Christians. No source, no matter how pagan it might superficially appear to be, was to be despised and spurned as unprofitable. George Chapman, preferring moral to worldly wisdom, read the Iliad as an allegory of "the body's fervour and fashion of an outward fortitude," and the Odyssey as that of "the mind's inward, constant, and unconquered empire."¹ Francis Meres spoke for his age in Palladis Tamia: "As bees out of the bitterest flowers, and sharpest thornes, doe gather the sweetest hony: so out of obscene and wicked fables some profit may be extracted."² And, as Shakespeare's Henry V observes,

Thus may we gather honey from the weed,
And make a moral of the devil himself,
.....
There is some soul of goodness in things evil
Would men observingly distil it out.
(IV.1.4-5, 11-12)

In order to see something as it really is the Elizabethan mind was constrained to regard it indirectly, exploring it through a relationship, either through double aspects of itself (analogy) or through its opposite (paradox).

¹George Chapman, The Odysseys of Homer I, ed. Richard Hooper (London: Reeves and Turner, 1897), p. xlvii-xlviii.

²Francis Meres, Palladis Tamia (1598), ed. Don Cameron Allen (New York: Scholars' Facsimiles and Reprints, 1938), p. 268. Meres is quoting Plutarch. Another of his adages--apparently one of his own--makes an amusing contrast with the one quoted here: "Bees abstaine from withered flowers: so we should abstaine from corrupt, vicious and obscene bookes." P. 266.

The analogical or allegorical habit was deeply rooted and variously manifest. The widespread interest in emblems, for one thing, attests to the mental habit of a two-sided approach. The emblem books supplemented an abstract moral precept with an emblem--a visual sign of an idea, reinforcing concept with significant pictorial form. This inclination to juxtapose picture and concept is defined by Rosemary Freeman as the emblematical temper of the Elizabethans. She observes that "the personified figures which Spenser used so frequently might be found painted on a ceiling, embroidered on a cloak, or woven in a tapestry. . . ."¹

Originating in France, the emblem books were introduced into England in the 1580's. Their instantaneous popularity affirms the emblematical character of the Elizabethan mind. Tillyard, prefacing a study of English emblems, summarizes their significance.

Now one of the then habits of mind most prevalent yet most remote from ourselves was the emblematical . . . The chief general interest of the English Emblem Books is that they present in a very simple and striking form one of the ruling mental principles of a whole century. Their very ingenuousness and their popularity prove how deeply the emblematical way of thinking had penetrated the consciousness of England.²

Similar to the emblem is the rebus, a sort of riddle representing some sentence or object by means of pictures or words, or a combination of both. Shakespeare's coat of arms is exemplary. A breakdown of his name into "Shake" and "speare" is the basis for the pictorial symbol: a bird, at the top of the crest, raising a spear, apparently about to

¹ Freeman, p. 2.

² Ibid., p. viii.

hurl it.

Even superficially considered, Elizabethan language and literature bear witness to a pervasive love of analogy. This is reflected not only in whole works but in smaller units. Homonyms were a constant delight because of their concise double meanings. And, for another example, the Petrarchan conceits, on a more sustained basis, provided two levels of meaning.

Allegory, the most extensive example of this sort of literary interest, was obviously a popular mode of expression. The Fairie Queen is no doubt the most influential example of Elizabethan allegory. In his search for moral truth the Red Cross Knight endured experiences which find their profound appeal because they are analogous to vicissitudes that befall us mortals. Of course, within the allegory the poet touches upon paradox too. The Red Cross Knight frequently acquires new knowledge through acquaintance with falsehood in its various forms. The quest for truth in this work is indirect and offers a persistent challenge in the discerning of true and false, right and wrong. Outward forms, suggesting intrinsic beauty and truth, are not to be accepted uncritically. Duessa, despite her appearance, ought not to be confused with Una. We shall presently be further concerned with paradox derived from false appearances.

Examples of religious and pious allegory are legion. Even a brief survey of the Short Title Catalogue will produce a host of titles testifying to their popularity. The title of Anthony Nixon's allegory

is representative of their subject matter and approach. The Christian Navy. Wherein is playnely described the perfit course to sayle to the Hauen of eternall happiness, 1602. This long poem describes the best course for avoiding the rocks and whirlpools of the sea of life. Especially popular among the middle classes was Richard Bernard's The Isle of Man. Or The Legall Proceeding in Man-shire against Sinne.¹ Phineas Fletcher's Purple Island, Or the Isle of Man, 1633, reaches perhaps the limits of unreadable complexity which characterizes these allegories.

Another type of allegorical literature that satisfied the dual need of edification and amusement was the beast fable, which continued in popularity through the time of Elizabeth. Reynard the Fox, for example, was reprinted several times. Again, moral and psychological truths were approached through indirection. By identifying a type of human being with an animal, the easily recognized traits of the particular animal reveal more vividly the quality of the more complex human. The usefulness of animal symbolism is recognized by Elizabethan dramatists--Jonson and Chapman, for example--and is used continuously for economical characterization.

Another indirect way of regarding something--in addition to exploring it analogically--was by examining it in the context of its opposite, that is, through a paradox.

The recurrent Elizabethan distrust of appearances has already been discussed. One evidence of the unreliability of appearance is that

¹Wright, p. 397.

what seems wicked, pagan, or sensual may be a mere façade for the good, the religious, the spiritual. What lay beneath the apparent was its opposite, according to this approach.

The eroticism of Ovid, objectionable on its literal level, was rendered not only innocuous but spiritually elevating through Golding's interpretations. The Pyramus and Thisbe tale, for instance, shows how heady love turns to grief, and it vividly portrays how secret sin is brought to light. Golding's edition of Ovid is prefaced by a laborious defense of the pagan eroticism in terms of moral allegory.

If poets, then with leesings and with fables shadowed so
The certain truth, what letteth us to pluck those visors from
Their doings and to bring again the darkened truth to light,
That all men may behold therefore earnestly admonished to be
To seek a further meaning than the letter gives to see.¹

The Elizabethan practice of "seeking a further meaning" from classical literature depended upon the sanction and inertia provided by medieval habit. Pagan writings could be conveniently accommodated to the demands of the Christian attitude when they were regarded as corruptions of the true scriptures. At least their sources were good and, taken allegorically, they were instructive. The role of Virgil in Dante's Inferno reflects the medieval attempt to reconcile classical and Christian traditions. Though not a Christian, Virgil appears to be a suitable guide, a sort of pagan prophet for Christianity. Ovid was similarly misunderstood in the late medieval period. With characteristic irony, Chaucer, it will be recalled, has his Prioress in the Canterbury

¹Ovid's Metamorphoses, trans. Arthur Golding, as cited in The Renaissance in England, ed. Hyder E. Rollins and Herschel Baker (Boston: D. C. Heath and Co., 1954), p. 541.

Tales wear the badge, "Love conquers all"; the legend was taken from Ovid, but lacquered with Christian denotations.

In the poetry of Robert Southwell, a Jesuit, the sensual and the spiritual are two sides of the same coin. This tendency of working through opposites or working through the physical to the spiritual also gathers its momentum through the medieval habit of thought. Supported by Platonism and the tradition of the Petrarchan conceit it finally reaches fruition in Donne and the metaphysicals, with whom it is usually associated. Southwell, contemporary with Shakespeare's productive period, attests to the general search for truth through its varied and often paradoxical facets. That the sensual is expressive of the spiritual is axiomatic to Southwell. Explicit reference to the hidden quality of virtue and beauty is to be found in many of his poems. In "New Prince New Pomp" from Saint Peter's Complaint, 1595, we find that "An orient perle is often founde / In depth of dirty mire."¹ And "Love's Servile Lot" presents love as a false mistress, who "shroudeth Vice in Vertue's veyle."² The most extensive and successful of these Elizabethan allegorical techniques is, of course, found in Spenser's The Faerie Queene; working through the sensual and the unlovely, the poem aims at spiritual beauty and the glorification of the Christian virtues. Moral truth, the Elizabethan believed, could be discerned not only directly by precept or historical precedent, but also through a discovery of its opposite--error--or spiritual truth through the sensual. At the far end of the

¹Robert Southwell, The Complete Poems of Robert Southwell, ed. Alexander B. Grosart (London: Robson and Sons, 1872), p. 116.

²Ibid., p. 78.

Renaissance, Milton recognized in his Areopagitica that good is known through evil and that to eradicate evil would be to destroy the complex which embodied good as well.

The attempt to reconcile opposites and see them as double manifestations of an underlying unity permeates every aspect of Renaissance thinking. Elizabethans adhered to an orderly conception of the universe which ultimately provided resolution for opposites. Every creature and condition had its antithesis, but every antithesis found resolution in a concordant universe. Hot and cold, moist and dry--all elements fused or mixed to create objects having new, valuable properties. Elizabethans "recognized that this exactly balanced conflict of opposites was essential to the settled order of the world."¹ The discussion of universal proportion in The Courtiers Academy by Annibale Romei, translated by J. Keper in 1598, supports this sort of generalization. Here the beauty and design of the human body is extolled. Man's beauty is in his proportion--in this respect he is microcosmic--as he combines many opposites into a product of great attraction. The complex substance, which reconciled a great number of opposites, gave much satisfaction to the Elizabethan. The aesthetic appeal of a diamond is less than man's; its beauty lies in its white color, only a single quality.²

¹James Winny (ed.), The Frame of Order: An Outline of Elizabethan Belief Taken From Treatises of the Late Sixteenth Century (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1957), p. 19.

²Ibid., p. 211.

This Renaissance habit of a double vision through opposites is reflected in the Ramist logic of the day. This system is a dialectic through which moral truth appears to hang suspended between the affirmative and the negative; both sides are debated and every question is approached through its two sides. Ramus states that dialectic "proclaims to us the truth of all argument . . . whether the truth be necessary, as in science, or as in opinion, contingent, that is to say, capable both of being and not being."¹ Because something is contingent, relative, does not mean it cannot be known. Its truth lies within categories of both being and non-being. Hardin Craig proposes that this recognition of the double aspect of a moral issue "is an intuitive response to the spirit of the age."² And this interest in dialectic was a pervasive one in Elizabethan England. "Proficiency in dialectic with its concomitant rhetoric was the most serious educational and cultural ideal of the age."³

Shakespeare himself reflects in his drama and poetry the Elizabethan concern with the paradoxical and hidden character of truth.

"The Phoenix and the Turtle" concludes that

Truth may seem, but cannot be;
Beauty brag, but 'tis not she;
Truth and Beauty buried be.

¹Petrus Ramus, *Dialectique*, 1955, p. 2. as cited in Wilbur S. Howell, *Logic and Rhetoric in England, 1500-1700* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1956), p. 154.

²Craig, p. 157.

³Ibid., p. 152.

And what are they buried in? In the false, in the superficially or partially true, or in a paradoxically existing mixture of the false and the true--as Cressida says, "To say the truth, true and not true."

(I.ii.106) Enigmatic or paradoxical statements such as the following occur throughout Shakespeare's drama: "Truth doth . . . falsely blind the eyesight" (Love's Labour's Lost I.i.75-76); "I am not what I am" (Iago, Othello I.i.65 and Viola, Twelfth Night III.i.153); "nothing that is so is so" (Feste, Twelfth Night IV.i.9); "a natural perspective that is and is not." (Duke, Twelfth Night. V.i.224).

The literary and educated mind of Elizabethan England appears to have been sensitively aware of various meanings latent in a single significant form. But what of Shakespeare's audience? The spirit of the age was conditioned by the Biblical and logical tradition of thought and the widespread occurrence of analogical and paradoxical multiple expressions. Basing my impression of an Elizabethan audience on recent studies such as Alfred Harbage's and Leslie Hotson's, I assume that in background and the degree of attentiveness the audience would have been perceptive to the dramatic, expository and symbolic value of Shakespeare's disguises. A widespread ability to quote from the plays would indicate spectator attentiveness. Furthermore, according to Harbage, "The ability to quote extended beyond the literate and cultivated spectators."¹

¹Alfred Harbage, Shakespeare's Audience (New York: Columbia University Press, 1941), p. 120.

Harbage suggests convincingly that the educational background, emotional responsiveness, and general attentiveness of Shakespeare's heterogeneous audience were on a higher level than has traditionally been supposed. Unfortunately, railers against theater-goers, upon whose records subsequent evaluations have been dependent, are, on the whole, the moralists, who found it convenient to paint a clear-cut black picture. If future ages judged modern motion pictures by the censoring commentary of present day evangelists, the complexity of motives and experiences of all movie-goers would be similarly simplified and obscured.

Supplementing the biased tone of the moralizers is the "sour grape" attitude of unsuccessful or disillusioned dramatists. Harbage discovers that "the most successful writers were less critical when they had scored a hit."¹

The ordinary commoner was trained to detect an abstract meaning from an outward form; he was accustomed to this way of looking per-spectively through things. An emphasis upon graphic similarities among things permeated Elizabethan thinking. The commonness of this analogizing perspective is summarized by Winny: "The unwearied delight in analogy and correspondence which sixteenth-century literature exhibits is nourished by beliefs held in common by theologian, scientist, and poet, and deeply impressed upon the outlook of all three."²

¹Ibid., p. 130-131.

²Winny, p. 15.

Moral truth and the relevance of objects and incidents were continuously sought after through something else: its analogical counterpart or its opposite. This sort of perceptiveness resulted not only from the cultural conditioning that would have been restricted to certain classes or occupations--the highly literate, or the cleric, for example--but it was generated by a pervasive allegorical habit of thinking. The Elizabethan did not have to be an aristocrat or a student highly trained in scholastic thought to respond to the import of the bonfire, mentioned previously, in which a fierce lion signified sudden vengeance.

Even more universally, this sort of perceptiveness testifies to the ubiquitous ability or tendency of man to see more clearly that which is hidden. What one must attend to most carefully, one sees best. Apart from the conditioning of time and place and even education, this psychological phenomenon presents itself in human nature. Emily Dickinson, who so frequently captures a common but infrequently expressed psychological reality, succinctly conveys this expository value of obscuring forms.

The thought beneath so slight a film
Is more distinctly seen,--
As laces just reveal the surge,
Or mists the Apennine.

Or, I would like to propose, as disguise reveals the character so obscured.

CHAPTER III

CHARACTER DEPTH THROUGH DISGUISE

"I am not what I am."
(Viola, Twelfth Night III.i.153)

At its dramatic best, disguise in Shakespeare's work not only conceals but, paradoxically, reveals through concealment. Or, expressed in the idiom of Chapters I and II, it is a form of deception which nevertheless becomes not a piece of wickedness but an avenue to truth.

Shakespeare's use of disguise for characterization will be analyzed mainly through a close study of three disguised characters. Henry V and the Rosalind of As You Like It serve to illustrate how disguise liberates a character, granting him freedom to express and thereby reveal himself more fully. Secondly, Rosalind and Coriolanus explain the function of disguise as a kind of visible metaphor, a means of epitomizing some quality in the disguised character. An auxiliary and final purpose of this chapter is to examine disguise as it compares in effectiveness and dramatic thrift with other techniques for the exposition of character and as it complements their techniques.

Apart from those qualities of Henry V which disguise reveals, the king suffers under so heavy a thematic load that it is difficult to imagine responding to him with sympathy or even with dramatic belief. The play presents the completed realization of Hal as a king, and it also brings to a resolution the ideas of power and statesmanship broached in Richard II. In Henry V a serious and predominating theme is the

establishment of English order after a troubled period of internal conflict. Henry is deeply concerned with the legality and ecclesiastical approbation which underlie his action in claiming the throne of France. He desires to act "with right and conscience,"--to be right even more than to fulfill his own interests, so he inquires into the validity of his claim upon France before he will fight. With a legal foundation beneath him and a religious demeanor, Henry faces battle "by God's Grace." With a settled and quiet dignity, which commands respect and loyalty, he unites the factions springing from various national peculiarities.

In order to support the exalted representation of kingship in Henry V, it is necessary for Shakespeare to establish and maintain Henry's royal dignity and moral purpose. Henry heeds a noble obligation and resolutely pursues it.

However, it is difficult for the main character of a play to arouse the sympathetic interest of an audience when he is a man without any inner conflict or human weakness. A new facet to Henry's personality is illuminated when he appears disguised in the midst of his discouraged soldiers in the camp. Henry dissembles in the cloak of Sir Thomas Erpingham, one of his officers. Temporarily Shakespeare thereby frees Henry from his weighty role as the unflinching and righteous monarch, allowing him to engage in a new identity--in a position no more exalted than good old Erpingham's. Only superficially, however, is Henry someone else; actually he is more fully himself. That is, he reveals aspects of his essential nature that have been thus far concealed.

Henry's status as king, quite idealized in this play, does not give an opportunity for the exposure of the common fears that he shares with the lowliest of his men. But in his disguise Henry can tell us how he feels, under the guise of interpreting the nature of the king to a soldier, John Bates. "I think the king is but a man, as I am," he begins.

The violet smells to him as it does 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; and though his affections are higher mounted than ours, yet when they stoop, they stoop with the like wing. 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.105-117)

Shakespeare has chosen an exceptionally effective medium through which he reveals to us the humanity of Henry, which involves, in part, both sensitivity to fear and to the responsibility that restrains him from more direct expressions of personal feeling to his subjects. The conventional devices for such revelations of feelings that are inexpressible because of the demands of the action are the aside and the soliloquy. Set speeches, however, diverge from the moving plot, or they are generally uneconomical modes of disclosure, serving a single purpose. Shakespeare, as his technique develops, learns to do without soliloquy or else to use it more discriminatingly and with greater relevance to character and situation; Hamlet comes to mind as the obvious example.

In Henry V, a comparatively early play, a soliloquy follows the disguise scene. Disguise dramatically complements the conventional set

piece. The soliloquy makes explicit what has just been dramatized: outward appearances are misleading or incomplete presentations. The sorrows and tribulations of a king are laid bare in this impassioned complaint, which again points beyond the Henry who was revealed only through his official speeches and royal actions, to offer intimations of humanity.

Henry inspects the nature of ceremony. According to established Elizabethan attitudes the regal forms constituting the ceremony of which Henry speaks, are directly significant of the god-like qualities of the king, a being distinctively different from the common citizen. Henry, however, addresses ceremony in this way:

And what art thou, thou idol Ceremony?
 What kind of god art thou, that suffer'st more
 Of mortal griefs than do thy worshippers?

 Art thou aught else but place, degree, and form.
 (IV.i.257-263)

Ironically, those ceremonious forms which were respected by Elizabethans as revealing the nature of kingship are exposed as incomplete guides, whereas Henry's disguise, the assumption of garb that hid his position, actually proved the means for expressing his innermost being.

Through the combined effects of these indirect and direct displays of personal pathos, we are made aware of the problems and fears facing the king--problems and fears which, because of the demands of his situation, he must never undisguisedly disclose. Henry emerges not simply as a capable and righteous ruler or one whose initial propositions are simply tested and made to triumph, but he emerges also as a

more dynamic human person and thereby arouses from the audience the sympathetic response due a dramatic hero.

Disguise serves another purpose in Henry V. As an English king, personally qualified for his noble role, Henry can no longer associate closely with his old cronies Pistol, Nym, and Bardolph. But he is somewhat liberated from unrelieved seriousness when he assumes a disguise, talks freely with his men, and indulges in a bit of joking, in a spirit reminiscent of the fun-loving Prince Hal of the Henry IV plays. Donning Sir Thomas' cloak, Henry again jokes with his old friend, Pistol. In his elevated position as king, Henry can no longer be his comrade, however; and the degree of the difference between the two--a difference which combines with other aspects of the play to exalt Henry--is expressed here as Henry, through his disguise, is temporarily in a position to banter with Pistol. The import of Henry's jesting eludes the naive Pistol because of its sophistication. For example, when Pistol asks Henry his name, the king replies, "Harry, le Roy!"/ "Le Roy! a Cornish name. Art thou a Cornish crew?" asks Pistol, obviously ignorant of French. (IV.i.48-50) The disparity between the characters is now almost too great to permit a mutually satisfying, reciprocal species of joking. Henry's old sense of humor is somewhat recaptured and combines with his revealed fear and compassion to humanize him; and at the same time Henry's transcendent status is re-emphasized through his evident superiority, even while he is in disguise, to his former comrades. The Elizabethan mode of expression through opposites underlies the disguise technique: what the king is is more clearly seen through what he

is not. With his characteristic condensation the dramatist accomplishes several things at the same time, through a smoothly adapted convention which--unlike soliloquy--does not retard the movement of the play.

The disguise of Rosalind in As You Like It is similar in function to that of Henry V; it allows for a more complete picture of the character through an artistically controlled conventional device. Disguise grants Rosalind freedom of action and language, which her femininity would otherwise have restricted. Through the artifice of disguise Shakespeare also offers dramatic statement of qualities essential to Rosalind's nature.

Again it is necessary to examine the play as a whole before considering the special role of disguise. The play is essentially about love, from the most earthy love of Touchstone and Audrey to the etherialized, sentimentalized relationship between Silvius and Phebe. Rosalind is also a lover, and in this role she is the median for love; Rosalind dominates the drama not merely by virtue of her attractive personality, but because she stands between all the extremes of the play--including excesses of many sorts, but excesses in attitudes toward love in particular. When Jacques says he likes his melancholy better than laughing, Rosalind reproves him: "Those that are in extremity of either are abominable fellows." (IV.1.5-6) And to Silvius she says, "You are a fool, and turn'd into th' extremity of love." (IV.iii.22-23) Rosalind interprets the excesses constituting these extremes and helps to resolve them by offering the realistic type of love which she represents.

Even her own lover, Orlando, comes within the commentary of her values. Though loved by Rosalind, he romanticizes love too much for Rosalind's taste. Through her disguise Rosalind assumes the more aggressive role of a man and can criticize Orlando's sentimentality, which she could not do directly. Rosalind and Orlando are in love throughout the play. Rosalind fell in love with Orlando immediately and completely; she had little opportunity to know him well. In the forest of Arden Rosalind is slightly taken aback when she finds that the young lover, whose verses she and Celia--prompted by Touchstone--have found so ridiculous, is none other than her Orlando. Orlando has been characterized as comely, strong, gentle, brave, modest and in all aspects quite ideal as a lover for Rosalind. However his sentimentality is not in accord with her more realistic approach to love. Orlando says he will die of love; this, Rosalind says, is nonsense.

Orlando obviously must be re-educated in the nature of love and Rosalind, through her disguise, is an eminently qualified critic and instructor, but one always in keeping with the established tone of comedy, which dominates the play. As the median or the synthesizer, "the golden girl" in a drama of many extremes, Rosalind, through her disguise, is allowed to be both an amusing and penetrating critic on the excesses of love.

For such an aggressive role as Rosalind has to play, Shakespeare no doubt had some problems. In literature, the troubadour tradition of the passive and aloof female was not so entirely replaced in Shakespeare's

day, that overbearing women would appear attractive. And according to the accredited faculty psychology of the times, certain proprieties were imposed upon the female nature: under an influential convention Rosalind, as a woman, was expected to be passive and phlegmatic. Disguise does much to liberate the heroine from such restrictions.

In actual life, the forward woman was strongly reproached. Each age seems to have its distinctive species of controversy over women and sixteenth and early seventeenth century England was certainly no exception. Burgher writers in particular were voluminous and spirited in their pronouncements concerning woman's place in society.¹ Growing interest in discussions of the relations of the sexes was provoked by the increasing liberty of women.²

Venting their displeasure, the conservatives reproached women for their masculine boldness and growing sphere of activity. Husbands were ordered to assume more firm regulatory roles and to maintain leadership. One among the many evils of the female nature was talkativeness. Another was scheming. Intriguing females, whose prototypes are Eve, Jezebel, Herodias, and other Biblical characters, were included in the diatribes. On both accounts Rosalind and other vivacious and dissembling women from Shakespeare would undoubtedly be subject to a barrage of vituperation, had they been actual Elizabethans.

¹Wright, p. 465.

²Ibid., p. 466.

The number of books recording this sort of censure was legion. For illustration, Abraham Vele's publication in 1560 will serve: The decayte of women, to the instruction and ensample of all men, yonge and olde, newly corrected. This supplied in addition to the text,

a pictorial warning to husbands, in a woodcut on the title-page fearsomely presenting a woman astride her spouse, who goes on all fours with a bridle in his mouth as she flogs him with a three-lashed whip. The prologue maintains that only froward and deceitful women need take offense at the book. . . .¹

Such books were in popular demand and their contents were evidently well known if not always agreed with. Critics of the anti-feminists, as one might suppose from a period that was fond of logical disputation, challenged the ideas of their opposition point by point.

Hic Mulier: Or, the Man-Woman, though it appeared as late as 1620, is nevertheless representative of the distrust of women that characterized the period when Shakespeare was producing his plays. Opprobrium is heaped upon "you Masculine women," "that are the gilt durt, which imbroaders Playhouses."² And this is Rosalind's position precisely. She is "gilt durt," in keeping with the scriptural tradition of deceptive women, even though, the moralists would claim, her intention was not malicious. Or, to use another contemporary expression, Rosalind is a contemptible "gilded pill" as are all who dissemble, particularly those who use cosmetics. Through the following unattractive metaphor William

¹Ibid., pp. 470-471.

²Hic Mulier: Sig. A4, as cited in Wright, p. 494.

Prynne, who can always be counted on to analyse the wickedness of women, makes this analogy: "To conclude, whosoever she be, shee's but a Guilded Pill, composde of these two ingredients, defects of nature, and an artificiall seeming of supplie, tempered and made up by pride and vanity, and may wel be reckned among these creatures that God neuer made."¹

Shakespeare was aware of this line of thinking--this censure of assertiveness and the attitude that the very nature of the woman was altered by the assumption of disguise. As was mentioned earlier, Shakespeare's heroines make disarming statements implying that no immediate and pat conclusions concerning their natures can be reached merely on the basis of their use of disguise.

Rosalind is vindicated in another way. Her disguise is an allegedly evil form out of which good actually comes. That we are here confronted with a dramatic statement flatly contradictory to the allegation that disguise is evil because it produces evil consequences is clear. We are not dealing with an accidental. Within the comic framework of plays such as The Merchant of Venice and Twelfth Night, to mention just two, good comes of disguise. Good comes of Henry's disguise; certainly it is the consequence of the Duke's disguise in Measure for Measure and of Kent and Edgar in King Lear. Although Shakespeare's

¹William Prynne, Histrio-Mastix The Players Scourge, or, Actors Tragaedie, Divided into Two Parts (London: Printed by E. A. and W. I. for Michael Sparke, 1633), pp. 60-61.

plays abound in pernicious dissemblers and impersonators of many sorts, nowhere after the early Henry VI is a physical disguise assumed with a destructive result.

In yet another manner Shakespeare provides a defense for Rosalind's disguise. It is an oblique defense, but cogent.

This oblique defense of Rosalind and its effect upon her characterization will be best understood if we first establish the mode of argument which underlies it as both typically Shakespearean and also as a form of rhetoric well known to Elizabethans.

This mode of argument consists of using an opponent's argument as a means of refuting his major contention. It is enticing to think of Shakespeare's using the very form of what is criticized--the disguised woman--to vindicate it or at least to render it innocuous and appealing. The rhetorical device of using an objection to turn it back against him who made it would certainly have been known to Shakespeare, and its use is consistent with his practice elsewhere. Characteristic of Shakespeare's drama is an amused, gibing attitude towards contemporary but unreasonable ways of thinking or fixed beliefs. One way of mildly and subtly counteracting them without relying upon direct satire, is to allude to the questionable object or actually to employ it and somehow through its use, parody or otherwise undermine it. This is accomplished through classical modes of argumentation, with which Shakespeare is thoroughly at home. For example, Shakespeare grants his critic the critic's own ground through Julia's speech in The Two Gentlemen of Verona. "It is the lesser blot . . . women to change their shapes,

than men their minds." (V.iv.106-109) The argument against disguise-- that it is a blot--is conceded, but its desirability over inconstancy of intent sets it advantageously in a new light, because it is observed as relative to what is worse. Rhetorically this type of defense and rebuttal is metastasis. This device involves the turning back of an objection against him who made it.¹

There is in Antony and Cleopatra an instance of the use of metastasis for an amusing gibe. Stubbes in his Anatomic of Abuses, written 1583, condemns plays in which bawdiness, lechery, and adultery appear in "infinite varietie."² What context Shakespeare put this pejorative phrase in is well known: "Time cannot wither her," says Enobarbus, "nor custome stale/ Her infinite variety." In the prevailing moral code of Elizabethans such as Stubbes and in the eyes of the Romans the "infinite variety" of Cleopatra is vicious. Yet the whole force of Cleopatra's triumphant personality turns the phrase back upon itself--helped, of course, by the admiring tone of Enobarbus' eulogy. A phrase initially pejorative becomes the means of memorable praise. Thus Shakespeare accepts an anti-feminist's phrase and so treats it that the original intention is precisely reversed.

The type of argument behind this allusion can be more clearly seen in the development of Antony's oration in Julius Caesar. Here the

¹Henry Peacham, The Garden of Eloquence (1577), p. 180, as cited in Sister Miriam Joseph, Shakespeare's Use of the Arts of Language (New York: Columbia University Press, 1949), p. 383.

²Stubbes, p. 143.

metastasis is employed in its conventional context of verbal argument rather than transformed into a dramatic device. Following Brutus' speech defaming the murdered Caesar, Antony begins with the premise of the "noble Brutus"--that Caesar was ambitious. Antony uses this premise, in the guise of agreeing, to eventually undermine it and establish a new conclusion. Brutus' speech has succeeded. Through his established character of a good, noble man and his appeal to his audience as reasonable men, he has successfully convinced these auditors that Caesar was overly ambitious. Antony in attacking Brutus must work through the premise of his opponent and through the attitude of Brutus toward his audience that had been fundamental to the establishment of this premise. That is, the audience, appealed to as reasonable men, are convinced of Brutus' honor and Caesar's infamy on this basis. It is the aim of Antony, however, to lead them, by appealing to their emotions, into a sympathetic attitude towards Caesar. Unable to violate the assumptions of the crowd at the moment, Antony must condition the assumption with a not too obvious "if";

The noble Brutus
Hath told you Caesar was ambitious.
If it were so . . .

(III.ii.82-84)

Repeatedly Caesar's ambition is presented as the conclusion of the noble Brutus. If Caesar isn't ambitious--and Antony increasingly insinuates that he isn't--then Brutus' nobility is put in question. And if his nobility is put in question, so is the assumption that the crowd has behaved reasonably by receiving Brutus. Thus Antony prepares the way for appealing to them as men of passion.

It is not meet you know how Caesar lov'd you.
 You are not wood, you are not stones, but men;
 And being men, hearing the will of Caesar,
 It will inflame you, it will make you mad.
 (III.ii.146-149)

The necessity of disarming and refuting through accepted modes of thought, which is the common factor in the examples of rebuttal cited above, is certainly not beyond the interest and practice of Shakespeare on a scale that is larger than these incidental occurrences. Shakespeare frequently exposes a character's inappropriate reliance upon conventional, facile approaches to truth. In Julius Caesar use is made of Brutus' reliance upon idealistic precept to expose its inapplicability in a specific situation. Hamlet's reliance upon example or precedent--Horatio and Fortinbras--has no efficacy in the solution of his own individualized dilemma.

Our excursion into examples of Shakespeare's use of a rhetorical mode of argumentation has taken us through devious by-ways. However, by defining this typically Shakespearean and Elizabethan way of looking at things, this discussion provides a basis for insight into the dramatist's use of disguise. Now back to Rosalind.

Rosalind assumes a disguise, implying her deceitful nature. That is, in an Elizabethan frame of reference she is two-faced, two irreconcilable things at the same time, which nevertheless produce something new--a new creature, one not created by God--a hermaphrodite, Prynne would proclaim. Dramatically, too, she is a new creature. In a sense, Prynne is right. His premise is granted; a new statement about Rosalind's nature is proffered through her assumption of a disguise. But the

spectacle of disguise dramatically imposes a new conclusion upon this premise, just as Julia, in the statement already referred to, recast the traditional criticism against disguise and just as Antony used the statement of Brutus and Shakespeare the phrase of Stubbes to force new conclusions upon them. Rosalind is a rounded character composed of opposite qualities of masculinity and femininity that are in their complexity much more realistic and convincing than the conclusion of the moralist who depends upon a false belief in the connection between clothes and their wearer.

Compared with the moralists who objected to disguise, Shakespeare is more modern and, of course, artistic in his approach, using disguise to show how many facets of Rosalind's personality--a personality in which the traditionally accepted distinctions between male and female are not mutually exclusive. As in Ramist logic, "to be and not to be" are really one; they are aspects of being in its more comprehensive scope. Or, as in the rhetorical device of prosapodosis, none of the alternatives are rejected: the device of prosapodosis "overthroweth noe parte of the Division, but returneth some reason to each member . . . affirms and keeps all sides upp."¹ Rosalind's personality is allusive and realistically complex, one that twentieth century anthropologists such as Margaret Mead could acclaim as lifelike, recognizing as they do that many of the qualities commonly attributed to either the male or female as intrinsically peculiar to that sex are actually the products of conditioning cultures.

¹Hoskyns, p. 160, as cited in Sister Miriam Joseph, p. 362.

Clearly, therefore, at all points where Shakespeare was defending Rosalind's disguise against the objections lodged in his audience's minds he was accomplishing positive dramatic disclosures of material vital to his play's total statement. The dramatically important matter is, of course, the positive statement made possible by disguise, and to illustrate such positive statement we shall now more extensively explore the contrasts implicit in Rosalind disguised.

Disguise reveals Rosalind through offering a contrast between what she is--a woman--and what she appears to be--a man. Disguise not only establishes Rosalind as a personality composed of both masculine and feminine qualities, but it accentuates her femininity through the concealment. This is generally the effect of the disguised heroine to those who witness performances of the plays. It is true especially of a play whose dialogue helps to center attention on the real identity of the woman in disguise. Not only Rosalind but also Viola, for example, in an actual dramatic production of Twelfth Night emerges much more emphatically feminine than if the romantic action of the play had not involved masquerading. And her femininity is not merely accentuated by the contrast between her physical woman's body and its man's dress. Because of disguise she is both somewhat masculine and more than ordinarily feminine. She is more womanly in disguise because of the constant and unmistakable reference to what she isn't--a man. This reference is provided less by her disguised appearance than by the double entendres, the postures and gestures, the mannerisms, and the whole set of relationships occasioned and sustained by this situation.

The effect of this constant emphasis on Rosalind's and Viola's feminine-masculine duplicity is relevant to the larger interests of the plays. Both plays abound in a spirit of love and joy in la différence; and a conspicuous means of establishing la différence is disguise. The nature of the comedy that emerges in these plays and is heightened by disguise is incomparably more delicate than is common to the Plautine and Italian conventions.

Differences are more apparent when resident in a single form. The pun can be a way of establishing a new attitude through the presented differences, just as a rhetorical device can force together argument and refutation through the same premise.¹ With reference to Macbeth Kenneth Muir regards Shakespeare's mature pun to be an "uncomic pun" in the sense that it functions with serious, far-reaching dramatic effects.² For one thing it links together unrelated imagery, acting as a solvent for mixed metaphors. This is by analogy a statement of the effect of Rosalind-in-disguise, inasmuch as she can be interpreted as a visual pun.

The contrast offered by a woman in the disguise of a man is, as we observed in the rhetorical device, prosopodosis, dependent upon a coincident presentation of opposites, not upon an alternation between one part of an antithesis and the other. Shakespeare uses simultaneous

¹Shakespeare suggests a thing by saying its opposite, more obviously, through the verbal statement. In King Lear, for example, the Fool counsels Lear: "But I will tarry; the Fool will stay,/ And let the wise man fly./ The knave turns fool that runs away;/ The Fool no knave, perdy." (II.iv.83-86) Suggested by Hudson in the Furness ed., p. 145.

²Kenneth Muir, "The Uncomic Pun," The Cambridge Journal, III (May, 1950), 472-485.

contrast in a number of ways besides disguise and the pun. It is the operating force behind the oxymoron and other verbal paradoxes or alliterative devices that permeate Shakespeare's art. E. E. Stoll in Art and Artifice in Shakespeare analyzes the dramatic effect achieved through contrast, particularly with regard to the simultaneous existence of opposite qualities in the personality of a single character. Othello, for example, does not vacillate between love and hate; he both loves and hates concurrently. This juxtaposition of opposite qualities is explained more fully in the following quotation, in which Stoll briefly--and intriguingly--allies it with the "situation of disguise."

Instead of the conflict and contention, oscillation or fluctuation, resolve and counter-resolve, of the Racinian or Cornelian hero, there is, through all the changes, a contrast, continually reappearing, of the two feelings side by side. He is not now loving again, now jealous, but both together. There are juxtaposition and opposition instead of contention and alternation; and this very much as in ancient tragedy, the Antigone, the Oedipus, or the Agamemnon, and somewhat as in the situation of disguise, of Titus' and Hamlet's feigned madness, or of Macbeth's present horror of the deed which he is doing. Through the mask of Othello's hatred the eyes of his love are ever looking:

"Come, swear it, damn thyself
Lest, being like one of Heaven, the devils themselves
Should fear to seize thee!"¹

(IV.ii.35-37)

Reference has been made to Rosalind as a visual pun. Dramatically this is her effect--what she is is expressed in terms of what she appears not to be--and the possibility of her being recognized as such is consonant with the Elizabethan mode of double vision: looking at something

¹Elmer Edgar Stoll, Art and Artifice in Shakespeare: A Study in Dramatic Contrast and Illusion (New York: Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1933), p. 24.

two ways.

Much of the Elizabethan double vision employed one of its objects for the sake of expressing the other. The emblem existed as pictorial reinforcement for the epigram. The sensual was frequently merely a conveyance for the spiritual, as in Golding's Ovid. For the sake of examining Shakespeare's complexity in the framework of the Elizabethan double vision, the eyes of modern aestheticians are directive. Maurice Grosser helps to define the Elizabethan double vision when he discusses the use of double images in art. How to look at paintings is the problem attacked by his study The Painter's Eye. Grosser discusses double images in modern art, nothing that as a technique of painting it is not new.

Allegory, which was the subject matter of so much of the painting and poetry of the Middle Ages and of the Renaissance, is but the systematic use of double images. Decorative painters, like the sixteenth century Arcimboldo, for example, often painted landscapes, or still-lives, which seem from a certain distance become grotesque faces. But here the double image was only a decoration or a joke; or, as with the alchemists, was used to conceal knowledge in an impressive and secret alphabet; or, as in allegory, furnished the painter with a useful framework for composing the world he knew into large, rich pictures, at the same time exhibiting his philosophy or his wit.¹

At any rate, one meaning in the double image existed for the sake of another. Modern art, Grosser proposes, is distinguishable because all of its meanings are equally important. Of which perspective is Shakespeare typical? He is modern in his concern for life-like complexity. Rosalind's masculinity does not merely reveal by contrast her femininity.

¹Maurice Grosser, The Painter's Eye (New York: The New American Library of World Literature, Inc., 1956), pp. 168-169.

It does not exist merely for the sake of the underlying femininity. The masculine aggressiveness and resourcefulness and her capacity for rather coarse jesting while she is in disguise are authentic parts of her total personality. Her total meaning does not reside in an either-or dialectic between what are traditionally accepted as opposites but in the combination of the two, plus qualities revealed through her very willingness to assume disguise: that is, an adventuresome willingness, defying modesty, to try a new experience.

The shock of Rosalind and Viola in disguise is a type of counterpoint that can be expressed also in terms of what Grosser calls Neo-Classicism in art. He mentions the Neo-Classicism of Picasso's Mother and Child "where a family portrait is disguised as a late Roman fresco"; of the same painter's costumes for Satie's ballet Parade, "where the ineffectual managers are clothed in the monumental style of a New York skyscraper"; of the films of Mae West, "where an up-to-date and brazen sensuality is displayed in the rococo trappings of a decade supposed to be more prudish than our own."¹ In all these examples the shock of double image comes from the incongruity between the content and its form. The effect of these juxtaposed incongruities is obviously unlike the effect of medieval and Renaissance allegory. The two elements of the modern double vision say something about each other and, as in the case of Rosalind's incongruity, the total is more than the sum of its parts.

¹Ibid., p. 171.

The assumption of a disguise, as we have seen, can be revelatory of character through liberating him from the demands of a restrictive role or through visual punning. The visual pun, commenting as it does upon the nature of Rosalind, functions symbolically. The symbolic use of disguise will be examined more closely with reference to Coriolanus: his disguise--the very act of its appropriation and the way in which it is discovered--is emblematic of Coriolanus' nature.

The long dramatic tradition of significant costuming which is behind Shakespeare has already been discussed, in Chapter I, and has prepared the way for our understanding of Shakespeare's symbolic disguises. Clothes and costume generally were endowed with significance. But even more to our point, disguises of various sorts were used symbolically. The mask, for example, has been alluded to briefly as a means for characterizing which was much used in early drama; as a symbolizing device which reveals as it conceals, it is analogous to Shakespeare's symbolic disguises.

Arthur E. Haigh in Attic Theater has found that figures such as Justice, Persuasion, Deccit, and Jealousy were represented by special masks in Greek drama.¹ These masks quickly, conventionally, and vividly signified the forces which the characters represented. Green drama, early English liturgical drama, and Japanese drama are alike in their

¹ Arthur Elam Haigh, The Attic Theater (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1898), p. 221.

religious origins and in their symbolic use of disguise.¹ Though they grew independently, these plays originate in religious rites: Greek from the worship of Dionysus, English from the worship of Christ, and Japanese from the contemplation of the Shinto deities and Buddha. The symbolic use of the mask, which reveals as it disguises, is most clearly seen in the Japanese Noh drama, which is alive and unaltered in present times. This poetic drama has been "transmitted almost unchanged from one perfected form reached in Kioto in the fifteenth century."² In the Noh plays the artifice of the mask becomes a vital stylistic element which gives precision and intensification to the character. Masks are used not for quick identification but for transmitting through a traditionally sanctioned form, a statement which achieves tremendous animation. In a nation which has remained homogeneous and static until recent years these artifacts are significant forms invested with life. It is a Noh saying that, "The heart is the form."³ A species of dramatic life strikingly similar to that which persists in Japan was once felt in the tradition to which Shakespeare belonged.

Symbolistic disguise appears in English drama before Shakespeare. In Skelton's Magnificence disguise is used symbolically. For the most part, the hero mistakes vice for virtue simply because wicked characters

¹Ernest Fenollosa and Ezra Pound, 'Noh' or Accomplishment: A Study of the Classical State of Japan (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1916), p. 110.

²Ibid., p. 102.

³Ibid., p. 52.

change their names--Fancy for Largess, Crafty Conveyance for Sure Survayance, Cloaked Collusion for Sober Sadness. In one instance, however, disguise, imbued with symbolic denotation, augments the change of name: Cloaked Collusion wears some sort of vestment or priestly garment to represent Sober Sadness.

An advance in the attempt to represent character through emblematic disguises is noted by Freeburg. In Sir David Lyndesay's Satire of the Three Estates Flattery, Falsehood, and Deceit change their names to Devotion, Sapience, and Discretion; but in addition all three of these vices put on the costume of friars.¹

Early in the play The Three Ladies of London, a late morality, Dissimulation comes upon the scene, "having on a farmer's long coat and a cap, and his poll and beard painted motley."² It is of significance that Dissimulation appears as a farmer and that he is unwilling to risk the chance of being taken too literally, as a mere farmer or as a farmer arbitrarily. He explains himself to his audience:

My name is dissimulation, and no base name I bear
For my outward effects my inward zeal do declare;³

Dissimulation thus proclaims his zeal as similar to that of the industrious farmer. He is soon followed by Simplicity as a miller and Fraud as a ruffian.

¹Freeburg, p. 19.

²R. W., The Three Ladies of London, 1584, ed. W. Carew Hazlitt, Old English Plays (London: Reeves and Turner, 1874), p. 251.

³Ibid., p. 252.

The pattern that these disguises follow is a carry-over of medieval allegorizing--allegorizing for the purpose of revealing an abstraction of some sort, a moral truth or a particular vice, just as, in Grosser's discussion of the double image, one image was regarded as existing for the sake of the other. The abstraction of the medieval drama and the disguise of Shakespeare are both modes of allegorizing; whereas the medieval abstraction has the effect of simplifying character, to the point where it is summed up in a single word--Folly, Flattery, Deceit--Shakespeare's disguise often has the effect of presenting new facets of an individual character (as in the case of Rosalind), or, if we look at it with an appetite for generality, we find that the general proposition is far from that which will fit in the compass of a single noun.

Shakespeare uses disguise metaphorically, as a spectacle to represent some character trait, something going on within a character. The assumption of disguise, the way it is employed, or the way in which it is recognized may offer indirect statements regarding character. In Coriolanus the spectacle of disguise has meaning that actually extends beyond matters of character, inasmuch as Coriolanus and his political import is the continual focus of the play. All is subordinate to it--subsidiary characters, the background of family and populace--all functioning as choric echoes or commentaries on the problem of Coriolanus.

In Coriolanus we find that disguise is used partly as it was in Henry V, for the purpose of putting a character in another role temporarily to accentuate some quality about him. After Coriolanus is banished from Rome and has taken leave of his family, he disguises

himself as a beggar and proceeds to Antium to join forces with his rival, Aufidius, against Rome. There is a very practical reason for Coriolanus' assuming this disguise. He naturally would not wish to risk being identified and perhaps assaulted by his former enemies, before he has an opportunity to declare his friendly intentions.

Beyond this practical reason for the disguise, the warrior's concealment has ironic implications with regard to the characterization of Coriolanus that is developed throughout the play.

An explanation of these ironic overtones necessitates a review of the characterization and actions of the central figure, Coriolanus. The play is concerned with the downfall of an individual dominated by driving pride and a straining after superhuman standards. His pride and standards are so lofty that even praise is despicable to him. Placing Coriolanus in an atmosphere of social and political opposition, Shakespeare presents a man whose understanding of his relation to Rome will not allow him to do the things necessary to acquire the title which will satisfy his personal pride; yet when he tries to compromise with his nature, when he humbles himself to be something he despises, he can no longer function as a whole person. His destiny is enacted against a setting of opposition, one which brings to a critical test Coriolanus' ability to compromise with his nature--to debase himself in his own eyes by appearing before the commoners and displaying his wounds in order to receive the consulship. After an agonizing conflict as to whether or not he can force himself to this humiliating posture, Coriolanus lays aside his convictions of nobility and attempts to fulfill the role which

his family and political associates press upon him. Appearing before the people, Coriolanus holds up just so long; at last his temper and characteristic hatred of the populace break through. As a result, he is banished from Rome.

Inappropriate clothing, like the setting of social opposition, provides a means through which we can trace the fall of Coriolanus. The literal, eye-deceiving disguise situation in Antium represents a larger--indeed the comprehensive--situation which forces Coriolanus to assume a pose in conflict with his own self-esteem. Repeatedly Coriolanus cannot pretend to be what he isn't; even when he assumes the pose of a beggar and is therefore treated as one, he cannot maintain this attitude. In a sense, Coriolanus temperamentally cannot assume a disguise. He cannot do so because he cannot debase himself to the extent that he despises himself; no matter what the circumstances, he must attempt to remain true to his sense of nobility and personal pride.

His attitudes are always recognized by the populace for what they are. The play opens with the angry discussion of the mutinous citizens, who perceive well enough the character of Coriolanus. All agree that Coriolanus is proud and seeks personal satisfaction in his public life and that he is constrained this way by his nature and is victimized thereby. In Act II several officers discuss the inability of Coriolanus to dissemble. The second officer explains the attitude of the warrior:

Faith there hath been many great men that have flatter'd
the people, who ne'er loved them; and there be many that
they have loved, they know not wherefore; so that, if they
love they know not why, they hate upon no better a ground.

Therefore, for Coriolanus neither to care whether they love or hate him manifests the true knowledge he has in their disposition, and out of his noble carelessness, lets them plainly see't. (II.ii.7-17)

Entreated to display his wounds and receive the consulship, Coriolanus pleads, "Let me o'erleap that custom; for I cannot/ Put on the gown, stand naked and entreat them. For my wound's sake to give their suffrage." (II.ii.140-142) Succumbing to Menenius, Coriolanus at last appears in the gown of humility. He carries off the pose satisfactorily, but not without a sense of inner tension through his imposture. He is eager to relieve himself of the dissembling garb.

May I change these garments?

Sic. You may sir.

Cor. That I'll straight do, and, knowing myself again,
Repair to th'Senate-house. (II.iii.153-155)

The tension between appearance and reality is further emphasized in the speech of Brutus, just after Coriolanus leaves to take off his gown. "With a proud heart he wore his humble weeds." (II.iii.161)

Projected against this background the disguise spectacle in Antium provides poetic reinforcement to both the character of Coriolanus and his situation. By having Coriolanus again try to dissemble in clothes that conflict with his nature, Shakespeare forces his audience into a realization, too, that Coriolanus has changed; he is less patient in carrying through the imposture. A sense of dramatic movement and accumulating conflict results, vitalizing the action by forcing comparisons.

As in the previous scene, before the commoners, Coriolanus enacts a false role, but only up to a point. A servant at Aufidius'

house asks the beggared Coriolanus to leave.

What have you to do here, fellow?
 Pray you, avoid the house.
 Cor. Let me but stand;/ I will not hurt your hearth.
 3. Serv. What are you?
 Cor. A gentleman.
 3 Serv. A marv'llous poor one.
 Cor. True, so I am.

Considering Coriolanus' hatred and repulsion of common people, he had to exercise restraint here, in adapting himself to a beggar's role.

But when the servant continues,

Pray you, poor gentleman, take up some
 other station; there's no place for you. Pray you,
 avoid. Come.

Coriolanus must be himself as he says,

Follow your function,
 go and batten on cold bits,

pushing the servant away from him.

Coriolanus' inability to disguise his real nature is also reflected in the comments made between these servants, after they discover who "the beggar" really is. "Yet my mind gave me his clothes made a false report of him," said the second servant, and "I thought there was more in him than I could think," said another; these comments reinforce the suggestion prevalent in the play that Coriolanus' nature, though proud and untactful, is yet fearfully admirable and propelled by an almost supernatural spirit that cannot be covered by actions, words, or disguise. Disguise, then, adds another level through indirect, poetic means, to the multiple statements made about Coriolanus' nature and his fall. The disguise episode is in itself a symbol of something

that the whole play is involved in demonstrating.¹

When disguise is conceived thus metaphorically or for purposes of character revelation, literal plausibility of the disguise is irrelevant. Shakespeare has too frequently been criticized on the basis of the implausibility of his disguises or the inconsistency between the complexity of the disguise and the ease with which it is discerned, and so forth. This kind of criticism arises, it seems, from too prosaic an approach to the artifices of Shakespeare. Everyone familiar with Shakespeare's drama can recall many instances of what Aristotle so aptly labels probable impossibilities. Carefully leading his audience from the real to the poetically possible, Shakespeare creates a plausible world and one which Elizabethans grew up on, so to speak. The whole theatrical scene--daylight, unimaginative props, male actors, and so forth--compelled the audience into imaginative habits of perception.

Another factor leading to the acceptance of the artifices was the tone of consistency in all the improbabilities. Thus if Shakespeare

¹The usefulness of disguise may go beyond interests of characterization, reaching into matters of theme. Disguise provides the artificial means for allowing a character to demonstrate some quality that is important to the general meaning of the play. This will be examined more intensively in Chapter IV. For a brief example: Viola's love is constant and abiding; it survives apart from direct declarations. How are we to know then of the nature of her love, which differs so from that of the Duke and Olivia? Through the spectacle of disguise. Through the double talk permitted by disguise Viola can both conceal and disclose her love. Her disguise is a reminder to the audience of her nature. It is rather like a sign worn by the morality actor, because Viola's presence on the stage is a constant referent to her meaning. Kent, in King Lear, functions similarly. Through disguise the exiled Kent can return as a servant to Lear; thus he is put in a position in which his loyalty and humility can be exercised. His presence on the stage keeps Lear's folly in remembrance. His disguise permits the indirect assertion of a quality

presents a character disguised in a merely physically unconvincing disguise, the disguise is not destined to dramatic ineffectiveness, if the total atmosphere of the play testifies to an unabashed invitation to accept it as the acknowledged artifice.

Disguise is more easily taken as a sort of spectacle, as emblematic, if other artifices or stylizations support this meaning. The Greek mask and the Noh mask depend for their effectiveness upon an established atmosphere of stylized and dignified, almost liturgical representation. Coriolanus shares some of this atmosphere of the Greek spectacle through the choric-like public, the entreaties of the family, and so forth.

Setting, for example, may combine with disguise in the creation of an imaginatively true artifice. In As You Like It, as we have seen, it is possible through disguise to isolate the qualities in Rosalind that would be difficult to present otherwise, without sacrificing her attractive feminine quality. Rosalind in disguise has a structural function that is similar to the function of the Forest of Arden setting in that both disguise and setting facilitate the simultaneous presentation of disparate ideas. It is quite apparent that Shakespeare's Forest of Arden, made up as it is out of heterogeneous elements, established the improbable but poetically plausible setting necessary to the suspension of one's disbelief. It serves as a non-realistic, artificial arrangement through which love and ways of life can be seen unobstructed by

that is essential to the meaning of the play. Loyalty and disloyalty, pride and humility are inescapable themes of King Lear. Chapter V will pursue these matters further.

distracting details of the familiar world. Rosalind, similarly, is freed by disguise from many of the restrictions imposed by real life upon the feminine role.

Shakespeare takes liberties with disguise and setting that need not be disturbing. It might be distressing to notice that the ease with which disguises are recognized does not always depend upon the concealing ability of the disguise. Although Henry V is able to completely conceal his regal personage by wrapping Erpingham's cloak about his shoulder, Bottom, who is completely buried beneath the head of an ass, is nevertheless easily recognizable by his fellow craftsmen. Beneath the ease or difficulty with which these disguises may be penetrated lies Shakespeare's over-all purposes in the particular play. Appropriate to the character himself or to his perceiver, Coriolanus does not succeed in his disguise; Lear never does recognize the disguised Kent, and various partial recognitions are suggested (Gloucester, and in Cymbeline), in keeping with the situations and the personalities of the deluded characters.

Shakespeare's use of disguise was a highly economical expository device for characterization. As we noted earlier, Freeburg admires a playwright's dramatic compression through which two persons are represented in one. He illustrates the value of such duality by citing Chapman's Widow's Tears. Chapman found a story containing a dead husband, a widow, and a soldier lover. He arranged his source in a new, more economical framework; the husband was merely supposedly dead but really disguised as the soldier lover. Thus Chapman "actually eliminated a

character, but multiplied the dramatic results."¹ This sort of dramatic economy refers to the compression of quantities of characters through disguise. Also the two characters of the disguised person include the personality maintained for the companions, who are deceived, and the other personality for the spectators who are not deceived. The coalescing personalities are the real and the fictitious. Freeburg values dramatic economy for the compression of quantities of characters through disguise; but Shakespeare's disguise upon occasion goes beyond this sort of economy to the enlargement of qualities of character, as it provides a new, humanizing dimension in Henry V and a more complete characterization of Rosalind. Shakespeare's economy not only saves but earns something. It has the effect of the poetic artifice. Through formal restriction essential and subtle meanings can best be liberated, as in the pun or in the repetition of a word which forces one into making comparisons and contrasts.

The dramatic effectiveness and general usefulness of disguise can be examined in the light of a more conventional expository device--the soliloquy or the aside. Opinions on the dramatic value of these devices vary. William Archer's comment is of special interest because it places the soliloquy in a relationship with visual expository devices notable in medieval drama. " A drama with soliloquies and asides is like a picture with inscribed labels issuing from the mouths of the figures. In that way any bungler can reveal what is passing in the minds of his

¹Freeburg, p. 15.

personages."¹

Arthur C. Sprague's study in techniques of exposition commends the use of the soliloquy enthusiastically; it is first in importance among all the conventions Shakespeare employed for expository purposes.² In soliloquies and asides "character and motive are unfolded, plot and counterplot set going, events narrated, and the issues of the play made clear."³ Expressed in these generalities Sprague would seem to be correct. However, "plot and counterplot" are not always "set going" by soliloquy. It tends to be a retarding device which may be detrimental to the movement of any particular play. In Henry V disguised talk and soliloquy appear side by side, making possible an easy comparison, one which reveals the advantage of disguise in keeping the plot moving and more compactly constructed. The extended scenes in which Henry appeared in disguise served multiple purposes as compared with the limited function and effect of the soliloquy. Also, soliloquy reveals character--admittedly--but what if the soliloquizing character is not by nature strongly reflective? It is improbable that he would express himself through soliloquy. There must be an appropriateness between the established character and his modes of revealing himself.

¹William Archer, Play-Making (London: Chapman and Hall Ltd., 1912), p. 307.

²Arthur C. Sprague, Shakespeare and the Audience: A Study in the Technique of Exposition (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1935), p. 62.

³Ibid., p. 72.

Harley Granville-Barker offers insights into this problem. He discusses Shakespeare's use of soliloquy in relation to his increasing concern with elucidating character. "What he learns to do is so to vivify and dramatize soliloquy that, the convention accepted, the illusion of character will not be broken."¹ "Dramatizing soliloquy" is in Shakespeare close to techniques of exposition through dual-personality devices, to be defined and analyzed in Chapter V.

Granville-Barker notes that Shakespeare "as he advances in mastery, either turns it [soliloquy] to significant account or largely does without it."² It is interesting to examine the expository devices employed in these cases in which Shakespeare eschews soliloquy. In the tragedies which focus upon introspective character, the soliloquy is used with great effectiveness and with delicate appropriateness to character and the play's larger framework of meanings. The very act of soliloquizing as well as its revealing content is of expository value and is also in keeping with the plays' tempo and rhythms in Hamlet, Macbeth, and Othello (Iago). Where the heroes are by nature men of action new modes of exposition must be utilized. One of these modes is disguise.³

¹Harley Granville-Barker and G. B. Harrison, A Companion to Shakespeare Studies (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1937), p. 69.

²Ibid., p. 69.

³A stimulating discussion of the disguise of Rosalind and Viola appears in a recent short study of Wolfgang Clemen which has come to my attention since the completion of this present study: Schein und Sein Bei Shakespeare (Munchen: Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1959). There are gratifying points of agreement between our contentions. However, whereas my interest is in the use of disguise for a communication from the dramatist to the audience, Clemen--concerned with many aspects of schein and sein--observes that disguise is a form through which the disguised character's own being becomes more painfully conscious to him and through which he comes to know himself more fully.

CHAPTER IV

MISAPPREHENSION AND MISCONCEPTION IN COMEDIES OF ERRORS

"Our very eyes are, sometimes like our judgments, blind."
(Cymbeline IV.ii.302)

While disguise is useful for purposes of characterization, it may possess so many correspondences with other dramatic statements in a given play that it acquires the force of a symbol, the symbol of a concept which encompasses the meaning of the play. Disguise thereby serves as the most conspicuous reinforcement for a structure of false ideas or misconceptions upon which the play is built. False physical appearances, that is misapprehension, together with misunderstandings, support a framework of wrong attitudes which must be righted before the dramatic action rests. This alliance of misapprehension and misconception can be found throughout Shakespeare's work--in his drama and poems--and within the dramatic tradition both before and after Shakespeare's time, as we shall see. Shakespeare begins to ally misapprehension and misconception in the early comedies, but Twelfth Night will be found to express Shakespeare's developed interest in "blind judgments"--in the relationship between seeing and perceiving.

That Shakespeare was consciously attentive to the alliance between misapprehension and misunderstanding appears not only in the organization of his plays but also in explicit statements at all points in his career. Analogies or juxtapositions of one's perceptions and

one's judgment occur in both the plays and sonnets. Imogen, seeing the dead body of Cloten but mistrusting her eyesight, says, "Our very eyes are, sometimes like our judgments, blind," (Cymbeline IV.ii.302) while in Henry V mention is made of young maids, who are "blind though they have their eyes." (Henry V V.ii.336) Much use is made of the analogy between perceiving and conceiving in the sonnets, the most extensive use being found in sonnet 73, "That time of year thou mayst in me behold." The sonnet obviously breaks into three sections, each involving imagery that intensifies the transiency of the speaker's life and the imminence of his death. Each image concerns a visually perceived object, clearly portrayed as such: "That time of year thou mayst in me behold"; "In me thou see'st the twilight of such day"; "In me thou see'st the glowing of such fires"; and finally, in summation, "this thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more strong,/ To love that well which thou must leave ere long."

In several of the sonnets Shakespeare's "love-is-blind" interest crops up. Again, seeing falsely is inextricably bound together with judging falsely. In sonnet 137 the writer laments,

Thou blind fool, Love, what dost thou to mine eyes
That they behold, and see not what they see?
.....
Why of eyes' falsehood hast thou forged hooks,
Whereto the judgment of my heart is tied?

The false perspective of love is again behind the plaintive cry of sonnet 148:

O me, what eyes hath Love put in my head,
Which have no correspondence with true sight!

The accusation and queries recur in sonnet 150.

The dramatic tradition behind Elizabethan drama also exemplifies the viewing of false appearance and false attitudes together. Although the secular, Plautine comedies of errors depended entirely upon mistaken physical appearances for their complication and denouement, earlier dramatic use of disguise aligned misunderstanding with misapprehension. For example, in Euripides' Bacchae, the god disguises himself as a mortal; the disguise is effective and the king treats him with contempt. The king is both unaware of the true physical identity of the disguised Bacchus and skeptical of the very existence of the deity. Guilty of the sin of hubris, the king exults in his own eminence. The error of his thinking is made dramatically effective through the visually perceived spectacle--the ironic presence of the disguised god.

In other religiously oriented drama, disguise is also symbolic. As we have seen in Chapter III, the morality play tradition gradually linked false physical appearance with mentally undiscerned qualities or false attitudes. At first the well-intending "everyman" was confused in his moral discernment because of impersonators. In Magnificence it was just as difficult to distinguish between wrong and right as between Counterfeit Countenance and his impersonation--Good Demeanance. Vices not only dissembled through the assumption of false names but through false appearances: in keeping with a late medieval trend in ecclesiastical satire, the garb usually employed for the masquerade of Vice was that of the friar, as in Satire of the Three Estates. Gradually the false appearances became more individual and

specific. In The Marriage of Wit and Wisdom Idleness is not always recognized as such, whether conceptually or perceptually, because he appears as a doctor, beggar, priest, and so forth. In all these cases, the misapprehension of a disguised person exists as a commentary upon the inscrutability of moral qualities.

That this coupling of misapprehension and misconception is not to be relegated to a merely historical interest but is almost inevitable in a drama that scrutinizes the human predicament is clear. Religious and moral symbolistic disguise appears also in modern drama. The tendency to equate perceptual blindness of some sort to conceptual blindness is deep-rooted and ubiquitous. Charles Rann Kennedy's The Servant in the House, a poetic drama of the early twentieth century, in the manner of Ibsen, involves the disguise of Manson, who poses as the new servant in the house of his brother, a Vicar. Despite their façades of righteousness, the vicar and his associates are corrupt and selfish, specifically in their program for building a new church. Manson, who is not only the long absent brother but actually God incarnate, effects a reform of the church and the Vicar's household, which necessitates a thorough cleaning of the putrid drains and rotten foundations of the old church. Repellent in his capacity as a begrimed sewage worker, he is nevertheless finally recognized for the beauty and integrity that underlie mere outward appearance. Outward appearance is proved to be deceiving both in disguised virtue (Manson) and disguised evil (the Vicar). Needless to say, the relationship between error and

deceptive physical appearance is fundamental to the full impact of the play's didactic purpose.

Forces of evil are also, in modern drama, by this means represented as difficult to discern. Whereas it is primarily God who is inscrutable in Kennedy's play, the Devil is the illusive character in Ferenc Molnar's The Devil. The inability to recognize evil is in the course of the action rapidly equated with the inability of the characters to recognize Dr. Miller, who is actually the Devil.

The drama of the Elizabethans, like that of Plautus, employed mistaken identity most conspicuously for the comic complication of plot. In The Comedy of Errors we do not have to meditate for a single moment over the inability of the two Dromios to distinguish their masters. Dromio of Ephesus, for example, simply could not distinguish his master, Antipholus of Ephesus and his identical twin. Dromio was far too busy carrying messages and dodging a thrashing to wonder whether his inability to distinguish his "true" master symbolized his inability to discern between God and the Devil. Matters of false perception and comical, erroneous actions dominate the plays growing from the Plautine tradition. Matters of theme and characterization only faintly intrude into the low comedy of situation.

Twelfth Night is the outstanding example in Shakespeare's drama of the combination of the mistaken identity framework with his mature dramatic interests, involving indirect means to explore truth--mistaken ideas as a means of canvassing the nature of truth in a specific situation. The success of his mature use of disguise is best seen when we

compare Twelfth Night with his earlier comedies: The Comedy of Errors, Love's Labour's Lost, The Two Gentlemen of Verona, and A Midsummer Night's Dream--all of which depend upon mistaken identity and indicate Shakespeare's growing concern with integrating misapprehension and misconception.

The Comedy of Errors is entirely dependent on mistaken identity for its plot construction. And in this play, as indeed in the other three plays mentioned above, mistaken identity is used more extensively than in any known sources. Shakespeare explores the comic effect of disguise, doubling the use of mistaken identity over Plautus. In no other play, however, does Shakespeare use mistaken identity apart from some elements of a theme based upon misunderstanding or misconception.

Disguise begins to serve new interests in Love's Labour's Lost. It is used sparingly for comic complication. The play is not a comedy of situation, but a comedy of wit that develops a theme. The action is neither initiated nor resolved through the misidentities immanent in disguise. Disguise is not the basis for the main situation of the plot; that is, the rejection of women by the would-be scholars of Navarre, the subsequent betrayal of their scheme, and the final acknowledgment of their folly. The basic situation involves misconception, not misapprehension. The scholars have agreed to pursue knowledge to her very sources, to search for "things hid and barr'd . . . from common sense." (I.1.57) In pursuing the depths of truth, however, they must come to realize that "truth falsely blinds" the eyesight to more fundamental truths that must be acceded to in practical living. Any ideas of

self-development--learning, specifically--must take into consideration that we are human beings living in a human world, which consists of women as well as scholars.

The pact to ignore women is broken by every scholar, for as Biron concludes,

Young blood doth not obey an old decree.
We cannot cross the cause why we were born;
(V.iii.17-18)

And in another speech,

From women's eyes this doctrine I derive;
They are the ground, the books, the academes
From whence doth spring the true Promethean fire.
(IV.iii.302-304)

The main action of the play involves the change of the scholars to a more realistic, common sense attitude towards their too idealistic, scholarly goals. Has this original delusion and the enlightenment that follows any relation to the elements of disguise appearing in the play? The relationship between misconception and misapprehension in Love's Labour's Lost appears to be casual. The folly of the men is somewhat highlighted, however, by their inability to recognize the disguised women. By the end of Act IV the men, having discovered that they have all surreptitiously engaged in amorous schemes, adopt a more practical and honest attitude toward themselves. Disguise has nothing to do with thematic revelation and change of character.

In the last act, disguise produces comic effects. Perhaps to reiterate and vivify the importance of women, the Princess of France and her retinue have invariably had the edge on the men. This is

especially true here when the men of Navarre, who disguise themselves as Muscovites to court the women of France, are again following a scheme which is frustrated by the women. Upon discovery of the "Muscovites" approach, the ladies mask themselves and exchange favors to confuse their identities, thus meeting the oncoming disguise with a disguise of their own. The men had earlier assumed a pose through which they pursued truth, finding eventually that "truth falsely blinds"; now they assume a disguise and find that the real identities of the various women lie hidden beneath the misleading, false outward or superficial appearance. Thus they confront a false appearance, while still acting on the basis of a false assumption. Through the merriment of the dual disguise, the men again eventually appear ridiculous; and the folly of their original plan to disregard women is even more emphatically exposed in this disguise situation, because the scholar-lovers had intended to save face and avoid admitting their imprudence through their incognito love-making. Their transformation takes a further step; they must not only acknowledge the necessary existence of women, but they must be willing to reveal themselves for what they are.

Disguise and theme thus come into common focus even in Shakespeare's early drama and indicate his developing concern in probing the surfaces of appearance and assumption. In Love's Labour's Lost, a play of wit, double entendres, and the love chase, disguise is not merely an agent of comic complication; it has a function that relates to something outside itself. In its gesture towards bringing theme and disguise into some sort of focus, Love's Labour's Lost prefigures

Shakespeare's more mature, thoroughgoing accomplishment in Twelfth Night.

Shakespeare first uses the disguised female page--a contribution of Italian comedy--in The Two Gentlemen of Verona. As in Love's Labour's Lost, Shakespeare is interested in mistaken identity not merely as the provocation for a comic situation, but as it is instrumental in the exploration of a theme. Accordingly, as Freeburg notes, Shakespeare's method in this play varies significantly from that of the Italian dramatists. The disguise of Julia as a man is not, for example, counterbalanced by the disguise of Proteus as a woman--that would have been the Italian way.¹ Shakespeare's method, as we shall see, is indicative of his interest in focusing attention upon the character of the disguised female--compare also Rosalind and Viola--rather than in producing great complexity of plot.

Disguise in The Two Gentlemen of Verona is put to serious use in the exploration of loyalty and disloyalty in friendship and love--loyalty as it is embodied in Julia, who faithfully loves Proteus, and disloyalty, in Proteus. After Proteus is sent by his father to Milan, Julia follows him, disguised as the page, Sebastian, and is instrumental in advancing his love suit with Silvia. Silvia, however, was first claimed as lover by Valentine, friend of Proteus. Proteus emerges, then, as an unfaithful friend and lover.

The constant and patient love of Julia, which is antithetical to

¹Freeburg, p. 70.

the fickle love of Proteus, is evident through the speech and action allowed her because of disguise, as Proteus' page. Her frequent presence, ostensibly as a page though she is really herself, serves as a constant reminder of her rights and the quality of her love, both of which provide a perspective that diminishes Proteus. While thus disguised, Julia is a first-hand witness of his infidelity; yet she remains true to Proteus and to an ideal of loyalty held also by Valentine and Silvia--one by which Proteus himself finally acts. Up to this point Proteus is blind both to the allegiance he owes Julia and to her identity when she is disguised. He is corrected on both accounts.

Because of the relationship between mistaken appearances and mistaken affection and the similarity between Julia and her situation and Viola and hers, The Two Gentlemen of Verona can be regarded, together with The Comedy of Errors and Love's Labour's Lost, as elemental in the creation of Twelfth Night.

Shakespeare explores the connections between mistaken identity and mistaken affection in another early comedy, A Midsummer Night's Dream. In this play no formal elements of disguise appear, although it is akin to the original comedy of situation based on mistaken identity. The characters are less troubled by misleading physical appearance than by mistaken affections. The original spirit of the mistaken identity play prevails: a web of complication and a general atmosphere of "things not being what they seem to be" unite the two types of comedy. The action of A Midsummer Night's Dream is similar to that

of Twelfth Night insofar as both plays begin with characters who have false objects of affection and end with the union of true lovers.

An interpretation of Twelfth Night based upon its mistaken identities and mistaken attitudes does more justice to the play than the more usual interpretations of the meaning of the whole play. Interpretations of Twelfth Night tend towards one of two extremes: the play is taken as a loosely constructed farce or as a serious study of social struggle--or, at any rate, as a play whose meaning is dependent upon topical references. A program from a recent enactment of the play gives the following description:

It [Twelfth Night] is a hodgepodge of foolishness, put together for our entertainment, seasoned with high comedy, low comedy, good humor, bad puns, roistering rowdiness, gentle dignity, fine poetry, false courage, and appalling inconsistency. It has no more serious intent than a musical comedy or extravaganza. . . .¹

The same play that provoked this statement stimulated another critic, John Draper, to say that Twelfth Night is "the comedy of the social struggles of the time"; it is "Shakespeare's play of social security."² The unity of the play--so runs this argument--resides in a search, on various planes, for security. To add weight to his argument, Draper de-emphasizes qualities that savor of romance. Twelfth Night is most frequently regarded as a play of love; Draper remonstrates:

¹Taken from a program used for a University of Connecticut production of Twelfth Night at Storrs, Connecticut, 1959.

²John W. Draper, The Twelfth Night of Shakespeare's Audience (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1950), p. 250.

But, if love were the theme, would not at least one of these courtships, as in Much Ado, follow normal Elizabethan convention? But in each case, the girl, unaided and unadvised, chooses the man, an unusual procedure in actual Elizabethan life. In Twelfth Night neither father nor brother nor next of kin bestows the hand of Viola, Maria, or Olivia.¹

Draper's assumed premise--that a play of love is a play involving conventional courtship--is disputable. Furthermore, Viola, the romantic heroine in the love chases, does not "unaided . . . choose the man." The quality of her constant, passive and altruistic love to the Duke, only indirectly revealed, is in sharp contrast to the ill-founded, overly verbal and asserctive passion of Olivia for her lover.

Emphasizing the realistic problem of attaining social security, Draper also tones down the "poetic cast" and the "ethereal" atmosphere of the play.² Illyria is tied down to the "then and there" as closely as Draper can tie it, but the very attempt to give the setting and action of the play a temporal and topical framework helps to accentuate the illusiveness and "what-you-will" atmosphere permeating Twelfth Night.

Leslie Hotson's study, The First Night of Twelfth Night, constructs a possible first performance of the play and suggests several topical allusions. Hotson vividly pieces together what he concludes to be the scene of this first performance, depending largely upon actual

¹ Ibid., pp. 247-248.

² Ibid., p. 214.

accounts of the Twelfth Night festivities for his re-creation. However to explain the play topically--even if we were to grant Hotson success in his attempt--does not do full justice to its meaning. The perennial success of Twelfth Night has obviously been dependent not upon occasional allusions but upon basic structures of universal occurrence, common to human experience apart from conditions of time and place. These basic structures are those of misidentity and misunderstanding, which account for all the complication of the play.

False love and true love, delusion and disguise, inconstancy and constancy dominate the play and impose a sense of structure upon the variety of incidents making up Twelfth Night. The play is typical of Shakespeare comedy in the respect that it is about love. The unity of the play, however, does not--indeed, cannot--reside merely in this interest, however central it is: love here is subsumed into the larger design and becomes only the most conspicuous expression of the delusion-reality theme. The play's concern with ways of looking at love is part of the pervasive preoccupation with false appearances and false ideas.¹

Disguise in Twelfth Night has a metaphorical function in the characterization of Viola and in the over-all structure of the play;

¹With a viewpoint similar to my own Joseph H. Summers' "The Masks of Twelfth Night," The University of Kansas City Review, II (Autumn, 1955), 25-32, is concerned with the extensive mask-like quality of various poses assumed by the characters. That is, they have "masks." We laugh at those who don't see the mask they have assumed. Characters are explicated in terms of their poses; Malvolio and Sir Andrew, for example, "fail to perceive the comic gaps between themselves and their ideal roles."

disguise stands for, represents in itself, the faulty appearances or misconceptions which provide the impetus for the action. Twelfth Night incorporates the traditional plot of misidentity not only through its use of the twin situation and disguise but through its preoccupation with the confusion that grows from misunderstanding; from mental misidentity. And both misidentities are manifestations of a single, more basic, disability to recognize that things are not always what they seem to be. All of the main characters but Viola are confused by misunderstanding the sources or objects of their love. The resulting confusion is expressed as a sort of madness conditioned by a multitude of things that are not what they seem to be.

Twelfth Night examines false attitudes that are everywhere apparent. Delusions are evident most clearly in false attitudes about love. Olivia, for example, is self-deluded into a false display of affection for her dead brother; the form or expression of her mourning is incommensurate with her actual feeling. Also her over-hasty passion for Viola shows her capacity for indiscriminate and misdirected love. Olivia, self-absorbed, acquisitive and voracious in her love, is sharply in contrast to Viola, who patiently bears her devotion to the Duke in silence. More altruistic than Olivia, she seeks his happiness, and, ironically, willingly promotes his suit for Olivia, much as Julia served Proteus and with something like the same degree of determination to succeed.

The Duke is similar to Olivia in the highly verbal and formal expression of a love that is nevertheless hollow and inconstant. In

love with the form and expression of love, the Duke pursues sentiment with a desperation that implies the artificiality of the feeling. It is as though his passion is sustained only by music, invocations to the spirit of love, and the effects of auto-suggestion. Though he avows the constancy of the male lover, and especially his own devotion, his inconstancy is eventually revealed. When it is discovered that Olivia has centered her affection upon Caesario, the Duke passionately denounces Olivia. He is not constant when circumstances are emphatically adverse and is therefore a foil to Viola, whose love is neither fed by auto-suggestion nor conditioned by the prospect of attainment. The Duke is wrong about the nature of his feeling for Olivia; he is wrong about Viola, blind as he is to her concealed identity and the constancy of affection of which she is capable. He had declared that no woman's heart could hold the love like his. (II.v. 96-99).

Wrong attitudes--or blindnesses--are displayed in every incident of Twelfth Night, not just those involving the Duke, Olivia and Viola. Sir Andrew Aguecheek trusts to mere form in courtship--a few pretty conceits, an ability to dance, and so forth; in emphasizing these he is blind to larger issues. He cannot see himself, imagining that he might become Olivia's husband and relying upon those ineffectual mannerisms through which an admirer is supposed to achieve the favor of his lover.

Malvolio, too, suffers from the delusion, first of all, that he is a probable suitor for Olivia. The main source of the humor that

Malvolio provokes grows out of his inability to see himself. His rigidity and unwarranted self-esteem depend upon his regarding himself within a narrow context. He is similar to Aguecheek in his lack of perspective. In error throughout the play, Malvolio habitually cannot see what is to be seen. He is unable also to see the absurdity of his costume--replete with yellow hose and cross garters; he completely mistakes the probable effect of his own appearance. At last, desperate and befuddled, from his dark place of imprisonment he entreats Sir Topas, the curate (actually Feste, the clown) to deliver him. Malvolio is so blind to real circumstances that, as Maria recognizes, the clown need not have even assumed a disguise to have deluded him. Speaking to Feste, Maria concludes: "Thou mightst have done this without thy beard and gown. He sees thee not." (IV.ii.69-70)

To continue the listing of confused persons, Antonio mistakes Viola for Sebastian; officers falsely conclude that Antonio is mad; Aguecheek mistakes Sebastian for his supposed rival, Caesario; Sebastian concludes--how rightly and wrongly!--that Feste, who mistakes him for Viola, is a fool; Olivia is convinced by Maria that Malvolio is irrational--"tainted in's wits"; and so forth. Twelfth Night appears to be indeed another "comedy of errors." This listing of misconceptions (forms of madness, according to the play) includes many types of misapprehension, some of which are explained simply as complications relevant to disguise and the misidentity of the twins. However, much of the misunderstanding lies in, or is paralleled by, a more fundamental inability on the part of several of the characters to see themselves or

to grasp realistically and within a complex framework the nature of their relationships to other characters. In this general framework of faulty appearances, the conventional media of misidentity are emblematic of the prevailing symptoms of blindness which permeate the play and constitute the comic situations. In Twelfth Night Shakespeare fixes attention upon disguise, a detail which epitomizes a whole situation.

Shakespeare, concerned with getting at the heart of things, constantly examines not only false attitudes but also outward forms--appearances or exteriors and their relation to what really is. There are many forms which do not express what they should according to the tradition which interprets them; they are misleading.

In Twelfth Night conventional attitudes towards the significance of clothes are found to be erroneous. Mourning clothes, the appropriate outward expression of an inward state, are misleading. Olivia's outward habit--supposedly the emblem of her mourning--is not congruent with her real feelings and hides them for a time. On the other hand, the real nature of Viola, who is disguised as a man, is revealed through what would be considered as incongruent attire. Viola "never told her love" as she says to the Duke by way of speaking of her "sister." Disguise does not simply cause Viola's disinclination to express her love; it is a symbol of this trait. Viola's love is such that the fact of her appearing in disguise is a fair representation of one of its aspects. Thereby the patience, devotion, and silent self-sacrifice of her love are emblemized, while at the same time, her love is allowed

expression because she is able to speak in the person represented by her disguise. The disguise of Coriolanus has been interpreted as an ironic commentary upon his inability to disguise his nature; Viola's disguise is a commentary upon her characteristic inclination--or at least ability--to hide her feelings, even while she is displaying them.

The clothing of Olivia provides an inadequate representation of her feelings just as Henry V's feelings were hidden beneath the import of his ceremonial dress. In the world of Henry V ceremonial dress was unquestionably the sign of intrinsic dignity, nobility and almost unhuman fortitude. Yet, as Henry's soliloquy points out, the ceremonial garb is the sign of a role the man must play, reflecting nothing of the fear and common sentiments which represent his basic humanity, king though he is. On the other hand, the disguise of Erpingham's cloak--a form inappropriate for the king as king--provided a means through which he could reveal himself.

A teasing example of misleading clothing in Twelfth Night is that of the fool. Motley, the sign of the fool, was traditionally indicative of the nature of its wearer. Feste, however, corrects the assumption that clothes adequately reveal the wearer. His words, "I wear no motley in my brain," (I.v.62) recall the querie of Rosalind, which corrects a well-established attitude that male attire produces a perversion: "Dost thou think . . . I have a doublet or hose in my disposition?" (III.ii.204-206) Also, in Measure for Measure, Lucio

speaking of Friar Lodowick, says "!Cucullus non facit monachum."
Honest in nothing but in his clothes." (V.i.263)

Another form that should disclose but actually conceals is the artificial, Petrarchan love conceit, employed by Viola in her courtship of Olivia for Orsino. An acceptable mode of revealing true feeling, the artifice of the conceit nevertheless conveys only superficial sincerity; it transmits no sense of emotional truthfulness and is therefore a good form for Viola to hide behind. Through a conventional device she does not have to display any emotional sincerity, but can rely wholly upon complimentary fixed forms. Viola begs of Olivia an audience for the message she has learned with great pains. The Duke, according to Viola, loves Olivia

With adorations, with fertile tears,
With groans that thunder love, with sighs of fire.
(I.v.274-275)

And later

Viol. If I did love you in my master's flame,
With such a suff'ring, such a deadly life,
In your denial I would find no sense.
.....
Make me a willow cabin at your gate,
And call upon my soul within the house;
Write loyal cantons of condemned love
And sing them loud even in the dead of night;
(I.v.283-294)

There is also a disparity between outward form and intrinsic state--there is a quality of "what is, or should be, is not"--in the psychology of the various characters. The characters are not what they are supposed to be according to the accepted categories of

faculty psychology. And as Draper points out, "To the Elizabethan, the humors, which were common knowledge in every household, must have supplied a running commentary on the play's psychology and motives."¹

Draper analyzes the characters in terms of what they should be according to faculty psychology.

The two knights should be choleric, hot and dry, but are in fact phlegmatic, cold, and wet; the steward should be phlegmatic and has in fact the pride and ambition of choleric; the Duke, as a duke, should be sanguine, hot and moist, but the melancholy of unrequited love has made him cold and dry; and Olivia, who should as a woman be passive and phlegmatic, is melancholy and sanguine.²

In this context of things that are not what they seem to be or should be the search for true identity, for the reality that underlies appearance, is basic. The search is undertaken through the employment of various double visions: logical illogic, wise foolishness, and disguise. In the spirit of Ramus who concluded that dialectic proclaims all truth whether it be necessary or contingent--that is, it is "capable both of being and not being"--Shakespeare investigates dramatically both the being and non-being facets of truth.

False appearances and false conceptions provide a background of paradox emphasized by the strange fits of logic appearing in the play. This use of logic backs up the play's exploration of "what really is." What is assumed to be true is so often not and what is assumed to be false is often true. As Viola says, "I am not what I am." (III.i.153) Logic that appears to be illogic and illogic that appears to be logic provides a double source for much humor in Twelfth Night and the double paradox is a medium for stating that what is supposedly true is sometimes

¹Draper, The Twelfth Night of Shakespeare's Audience, p. 227.

²Ibid., pp. 226-227.

false and vice versa. Feste appears to be a fool, but isn't; he appears to be illogical, but isn't. Feste asserts his superiority over Olivia by challenging her to a contest of wit, through which he employs a well recognized method of dialectic; as Sister Miriam Joseph notes, the clown eventually evokes from Olivia "through question and provocation a statement by which to prove his allegation out of her own mouth."¹

Clo. . . . Good madonna, give me leave to prove you a fool.

Oli. Can you do it?

Clo. Dexteriously, good madonna.

Oli. Make your proof.

Clo. I must catechise you for it, madonna.

Good my mouse of virtue, answer me.

Oli. Well, sir, for want of other idleness,
I'll bide your proof.

Clo. Good madonna, why mournest thou?

Oli. Good fool, for my brother's death.

Clo. I think his soul is in hell, madonna.

Oli. I know his soul is in heaven, fool.

Clo. The more fool, madonna, to mourn for your brother's
soul being in heaven. Take away the fool, gentlemen.

(I.v.63-78)

Feste does not always reason logically. However, his illogic implies a knowledge of the right use of logic. Fallacies are employed for humor; Feste's art implies a self-conscious awareness of what he is doing. He is similar to the musical satirist who comically imitates the style of--for example--a beginning pianist, whose poor performance is accurately transmitted only through the mastery of the imitator. The error of Feste is similarly calculated and employed for irony. Feste commits a material fallacy--a general term applying fallacies which have their root in the matter, that is, in the terms of a

¹Sister Miriam Joseph, p. 209.

syllogism which appears to be formally correct. The most important of the material fallacies is equivocation, use of the middle term in two different senses.¹ This fallacy appears in the following conversation.

Ces. Save thee, friend, and thy music!
 Dost thou live by the tabor?
 Feste. No sir, I live by the church.
 Ces. Art thou a churchman?
 Feste. No such matter, sir. I do live by the church;
 for I do live at my house, and my house doth stand by the
 church.

(III.i.1-7)

Shakespeare invests his wise fools with this capacity for sensing contingencies and ambiguities. Like Shakespeare himself, these wise fools are a source of a wisdom founded upon an ability to assume multiple perspectives. Like the Ramist logicians Feste and another manipulator in the play, Sir Toby, are capable of examining a conclusion both in an absolute sense and in a context of contingency.

Petrus Ramus, of course, provides a basis for this kind of perspective. He refuted Aristotle's division of logic into two provinces--one of which ruled over absolutes while the other--rhetoric--applied to opinion, contingencies. Because some truth is necessary and some contingent, "Aristotle wished to make two logics, one for science and the other for opinion . . . The art of knowing, that is to say, dialectic of logic, is one and the same doctrine in respect to perceiving all things. . . ." ² Because something is contingent, and therefore

¹Ibid., p. 191

²Ramus, pp. 3-4, as cited by Howell, p. 154.

relative, does not preclude our knowledge of it. Ramus promotes the value of his logic "because it proclaims to us the truth of all argument and as a consequence the falsehood, whether the truth be necessary, as in science, or, as in opinion, contingent, that is to say, capable both of being and not being."¹

Within a specific context, with a distinctive perspective, things that are so are not always so. Shakespeare sometimes gets at multi-faceted reality through the use of a proverb. Elizabethans, of course, delighted in proverbs, regarding them as vehicles of truth. In King Lear, for example--a play vitally concerned with relationships between appearance and reality--Gloucester says, "'tis the time's plague when madmen lead the blind." (IV.i.46) Though this may be true generally in the specific context of King Lear, this truth is false; what is so is not always so. It is a blessing, no plague, that Edgar as mad Tom leads his father. The action of the play associates Gloucester's physical blindness with misunderstanding, and it is primarily in this latter sense that he is led; Edgar is the "madman" but his is a sane madness. Beneath the appearance of madness lies a sanity and maturity that provides a proper basis for guiding the uncomprehending Gloucester. Again, a form or medium for truth is used to express merely a partial truth and thus to force the reader or audience, because of the disparity, into a heightened awareness of the real situation.

When Feste says, "Nothing that is so is so" (IV.i.9) he is

¹Ibid., p. 2, as cited by Howell, p. 154.

stating a truth, one that has special relevance within the context of this play, although the statement seems to be more of his "foolishness." There is indeed a sense in which what is, is not. What appears to be true is not always true. Viola is not a male page; Olivia, despite Malvolio's conviction, does not love him; and outward forms of logic may actually hide fallacies, as Malvolio's false conclusions demonstrate. Feste's statement that "nothing that is so is so" recalls Sir Toby's refutation of a similar analytical proposition: "To be up late is to be up late." (II.iii.5) He opposes the gullible Sir Andrew with the conclusion that "not to be a-bed after midnight is to be up betimes." (II.iii.1-2) Sir Toby achieves his humor by the fallacy of secundum quid, assuming that what is true in some respect is true absolutely.¹ However, unlike Sir Andrew, Sir Toby is aware of what he is doing and is familiar enough with the rules of logic to assume a partial and therefore false perspective for comic effect. Whether or not he is right depends on which of two days is under consideration.

Viola, disguised as a man, like Feste, who is "disguised" as a fool, uses forms of reason that resemble their poses. She is at home with the syllogism and its parts and its capacity for stating a truth which the hearer does not perceive. As Caesario, "she proves syllogistically that she is Olivia's servant."²

¹Sister Miriam Joseph, p. 195.

²Ibid., p. 177.

Ces. Cesario is your servant's name, fair princess.
 Oli. My servant, sir . . .
 You're servant to the Count Orsino, youth.
 Ces. And he is yours, and his must needs be yours.
 Your servant's servant is your servant, madam.
 (III.i.108-113)

Malvolio's conclusions involve the falsely true. That is, outward forms of logic used by Malvolio hide fallacy. The fallacy is actually far from hidden, however; falseness is here as elsewhere in the play best seen, and most ironically, through what normally is a vehicle of truth. If Feste's reasoning is a wise foolishness, Malvolio's is a foolish wisdom. As Feste himself judges, quoting Quinipalus: "Better a witty fool than a foolish wit." (I.v.40)

Malvolio reasons with faulty logic because of his misuse of the enthymeme. In this case "usually only two of the three propositions of a syllogism are expressed, while one is merely implicit. Such an abridged syllogism is called an enthymeme. Malvolio, reading the letter which Maria has written in Olivia's hand in order to gull him, quotes a proposition, supplies a minor premise, and infers the hoped-for conclusion."¹

Mal. "I may command where I adore." Why, she may command me. I serve her. She is my lady. Why, this is evident to any formal capacity. . . .
 (II.v.126-128)

Smugly priding himself on his ability to reason syllogistically, Malvolio concludes that "I am the one she adores." Thereby he makes his mistake. "In that form of enthymeme in which one of the premises is omitted there

¹Ibid., p. 177.

is a strong tendency to accept the conclusion without scrutinizing the missing premise on which the argument rests."¹

Malvolio's "madness" is thus seen not only through his delusions but through his misuse of formal logic. Malvolio is guilty, too, of the fallacy of composition, assuming "that what is applicable to individual members of a group is applicable to the group. This fallacy seems to underline Malvolio's attitude in wanting to bind his Puritanical ideas on all."² Sir Toby objects with the famous, "Dost thou think, because thou art virtuous, there shall be no more cakes and ale?" (II.iii.123)

Manipulations of logic provide one of several means of forcing the audience's attention to come to bear on the "what is, is not" quality suggested by disguise in Twelfth Night, and of exposing the madness of those who cannot perceive what is really so. Another device for emphasizing this madness has a cohesive effect similar to that of the incremental repetition characteristic of folk songs and much medieval literature. The word "mad" repeatedly used in the play, draws together scenes that seem to be casually related but which actually present diverse expressions of the madness that carries the play along. For example, scenes involving incidents having no causal relationship are brought together under the common denominator of madness: the scene involving Feste, dressed as a curate, and the imprisoned Malvolio

¹Ibid., p. 178.

²Ibid., p. 193.

(Act IV, scene ii) is followed by a song and then a new scene in which Sebastian agrees to marry the deluded Olivia. Feste finishes his talk with Malvolio by saying, "Nay, I'll ne'er believe a madman (Malvolio) till I see his brains." (ii.125-126) "Mad" appears immediately after in Feste's song. Sebastian then opens a new scene, which takes place in Olivia's garden, with the protestation that Olivia's attention towards him has been real: he is enraptured with wonder, but not madness. (IV.iii.4)¹

¹Compare also the use of "content" in a similar play, As You Like It. As You Like It sets in contrast the world of the court--supposedly civilized, just, and generally productive of happiness--and the life of Arden--supposedly uncivilized and subjected to the discomforts of hard labor and wintry winds. Actually, the forest of Arden is the setting for a "life more sweet . . . more free" for the Duke; it is the "better world" mentioned at the beginning of the play. Shakespeare uses several means of keeping one attentive to the comparison between the two settings, and the modes of life offered by the court world and Arden. There is much use of the word "content" to give another dimension to the comparison between the court world and the Arden world. Just as Arden represents contentment and characters such as Corin and Audrey represent pastoral contentment, so do the court and such characters as Jacques represent discontent. The play abounds in the word "content," and the variety of uses and contexts in which it appears amplifies the diversified ways in which the Arden life is a good one, a contented one--that is, they give definition to this general quality of contentment.

Celia and Rosalind leave for Arden in content: Arden is a refuge and place of freedom for them. Touchstone says upon entering Arden that this is not so good a place as the court, "but travellers must be content." (II.iv.18): That is, he must be resigned, through adjustment; and throughout the rest of the play, Touchstone adjusts by making a compromise between the courtly and the real. Corin says that he is "content": his simple but sensible shepherd life is one of content and in this way he is the fulcrum for the extremes of pastoral life represented in As You Like It. Touchstone's idea of content is also, appropriately, related to the physical. He asks Audrey if his simple shape "contents" her. (III.iii.5) Thus content means different things to these characters. Finally, Rosalind, in effecting the desires of all the lovers, speaks to each lover in terms of helping, satisfying, and finally, of contenting him the next day, when they all will be united in marriage.

Another way in which Twelfth Night approaches the "to be and not to be" paradox, the simultaneous falsity and truth announced by disguise in the play, is by direct reference to perspective painting. Feste has said, "Nothing that is so is so," and Sir Toby has concluded that being up late does not always mean being up late. That is, beneath a single appearance two realities may lie; this is also the observation of the Duke, when confronted by both Sebastian and Caesario simultaneously. In this case of the mistaken twins, what seemed to be a single reality is discovered to be two, just as conversely disguise allows a person to seem to be two, though he actually be one. The Duke alludes directly to the vogue of perspective painting in explaining the source of confusion over the mistaken twins:

Duke: One face, one voice, one habit, and two persons,
A natural perspective that is and is not!
(V.i.223-224)

"Perspective" here is used with one of the denotations given the term in the sixteenth century. The reference is to a type of painting which should be looked at from a particular, off-center point of view. Tollet quotes from Humane Industry, 1661, to explain the particular trick in perspective painting to which Orsino is probably alluding.

It is a pretty art that in a pleated paper or table furrowed or indented, men make one picture represent several faces--that being viewed from one place or standing, did shew the head of a Spaniard, or from another, the head of an ass. . . . A picture of a chancellor of France presented to the common beholder a multitude of little faces, but if one did look on it through a perspective, there appeared only the single pourtraicture

of the chancellor himself.¹

Shakespeare's England explains the "perspective paintings" through an example:

Specimens of these distorted figures, which can only be seen aright by looking through a hole in a slanting direction, appear in the portrait of Edward VI at the National Portrait Gallery, and in the painting of "The Ambassadors" by Holbein at the National Gallery, where there is a perspective presentation of a human skull.²

Varied points of observation, or perspectives give the painting its multi-meaning. Regarded directly, only confusion is perceived, but regarded obliquely, a person's picture is seen. As in Shakespeare's Twelfth Night, the true may not be discernible if sought directly; it may have to be approached through the false--through a "wrong" perspective such as disguise, wise fools, and logical illogic provide. Shakespeare offers a statement of this "wrong" perspective in Richard II.

Like perspectives, which rightly gazed upon
Show nothing but confusion; ey'd awry
Distinguish form.

(II.ii.19-21)

The character in Twelfth Night whose appearance belies and yet asserts his true nature in a degree closest to Viola is Feste. What in her is physical disguise corresponds to his role as a fool. He is no more foolish than she is male, yet the folly has uses as truly as do

¹Horace Howard Furness (ed.), A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare, XIII: Twelfth Night, Or, What You Will (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1887), 76.

²Shakespeare's England (Oxford: Clarendon Press), II, 10.

men's garments, and its function is similar. The device of the jester's role, whereby under the pretext of foolishness a man may speak the truth with great freedom and boldness is similar to disguise when disguise liberates a character from his original role in order to act as a commentator upon a situation.

Robert Goldsmith's study of Wise Fools in Shakespeare provides a basis for connecting the wise fool with the more general tradition of physical disguises that reveal. Examining the origin of his stock character, the author relates the fool of tradition with the comic Vice of the Tudor morality play and with the later stage fool.¹ Feste himself in Twelfth Night alludes to his archetypes.

I'll be with you again,
In a trice,
Like to the old Vice,
Your need to sustain.

(IV.1.132-135)

The Vice seems to owe his nature to qualities suggested by the Seven Deadly Sins of the homilies. In the older plays, according to Goldsmith, "he came on the stage or pageant in the Devil's retinue, but at some point in his stage career he became the antagonist of the Devil and belabored him with his wooden lath."² In other words, though associated first with the Devil, Vice eventually becomes a character who is only superficially evil, aligning himself in truth against the Devil and his retinue. This suggestion of disparity between what he seems to

¹Robert Hillis Goldsmith, Wise Fools in Shakespeare (East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 1955).

²Ibid., p. 17.

be and actually is is re-emphasized and it is expressed distinctly through physical disguise in a later, secular play. Skelton's Magnificence has two fools, Fancy and Folly; Fancy is a real fool and Folly, a counterfeit fool, only feigning foolishness and in reality embodying some wisdom. The wise fool becomes firmly established dramatically by the time of John Redford's allegorical interlude Wyt and Science (c. 1530). Wyt appears in the garb of Ignorance and is taken for a fool. Here, then, the wisdom of the fool and the revealing disguise join forces. Compare also the ironic use of folly in Erasmus' Encomium Moriae, 1512, in which the mouthpiece of wisdom is called folly. Biblical precept no doubt underlies this tradition of reversing the sources of knowledge, for "hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" and conversely, "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise."

It is noteworthy, says Goldsmith, that the wise fool has scant occurrence outside of Shakespeare, cropping up twice in Marston--- Passarello in The Malcontent and Dondolo in The Fawne; once in Middleton--Pickadill in No Wit, No Help Like a Woman's; and once in Samuel Rowley--Will Summers in When You See Me, You Know Me.¹ In Shakespeare, however; the wise fool is a character repeatedly found. That is understandable, considering Shakespeare's interest in paradox and life-like complexity along with his interest in oblique approaches to truth. It is consistent with his use of indirect media for the exposition of

¹Ibid., p. 32.

character and theme. The physically disguised character and the mentally disguised wise man--both of which are agents of revelation--appear cooperatively in two of Shakespeare's mature works, not only in Twelfth Night but also in King Lear which will be discussed in the next chapter. In Twelfth Night the disguised nature of Viola, womanly and affectionate, and the disguised wisdom of the fool act as commentaries upon the misconceptions basic to the action.

The main misconceptions of the play have to do with unreasonableness and falseness of the Duke's and Olivia's love. Each maintains an adamant, though idealistic attitude towards love. Abundantly verbal, but ill-directed and eventually inconstant, their love is at variance with that of Viola--steadfast though inarticulate. Beneath her concealment lies a feeling more real than that of Olivia and the Duke, despite their declarations. True affection is that which through most of the play lies concealed, expressing itself only through the indirection which disguise or occasional, brief asides permit. Disguise then acts as a commentary. How else is the folly of Olivia expressed? Through the fool. Because of Olivia's status as a rich countess, none of her household could criticize her directly, but under a cloak of foolishness the wise fool--the clown, Feste--proclaims her a fool, thus reversing their roles.

First Olivia is attacked generally, as a fool.

Oli. Take the fool away.

Clo. Do you not hear, fellows? Take away the lady.

(I.v.42-44)

Several lines later the charge is more specific and in keeping with Olivia's delusions about the nature and expression of love. Her brother's death is the topic of discussion.

Clo. Good madonna, why mournest thou?
 Oli. Good fool, for my brother's death.
 Clo. I think his soul is in hell, madonna.
 Oli. I know his soul is in heaven, fool.
 Clo. The more fool, madonna, to mourn for your
 brother's soul being in heaven. Take away
 the fool, gentlemen.

(I.v.72-78)

The fool, as Goldsmith notes, has little need for the stage whisper or comic aside.¹ Like Viola in disguise or Hamlet in his supposed madness, the fool can reveal himself dramatically and ironically, without relying on conventional devices of the aside or soliloquy which retard the movement of the play and exist for single purposes.

Most of the characters of Twelfth Night are in some way deluded-- "mad" is the expression recurrently given to their quality of misconception. Viola and Feste are obvious exceptions to this assemblage of madmen. Perhaps Sir Toby would be another exception, if he were not constantly in some stage of drunkenness. And what does Feste, the wise man, say of a drunken man? He is "like a drown'd man, a fool, and a madman." (I.v.139) This statement encompasses all of the deluded characters in the play. The Duke is a "drown'd man": he has repeatedly expressed the excessive capacity of his love as being that of the sea, so he is allied with the "drown'd." He compares his love with that of a woman who has less retention of affection:

¹Ibid., p. 20.

Their love may be called appetite,
 No motion of the liver, but the palate,
 That suffer surfeit, cloyment, and revolt;
 But mine is all as hungry as the sea,
 And can digest as much.

(II.v.100-104)

However, he seems more soused than satisfied.

And who is the fool in Feste's analogy? Olivia, obviously. Moments before, the fool had directed the retinue of Lady Olivia to "take away the fool." Madmen, too, are like the drunken man, the drown'd man, and the fool. Madmen, or those accused of being mad, are plentiful. Malvolio asks Sir Toby, Maria and the other revellers if they are not mad, to be up so late. (II.iii.93) Maria, on the other hand, reports to Olivia that Malvolio is "tainted in's wits." (III.iv.13) And Olivia, after confronting him, concludes herself that "this is very midsummer madness." (III.iv.61)

Feste continues to expose madness and foolishness as the action progresses and the delusions accelerate. Antonio, disconcerted by the unfaithfulness of Sebastian in failing to return his purse, has confused Viola for Sebastian and is thought to be mad by officers who arrest him. Sebastian, mistaken for Viola by both Feste and Sir Andrew, asks "Are all the people mad?" (IV.i.29) although a few lines later, because of his growing confusion he entertains the alternative, "Or I am mad." (IV.i.65) Feste accuses Antonio of madness and the Duke accuses Antonio of the same. And finally, the last accusation is made by Olivia to Feste.

Oli. How now, art thou mad?

Clo. No, madam, I do but read madness.

(V.i.301-302)

And this is indeed his role. He is aware "that . . . foolery does walk about the orb, like the sun; it shines everywhere. . . ."

(III.ii.43)

The resemblance of Feste the wise fool to the disguised Viola is heightened in two ways. Viola wisely discerns the wisdom of the fool and the fool assumes the disguise of a priest to fool Malvolio. Viola, after bantering with Feste, reveals her own acute perception and wisdom as she says:

This fellow is wise enough to play the fool,
And to do that well craves a kind of wit.
He must observe their mood on whom he jests,
The quality of persons and the time,
And, like the haggard, check at every feather
That comes before his eye. This is a practice
As full of labour as a wise man's art;
For folly that he wisely shows is fit,
But wise men, folly-fall'n, quite taint their wit.

(III.i.67-75)

In the tradition of the morality plays, specific and generalized Vices, as they resorted not only to changes in name but also to changes in appearance in order to signify their deceiving natures, took upon themselves the garb of the friar. Feste, too, puts on the gown, dissembling as Sir Topas the curate, and uses the situation for a characteristic display of his wisdom.

Well, I'll put it on, and I will dissemble
myself in't; and I would I were the first
that ever dissembled in such a gown.

(IV.ii.5-7)

Feste, like the earliest examples of morality disguises--and like Viola in her role as a page--exposes error in the assumed disguise.

Starting with the basic Plautine comedy-of-errors plot, Shakespeare has utilized his source for full dramatic value in Twelfth Night. Despite the demands that Shakespeare imposes on disguise and misidentity in general, the play is nevertheless dependent for some of its comic spirit upon the more traditional comic effects of misidentity. With effective compression, he overlaps the traditionally separate conventions of misidentity through disguise and misidentity because of identical twins: Viola is both a twin and a character in disguise. However, Twelfth Night is at least partly a commentary on love and a drama of character; it is not purely a comedy of errors, and the complications potential in the twin situation are subordinated to the play's more predominant interests. Shakespeare changes his sources, rendering Sebastian inconspicuous, causing him to come into the plot late; he unobtrusively complicates and resolves the situation initiated through the element of disguise. Thus one aspect of misidentity (the twin situation) leads to the exposure of another aspect of misidentity (disguise) and leads to the play's resolution. Sebastian is not in the play merely to create a comic situation.

The dueling situation of Viola versus Sir Andrew and the one in which Sebastian replaces Caesario (Viola) and slightly wounds Sir Andrew are the only examples of disguise used in the original Roman comedy style, for low comedy. However, they too undergird characterization and theme. Let us examine the duels more closely. The encounter between Viola and Sir Andrew scarcely deserves the name of duel. The effete and timorous Sir Andrew is no more capable of bloodshed than is

his female opponent. In this scene, the real nature of Viola is set off in contrast to the demands of the pose she is assuming through her male disguise. Her speech reveals the tension between her pose and her nature, but more effectively, her gestures, improvised in an actual performance of the play, portray her lack of skill and her faintness of heart. Viola's real nature is also highlighted through a contrast with the performance of her masculine counterpart--her brother Sebastian--as he eagerly takes on his reluctant challenger, Sir Andrew, and quickly subdues him. The disparity between the dueling Viola and the dueling Sebastian helps to enunciate the femininity of the heroine.

It is well that as the play advances and the action nears resolution we are put in mind of the actual feminine nature of Viola. It is important to establish her as a woman through her disguise, for it is Viola, the woman, who finally marries the Duke. Love, as we have seen, is at the center of the play's interests. But it is not the love of an Olivia for a dead brother (which leans toward the incestuous), nor Olivia's attraction to the disguised Viola, nor the love of the Duke for Olivia (nourished more by artificial forms than by the one who is loved) that the action of the play approves. Viola, like Rosalind, is set amongst those whose concepts of romance or whose moods of love depart from a standard of normality which she maintains and represents in the play.

Of all the plays, Twelfth Night exhibits the broadest and the deepest range of uses of disguise, which Shakespeare has developed as

modifications and extensions of an early and simple comic device. In the earlier plays, which we have examined, disguise may have reinforced theme by juxtaposing false appearance and false attitudes, but with less comprehension and complexity. In Love's Labour's Lost, on the one hand, disguise relates to the theme of misunderstanding the scholarly quest, but merely in Act V. In The Two Gentlemen of Verona, on the other hand, the falsity which disguise helps to expose is that of idealistic, too-easily-determined "right" attitudes and modes of behavior. One leaves the play knowing what is wrong--infidelity to those one loves--whereas in Twelfth Night the polarities are not as clear; the black and white shade into life-like degrees of grey.

In Twelfth Night the interplay between mistaken appearance and mistaken conception is thorough-going. Shakespeare brings these two interests together with regard to over-all plot construction. The complication initiating the action of the drama springs from both the disguise of Viola and the delusions of the Duke and Olivia concerning love. Disguise, traditionally an external or mechanical cause for dramatic action, joins psychological, internal causes from the very beginning of the play. Complications growing out of the physical and the mental misidentities accelerate until they are resolved through a single incident--the revelation of who Viola actually is. All the accumulating tensions of the play focus on this scene and find resolution as a result of Viola's disclosure. The Duke recognizes Viola as the true object of his affection and Olivia is restored to her actual husband, Sebastian. Only the delusions of Malvolio are incapable of

resolution, thereby reiterating the serious implications of the pervasive tendency of all the characters to confuse appearance and reality, but without damaging the comic spirit of this comedy of errors. Error, however, is not so easily and completely righted: there is for Malvolio no miraculous herb of Oberon

whose liquor hath this virtuous property
To take from thence all error with his might.

Error is seen to be a coin with two faces, comedy and tragedy, which are not mutually exclusive. King Lear, as we shall see in the next chapter, unremittingly turns toward us the tragic face of misconception.

CHAPTER V

DISGUISE IN A TRAGEDY OF ERRORS

"Most true it is that I have look'd on truth
Askance and strangely. . . ."
(Sonnet 110)

Disguise, too often relegated by critics to the interests of comedy in Elizabethan drama, appears in a mature Shakespearean tragedy, King Lear. In this play disguise is not only a means of revealing the character of a person assuming a false pose, but it is also a means of elucidating and promoting the characterization of Lear himself. Lear, who is constantly kept in focus, is surrounded by characters who, besides maintaining their own identity, are projections of some aspect of the king; thereby they vividly convey both the disunity of his personality and his characteristic tendency to see himself in external objects. Stated generally, this technique of characterization--associated so often with Henry James in narrative fiction--is one in which the definition of a character is established through his context. The true nature of a character or situation is explored through a complex of perspectives. In King Lear things apparently disparate and even irreconcilable are throughout the play brought into an increasingly close juxtaposition and finally are made to converge as part of a single actuality. To be specific, Lear's identity--what he actually is--is definable only with reference to objects and characters which, in a literal sense, he is not. Similarly, the wisdom he finally

achieves is expressible because he comes to regard himself as foolish. And his clearest insights are transmitted through what superficially appear to be mad babblings. As a study of ways of looking at things, King Lear will be found to express Shakespeare's characteristic mature employment of the indirect perspective.

Not all of these characters who enlarge the statement of Lear assume a physical disguise. Both Edgar and Kent appear in disguise, and the Fool--of a type exemplified by Feste and functioning along with Viola as a revealing commentary on character in Twelfth Night--is also "disguised" in the sense that his wise commentary is veiled beneath the superficial appearance of a fool. The Fool fits into a general category of characters who may be regarded as disguised insofar as the appearance they present to others in the play disguises what they principally are. In the present study the Fool will be regarded henceforth as simply disguised.

These disguised characters may be considered agents of a mode of dramatizing similar to expressionism, reflecting as they do the experience of Lear. As such they combine with aspects of setting--the storm principally, which is frequently interpreted as an objectification of what is happening within Lear himself. The agony of Lear's position is in part seen externally, through the inter-relationships of Lear with the storm, Kent, the Fool, and Edgar as Mad Tom.

What might be labelled a split personality convention--that technique of representing a character and his disunity by projecting aspects of him into the outside characters--was a convention established early

and widely in the Morality play, with its conflict of good and evil, in various forms, which centers in the main character. The Morality play offers conspicuous examples of what I have called a split personality convention, or, generally, an aspect of expressionism in King Lear.

Various character traits are in the Moralities isolated and objectified through allegory. The character of "mankind" is a composite of qualities found in the characters surrounding him. Less extended in scope, this sort of symbolism continues into the interludes. In The Interlude of the Virtuous and Godly Queen Hester some use is made of the allegorical representation of character. The wickedness of Aman is dramatically revealed in his interaction with Pride, Ambition, and Adulation.¹

Perhaps this technique of representing characters who are to some degree disintegrated is best seen because most consciously used in modern examples, in the post-Freudian drama. Modern dramas--both early twentieth century plays and later, more analytically psychological studies--rely again on this convention that Shakespeare and his predecessors had used.

The technique can be defined vividly in our minds if we look at O'Neill, because of the obvious symbolism of his artifices. The use of the projected character in Days Without End approximates that of the

¹William Roy Mackenzie, The English Moralities from the Point of View of Allegory (Boston and London: Ginn and Company, 1914), p. 242.

Morality play tradition the most closely. Here, John Loving's dual self is represented dramatically by the delegation of his part to two actors who appear concurrently on the stage. John is the persisting aspect of the personality, and it is John that the other characters see and converse with. Loving, his other self--a type of Bad Angel, characterized in this play as rational and cynical--remains unseen to the others. When John regains the religious faith of his childhood, his personality is whole and the malevolent Loving expires.

Seeking escape from what he has called the "banality of surfaces," O'Neill experimented in The Emperor Jones with expressionistic uses of setting (in the broad sense of the word), employing drum beat, "little formless fears" and so forth to objectify and vitalize conflicts waging within Jones himself. Reflecting back upon several completed plays, O'Neill in his Wilderness edition, states that The Great God Brown, an extensive dramatic exploration of aspects of personality,

attempts to foreshadow the mystical patterns created by the duality of human character and the search for what lies hidden behind and beyond words and actions of men and women. "More by the use of overtones than by explicit speech, I sought to convey the dramatic conflicts in their lives and within the souls of the characters."¹

Shakespeare's dramatic exploration of character in King Lear bespeaks a similar interest.

These expressionistic devices employ both outside characters and aspects of setting as means of searching "the duality of human character

¹As cited in Edmond M. Gagey, Revolution in American Drama (New York: Columbia University Press, 1947), p. 54.

and . . . what lies hidden." It is a technique which in the hands of such dramatists as O'Neill and Shakespeare is beautifully adapted to exposing this duality or complexity and its hidden nature, because the technique itself constitutes dramatic testimony to the existence of the mystery.

Another means of objectifying character, one that is similar to Shakespeare's use of the disguise, is O'Neill's use of the mask. The Great God Brown makes extensive use of masks to represent character levels and changes, just as Rosalind's disguise expands the range of her personality. Dion Anthony represents a combination of the life-giving Dionysus--or the sensual--and the life-denying, masochistic spirit of St. Anthony--or the spiritual--by the gay, scoffing mask which hides his spiritual, underlying expression. It is the mask-personality of Dion that his wife Margaret loves, not knowing the sensitive man beneath. She wants an ambitious and successful, however superficial, husband. She becomes completely happy when the worldly successful William Brown acquires the mask of Dion, who has died; Brown poses in the mask of Dion and is joyfully accepted by Margaret. And Brown seeks himself, his own identity, through the identity of Dion.

An actual performance of The Great God Brown, of course, exhibits the full extent to which symbolic disguise can be used in this play. In a recent New York production, for example, a moment of intense disjunction in Dion's personality was dramatized in his removing his mask and speaking to it as though it were separate from him. Margaret's confusion and tension were conveyed directly by action, by a

momentary gesture towards removing her mask, when in Brown's office she sought work for Dion. A momentary impulse to be sincere and direct was dramatized thereby.

In King Lear and in The Great God Brown the artifice of disguise is easily accepted within its poetic, stylized context. In The Great God Brown artificial, paralleling set scenes at the beginning, combine with repeated stylized movements, stark staging, spot-lighting that poetically isolates characters and incidents, and discordant music to enunciate the reality of the hidden psychological and spiritual situation. In King Lear there is a myth-like quality to the play that makes possible a non-realistic treatment, involving, among other things, the use of disguise, an outward emblem. The main action of King Lear prepares Lear for his reconciliation with Cordelia at the end, and the nature of his transformation is the primary concern of the body of the play. Shakespeare uses his non-realistic means to express the various qualities of Lear and stages of his transformation.

Shakespeare's use of disguise in King Lear is consonant with his increasing concentration upon character and upon expressionistic methods of dramatizing the protagonist, and it is peculiarly appropriate as a mode of statement in this play because Lear is a notably impulsive and unreflective man. In King Lear various characters, in actual physical disguise or some modification of a disguise, contribute qualities that reveal Lear. Here conventional media such as the soliloquy would be highly inappropriate for exposition of character. The dramatist who wrote Lear has, in effect, asked himself whether the character he has

created would be inclined to soliloquize and answered no. Lear would not be inclined to soliloquize. Lear seems unable to look into matters closely. His lack of perceptiveness is suggested when one of his knights detects a lack of respect and affection to Lear; Lear himself had scarcely noticed. (I.iv.60-76) Lear's dislike of reflection--or his inability to pursue a thought inferentially--is indicated in his next speech; putting off thought, Lear promises, "I will look further into't. But. . . ." (I.iv.76-77) And thus he procrastinates. His ineptitude for imaginative thought is indicated again in his ineffectual diatribe against Goneril and Regan: He threatens to

. . . do such things,--
 What they are, yet I know not; but they shall be
 The terrors of the earth.

(II.iv.283-285)

Soliloquies from the mouth of an introspective, deliberative Hamlet are more intrinsically suitable than they would be for the impulsive and unreflective Lear.¹

For Lear the material of soliloquy has been translated into dramatic situation. For example, soliloquy has been converted into

¹Indirect means of characterization--often through external objects or players--are relied upon extensively in the last tragedies whose protagonists are primarily active. Indirectly the fears of Macbeth are objectified into terms of concrete apparitions, daggers and such, even as, in a modern expressionistic play, O'Neill's The Emperor Jones, Jones is characterized, in part, through the "little, formless fears" he encounters. Coriolanus and Anthony are two other Shakespearean tragic heroes who are more prone to act than to verbalize and meditate. The destructively honest pride of Coriolanus, it has been observed, is dramatically highlighted through the use of indirect media: disguise. Anthony, on the other hand, torn against immense foils to his own nature: the sensuous world of Egypt with its Cleopatra and the world of duty and glory--Rome with its Caesar.

dialogue when Lear converses with characters whom the action of the play and Lear himself tell us are to be identified with the king. These characters, these projected aspects of Lear, not only reveal the qualities of Lear that they reflect directly, but because of the fact that Lear sees a relationship between these characters and himself we perceive more clearly Lear's tendency to regard himself in terms of exterior objects--relying as he formerly did upon merely "the name," "th'addition" of a king.

The observable analogies between Lear and several of his associates become clear contributors to our understanding of the old king if we regard Kent, the Fool, and mad Tom not only as characters with whom he has to deal but also as aspects of Lear himself projected into disguised forms of himself.

The disguise of Kent helps to characterize both Kent and Lear and to make possible a statement of the difference between them--a difference which is apparent because they are similar. For one thing, Kent's loyalty to his king is manifest and persistently restated throughout the play because of his assumption of his particular disguise, the means whereby he debases himself in order to be of service to Lear. This he does despite the unjust treatment Lear has accorded him. Thus a strong quality of Kent's character, his loyalty, is revealed. Not only is Kent's character emphasized but his loyalty keeps alive throughout this play our sharp awareness of the tragically consequential disloyalties and disrespectful actions which are its bitter causes of tragedy.

Kent, though he is himself (albeit in disguise) at the same time reflects the king and, at times, acts as a projection of the person of the king; this is especially evident when he is mistreated, as Lear's messenger, by Regan, who has him put in the stocks. Kent is inextricably identified with Lear when he acts as his messenger. Kent himself warns Regan against her rash treatment of him:

You shall do small respects, show too bold malice
Against the grace and person of my master,
Stocking his messenger.

(II.ii.7-9)

And, more pointedly, several speeches further, Gloucester intercedes on Kent's behalf:

The King must take it ill
That he, so slightly valued in his messenger,
Should have him thus restrain'd.

(II.ii.152-154)

On other occasions Shakespeare guides us into conjoining the two characters. For example, when first he sought service under Lear, the disguised Kent aligned himself with his master, commenting that he was "as poor as the King" (I.iv.20-21), and later, out in the storm, he answers Lear's "Wilt break my heart?" with "I had rather break mine own." (III.iv.3-4) Upon another occasion, he identifies himself with Lear against Oswald, sharing the will of his master. (I.iv)

The figure of Kent as a projection of the king whom he serves is an easily acceptable dramatic device because of the living convention that a king's messenger is to be treated with deference symbolic of the deference accorded the king. Shakespeare builds thus upon a sure and comfortable base.

Shakespeare also emphasizes differences between Kent and Lear.

Kent is wiser than Lear. He is similar to the Fool and to Edgar as mad Tom because of his discernment and wisdom, which so obviously contrast with the folly of Lear. Like these other disguised revealers of truth, Kent displays wisdom which is influential, no doubt, though operating subtly and accumulatively, in the reconstruction of Lear's personality. Kent, with a capacity for loyalty to the king, is yet capable of asserting a truth the king does not and will not see. Lear, strong in self-will and frustrated when defied by recalcitrant circumstance throughout the first parts of the play, commands heaven to his own purpose or appropriates heaven's prerogative as his own divine sanction. "By Jupiter," "By Apollo" and such oaths are his frequent expressions. His imperative mode and his oaths, however, are early in the play mocked by Kent, who tells Lear "thou swear'st thy gods in vain." (I.1.163) Later, Kent, bound in the stocks, again mocks the unyielding king, who can neither comprehend nor accept the outrage he has just suffered in the person of Kent. "By Jupiter, I swear, no," he protests. To this Kent adds, "By Juno, I swear, ay." (II.iv.21-22) Kent is as violent in speech and action as the king. The difference is that whereas the king will not accept a fact, Kent will. This similarity with a difference was evident early in the play: Lear was impetuous in renouncing Cordelia, and Kent showed an equal lack of restraint as he immediately remonstrated, "Good my liege--" (I.1.123) and was quickly silenced by Lear. The characters are allied through the

common trait of impetuosity. The fact that clearly emerges from such a notable similarity, however, is that Lear's judgment was wrong, Kent's was right.

That the avowed affection of Goneril and Regan was false and that Cordelia was indeed devoted could not be revealed to Lear directly by the discerning Kent. Lear would not tolerate a direct criticism. In disguise, however, Kent served as an instrument whereby Lear could be confronted with the truth and thus eventually could approximate the wisdom of Kent himself. Through Regan's mistreatment of Lear's servant, Kent in disguise, Lear was vividly confronted with the injustice done to Lear himself. And near the play's conclusion, when Lear has been made ready to perceive the true affection of Cordelia, Kent is instrumental in bringing him to her, literally carrying the old king to his daughter and symbolically bringing him to a true relationship. Regan, earlier in the play, had said by way of encouraging Lear to seek Goneril's aid,

You should be led
By some discretion that discerns your state
Better than yourself.

(II.iv.151-152)

Kent is one such "discretion."

The folly of the King and his deed are highlighted also by the Fool, who under a guise of irrelevance and foolishness is a spokesman for truth and for the self-accusation Lear tries to suppress. The Fool, like Kent and mad Tom, is presented in the play in an identification with Lear himself despite vast differences. In the scene introducing

the Fool into the action, one of his first remarks establishes the identity and yet minimizes the distinction as he sings to Lear that they are both fools, "me sweet, you bitter . . . The one in motley here, the other found out there." And when Lear in his growing confusion begins to seek self-knowledge, he asks, "Who is it that can tell me who I am?" (I.iv.250-251) The Fool replies, "Lear's shadow." The Fool is in part a projection of Lear himself, since he reflects insights of the neglected common sense that Lear must face in his growth towards a more realistic and broader understanding of himself and his relationships with authority. The Fool tells Lear that he is a fool. The conflict waged within Lear between his partial awareness of his folly and indiscretion and his unwillingness fully to accept this realization is dramatized by means of the Fool. It is a commonplace of modern psychology--Freudian, particularly--that a man tends to externalize unpleasant pressures from within. Thus, through "projection" the recognition that "my conscience is bothering me" becomes instead, "He is bothering me." This fact of projection, as it applies to Lear, and the content of the message of fact is dramatized by means of the Fool.

The fool leads Lear towards a more discerning approach to what is immediately apparent but in some way untrue. Lear must achieve the scepticism of the Fool before he is ready for a reconciliation with Cordelia. At the beginning of the play Lear is unable to see beyond the silence of Cordelia's answer to Lear; when he asked her what she could say to express her affection for her father, she replied "Nothing, my lord." Lear, of course, disinherits her, blind as he is to the

unexpressed depth of her feeling. Lear also is unable to perceive the consequences of the dividing of his kingdom. In the first scene in which Lear and the Fool appear together the Fool attempts to confront Lear with his hasty and superficial way of looking at things. The scene begins with the Fool's song of veiled reproach of Lear's folly in surrendering his authority. Characteristically, Lear assumes that, "This is nothing, Fool." Lear believes that even though he has divided his kingdom, he retains his authority; he is still essentially a king, still at least something significant, finding his status in "the name," "th'addition" of a king. The Fool, however, states Lear's "nothingness": "thou hast pared thy wit o' both sides and left nothing i'th'middle." Picking up "nothing" in his very next speech, the Fool informs his companion, "I am better than thou art now; I am a Fool, thou art nothing." (I.iv.214) It is only after bitter experiences that shock him into self-awareness that Lear can clearly perceive, "They told me I was everything; 'tis a lie." (Iv.vi.106)

Lear, with his hunger for the outward tokens of affection and authority, benefits too from the reflection of himself which he sees in mad Tom o'Bedlam, who is reduced almost to nakedness. Tom, himself a character in disguise, is seen to be an aspect of Lear. Confronting him, Lear speculates: "Is man no more than this?" and concludes in the same speech, "Thou art the thing itself; unaccommodated man is no more but such a poor, bare, forked animal as thou art." (III.iv.107. 110-114) Lear sees in Tom "unaccommodated man" and he must eventually recognize

in himself this essential, unadorned nature before his transformation is complete. That is, he had previously demanded special treatment and the superfluities of life because he was king, but he comes to realize the folly of centering so much attention in himself, in what is basically nothing more than a man.

The identification of Lear with Kent, mad Tom, and the Fool becomes more complete as Lear achieves a clearer insight into himself and his situation. Lear, as we have seen, is identified in several ways with Kent, though Kent's judgment was clearly superior to Lear's. And Lear is more completely like Kent as he achieves wisdom which approximates that of Kent.

Also, Lear is increasingly identified with mad Tom and the Fool as he gains knowledge of himself and his situation. His identification with mad Tom is indicated in his act of tearing off his own clothes; he sees himself in mad Tom and seeks to resemble him fully. And throughout the last part of the play Lear is more and more identified with the Fool. We have found the Fool to be a projection of Lear; this projection dramatizes the king's disunified personality--the fact that he will not acknowledge his own indiscretion.

After Lear has identified himself with mad Tom, in the storm scene, both mad Tom and the Fool abandon their roles as projections of Lear's character and cease to be the companions of Lear, being no longer needed in their function as symbols of Lear's inner chaos. As Lear's personality achieves a greater degree of integration, his projected

aspects disappear. Mad Tom changes to the disguise of a peasant whereby he becomes a means of guiding Gloucester both physically and mentally, while the Fool "goes to bed at noon." (II.vi.92)

The Fool's final statement, "And I'll go to bed at noon," has usually been interpreted only in the light of the Fool's tender-heartedness and his great capacity for sympathy.¹ That the Fool is characterized by such sympathy is evident and testifies that he is an actual, suffering personality in the play; but he also represents a quality of Lear, and as Lear attains recognition of the truth that the Fool has confronted him with, the king wisely sees himself as a fool, thereby of course acknowledging what the Fool has said, to wit that though a king he is a fool. The Fool's wisdom has resided in his perception of Lear's folly, so that when Lear recognizes his own folly, it is reasonable to say that he has appropriated the Fool's wisdom. The scene after the Fool and Lear have physically parted supports these observations. Lear speaks of himself as a fool. He looks upon life as "this great stage of fools," (IV.vi.187) and, becoming more specific, "I am even the natural fool of fortune." (IV.vi.194-195) He confesses to Cordelia, "I am a very foolish fond old man," (IV.vii.60) and later, "I am old and foolish." (IV.vii.85) Wisdom and "foolishness" come into common focus with Lear's new understanding. For he has achieved in part the Socratic wisdom of shedding pretensions to a wisdom not possessed.

¹Or else Lear's complete irrationality leads to the Fool's departure. According to Denton J. Snider (from the Furness edition of King Lear, Vol. V, 1880): "Wisdom--though to effect its design it has assumed the garb of folly--has not succeeded. The fool, therefore,

Ironically, as Lear is propelled towards his final clear-sightedness in the play his acknowledgment of the fact that he is a fool is expressed not only in words but also through the very act of a madness which in this play is parallel to the blindness of Gloucester. Blind Gloucester can say, "I stumbled when I saw." Mad Lear not so explicitly but just as vividly says, "I perceived falsely when I was sane." Though anguish and physical exhaustion bring about some degree of actual delirium in Lear, there is in his distraught utterance more wisdom and awareness of situation than was evident in his superficially coherent speech of earlier parts of the play. Just after Lear states, "My wits begin to turn" (III.ii.67)--that is, as his delirium accelerates--he shows new capacities for experiencing things beyond his own sphere of personal desire and disappointment. Hitherto sorry only for himself, he now takes a new point of view and expresses interest in the Fool, who shares with him the discomforts of the storm. "Come on, my boy. How dost, my boy? Art cold?" He also sees value in what would previously have appeared worthless.

The art of our necessities is strange
And can make vile things [i.e. the straw] precious. . . .
(III.ii.70-71)

During the scene of heightened delirium, Lear gains new insight

drops out now; his function must cease when Lear is no longer rational, but has himself turned fool. It was his duty to reflect the acts of the King in their true character, so that the latter might behold what he was doing. When intelligence is gone this is impossible." (p. 430) Similarly, from Dr. Carl C. Hense: "The Fool has his place in the tragedy only so long as the king is able to perceive the truth veiled by the Fool's humour. There is no longer room or need for him after the king becomes crazed. The crisis is the end of the Fool. He vanishes, 'goes to bed at midday,' when his beloved master is hopelessly lost." (p. 460)

into the disguised truth with which the Fool has continuously been confronting him. For example, when the Fool sings the song of him who has "a little tiny wit" and "must make content with his fortunes fit," (III.ii.76) Lear responds with uncharacteristic perceptiveness: "True, boy." He now accepts the truth the Fool presents to him and thus achieves a greater degree of personal integration. He had several speeches earlier said, "My wits begin to turn," but this turning is in the direction, not of madness, but sanity. Lear--"he that has a little tiny wit"--apparently has that small share of wit not as a reminder of a former abundance but as the beginning: he is finally achieving wit. That his present stage is progress in the Fool's view is clear, especially in the light of the Fool's statement early in the play: "thou hast pared thy wit o'both sides and left nothing i'th'middle." (I.iv. 204-205) In Act IV, scene vi, Lear, arrayed in flowers, is at his greatest point of sane madness; he sees himself both as fool--it is during this scene that he frequently refers to himself as a fool--and as "nothing," suggesting his resemblance to his "unaccommodated man," Tom o'Bedlam aspect. Lear makes some of his most clear-sighted statements at this time: "they told me I was everything; 'tis a lie." (IV.vi.106)

At the scene of his reconciliation with Cordelia, however his wisdom is not complete; it is not sufficient for the situation he now faces. If his tragic end is a result of his inadequate insight, as it is, then his final tragic realization can be explained in terms of his final insight into the limitations of the wisdom of the Fool, a

wisdom which recognizes error and achieves a degree of humility and therefore submission, but a wisdom which is an inadequate basis for dealing with living evil men. Despite the increased maturity which prepares the king for reconciliation with Cordelia, Lear until Cordelia's death has still a limited knowledge of himself and his duty. He sees where he made mistakes--in misjudging his daughters and in mistaking merely "the name and th'addition" of a king as adequate bases of his authority. However, he does not yet see his present obligation--that of a father to a daughter. He is resigned to circumstances as the Fool was. Willing to withdraw with Cordelia to prison, he says, "Upon such sacrifices, my Cordelia, / The gods themselves throw incense." (V.iii.20-21) His awareness of obligation comes too late; his recognition that "I might have sav'd her" comes with the bitter fact of her death.

Disguise helps to characterize Lear but it does not carry us directly into the important moral problems in the play: it does not lead us to a statement of the attitude and action that is right for such as Lear and Gloucester who are overwhelmed by the evil about them. However, disguise does have relationship to the full meaning of King Lear. It is therefore pertinent to our study of disguise to digress at this point to discuss the way in which the play provides a rationale for the moral problem in order that the relation of disguise to this rationale may be intelligible.

An answer to the moral problem of King Lear is suggested in the varying perceptions, interpretations, by a number of characters, of the

nature of their cosmos and their relationship to it. This answer emerges only from a complex of differing, and even opposing, ways of looking at the controlling forces of the universe. Any attempts to extract a system of ethics or metaphysics in King Lear will reward the philosophizer only if he relies on isolated passages; considering the complexity of attitudes expressed in this play, clear-cut answers to the embodied moral problems are impossible to find. The attitudes of the discerning educators, Kent, Edgar, and the Fool, come closest to providing a rationale: that is, a concept of the cosmos whose implications contain a guide for the proper behavior of Lear and Gloucester. In contrast, the beliefs and opinions of characters such as Lear, Edmund, and Gloucester are too limited or they are in some way falsifying, as the action of the play makes clear. Nevertheless, the view expressed by Edmund, though if taken alone it is even more disastrous in its moral consequences than the partial views of Lear and Gloucester, must be assimilated if the total concept of a credible universe is to be consonant with morally tolerable behavior.

An interpretation of the cosmos is implied in Lear's oaths and reflects Lear's strongly ego-centric orientation to things about him. His attitude towards the universe is not reflective. He does not interpret it; he implores it to serve his interests. Lear's strong self-will and reliance upon some absolute authority is evident in his appropriation of divine sanction for the assertion of his personal desire. It has already been observed that he frequently backs up his commands or threats with "By Apollo," or "By Jupiter," and is advised

by Kent that he swears in vain. Or he prays only to command: "Hear, Nature! hear, dear goddess, hear! Suspend thy purpose. . . ." (I.iv.287) Humbled and disillusioned by adverse situations against which his will is impotent, Lear demonstrates his gradual change partially through his new attitude towards transcendent forces. He has a new point of view. After suffering Goneril's insults, Lear invokes deity for the first time as one who recognizes the limits of his own will: "O, let me not be mad, not mad, sweet heaven!" (I.v.49-50) An even greater degree of resignation and a more pathetically supplicant tone is notable in a speech following the abuse received from Regan:

You heavens, give me that patience, patience I need!
 You see me here, you gods, a poor old man,
 As full of grief as age; wretched in both.
 (II.iv.275-276)

Lear's relationship to transcendent being is observable through his lyrical expression; and in these expressions as in other matters, as we have seen, Lear is characteristically unreflective towards the possible cosmic forces precipitating his disaster. He does not verbalize attitudes, but simply and spontaneously creates an outlet for surging emotion.

Other characters express various conflicting attitudes towards the universe.

Attitudes of both determinism and free will are assumed. Gloucester, for example, regards the source of evil in Edgar as astronomically determined: eclipses cause disruption and Edgar's unnaturalness follows. These circumstances are found to be "strange"--a word Gloucester

uses upon several occasions to testify to the inscrutibility of actual causes and relationships. Edmund, as opposed to Gloucester, claims no refuge in necessity, asserting freedom--we're what we are of ourselves--and personal responsibility.

Kent contrasts with Lear. Whereas Lear cannot accept any restriction of his own will, Kent though a man who acts accepts good and evil, complying with the inevitable when it is beyond his own ability to alter a situation. Together with the Fool, he realizes that one "must make content with his fortunes fit," as the Fool had admonished the king. Kent sees misfortune as merely a temporary state of fortune; he sees the present through the perspective of the future, through the perspective of eventual change. More aware of vicissitudes and multiple, changeable appearances than Lear, Kent maintains an attitude that is immune to the beguilement of appearance. As Dowden has said, "His [Kent's] loyalty to right has something in it of a desperate instinct, which persists in spite of the appearances presented by the world."¹ In the stocks, Kent takes a far-sighted view of the change in fortune which he feels will eventually come: "Fortune, good night: Smile once more; turn thy wheel." (II.ii.180) This attitude sharply contrasts with that of Lear, upon finding Kent so imprisoned: "By Jupiter, I swear, no." And Kent retorts, "By Juno, I swear, ay." (II.iv.21-22) Lear resists even the reality of the situation, whereas Kent, fully

¹Furness (ed.), pp. 134-135.

aware of it, accepts it in the perspective of the next "turn of the wheel."

Edgar, like Kent, is far more capable of a broad perspective and of "biding the time" than Lear and Gloucester. In his relationship with Gloucester, the disguised Edgar helps his father to readjust his attitudes to conform to actual situations and to bear what can not be changed. In this complex of varying interpretations of the universe and, inferentially, of one's responsibility in such a world, there are no tidy answers. What emerges as a partial rationale for this problem can be best illustrated by examining the scenes that bring together Gloucester and Edgar.

Gloucester is characterized early in the play as one who habitually makes unwise judgments: he denounces Edgar, for example, on too little evidence, and shares the unrealistic, naive attitudes toward personal relationships that characterize Lear. His naiveté is evident on the occasion just before he is blinded by Cornwall with the encouragement of Regan. He reacts to their obviously hostile, even cruel intentions with uncomprehending simplicity: "You are my guests. Do me no foul play, friend." (III.iv.31) It should be obvious to him that he is not dealing with friendly house guests. Similarly, Gloucester is ill-prepared philosophically to receive anything but kindness from the gods; again he demonstrates his limited perspective. Repeatedly, Gloucester refers to the deities as "kind gods," and later, as "ever-gentle gods." Therefore, the crushing blow to his belief in benevolence

reduced Gloucester to complete disillusionment and despair, a position from which Edgar gradually raised him. When Edgar offered to guide the blind man, Gloucester despaired; "I have no way . . . I stumbled when I saw"--a fact which now, though physically blind, he perceives.

(IV.i.20-21) Reacting to his "kind gods" belief, Gloucester finds his troubles unbearable:

This world I do renounce

 If I could bear it longer, and not fall
 To quarrel with you great opposeless wills,
 My snuff and loathed part of nature should
 Burn itself out.

(IV.vii.35-40)

Edgar encourages Gloucester to regard the gods in a new way; he refers to them not as the "kindest gods" or gods of "great opposeless wills," but in this way: "the clearest gods . . . have preserved thee."

(IV.vi.73-74) It is not that the gods are unkind. When Gloucester says, "As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods,/ They kill us for their sport" he also has a faulty because incomplete perception.

Convinced through Edgar's help that suicide is not, shall we say, the best solution to his problem, Gloucester decides,

Henceforth I'll bear
 Affliction till it do cry itself
 "Enough, enough," and die.

(IV.vi.75-76)

In his attempts to confront Gloucester with himself, Edgar in his own person suggests an attitude he wants Gloucester to adopt, as the Fool did with Lear. For example, when asked who he is, Edgar answers the blind man, "A most poor man, made tame to fortune's blows." (IV.vi.225)

Finally, in a last reproof of Gloucester's recalcitrance in accepting experience, Edgar queries:

What in ill thoughts again? Men must endure
Their going hence even as their coming hither;
Ripeness is all. Come on.

Gloucester accedes to Edgar as Lear did to the Fool: "And that's true too." (V.ii.9-11)

Stoical resignation and an acceptance of what seem to be uncontrollable events should not obscure one's awareness of his personal responsibility for an evil: Gloucester must come to a realization of this. Gloucester's misfortunes are not the fault only of circumstance--the evil that lies in Edmund--but in Gloucester himself, according to Edgar.

The gods are just, and of our pleasant vices,
Make instruments to plague us.
(V.iii.170-171)

The "clearest gods," the "just gods" effect judgment through one's personal guilt.

Just as one is a cause of the evil, he is responsible for its removal. It is significant that the last speech in the play is not that of the stoical Kent or Fool, but Edgar.

The weight of this sad time we must obey;
Speak what we feel, not what we ought to say.
(V.iii.323-324)

The speech testifies only partly to Edgar's belief that "ripeness is all" and that the acceptance of circumstances should be our response to events; there is also the necessity of recognizing and acting upon our responsibilities. In this Lear failed. The ending of the play

finds him humbled and more aware of self; he has gained resignation, but, as we have seen, resignation has hindered him from perceiving his obligation to Cordelia. When he should have acted to save her, out of a sense of responsibility, he acted, but too late.

We are now ready to return from our digression. Our understanding of Lear's tragedy depends upon our understanding of Lear and his moral universe. Both are defined through a general technique which is also observable in Shakespeare's use of disguise in this play. That is, disguise employs multiple perspectives for the purpose of stating fully and dramatically the characters of those in whom we are principally interested; and an answer to the moral problem of King Lear, what to do in the universe he inhabits, is suggested in the varying interpretations, offered by a number of characters, of the nature of their cosmos and their relationship to it. In each case, that is in the characterizing of Lear and in the characterizing of his universe, the very technique that is used for the exposition dramatically testifies to the undefinable locus of truth: it has to be approached indirectly and on multiple avenues. Only when the truth is approached in this way, says the play, is there an answer to the questions--wherein does a character have his identity and where is an interpretation of the universe that will give a basis upon which moral action can be taken?

Truth exists only in a complex. Edgar is a concrete manifestation of the complexity of truth and the manner in which it assimilates things separate and superficially disconnected. His identity lies not only in what he most literally is--Edgar--but also in what he literally

is not--the forms taken with his various disguises. He expresses himself through his concealment--the only means whereby his truth will begin to be tolerable to both Lear and Gloucester.

Edgar's disguises are a dramatically effective adaptation of the "rogue in multiple disguise" convention. Nowhere is Edgar-in-disguise a rogue, in the first place. Edgar flexibly simulates five different disguises, five forms through which he subjugates his true identity to serve the demands of immediate situations.

The roles he assumes often enable him in some way to convey attitudes which those who perceive him finally adopt. Edgar's disguise with Lear has been discussed. Through mad Tom Lear was more clearly confronted with himself. Only through disguise could Edgar and his truth be presented to Gloucester, blind physically and blind to the worth of Edgar. Edgar replaces one disguise by another in order to lead Gloucester into a better point of view. Edgar as mad Tom becomes submerged gradually into Edgar-the-peasant, in order, so it seems, to accommodate himself to rendering new services. His nakedness, important to the characterization of Lear, is covered--he tells Gloucester he has put on the garb of a peasant--and his speech becomes coherent. After a few initial speeches Gloucester himself notes this:

Methinks thy voice is alter'd, and thou speak'st
In better phrase and matter than thou didst.
(IV.vi.7-8)

For his new role, that of guiding the blind man and directly arguing against his extreme despair, Edgar needed this new form.

Edgar again simulates a change of identity. After leading Gloucester to the cliff, Edgar next appears to the old man (who is deluded into thinking he has jumped), as a peasant. In this guise he maligns his previous form, represented as standing on the cliff above, whose eyes, according to Edgar's report,

. . . were two full moons; he had a thousand noses,
Horns shell'd and waved like the [enridged] sea.
It was some fiend;

(IV.vi.69-72)

This new helper, who is supposedly a peasant, is in a position to point out to Gloucester, "Thy life's a miracle," inducing the father to change. Gloucester resolves,

Henceforth I'll bear
Affliction till it do cry out itself
"Enough, enough," and die.

(IV.vi.75-77)

Edgar appears also as a messenger to Albany; he assumes the form of a Southern peasant to fight Oswald; and he confronts and eventually defeats Edmund in the guise of an armed unnamed knight. Edgar's various disguises may well be considered the one Shakespearean concession to the fashionable "multi-disguise," in which frequent changes of costume account for the play's shifting and episodic development. If regarded in the light of this convention, however, the subtlety and dramatic function of Edgar-in-disguise is clearly apparent.

Shakespeare's use of disguise is consonant with his mature perspective, as contrasted with his earlier and simpler manipulation of the typical Elizabethan double vision--the emblematic or analogizing inclination. In characterizing Lear Shakespeare works obliquely;

approaching qualities in Lear through outside points of view--other characters that reflect him--just as the meaning of a mature Shakespearean play such as King Lear lies in a complex of paralleling, opposing, or paradoxical components. Such a device for getting at meaning is not uncommon to the Renaissance mind, and is in evidence in the art of the period. That part of the Renaissance which Wylie Sypher has labelled "mannerism" is characterized by the use of both multiple points of view and a double functioning of members. The mannerist temperament, not limited to a particular medium of artistic creation, is explained as follows:

Mannerism is experiment with many techniques of disproportion and disturbed balance; with zigzag, spiral, shuttling motion; with space like a vortex or alley; with oblique or mobile points of view and strange--even abnormal perspectives that yield approximations rather than certainties.¹

Use is certainly made in King Lear of oblique and mobile points of view and of foils and doubles which create a "disturbed balance." In King Lear the "disturbed balance" resides in the forcing together of both similarity and dissimilarity. The play relates separate identities and opposites. In Shakespeare's early plays the balance provided by foils was not a disturbed one. One character or his situation was paralleled by another character and thus it was reinforced through a

¹Wylie Sypher, Four Stages of Renaissance Style (Anchor Books Original. Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1955), pp. 116-117. See also the discussion of the complexity of Shakespeare and Donne's vision in Patrick Cruttwell, The Shakespearean Moment (New York: Random House, 1960).

fairly simple analogy, just as the balance of a Petrarchan conceit was not a disturbed one. Shakespeare often uses similarities, not simply to define one term by another, but to force a comparison that issues in a contrast--a device typical of Donne. The loyal Kent and the faithful Fool show both what Lear is and what he is not; the two characters reflect Lear and represent him in many ways; yet the devotion of both servant and fool is a quality unknown as yet to Lear.

Symmetries in the play's structure are only partial. Gloucester's situation is not Lear's, for example. The fact, emerging from the play, that there are no easy single answers to the sources of evil or value as represented in the play, is apparent when we consider the effect of symmetry and analogy in King Lear. Foils don't restate; they bring up opposites. Over against the evil of Edmund, the bastard, there is the evil of the legitimate offspring, Goneril and Regan. Over against the valued loyalty and enacted responsibility of Kent and eventually Lear, there is the loyalty of Oswald--a loyalty that is put to wrong uses.

Shakespeare uses disguise to explore both evil and good. Robert Heilman examines the relationship of disguise to a context of evil forces: psychological disguise is the garb of the wicked, whereas physical disguise is the defense of the guileless and persecuted.¹ Thus, Edgar's nakedness is ironically a defense against an evil world. Heilman

¹Robert Heilman, This Great Stage: Image and Structure in King Lear (Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 1948).

examines disguise, then, in the light of a character's responses to a world of evil, a world in which appearances are misleading and the actual is discerned with difficulty. What Heilman suggests is provocative, but he does not give attention to the fact that Shakespeare also uses disguise for people whose persecuted state is less significant than their quest to learn or communicate the true nature of circumstances and personalities. The false or the indirect may furnish truth--just as disguise reveals. Conversely, what appear to be truths may be misleading in the understanding of a particular circumstance. For example, Cornwall, early in the play, decries Kent's straightforwardness, which, he says, must not be regarded as an indication of honesty. It is true, as Cornwall observes, that blunt speakers may

. . . harbour more craft and more corrupter ends
Than twenty silly ducking observants
That stretch their duties nicely.

(II.ii.108-110)

However, the platitude is false in this particular context, with reference to Kent.

The play, then, is in part a study of ways of looking at things.

Who is Lear and what is he? His characterization would be incomplete apart from his meanings that are reflected back upon him from the Fool and Edgar. And conversely, their identities lie partly in the person of King Lear.

Who are the wise and who the foolish? Paradoxically, the Fool is wise and Lear's expression of his own foolishness demonstrates his Socratic-like wisdom. On the other hand, the morally foolish Goneril

presumes to call Albany a fool--"a moral fool," and "a vain fool" (IV.iii.58 and 61)--but the action of the play reveals Albany's choices to be wiser than those of his accuser.

How do appearance and reality relate? Clothes, the superficial "additions of a king" and ceremony, though they are sometimes authentic, are often erroneous guides to underlying actualities: appearances mislead; they deceive Lear. Yet Shakespeare also uses the technique of disguise to reveal. The identity of Edgar is hidden by his outward appearance--a deceptive exterior; however, the personality of Edgar is revealed through the same device. Edgar's feelings are vividly characterized when he assumes a disguise. His father's unwarranted attempt upon his life made the disguise necessary, but Edgar's continual difficulty in sustaining the disguise and his determination to maintain it even after the original motive was no longer applicable results from his sincere affection for his father. The necessity of restraint, occasioned by Edgar's disguise, also reinforces the atmosphere of overwrought emotions that keep the entire play charged with tragic tension.

CHAPTER VI
DISGUISE AND THE SHAKESPEAREAN PERSPECTIVE

"Perspective it is best painter's art."
(Sonnet 24)

Shakespeare's use of a form of deception--disguise--for a revelation of what is true is indicative of his interest in the relation between seeming and being and his concern with the locus of truth in a play. That which seems true or is readily accepted as an adequate guide to truth may be found to mislead; on the other hand, that which is considered to be a form of deception may be a conveyance of the understanding to what is really so. This chapter will compare Shakespeare's characteristic use of perspective in his mature plays--that is, his use of multiple points of view in stating what is true with his earlier use of foils and antitheses in the manner of the typical Elizabethan double vision. Through such a comparison Shakespeare's alliance with the new ways of looking at things, which typify the critical attitudes of the seventeenth-century, will be evident.

In his investigation of the truth of a situation or of the nature of a character Shakespeare continually presses beyond what is superficially given. Appearances which may be suspect are dramatically examined for their relation to truth; they may either blind one to what is true, or they may, under the guise of concealment, reveal what is true. The character whose identity is concealed through his assumption of a disguise is just one example of the many aspects of seeming that

Shakespeare attends to. Another, which is fundamental to many of the situations of Shakespeare's plays, is that of the dissembler or the hypocrite--any character who disguises his mind; whereas Viola says, "I am not what I am," Iago says, "I am what I am not."

Allied to Shakespeare's concern with false appearances is his concern with false assumption. False attitudes are, for example, not only a consequence of the dissembling character, who has disguised his outward form or his mind, but they seem to be the natural expressions of such people as Malvolio and Aguecheek, who have an inherent capacity for seeing and perceiving falsely. Shakespeare, as we have seen, brings situations involving the misapprehensions and misconceptions of his characters into common focus; that is particularly evident in Twelfth Night. Even Shakespeare's early disguise comedies indicate his concern with themes involving disguise, with probing the surfaces of appearance and assumption.

Not only in the plays, but in the sonnets too the dramatist's interest in appearance is conspicuous. Sonnet 69 decries judgments based on the mere outward form of his subject, "those parts of thee that the world's eye doth view." The young man's character unfortunately does not concur with favorable outward show. Those who judge him superficially are described as "utt'ring bare truth, even so as foes commend./ [Thy] outward thus with outward praise is crown'd." In the context of sonnet 102, the form or display of love is also found to be less than the content of feeling (as in the case of Cordelia):

My love is strength'ned, though more weak in seeming;
I love not less, though less the show appear.

In the sonnets the alliance between seeing and perceiving is expressed most conspicuously in sonnet 73: "That time of year thou mayst in me behold."

Another aspect of apparent truth which may be proved false by the action of the play is the supposed truthfulness of various attitudes that are commonly and traditionally accepted in Elizabethan England. Some of these erroneous attitudes have to do with clothes. For example, pompous appearance and dress--ceremony in general--Shakespeare examines for its appropriateness to its wearer. People in the Elizabethan age tended to look upon ceremonious garb as a trustworthy symbol of underlying qualities of majesty and superiority in a king. Sometimes in Shakespeare's plays, however, because a king places undue reliance upon his outward appearance, he deceives himself. Richard II, the weakest of Shakespeare's kings, dwells upon the outward manifestations of kingship. He finds his supremacy to a great extent just here; he is a king, part of which involves looking like a king, just as an eagle or the sun are supreme because they look supreme.¹ According to this play, superficial similarities are not indicative of a thoroughgoing identification, just as in other plays the disguised person's sex was not changed when he assumed the clothes of the opposite sex: Shakespeare, in this play,

¹George Ian Duthie, Shakespeare (London: Hutchinson's University Library, 1955), p. 119. Duthie proposes that Shakespeare rebels against the unmysterious universe of Hierarchy, Order, and Chain of Being--"the Lovejoy Layer-cake."

undermines the accepted Elizabethan belief in correspondence.

Lear mistakes the quality of kingship for its ceremonious forms, and only after severe trials recognizes that "robes and furr'd gowns hide all." That the outward form ought to concur with the actual state of mind and real intention of a character is insisted upon repeatedly during the examination of appearance in King Lear. The attempt to make a valid identification between physical appearance and what it symbolizes is behind Lear's tearing off his own clothes, to identify himself with mad Tom's unadorned, basic humanity. Similarly, Kent laments the discord between Oswald's appearance and character as he disdainfully remarks:

That such a slave as this should wear a sword,
Who wears no honesty.

And the concluding speech of the play--that of Edgar--urges the concordance of another outward form--speech--with the speaker's actual feeling.

The weight of this sad time we must obey;
Speak what we feel, not what we ought to say.

Ceremonious forms, while they are significant, may be a means of obscuring something more important, just as in Love's Labour's Lost "truth falsely blinds." Timon of Athens bitterly realizes the limitation of wealthy show. Usurpers such as Richard III, Macbeth, and Claudius are attracted to the false glory of kingship. The tendency of ceremony to obscure the complete quality of a king is most explicitly and extensively stated in the battle-field soliloquy of Henry V.

And what have kings, that privates have not too,
Save ceremony, save general ceremony?¹

Types of dress other than those associated with ceremony are re-examined by Shakespeare. In Twelfth Night, it will be remembered, conventional attitudes towards the significance of clothes are found to be erroneous. Olivia arrayed herself in mourning clothes, a form supposedly appropriate to an inward state. However, Olivia's outward appearance is not congruent with her real feelings and even hides them. The nature of Viola, on the other hand, is supposedly concealed and certainly misrepresented through incongruent attire for a woman. Yet her personality is given expression thereby. Feste, dressed in motley, which traditionally designates the fool, denies the appropriateness of outward appearance and underlying nature--"I wear no motley in my brain"--(I.v.62) just as Rosalind denied indirectly the implications of her mannish attire. And in Measure for Measure Lucio, speaking of Friar Lodowick, says, "Cucullus non facit monachum." Honest in nothing but in his clothes." (V.1.263)

Besides looking beyond the conventional attitudes regarding external appearances--clothes, disguises, and ceremony, for example--the dramatist explores other conventional beliefs too easily assumed true

¹Other ceremonious forms are suspected: the critical, idealistic Brutus is wary of ceremonious overtures of friendship:

When love begins to sicken and decay
It useth an enforced ceremony.
There are no tricks in plain and simple faith;
But hollow men, like horses hot at hand,
Make gallant show and promise of their mettle.
(Julius Caesar IV.ii.20-25)

by the Elizabethans. The high regard for both precept and example as adequate guides in an ethical situation is open to Shakespeare's scrutiny.

The Elizabethan reverence for precepts is well known. The vast number of compilations of precepts and the popularity of such works as Erasmus' Adages and the writings of Seneca and Plutarch attest this reliance upon generalized truth. And, as Jacob Zeitlin has pointed out, "It is a striking circumstance that Plato, in spite of the magic attaching to his name, does not get into English at all, for he does not formulate rules of conduct in concise sentences."¹ Yet truisms, assumed to be workable or trustworthy according to the attitude of the day, are not always so in the context of the Shakespearean situation. Both Othello and Hamlet, for example, contain untrue truisms or statements of advice. In Othello Brabantio, contemplating the Duke's "wise sayings" about patience, observes their inefficacy and limitation outside the artifice of language. The Duke had said:

To mourn a mischief that is past and gone
Is the next way to draw new mischief on.
What cannot be preserv'd when fortune takes,
Patience her injury a mock'ry makes.
The robb'd that smiles steals something from the thief;
He robs himself that spends a bootless grief.
(I.iii.204-209)

Brabantio objects:

¹Jacob Zeitlin, "Commonplaces in English Life and Letters," The Journal of English and Germanic Philology, XIX (1920), 47.

These sentences, to sugar or to gall
 Being strong on both sides, are equivocal.
 But words are words;
 I never yet did hear
 That the bruis'd heart was pierced through the ear.
 (I.iii.216-219)

The fund of patience is simply not sufficient to pay grief. The fact of a real loss and grief is slighted by the truisms of the Duke.

Polonius, in Hamlet, has a ready supply of wise precepts; not all of these contain wise advice, though they may be phrased in a captivating, disarming manner. Polonius plays with the true-false anti-thesis: "This above all: to thine own self be true,/ And it must follow, as the night the day,/ Thou canst not then be false to any man." (I.iii.78-80) Whether or not this is true (and good advice) depends upon the sort of nature the man has. Claudius followed his own evil nature, for example, and was thereby false to more than one man. Polonius' precept is one which obviously needs qualification when directed towards specific situations.

The sixteenth century highly esteemed the study of the life of a great person, his choices and their consequences, as providing an adequate guide for action. In harmony with this tradition Hamlet looks to Fortinbras and Horatio for precedents, neither of which suffices for Hamlet's own particular predicament. "Readiness is all" is as close as Hamlet can formulate a verbal answer. What was an answer--the truth, in a sense--for Fortinbras and for Horatio could not be taken over as an answer for Hamlet. Donne understood his situation when he said, "Stand

on two truths; neither is true to you."¹

Truth, then, is not found in single precepts, in the following of single models of behavior, or in the one-sided point of view which correspondence or analogy affords, just as the ghosts which parade before the sleeping Richard III and Richmond on the eve of their battle are to Richard terrifying visions, and to Richmond, "fairest boding dreams," assuring him of the intervention of "God and good angels"; what the ghosts actually are is expressible only contextually and as a reflection of the interpreting character.

The ways characters variously saw and perceived what lay before them in Shakespeare's works, while demonstrating a range of styles and perspectives which elude over-all classification, taken in sequence bear witness to his turning away from the use of proportion and simple comparison towards more life-like complexities of many sorts. This, of course, is part of a widely recognized aspect of his development. The earlier plays rely heavily upon foils, paralleling characters and situations, and clear-cut antitheses for techniques of representation. It is useful to express this early technique in the idiom of Sypher, who in his study of stages in Renaissance style discusses Shakespeare within the category of an artistic perspective. Sypher defines Shakespeare's early style in terms of "mechanical foreshortening." This style characterizes plays in which proportions are exactly stated. The action, for

¹From "To the Countess of Bedford, T'have written then." The Complete Poems of John Donne, Alexander B. Grosart (ed.), (London: Rob-son and Sons, 1873), p. 37.

example, of Romeo and Juliet,

confined as it is by the walls of Verona, its orchards, square, and rooms, is measured in the careful ratios of those Italian paintings whose composition was subjected to simple geometric solutions. The contrasting movements of the plot are arranged like the conjugation of lines in orthogonal space, and the dramatic illusion is won in an almost naive way by forcing the perspective--which has the effect of destroying the "middle ground." The mechanics are too clear: Romeo is scaled against Paris and Mercutio--etc.¹

In Romeo and Juliet, as in The Two Gentlemen of Verona and other early plays, the values, too, settle into symmetrical patterns of antitheses: love and hate, rashness and caution, tolerance and intolerance, faithfulness and unfaithfulness, day and night, and so forth. The actions of the early plays are also in careful balance; Love's Labour's Lost is the most notable example. The symmetry and order of the temporary exchange of partners is noted particularly by Harold Jenkins, who generalizes: "Indeed the movement of the whole play is like a well-ordered dance in which each of the participants repeats the steps of the others."²

The art of the Renaissance reflects a similar use of correspondences and balanced opposites for proportion. The early attempts in using linear perspective were concomitant with the Renaissance desire for order; "it was during the Renaissance that painters systematized the use of these devices [perspective] so as to present an orderly view of

¹Sypher, p. 80.

²Jenkins, p. 43.

nature, a view which could conceivably be seen from one particular position. . . ."¹ Throughout the Renaissance the medieval-like use of contrast, such as opposing heaven and earth in a single picture, was employed. Examples include Charonton's "Coronation of the Virgin," Raphael's "Dispute of the Holy Sacrament," and Guereino's "Burial of St. Petronilla."²

Correspondences and balanced opposites flourished, for art was striving for the proportion so essential to the settled order of the world. In the words of a Renaissance contemporary:

Proportion causeth harmonie in number, in bodies beautie, in humours health, in minde vertue; as contrariwise disproportion produseth in numbers discord, in bodies deformities, in humours infirmity, and in the minde vice.³

The early Shakespearean play too easily, perhaps, sets its dramatic situation off against a Renaissance background which judges it through the perspective it affords. Richard II is regarded by Sypher as typical of the Renaissance style in which there is dramatic disharmony between the foreground surface and "unified deep space." "Amid the pageant of English history Richard is arrested in lyrical attitudes, merely a contour of royalty, who studies his worn image in the mirror he holds before him. . . ."⁴ The effect is a two-dimensional one.

¹Frank P. Cline, Jr., "Presentation of Space in the Plays of John Webster" (unpublished Master's thesis, Dept. of English, University of Florida, 1958), p. 8.

²Ibid., p. 34.

³Annibale Romei, The Courtiers Academy, trans. J. Kepers (1598), as cited in Winny, p. 211.

⁴Sypher, p. 93.

The comparatively simple perspectives of analogy--with their clear delineation of both similarity and contrast--do not belong to the style of Shakespeare's mature work. Wherever an issue is couched in terms of two sides, each seeking an absolute, truth suffers; or, in Shakespeare's words, "On both sides thus is simple truth suppress'd." (Sonnet 138) As early as the sonnets Shakespeare treats analogy, (granted it be that of the artificial Petrarchan love contention), with levity. Beginning with "My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun" in that familiar parody, sonnet 130, Shakespeare takes a disruptingly realistic attitude.

The "truth" of a character--his variety of qualities, his full identity--is manifest not through the over-simplification or even distortion, of analogy, but through the establishment of various dramatic points of view; frameworks such as the disguise of Rosalind or the characters surrounding Lear provide a backdrop of these interpreting points of view. Disguise, as we noted in Chapter III, is allied with the Renaissance double vision--the allegorizing habit, by means of which one level of meaning exists largely for the sake of another. However, in the later Shakespeare disguise functions with relevance to all its meanings. Grosser in The Painter's Eye examines this sort of difference in the works of art of the Renaissance and the modern period. Modern art, he proposes, is distinguishable because all of its meanings are equally important. In this respect the effect of Shakespeare's disguised heroines is that of a modern perspective as well as that of the seventeenth century mannerist. Rosalind's total meaning, for

example, lies both in her femininity that is highlighted by her assumption of a disguise and in the masculine aggressiveness and good sense, made apparent through her dissembling. Alternatives are thus reconciled, not excluded. This shock of Rosalind, and Julia, in disguise, as we have seen, is a type of counterpoint expressible also in terms of what Grosser calls Neo-Classicism in art. In all these examples--including that of disguise, which I add to Grosser's--the effect of the juxtaposed incongruities is unlike the effect of medieval and Renaissance allegory. The two components of the modern double vision are reciprocal in meaning and, as in the case of Rosalind's personality, are equal to more than the sum of their parts.

To examine this problem of the manner in which a character accrues his full meaning through a frame of reference, Polonius offers an interesting example. Appraisals of Polonius by Shakespearean critics have raised opposing attitudes. According to Claire McGlinchee, Polonius gives good practical advice; whereas to Josephine W. Bennett Polonius appears to be "a pompous, tiresome, and foolish old windbag," with his trite Latin quotations.¹ A more comprehensive viewpoint has been offered by T. Walter Herbert, who concludes that Polonius has different meanings to different characters, and his real meaning--the answer to "who is Polonius?"--lies in this complex of interpretations and must

¹Claire McGlinchee, "Still Harping," Shakespeare Quarterly, VI (1955), 362-364; and Josephine Waters Bennett, "These Few Precepts," Shakespeare Quarterly, VII (1956), 275-276.

take them all into account.¹ Similarly, one must depend upon the personality of the Fool, Edgar and Kent in compiling the character of Lear and the personality of Rosalind-in-disguise and Rosalind-out-of-disguise, or Henry V-in-disguise and Henry V-out-of-disguise in summing up those qualities that composed these characters.

Shylock is another problematical character who must be approached with a shifting point of view. Should we regard him as a heartless villain or as one who is pathetically a victim of a role society forces him into? Is he a man "more sinned against than sinning"? An interpretation of his personality must accommodate both Shylock the villain (Gratiano's view) and Shylock the injured Jew (Shylock's own view), a combination which necessarily arouses ambivalent responses in us.

Shakespeare's technique of establishing a full meaning through more than one frame of reference is a technique used by more modern writers.

In examining a situation or a character, instead of lining up a series of analogical situations or characters, Shakespeare surrounds his object, in pin-wheel fashion, supplying a variety of spokes pointing towards their hub. This is the device of Browning's The Ring and the Book and that of much of Henry James's fiction. Thus, Hamlet is interpreted through the perspectives of Gertrude and Claudius, with re-

¹T. Walter Herbert, "Diverse Estimates of Polonius' Character: An Example of Dramatic Technique," Renaissance Papers (Duke University: Published by the Southeastern Renaissance Conference, 1957), pp. 82-86.

gard to the nature and reason for his madness. Each presents a different aspect of his problem, one that is in a measure true of Hamlet but is instigated by the guilt feelings of the interpreting person at the moment. Similarly, Polonius is neither exclusively a wiseman nor an "old windbag"; his character does not reside in an either-or antithesis, but in a both-and paradox. And an interpretation of Shylock must similarly be responsive to varying perspectives.

Lear has his full identity made intelligible through his responsibilities and relationships to other characters, even his sense of identity with them. The complexity of a character's full identity is explored also in many modern literary situations. In Daphne de Maurier's The Scapegoat, John, the Englishman, discovers his full potential for both good and evil through his physical resemblance to and participation in the life of Comte Jean de Guè. Through assuming the identity of the Frenchman, John discovers a new dimension to his own character. Similarly, the modern literary existential hero recurrently finds his identity and meaning in a complex of relationships, despite his inescapable aloneness.

The individual, like the specific situation, has his full meaning in a frame of reference. In this attitude both sixteenth century analogizing and the seventeenth century mannerism concur in their searches for what is actually so. But the Renaissance frame of reference was used to augment one ultimate idea, or lesson, in its more didactic form. The resultant meaning was not an equivocal one. Allegory, with its

disguises or emblems, masks and physical and psychological misidentity, is in line with the Morality tradition which taught a clear-cut particular, though generalized, lesson, "one unequivocal lesson," as Mackenzie says.¹ Shakespeare travels far from this tradition. Through his perspective, Shakespeare, like Donne, may juxtapose two things, situations that seem to be analogous or in some way similar and thus force an awareness of basic differences. Or Shakespeare may employ what seems to be pure contrast, of the sort which delighted the Petrarchan sonneteer to have its parts issue in mutually dependent units which defy the limitations of their sum. Ambiguity and paradox are the result. Truth often lies not in simple analogy nor in one set of antithetical qualities but in a paradox compounded of these, as we saw in King Lear.

The "answers" to a mature Shakespearean tragedy, always tentative and unlimited, are bound up in paradoxes. Paradox, a rhetorical mode superficially used in the Petrarchan conceit and used with more serious and consequential intent in Shakespeare's word-play,² provides a kind of structure in many of Shakespeare's plays: disguise and setting provide this paradoxical structure. Disguise, as we have seen, proffers a kind of visual paradox. And in the judgment of Benjamin T. Spencer the same rhetorical mode is extensively employed for structure in Antony and Cleopatra, where the paradox of Antony is set off against not disguise but setting--the two worlds which compel him towards two irreconcilable

¹Mackenzie, p. 252.

²See Molly M. Mahood, Shakespeare's Word-Play (London: Methuen, 1957).

interests. Here, according to Spencer, paradox is used as nowhere else in Shakespeare to pervade and dominate behavior and catastrophe; unifying the play; language, situation, and character are paradoxical.¹

Antony, for instance, is inclined both to Rome, his career and military obligations, and to Cleopatra and the indulgence of Egypt. The action of the play demonstrates his inability to satisfy both claims upon his personality. His dilemma is paradoxical.²

Setting is used to establish paradox in As You Like It. Like the disguised character, setting combines heterogeneous elements and might be called a physical paradox. The play, as we found in Chapter III, has to do with establishing a mean for many opposites; and the answer to the extremes of the play is in terms of paradoxes such as disguise and setting afford.

Beginning in a recognizable, real world of the court, As You Like It soon shifts to an imaginative unreal world which is an amalgam of the conventional pastoral setting, the golden age of Robin Hood, southern climes, and an English countryside--a geographical and temporal paradox. Imaginatively projected beyond the reach of the claims of realism upon probability the forest of Arden provides a setting in which one can easily suspend his belief. Surely this forest is a place

¹Benjamin T. Spencer, "Anthony and Cleopatra and the Paradoxical Metaphor," Shakespeare Quarterly, IX, 373-378.

²See also Kenneth Muir, "Shakespeare and Rhetoric," Shakespeare Jahrbuch, XC (1954), 49-68. Muir proposes that the later plays show not a rejection of the rhetorical devices but a masterly use of them.

so indistinct, such a "nothing," that anything can happen; in this poetically conceived forest, palm trees, serpents, and lions coexist with oak trees and pastoral shepherds just as compatibly as Touchstone does with Silvius.

Arden is a place of great variety and it is inhabited by radically opposed characters. To bring them at last into harmonious relationships as probable habitants of a common world requires strange manipulation and Arden is just the place for it. And Rosalind, in disguise, is a suitable agent to manipulate the action. As we have seen in Chapter III, Rosalind dominates the play, standing between the extremes of the play, interpreting, and helping to resolve them.

Shakespeare juxtaposes many opposites in As You Like It. The conventional pastoral is presented and duly burlesqued. Rosalind is both man and woman. There is a constant shifting of point of view, which Shakespeare in several ways epitomizes. Outside of the use of disguise and outside of the paradoxical setting, this oblique manner of establishing what something actually is by its reference to various expressions of seeming is evident in two attitudes towards old age. The "Seven ages speech, it will be remembered, concludes with a capitulation of man's final decrepitude--"sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything." Jenkins notes that immediately after the speech, an aged man appears and is addressed as "venerable."¹ How is old age to be regarded? Are senile men and venerable men as different as they are

¹Jenkins, p. 49.

thought to be or do the terms simply represent different ways of looking at the same thing? As You Like It, within an obviously comic situation, raises the same sort of questions about the real nature of a person or situation that confronted us in our discussion of the tragedy, King Lear: Is the Fool also wise? Is madness reasonable? Is Providence kind, harshly just, or indifferent? Partial judgments modify each other, contradicting perhaps, but never cancelling as they interact.

Shakespeare uses various perspectives for revelation, as this study has recorded. That it is a conscious interest is indicated by his knowledge of techniques of art that relate to point of view and his knowledge of the meanings of "perspective" that were current in his day. The dramatist is interested in ways of looking at things, and he is aware of current techniques in painting: he speaks of "painting in little" (Hamlet II.ii.388-392), the "natural perspective" painting in Twelfth Night (V.i.224), and the "perspectives, which rightly gazed upon/ Show nothing but confusion; ey'd awry/ Distinguish form." (Richard II II.ii.19) The specialized meaning of "perspective" found in these two quotations is noted in the Oxford English Dictionary as one of the then current usages of the word, denoting "a picture or figure constructed as to produce some fantastic effect; e.g. appearing distorted or confused except from one particular point of view, or presenting totally different aspects from different points." Mr. Sypher does not mention these "perspectives" as illustrative of the mannerist mode of perceiving; they do, however, exemplify what he generalizes as techniques of the mannerist, the distorted or oblique point of view.

The early use of "perspective" to signify various optical devices which distorted images is also employed by Shakespeare. It is thus used metaphorically in Alls Well That Ends Well to objectify the power of contempt upon one's evaluation. "Contempt his scornfull Perspective did lend me, Which warpt the line of every other favor." (V.iii.48)

Shakespeare's interest in and use of the word "perspective" is not limited to a very specialized and ephemeral vogue in painting, or to the now obsolete meaning of the telescoping instrument. Shakespeare's perspective also involves allying physical perception with mental conception. And we find that "perspective" was also used in Elizabethan England with reference to conceptual points of view. The Oxford English Dictionary reports this meaning: "The relation or proportion in which the parts of a subject are viewed by the mind; the aspect of a matter or object of thought, as perceived from a particular mental point of view." The illustration is, fittingly, from Bacon's Advancement of Learning. "We have endeavoured in these our partitions to observe a kind of perspective, that one part may cast light upon another" (as in the interaction of characters in Shakespeare). Seeing things in a new context of relationship is important to Bacon and other seventeenth century thinkers.

Approving the use of this sort of conceptual point of view, Shakespeare claims in sonnet 24 that "perspective it is best painter's art." Perspective here has to do with conceiving something through a relationship. In Henry V, the young king, in love with Katharine, explains that he "cannot see many a fair French city for one fair French

maid that stands in my way." He is echoed by the French king: "Yes, my lord, you see them perspectively. . . ." (V.ii.344-348)

The oblique and mobile points of view which fit Shakespeare's use of disguise are typical of a seventeenth century mode of perceiving usually defined with reference to Donne. Donne, certainly approaches his subject from varying angles, probing through this perspective and that. He goes around and around his subject. This new technique of representation, termed "mannerism" by Sypher, already has been identified in this study as belonging to the perspectives in King Lear. It is there associated with a lack of security, resolution, and equilibrium, with perspectives which yield disproportions and disturbed balances--approximations instead of certainties. The more mature plays trouble us with ambiguities and imprecision. As Sypher notes, truths may be conveyed, as in Macbeth, through instruments of darkness; here Shakespeare's perspective, like that of Leonardo's "The Virgin and Child with Saint Anne" defies the limitations of terrestrial perspective--a closed system--and is oriented more to infinity than to the finite.¹ Reality in King Lear is associated not with the clearly definable and systematic but with an indistinct area of surmise, where "nothing that is so is so."

The relatively late Measure for Measure is a mannerist play which employs disguise. It is manneristic in its use of indirection--the disguise of the Duke and the substitution trick--to expose the evil in Angelo and spur him to tolerable deeds. The approach is oblique. The play seems to propose a problem in society, but even though the action

¹Sypher, p. 81.

concludes with an exposure of pretence and superficiality in judging, there is no resolution for all the evils of Vienna. The answer does touch upon public duty, but there it only partially hints at a saner city; the resolution, such as it is, moreover, is effected through means that rest uneasily upon the final action. Angelo's virtuous facade, his "unsoil'd name" and the supposed austerity of his life, are no longer effective, whereas Claudio's guilt is found to be equally superficial with Angelo's purity. At any rate he is found to be not worthy of capital punishment. But there are the more serious, abiding, social evils that survive--the problems represented by Mistress Overdone the bawd, the shifty Pompey, and Elbow the bungler, as well as the superficially ridiculous but authentic problem raised by the drunk man in jail--the problem of whether or not a drunk man should be hanged.

Both in his re-examination of traditional attitudes and in his use of the individual perspectives to surround the truth of a situation, Shakespeare is allied with the new critical thinkers of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries: Montaigne and Bacon. Turning away from a reliance upon generalized truths, these thinkers emphasize the value of individual perception and judgment. In his essays Montaigne, it will be recalled, explores his own individual experience, uninterested in laying down precepts or evaluating self through dogma, while plays such as Hamlet and Othello help to demonstrate the limitation of precept in a given dilemma. Bacon, too, repudiates commonplaces; "all of them carrying merely the face of a school and not of a world--referring to . . .

pedantical divisions--without all life or respect to action."¹

Bacon's aim was to shake men from the habit of observing data only through traditionally accepted generalizations, to see differences as well as similarities, just as Shakespeare and Donne force an awareness of differences through an examination of similarities found in analogies, for example. Bacon helps point the way to reconsidering the accepted truism that the world is as we see it. A suspicious attitude towards appearances, shared by Bacon and Shakespeare, is an evidence of the new critical growth of the seventeenth century. The well known "Idols of the Tribe" describes the falsity of the assumption that the universe is as we see it, against which Bacon remonstrates: "All perceptions . . . are according to the measure of the individual and not . . . the universe." On the other hand, the "Idols of the Theater" proposes that man ought to think only within the framework of nature, as against that of a tradition. Philosophies ought to represent the world of specific objects, not "worlds of their own creation." Philosophers ought also to subject the very tissues of their own reasoning to scrutiny and reject what was unreliable. Bacon turned the new critical spirit against his own logical procedures. As Marjorie H. Nicolson has pointed out, "In his earlier works Bacon occasionally used macrocosmio-microcosmic figures, but in his later period he quite unconsciously avoided the kind of analogical thinking he criticized in

¹Francis Bacon, The Advancement of Learning. Works, James Spedding, Robert L. Ellis, Douglas D. Heath (eds.), VI (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1907), 281.

his generation."¹

Shakespeare, especially in comparison to Donne, is commonly considered to be untouched by the new philosophy. This may be so with regard to the objects or theories which he brought under specific dramatic examination. If we thus limit its scope, the following discussion of Shakespeare may be allowed to stand:

In his response to the "new philosophy" Donne, as we have seen, is a modern. His contemporary Shakespeare, who lived on, like Donne, into a world of telescopes and stars and expanded space, remained an Elizabethan. Shakespeare must have seen the "new star" in 1604, must have heard of Galileo's discoveries of 1610, "of which all corners were full." He was writing some of his greatest plays during the period of Donne's transformation from Elizabethan to "modern." Yet his poetic imagination showed no more response to new stars or a new universe than it had shown to the Copernican theory. As Miss Caroline Spurgeon's elaborate analysis of his images indicates, his imagination was not stirred by concepts far removed from men's experience. "His feet are firmly set upon 'this goodly frame, the earth,' his eyes are focused on the daily life around him." He was much more interested in man than in the universe. Only in King Lear, written at the time his contemporaries were dwelling upon the dramatic new star of 1604 did his mind seem to concern itself particularly with cosmology, and here his interest was not in astronomy but in the "dire portents," troubled heavens and planets of astrology.²

If one considers the objects of the new philosophy and its theories, Shakespeare would seem to be Elizabethan in spirit. However, although his "poetic imagination showed no more response to new stars or a new universe than it had to the Copernican theory," his poetic imagination

¹Marjorie H. Nicolson, The Breaking of the Circle (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1950), f.n. xxii.

²Ibid., p. 149.

was stimulated to new ways of looking at things, which is, after all, fundamentally the spirit of the new philosophy. As thinkers turned from traditional approaches to truth, new efforts to explore its nature are everywhere manifest: Descartes, the rationalist, looking to his own mind for the "clear and distinct" reality; Browne, lost in a mystery, pursuing through intricate convolutions the Truth--"that obscured Virgin half out of the Pit." When Bacon turns from the traditional, teleological approach of the Aristotelian "why" to questions of "what" and "how," he is on common ground with Shakespeare, the dramatist. Epistemology, with the besetting questions, "Can I know anything of 'reality'? and if so, how and what?" --Montaigne's "Que scay je?"--is for the new philosopher close to the dramatic explorations of Shakespeare, as his characters work from error towards truth, both in comedy and tragedy.

Basil Willey, stressing the epistemological interest of the seventeenth century, concludes that this period is characterized by its effort to separate truth and error.¹ Both quests--those of the new philosopher and of Shakespeare--involve new approaches, new ways of getting at truth.

With his attention focused more and more on character in its response to a particular situation, Shakespeare shows no new belief in regard to attitudes towards the heavenly bodies in their mathematically describable relationship to the earth and one another, but he shows

¹Willey, p. 85.

himself to be in the spirit of the times in his attention to ways of looking at things. Shakespeare's whole plays, of course, like nearly all drama, concern the uncovering of truth, the exposure of error and false appearance. But Shakespeare's concern with the nature of truth and its relation to error and appearance is more extensive than simply this. Appearance may be simultaneously misleading and revealing, as we have seen. In a sense beyond the cliché, "apparel oft proclaims the man," (Hamlet I.iii.72) and false appearances are used demonstratively in, for example, Shakespeare's disguises. Yet no enthusiasm for the novel mode prevails on Shakespeare to forget that sometimes "robes and furr'd gowns hide all." (King Lear IV.vi.163)

What seems false may be part of a larger actuality: characters who are disguised are often more fully themselves, and statements, such as Feste's "nothing that is so is so" (Twelfth Night IV.1.9) that seem non-sensical, paradoxical to the degree of meaninglessness, acquire relevance in a larger context. And what seems true is discovered to be false in the light of a total consideration of all relevant issues; that is, for example, it is generally true that a studious mode of life leads to knowledge and wisdom, but when pursued with disregard for larger claims of human nature, it is found to lead the scholars of Navarre to folly. Truisms that blind one to truth are dramatically exposed in Shakespeare as frequently as they are argumentatively exposed in philosophical writers.

Plays in which disguises appear are clearly plays which work through deception and misconception to an understanding of the truth

of a situation, a character's identity. The truth of a character--his identity--is not something unconfrosted by characters throughout the play, unknown because it did not appear. The truth has been present but in a guise. The truth is embodied in the error, the disguised person present throughout the play.

These facts help to point out a difference between Shakespearean and Greek tragedy. In the latter, error and truth are known more clearly from the very beginning. A revelation of one's guilt came from what one clearly knew to be a departure from a standard or law. The laws, the standards, are not so clearly enunciated in Shakespeare. They become formulated from the raw material of partial truths and supposed errors as truth is investigated. One is not simply exposed as having violated a clearly-recognized responsibility, but one discovers his responsibility and guilt often in working through the illumination afforded by seeing self in terms of relationships. This process is seen in Shakespeare's sonnet 35. The guilt of the speaker is shared by the apparently guiltless person. The friend to whom the sonnet is addressed is regarded as an accessory in the wrong which he allows done to him. Elsewhere in the sonnets, Shakespeare is interested, though without Donne's degree of complexity and ramification, in the locus of identity in a pair of lovers. Where does one's identity lie is the problem of sonnet 36: the lovers are one, though separate, and separate though one--the answer lies in a dilemma.

Truth though it may be present in the Shakespearean play is ascertained with great difficulty. Confronted by truth, the character is

unable to perceive it: "While truth the while/ Doth falsely blind the eyesight of his look." (Love's Labour's Lost I.i.75) Conversely, when confronted with error, he may confuse it with truth, because of "the seeming truth which cunning times put on/ To entrap the wisest."

(Merchant of Venice III.ii.100) In Henry V the French claim to title has "some shows of truth, though, in pure truth, it was corrupt and naught." (I.ii.72) Or, "to say the truth, true and not true," as Cressida puts it. (Troilus and Cressida I.ii.104) Macbeth, growing wary of the promise of supremacy that will last "till Birnam wood do come to Dunainane," begins "to doubt the equivocation of the fiend that lies like truth." (V.v.44) A truth that lies, that is conceived of as hidden or allusively partial and intricated with error, must needs be approached through the convolutions of the mannerist. Thus Shakespeare explains in his sonnet, "Most true it is that I have look'd on truth/ Askance and strangely." (sonnet 110) And Hamlet decides,

. . . and thus do we of wisdom and of reach,
With windlasses and with assays of bias,
By indirections find directions out.
(II.i.64)

For,

Truth may seem but cannot be;
Beauty brag, but 'tis not she;
Truth and Beauty buried be.
("The Phoenix and the Turtle")

In the scope of the metaphysical tradition of wit, which Boris Ford phrases as "that constant sense of other possible attitudes and

experience;"¹--a definition which draws both the metaphysicals and Willey's mannerists together--certainly the mature Shakespeare, with his revealing disguises, is included.

¹Boris Ford (ed.), From Donne to Marvell (Baltimore, Maryland: Penguin Books, Inc., 1956), p. 59.

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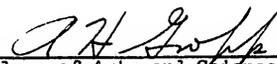
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VITA

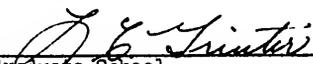
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