INFORMATION TO USERS

This material was produced from a microfilm copy of the original document. While the most advanced technological means to photograph and reproduce this document have been used, the quality is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original submitted.

The following explanation of techniques is provided to help you understand markings or patterns which may appear on this reproduction.

1. The sign or "target" for pages apparently lacking from the document photographed is "Missing Page(s)". If it was possible to obtain the missing page(s) or section, they are spliced into the film along with adjacent pages. This may have necessitated cutting thru an image and duplicating adjacent pages to insure you complete continuity.

2. When an image on the film is obliterated with a large round black mark, it is an indication that the photographer suspected that the copy may have moved during exposure and thus cause a blurred image. You will find a good image of the page in the adjacent frame.

3. When a map, drawing or chart, etc., was part of the material being photographed the photographer followed a definite method in "sectioning" the material. It is customary to begin photoing at the upper left hand corner of a large sheet and to continue photoing from left to right in equal sections with a small overlap. If necessary, sectioning is continued again — beginning below the first row and continuing on until complete.

4. The majority of users indicate that the textual content is of greatest value, however, a somewhat higher quality reproduction could be made from "photographs" if essential to the understanding of the dissertation. Silver prints of "photographs" may be ordered at additional charge by writing the Order Department, giving the catalog number, title, author and specific pages you wish reproduced.

5. PLEASE NOTE: Some pages may have indistinct print. Filmed as received.

Xerox University Microfilms

300 North Zeeb Road
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106

75-820

SPRIGG, Douglas Chapman, 1943-
SHAKESPEARE AND ELIZABETHAN THEATRICAL PERCEPTION.

The University of Michigan, Ph.D., 1974
Theater

Xerox University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106

THIS DISSERTATION HAS BEEN MICROFILMED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED.

SHAKESPEARE AND ELIZABETHAN THEATRICAL PERCEPTION

by

Douglas Chapman Sprigg

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
(Speech Communication and Theatre)
in The University of Michigan
1974

Doctoral Committee:

Professor John L. Styan, Co-Chairman
Professor William P. Halstead, Co-Chairman
Professor Claribel B. Baird
Associate Professor Richard J. Burgwin
Associate Professor Ejner J. Jensen

To Margaret and Bill,

John, Doc, and Bobby

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION ii

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION. 1

CHAPTER II ELIZABETHAN STAGE CONDITIONS AND THE STAGE-AUDIENCE RELATIONSHIP. 11

CHAPTER III THE THEATRICAL METAPHOR. 31

CHAPTER IV THE BOY ACTOR IN FEMALE ROLES 63

CHAPTER V THE-PLAY-WITHIN-THE-PLAY. 108

CHAPTER VI THE IMPLICIT PLAY-WITHIN-THE-PLAY . . 151

CHAPTER VII CONCLUSION. 204

BIBLIOGRAPHY. 215

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

> Methinks I see these things with parted eye,
> When everything seems double.
> (A Midsummer Night's Dream IV.i.93-94)[1]

Despite continuing criticism of Shakespeare's plays, Elizabethan modes of stage communication have received a disproportionately small amount of critical attention. The literary value of the text has overshadowed the theatrical value of the enactment. Rarely are the plays studied as the impetus and residue of a theatrical experience, a record of how Shakespeare used his actors on his stage to communicate with his audience. In the tradition of such critics as Harley Granville-Barker, M. C. Bradbrook, S. L. Bethell, Anne Righter, and J. L. Styan, this study will examine specific moments in Shakespeare's plays to discover more about his methods of communicating with his audience in the theatre.

The central thesis of this study is that significant aspects of Shakespearean stage communication resulted from the spectator's ability to sustain an awareness of the actor in his role as performer, simultaneously with an awareness of the actor in his role as character, simultaneously with an awareness of the character in the various

social and psychological roles enacted within the action of the play. Evidence will be presented to suggest that the Elizabethan audience's fluctuating awareness of the actor on a stage in a theatre constituted an important condition of Shakespeare's stagecraft. As the most subtle and sophisticated dramatist of the period, Shakespeare discovered, borrowed, and adapted an enormous number of strategies for exploiting his audience's ability to apprehend the many kinds of interconnections that can exist between the actor as character and the character as actor.

This chapter will discuss those aspects of the theatrical medium that naturally encourage an awareness of the actor in his different roles, a type of multileveled awareness particularly suited to the Elizabethan sensibility. The second chapter will present the relevant facts about Elizabethan stage conditions and the nature of the stage-audience relationship. An attempt will be made to demonstrate that these conditions and this relationship were based upon the audience's ability to perceive stage behavior functioning simultaneously in multiple spheres of reference. The remaining four chapters will be devoted to a survey of the major dramaturgical strategies employed by Shakespeare to evoke and exploit his audience's multiple perspectives upon stage behavior: the theatrical metaphor, the boy actor in female roles, the play-within-the-play, and those strategies which function <u>implicitly</u> as plays within the

larger play. It is appropriate to begin the discussion with a brief examination of the theatre as a medium of communication.

The manner in which the theatrical medium works upon human perception is a subject much too complex to be considered here in any great detail. But one fundamental aspect of theatrical communication needs to be examined: the audience's perception of the relationship between the action of representation and the action being represented. This relationship is unique in the theatre. The painter represents the human form in pigments, the sculptor in marble or bronze. The writer describes people and their behavior by means of the printed word. There is no confusion between the medium and its content. The theatre is the only representational medium of communication in which the materials used in the representation constitute the material being represented: human behavior is used to represent human behavior.

It is possible, nevertheless, as with other media, to distinguish in the theatre the materials of representation from that which is being represented; it is possible to distinguish the behavior of an actor on a stage from the behavior of a character in an imaginary locale. Few writers about the theatre fail to grant the spectator at least an occasional awareness of the actor on a stage during a theatrical performance. One of the earliest and, characteris-

tically, one of the most adamant defenders of a dual theatrical awareness is Dr. Samuel Johnson.

> The truth is that the spectators are always in their senses and know, from the first act to the last that the stage is only a stage, and that the players are only players.[2]

Some 200 years later in 1968, Walter Kerr observed that after George C. Scott had received exit applause for his performance of Ben Hubbard in The Little Foxes,

> . . . the audience promptly turned back to the other Hubbards . . . and continued worrying about them. Off, on. No problem. Multiple vision is easy to come by.[3]

Multiple vision appears to be encouraged by the inherent nature of the theatrical medium. The audience to some extent always is aware of what one writer calls the "social reality," actors performing in a theatre in front of an audience, while simultaneously aware of different levels of "aesthetic reality," characters functioning in an imaginary world.[4] An oscillating awareness of these interpenetrating realities seems irrepressible.

> Twenty times in an act we have one or two minutes of complete illusion. . . . We are distressed or delighted; we are on the point of rising from our seats; then, all of a sudden, the sight of the footlights, of the people in the orchestra, some other incident, recollection, or sensation, stops us and keeps us in our places. This is the illusion of the theatre, incessantly disturbed and recurring; the pleasure of the spectator consists in this. His pity or aversion would be too powerful if they lasted; excessive intensification of them is softened by incessant rectification. At one moment he believes, then he ceases to believe; each one of these acts of belief ends with a denial, and each of these bursts of sympathy culminates in apathy;

> we say in turn: "Poor woman, how unfortunate she is!" and almost immediately afterward: "But she is only acting, how well she plays her part!"[5]

Even a theatre purposely designed to eliminate any awareness of the social reality cannot destroy the multiple perspectives upon the action encouraged by the inherent nature of theatre as a medium of communication.

Some sense of the complexity of the communication created by the interaction of these multiple perspectives may be gained from a brief look at basic notions of semiotics set forth by Jan Kott.[6] Theories of signs and symbols distinguish the effect of a sign's form from the effect of that which is communicated by the form; they distinguish between the "icon" and the "content" of the sign. The simplest theories divide signs into the "literal," "mimetic," and "symbolic." A bench on the stage would function normally as a literal sign; it represents a bench. If the bench is used to represent a throne, it functions as a mimetic sign; it imitates something to which it is similar but not the same. If the bench is used to represent a shrub, it functions more as a symbolic sign; it represents something with which it has no structural similarities. Theatrical signs are unique in that they normally function simultaneously as literal, mimetic, and symbolic communication.

The basic "icon" in the theatre is the voice and body of the actor. The actor is himself at the same time that he depicts someone else, in the same way that the stage

is both a stage and "the vasty fields of France" (Henry V Prologue.12), in the same way that a prop is both a prop and the crown of England, in the same way that the play's action lasts two hours and yet covers two year's time.

> The body and costume of the actor are an icon, and therefore, if the actor plays himself--that is, an actor--the icon is a literal sign; if he plays a person from a play, a mimetic or symbolic sign--it is illusion. Verfremdungseffekt, the destruction of illusion, a consciously executed leap from the created character to the actor, from theatrical time to real time, from an imagined place to the real scene, can be designated as utilization of this same icon: first as a literal sign, second as a mimetic or symbolic sign. We are in the theatre--that means everything.[7]

The important idea in all this is that the actor may have many different relationships with the aesthetic reality he represents, and the audience may perceive him functioning simultaneously in many different spheres of reference.

The Elizabethan audience was particularly predisposed to entertain such multileveled perceptions. As numerous writers point out, the Elizabethans were trained to perceive truth by means of allegory and analogy.[8] Delight in analogy and correspondence was deeply impressed upon the thinking of writers in every discipline, the poet, the theologian, and the scientist.[9]

> The mental habits of the age were very different from ours and, in some respects, much closer to those of the Middle Ages; particularly in the taste for allegory . . . . .[10]

> The Elizabethans had been brought up in the "morality" tradition: they were used to seeing virtues and vices directly impersonated upon the stage, and used, therefore, to the necessity of penetrating

> an allegory in order to seize upon a play's full significance . . . .[11]

The morality tradition trained the Elizabethans to accept stage behavior as functioning on a number of analogous levels of significance: even as the actor's behavior was his own while simultaneously analogous to the behavior of the dramatic character Everyman, so was the dramatic character Everyman's behavior his own while simultaneously analogous to the behavior of everyone in the audience.

The physical structure of the playhouse itself encouraged Elizabethans to perceive stage action as functioning in multiple frames of reference.

> The Elizabethan play was always skirting the edge of the Renaissance world of allegory. The symmetry of the stage, the ceremonial of its theatrical tradition, its naked boards and its norm of poetic speech all encouraged the allusive qualities in Elizabethan drama.[12]

> It has also been pointed out that the nature of the permanent structure of the Elizabethan playhouse, with its flat open arena and its large balcony and its second smaller gallery, was a diagram of the universe, as seen by the sixteenth-century audience and the playwright--the gods, the court and the people--three levels, separate and yet often intermingling--a stage that was a perfect philosopher's machine.[13]

All the evidence suggests that Elizabethans had a considerable capacity for multiple perception, an allegorical frame of mind that perceived everything as both itself and something more. S. L. Bethell expresses well this aspect of Elizabethan theatrical perception.

> Not only character, but every aspect of the Elizabethan drama, is shot through with this quality of dual awareness. The mixture of conventionalism and naturalism demands a dual mode of attention. Awareness of the play as play implies the dual awareness of play-world and real world: upon this depends the piquancy of a play-within-the-play, or of the situation in which a boy plays the part of a girl playing the part of a boy . . . .[14]

> . . . there is a popular dramatic tradition, and that its dominant characteristic is the audience's ability to respond spontaneously and unconsciously on more than one plane of attention at the same time. I shall call this the principle of multiconsciousness.[15]

Although this aspect of Elizabethan theatrical perception has been recognized, and although many have commented upon the spectator's awareness of the actor on the stage during a theatrical performance, rarely has any attempt been made to gauge the effect of such an awareness upon the Elizabethan audience's moment to moment multileveled experience of a play in its playhouse. This study will examine the dramatic strategies employed by Shakespeare to evoke and exploit his audience's theatrical awareness to enrich the impact of his dramatic communication.

NOTES

[1]All references to Shakespeare's plays are from the following edition. G. B. Harrison, ed., Shakespeare: The Complete Works (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1948).

[2]Samuel Johnson, "Preface to Shakespeare," quoted in Barrett H. Clark, ed., European Theories of the Drama, rev. and ed. by Henry Popkin (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1965), p. 188.

[3]Walter Kerr, "The Delusion about Illusion," The New York Times, July 21, 1968, sec. 2, p. 3.

[4]Robert L. Benedetti, The Actor at Work (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970), p. 37.

[5]Hippolyte Adolphe Taine, "Intelligence," quoted in Lorenz Kjerbuhl-Petersen, Psychology of Acting (Boston: Expression Co., 1935), p. 24.

[6]Jan Kott, "The Icon and the Absurd," The Drama Review, XIV, No. 1 (Fall, 1969), pp. 17-24.

[7]Ibid., pp. 19-20.

[8]M. C. Bradbrook, Themes and Conventions of Elizabethan Tragedy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), pp. 32-33.

[9]James Winney, ed., The Frame of Order: An Outline of Elizabethan Belief Taken From Treatises of the Late 16th Century (New York: Macmillan Co., 1957), p. 19. Quoted in Emily Brown Stanley, "Seeing and Perceiving: A Study of the Use of Disguised Persons and Wise Fools in Shakespeare" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, The University of Florida, 1960), p. 48.

[10]Bradbrook, Themes and Conventions, pp. 5-6.

[11]S. L. Bethell, Shakespeare and the Popular Dramatic Tradition (London: Staples Press Ltd., 1944), p. 113.

[12]J. L. Styan, Shakespeare's Stagecraft (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), p. 211. Professor Styan's writing and lectures have influenced my thinking more than references can credit.

[13]Peter Brook, The Empty Space (Middlesex England: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1972), p. 97.

[14]Bethell, Popular Dramatic Tradition, p. 27.

[15]Ibid., p. 29.

CHAPTER II

ELIZABETHAN STAGE CONDITIONS AND THE STAGE-AUDIENCE RELATIONSHIP

The Elizabethan audience's penchant for multileveled perception has been discussed. It is appropriate at this time to examine the Elizabethan stage conditions which further encouraged multiple levels of perception, and to examine the Elizabethan stage-audience relationship which is based upon the audience's ability to engage in such perception. More than any other theatrical environment in history, the Elizabethan stage exploited the theatre's inherent possibilities for multileveled communication. The purpose of this chapter will be to list those conditions about which there is little controversy, and to demonstrate the manner in which they exploit the multiple levels of awareness naturally fostered by theatre as a medium of communication.

The focus will be upon the degree to which the theatrical icon imitates the dramatic object it attempts to communicate. In twentieth-century theatre there has been a tradition of so-called "naturalism" which holds that the theatre experience is better to the degree that the theatrical icon is identical to the object being communicated.

For Elizabethans, the literal imitation of reality would not only not have been a desirable goal, it would have militated against one of the central joys of the theatre experience: attempting to perceive reality through the guise of the complex appearances in which it is manifest. Every aspect of the Elizabethan theatre bears this out.

It will be profitable first to consider the nature and use of the Elizabethan stage structure. For our purposes it is enough to note the irreducible elements of that stage. Conjectured variations would not significantly affect the functioning of any play, inasmuch as most plays were written to be performed under a variety of conditions: at court, at inns, in provincial locales during the time of the plague, and often at more than one public or private theatre.[1] The basic conditions, drawn from the most solid piece of evidence--the De Witt-van Buchell drawing--may be summarized as:

1. A tight enclosing auditorium.
2. A projecting platform almost as deep as it was wide.
3. Two upstage entrances on to the platform.[2]
4. At least one balcony.

The stage was open to the sky and illumined solely by daylight.[3] Only the rear portion of the stage was covered by a roof known as the "Heavens," an emblem with the signs of the zodiac on a blue background.[4] Beneath the stage were one or more trap doors which could be used for graves, etc., and through which ghosts and spirits could arise.[5]

Considering the stage itself for a moment, it can be seen to function as a constant symbol encouraging analogical thought. As previously suggested, the stage is practically a diagram of the universe as seen by the sixteenth-century audience: the heavens above, the spirits below, and the drama of man unfolding in between. It is no accident that The Globe Theatre was so named, that it is reputed to have displayed a sign reading Totus Mundus Agit Histrionem, and that comparisons of the world to a stage were among the most popular analogies of the day.[6] On all stages, the action is assumed to have some relevance to daily life; on the Elizabethan stage this relevance was incorporated into the very structure of the playing area. The multiple awareness of actor as actor, actor as character, and actor as mankind was a constant visual insinuation.

Not only was the stage structurally designed to reflect levels of significance, from the specifics of unique individual behavior to the abstractions of universal principles, but it was also functionally employed to reflect similarly specific or abstract levels of locality and time. Because the theatrical icon of the stage reflected no locale, the stage remained unlocalized until imaginatively transformed, and then it could become any locale. Because the time of day could not be suggested physically, it was assumed unimportant or nonexistent unless established verbally.[7] The neutrality and resultant flexibility of the

stage[8] allowed it to represent from moment to moment a specific locale, an abstract locale, an imaginary locale, or an undefined locale. Correspondingly, the stage could reflect a specific time of day or time could be extended, telescoped, stopped; or its passage could be irrelevant. The action of Macbeth imagining a dagger before him takes place more in his mind than in a castle (Macbeth II.i. 33-61); time, for all practical purposes, stops while Hamlet decides whether or not to kill Claudius (Hamlet III.iii. 73-96). Much action in Othello takes place in "double time."[9] When Shakespeare does stress the time of day it is usually at night or early dawn; the lighting conditions must be created verbally inasmuch as they do not actually exist. The stage did not attempt an accurate imitation of physical or temporal reality. The playwright was free to range between the presentation of realistic specifics or symbolic abstractions.[10] The audience was capable of accepting the theatrical icon of real stage and real time as reflecting a variety of shifting perspectives upon imagined time and space.

Some scenic equipment was probably used for all dramatic performances.[11] Henslowe's list of properties records a rather large number of set pieces such as a rock, tomb, tree, etc. These would not attempt to make the stage look like the locality being represented, rather they would function as emblems.[12] Much like a poetic image, the

emblem would suggest the locale by imaginatively evoking the unrepresented details of the scene. Because there was always a great disparity between the icon and the object being represented, the same icon could be used to represent a number of different dramatic objects either simultaneously or in succession. A bench could represent a log in a forest or a chair in a courtroom. The two upstage doors could both represent doors; they could represent gates to the city; or they could represent the entrance through a thicket in a forest, all without any change in the physical reality of the stage doors themselves.

A number of standard stage practices and conventional stage uses further tended to emphasize the theatrical aspects of the stage. There is evidence that, at least for a time, spectators would sit or sprawl upon the stage itself.[13] This encroachment would blur the distinction between stage and auditorium, between actor and audience, both wearing contemporary dress. With uniform lighting conditions, with spectators engulfing the stage and occasionally sitting upon it, there would be little to physically delineate the audience from the actors. Much like children around an outdoor puppet stage or surrounding clowns performing in the street, the spectators would respond to each other's responses as well as to the actors themselves. All were part of a mutually shared experience.

The physical reality of the stage was emphasized

further by the transportation of scenery. There is evidence that " . . .stools, benches, and other properties must have been carried on and off in full sight of the audience;"[14] and this done while the actors were still on stage.[15] Because there were no curtains nor lights to indicate the end of one scene and the beginning of another, the world of the stage-hand could blend with the world of the actor and, through him, with the world of the character. By not attempting to imitate any locale, the Elizabethan platform could embrace all worlds; could be any place, every place, or no place; could easily blend all levels of relevance into interrelating experiences common to all.

The acceptance of a protean stage allowed the space to be defined by the actor's use of it.[16] As a vestige of the earlier mansion staging, the platform could on occasion represent two different localities simultaneously (Richard III V. iii). Or the distance between actors on stage could be used to represent a much larger geographical distance between the characters (Richard II III.iii). Characters could walk about the stage to communicate having walked a great distance.[17] Iago can enter Desdemona's bed chamber, and after she leaves, Roderigo can enter because it is no longer a bed chamber (Othello IV.ii.172). The cinematic analogy is as apt as it is familiar. Dustin Hoffman can jump out of a swimming pool onto Mrs. Robinson two days later in a

hotel bedroom because we accept the neutrality of the movie screen; it can and should alter time and space in order to achieve more economically powerful effects. The freedom from a literal representation allows a powerful juxtaposition to occur. The neutrality of the Elizabethan stage allowed for condensed economical effects.

Even as there was no attempt to literally represent time and space, so too there was no attempt at historical accuracy.[18] Costumes, props, set pieces were all contemporary. The few attempts to suggest period or nationality resulted in the wild mixture of styles evident in the contemporary drawing Titus Andronicus by Henry Peacham.[19] The Elizabethan audience did not expect the physical production to accurately reflect the physical characteristics of the dramatic world being represented. In fact, the contemporary costumes and props on a neutral setting, merely emphasized the analogical relevance of the depicted events to the current situation. The timelessness and universality of the issues also would be stressed.[20]

This relationship between the historical and the contemporary, between timeless universals and current specifics constitutes one of the most intriguing aspects of the theatre experience made possible by Elizabethan stage conditions and conventions. Two phenomena resulting from the flexible representation of time and space are topical references and anachronisms. Although identifiable topicalities and anachronisms occur in the plays with consider-

able frequency, they should not be regarded as isolated incidents. Rather they reflect what might be called a topical and anachronistic state of mind shared by playwright and audience. Even as Shakespeare conceived of his historical characters as wearing contemporary Elizabethan dress, so also did he think of them as behaving as Elizabethans in accord with Elizabethan fashion, custom, and social practice. The social disorders are Elizabethan; Falstaff's method of recruiting and his use of "shadows" are Elizabethan.[21] Again we see the Elizabethan ability to maintain dual and mutually informing awarenesses of two different periods of time. Because this dual awareness, this analogical frame of mind, is so natural, the wealth of anachronistic contemporary references to theatres, actors, puritans, plagues, plays, audiences, pickpockets, wrath of book-keepers, War of the Theatres, etc., by and large fit naturally into their dramatic context.[22] The contemporary world, the theatrical situation, and the historical or imagined representation were so naturally analogous that their intermixture was not incongruous. Functionally, none of the references to the contemporary world, or to the theatrical situation were anachronistic; they merged with the historical representation and emphasized relevancies. S. L. Bethell is one of the most persuasive elucidators of this aspect of the Elizabethan theatrical experience.

> For it is not only in "anachronisms" and occasional references that contemporary life enters into an

> Elizabethan historical play: in the style there is no attempt at all to preserve historical perspective, and the imagery, often clearly contemporary and "out of period," assures continuity of sharp contrast between the historical material and the contemporary experience with which it is brought into active relationship. The co-presence of such contrasting elements renders doubly impossible any mere illusion of actuality: once again, the audience must necessarily remain critically alert, whilst at the same time the historical element distances and objectifies what is contemporary, and the contemporary element gives current significance to an historical situation.[23]

The playwright could not afford to forget his audience's penchant for analogical comparisons. More than two years after the beheading of Essex, Ben Jonson was summoned before the City Council to explain his play Sejanus because the depiction of the rise and fall of a royal favorite in ancient Rome seemed too similar to the previous events.[24] Jonson and others went to prison on occasion for such unfortunate parallels with dramatized events, both historical and imaginary.

To summarize, all available evidence suggests that every aspect of the Elizabethan physical production resists any attempt to imitate literally the dramatic object being represented. As a result, the stage is capable of suggesting to the audience many different levels of signification with little or no change in the theatrical icon communicating the representation. The audience accepts a great dissimilarity between the physical reality of the staging and the dramatic object or aesthetic reality being staged. At the same time, the physical staging is capable of suggesting

many different levels of meaning. The theatrical conditions encourage and artistically exploit the audience's ability to assimilate the theatrical experience on multiple levels of awareness.

To understand fully the manner in which the Elizabethan audience responded to these kinds of stage conditions and stage practices, it is necessary to understand the historical development of the stage-audience relationship. A brief review of this development will facilitate further the discussion of Shakespeare's artistic exploitation of his audience's awareness of the interrelationship between actor and character, stage and world.

In her extremely enlightening analysis of the evolution of the stage-audience relationship in England from its origins to the interregnum, Anne Righter discusses the manner in which such a relationship "depends upon certain ideas about the theatre upon which both the dramatist and his audience were agreed."[25] She argues that because the fourteenth-century playgoer associated the religious subjects depicted in the mystery cycles with a greater reality than surrounded his own transient life, he was explicitly included in the action.

> While the performance lasted, audience and actors shared the same ritual world, a world more real than the one which existed outside its frame. Easily, with no sense of constraint, Noah and Moses addressed at one moment their fellows on the stage and, in the next, those onlookers in the street who, as Mankind, depended for their justification and very existence upon the fact of their inclusion

in the play.

> It has always been possible for people watching a Mystery play to recognize Christ on the Cross as the local cobbler and still believe that they are witnessing the actual Crucifixion of the Son of God.[26]

Once again we have a recognition of dual consciousness; in this instance, an awareness of the icon not only fails to destroy the "illusion of reality" pertaining to the object being represented, the object being represented has <u>greater</u> reality than the icon. A similar phenomenon no doubt occurs for religious Christians watching their small children in bathrobes, cotton beards, and angel hair reenacting Christ's birth at the church altar. An awareness of the icon can even enhance the awareness of the representation; the theatrical experience itself, the social activity of people coming together to share in the representation of significant experience, is an affirmation by social consensus of the importance of that experience.

With the development of Morality plays, the explicitly religious relationship of the audience to the play no longer existed. As a result, the audience became represented within the play indirectly by the character of Mankind or Everyman. The freedom to address the audience directly was carried over from the Miracle plays, but for the first time the action did not include the spectator as an active participant. The relationship became more implicit.[27] And also for the first time, the stage did not represent a

greater reality, but rather an allegory, an abstraction of their own daily reality.

With Tudor moralities "the traditional identification of the audience with a counterpart on the stage had begun to dissolve,"[28] yet the infusion of professional players into the companies encouraged the actors to play to, to entertain, to include the audience within the action of the play.[29] By the time the Interludes began to develop, the audience had no logical place within the structure of the play, yet the plays constantly recognized the presence of the audience. In Fulgens and Lucres, two servants A and B enter the play from the audience much like Ralph in Beaumont's Knight of the Burning Pestle.

> Unlike Ralph, however, A and B do not even try to leave the spectators behind. Fifteenth-century audiences, brought up on medieval religious drama, were simply not accustomed to being ignored. A, speaking to his master, includes "the company" as a matter of course in his list of the play's characters.
>
> "Mary here shall be fulgens,
> And publius cornelius hymselfe also,
> with dyverse other many moo,
> besyde this honorable audyence."[30]

In a number of Interludes, the audience's expectation of being recognized and included in the action of the play is satisfied by depicting only those actions which logically could occur before a large body of observers, the audience being cast in the role of a crowd gathered at the represented locale.[31] This practice of course placed a great burden upon the writers.

> Most of the Interludes Heywood wanted to write simply could not provide credible parts for a silent crowd of fifty or a hundred spectators, on stage from the beginning of the play to the end.[32]

As the plays turned away from purely religious celebration or moral affirmation and began more and more to present a self-contained dramatic representation which did not include an audience in the action, the relationship between the stage and its audience inevitably began to alter.

Such alteration was further encouraged by the burgeoning influence of classical drama upon the type of theatre developing in the mid-sixteenth century.

> Both Plautus and Terence drew a clear distinction between the world of the spectators and of the stage, a distinction which dramatists of the mid-sixteenth century in England were to find enormously useful. Their comedies embody an attitude towards the audience which is essentially that of the self-contained play. At the same time, they permit a limited amount of extra-dramatic address, all of it used for definite, quite functional purposes, which made it relatively simple for English writers to graft the Roman on to the medieval tradition.[33]

It is important to note that in England at this time there was no such thing as extra-dramatic address, simply because the audience was explicitly or implicitly included in the action of the play. Any direct address to the audience thus fits naturally within the action. The classical plays influenced Tudor drama in the direction of developing self-contained action while simultaneously maintaining direct contact with the audience. The dual awareness required had long been part of an English audience's capabilities.

Plays of this period such as Cambyses, Horestes, and King Daryus exhibit classical influence. The Vice character tends to maintain a more or less continuous contact with the audience characteristic of medieval drama, while other characters for the first time tend to remain more completely within the self-contained action of the play.[34] The Vice is a deceiver, a manipulator of others within the action while performing for the audience outside the action. He moves easily back and forth from the world of the audience to the imaginary world of the play, manipulating characters and action to both tease and delight the audience with his cleverness. The appropriately named Vice in Cambyses, Ambidexter, leers out to the audience to announce, "Now with bothe hands wil ye see me play my parte!"[35]

In response to Classical influence and the increasing desire to avoid the necessity of providing roles for spectators, the action became increasingly self contained. Yet the actors, most noticeably those playing Vice characters, nevertheless maintain contact with the audience in response to audience expectations conditioned by a long medieval tradition. For the first time, there is a definite world of the play as distinguished from the world of the audience, but the borderline between the two is blurred. They tend to merge and interpenetrate. Between the two worlds exists a middle ground in which characters may address an audience directly. The basis of the stage-audience relationship as

it was to exist in England with evolving variations for the next two hundred years had become established in terms of a fundamental paradox: characters inhabit an imaginary world in which an audience does not exist, yet simultaneously inhabit the world of an audience which they may recognize at any given moment of time.

In the theatre at the time of Cambyses (1560-1570), the action was self-contained (did not include the presence of an audience), yet characters easily could address the audience directly. There existed at least three spheres of reference: the social reality of the audience and the actors, the aesthetic reality of the artistic representation, and, where the two merge, an ambiguous middle ground in which the characters and actors directly address the audience using the second person form of address. Between 1550 and the time of The Spanish Tragedy (c. 1589), the amount of such "extra-dramatic" address continually decreases, although it continues to be used throughout Shakespeare's lifetime. Such address, nevertheless, begins to be replaced by more implicit means of relating the play to the audience. As direct address decreases within the body of the play, prologues, epilogues, and chorus speeches develop as appendages to the play, to accommodate the direct address deemed necessary to connect the audience with the action in which it was not included.[36]

Significantly, such early plays as Fulgens and

Lucres and Johan Johan The Husbande have no prologue inasmuch as the characters are their own chorus, speaking to the audience upon entering in the same easy manner that they address other characters. "God spede you, maysters, everychone. / Wote ye not whyther my wyfe is gone?"[37] By the time of Cambyses, a prologue is needed to provide the spectator with information, and to ease him into the action. The Prologue finishes his speech with, "Beholde, I see the players coming in,"[38] clearly separating himself from the actors playing characters.

> More, however, than an introduction, a leavetaking and the occasional furtive comment or isolated recognition was required to sustain the relationship of actors and spectators throughout the two hours' traffic of the stage. Although it never dies out altogether, extra-dramatic address could no longer provide a truly effective answer to the problem.[39]

More subtle means of relating the play to the audience began to appear which fulfilled all the functions of direct address (communicating information, contacting and interesting the audience, etc.), without ever completely leaving the province of the play world. Operating in the ambiguous middle ground between play and audience, such devices maintained various degrees of contact with both without ever completely losing contact with either. Like his modern counterpart, the Elizabethan playwright was attempting to conjure up an image of actual life, but to him the spectator's natural awareness of the theatrical situation was his ally not his enemy. There was physical

continuity between stage and audience, and, conditioned by medieval tradition, the audience expected there to be continuity between the world of the play and their presence as spectators.

> Surrounded by gallants on the stage and groundlings in the pit, the actor took his stand between the painted heavens and an equally palpable and medieval hell. His audience was not relegated to the recesses of a darkened auditorium, from which it gazed into the lighted window of the stage. The construction of the playhouse, like that of the innyard before it allowed the spectators to impinge upon the world of the drama from almost all sides, and to share a common daylight, a common weather, with the stage. This audience could no longer be regarded as an actor, in the medieval sense, but neither could it be entirely ignored. Elizabethan dramatists were still obliged--and privileged--to associate their patrons with their characters, to define the relationship of the real world, represented by this ubiquitous audience, with the illusory country of the play.[40]

The easy and mutually enhancing continuity between the world of the stage and the world of the audience is based in large part upon a firm conviction in the similarities between the theatre and life, a conviction Righter defends as the unifying idea behind the Elizabethan stage-audience relationship.

This ends the preliminary discussion prior to an analysis of the plays. It was argued that the inherent nature of the theatrical medium encourages an awareness of stage phenomena as both icon and content, as both social reality and aesthetic reality, a dual awareness particularly suited to the Elizabethan sensibility. Evidence concerning Elizabethan stage conditions and stage practices

suggests that the physical production made no attempt to imitate literally the aesthetic realities being presented, and the historical development of the stage-audience relationship reveals a tradition of close contact between the actor and the spectator. All the evidence indicates that the spectator maintained some kind of awareness of the actor and the theatre during a theatrical performance. Now that arguments in support of the existence of such an awareness have been presented, it is appropriate to begin a survey of the basic strategies utilized by Shakespeare to exploit this ability of his audience to sustain and assimilate multiple perspectives upon stage behavior.

NOTES

[1]Glynne Wickham, Shakespeare's Dramatic Heritage (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1969), p. 138.

[2]Styan, Shakespeare's Stagecraft, p. 12.

[3]Harrison, Ed., Complete Works, p. 53.

[4]Wickham, Dramatic Heritage, p. 148.

[5]Harrison, ed., Complete Works, p. 55.

[6]Anne Righter, Shakespeare and the Idea of the Play (Baltimore: Penguin Books, Inc., 1967), p. 60.

[7]M. C. Bradbrook, Elizabethan Stage Conditions (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), p. 31.

[8]Bradbrook, Themes and Conventions, p. 7.

[9]John Dover Wilson, ed., Othello (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), pp. xxx-xxxvi.

[10]Styan, Shakespeare's Stagecraft, p. 28.

[11]Wickham, Dramatic Heritage, p. 28.

[12]Ibid., p. 143.

[13]Thomas Whitfield Baldwin, The Organization and Personnel of the Shakespearean Company (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1927), p. 17.

[14]Bethell, Popular Dramatic Tradition, p. 31.

[15]Styan, Shakespeare's Stagecraft, p. 31.

[16]Bradbrook, Themes and Conventions, p. 8.

[17]Ibid., p. 9.

[18]Ibid., p. 15.

[19]Harrison, ed., Complete Works, plate, 13a.

[20]Styan, Shakespeare's Stagecraft, p. 34.

[21]Bethell, Popular Dramatic Tradition, p. 50.

[22]Righter, Idea of the Play, p. 139.

[23]Bethell, Popular Dramatic Tradition, p. 46.

[24]Harrison, ed., Complete Works, p. 47.

[25]Righter, Idea of the Play, p. 15.

[26]Ibid., pp. 20-21.

[27]Ibid., p. 28.

[28]Ibid., p. 32.

[29]Ibid., p. 30.

[30]Ibid., p. 36.

[31]Ibid., p. 37.

[32]Ibid., p. 38.

[33]Ibid., p. 43.

[34]Ibid., pp. 50-51.

[35]Thomas Preston, Cambises, in Tudor Plays: An Anthology of Early English Drama, ed. by Edmund Creeth (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1966), p. 484.

[36]Righter, Idea of the Play, p. 52.

[37]John Heywood, Johan Johan the Husbande, in Tudor Plays, ed. by Creeth, p. 75.

[38]Preston, Cambises, in Tudor Plays, ed. by Creeth, p. 449.

[39]Righter, Idea of the Play, p. 56.

[40]Ibid., p. 55.

CHAPTER III

THE THEATRICAL METAPHOR

The following chapters will be devoted to a survey of those dramaturgical strategies employed by Shakespeare to manipulate his audience's awareness of the actor in his theatrical surroundings to achieve specific artistic effects. Evidence suggests, it should be remembered, that such an awareness on the part of the audience was present to some degree even when the dramatist was employing no specific strategy to evoke and exploit it. Multiple levels of awareness are encouraged throughout the presentation of an Elizabethan play in response to the inherent nature of the theatrical situation, the specific nature of Elizabethan stage conditions and stage heritage, and the conditioned nature of Elizabethan patterns of thought and perception. A whole battery of Elizabethan dramatic techniques is based upon a recognition and acceptance of the many areas of interpenetration between the action of presentation and the action being presented.

It is appropriate to begin this examination of Shakespearean strategies for manipulating an audience's awareness of the actor by focusing upon the purely verbal references, either direct or indirect, to the actor's

presence on the stage. In some instances, the references occur when a character draws an analogy between some aspect of theatre and some aspect of life, as when, to use two famous examples, Macbeth compares life to "a poor player/ Who struts and frets his hour upon the stage" (Macbeth V.v. 24-25), or when Jaques contends that "All the world's a stage, / And all the men and women merely players" (As You Like it II.vii.139-40). In other instances, the references occur in relation to some theatrical event occurring within the context of the play itself,as when Hamlet gives acting advice to the players (Hamlet III.ii.1-51), or when the mechanicals are rehearsing to put on the play of "Pyramus and Thisbe" in A Midsummer Night's Dream (III.i). In both kinds of instances, these references function as what may be called theatrical metaphors.

The importance of the theatrical metaphor (or play metaphor) to the variety of relationships existing between actor and audience has often been implied. M. C. Bradbrook mentions in passing that the curious blurring of acting and reality may partly be explained by the physical conditions of the playhouse, but that "the popular comparison of life to a play and the world to a stage was at times something more than an analogy."[1] In an earlier work, she had written of Shakespeare:

> It was, for instance, a source of pleasure to his audience to be reminded in the play of the conditions of the playhouse. . . . they liked their own position as spectators to be dramatised. The

> characters would sometimes make equivocal remarks or refer to themselves in their capacity as actors.[2]

The theatrical metaphor is not uncommon in literary history; it was a Renaissance commonplace. Nor is it unusual that Shakespeare, an actor, playwright, and theatre owner should conceive of man as an actor and the world as a stage.[3] But as it began to appear with increasingly greater frequency in Elizabethan drama, the play metaphor began serving an increasingly theatrical function, providing both a philosophical base and a technical means by which actors could relate to spectators.

In its simplest form, the play metaphor is merely a trope, a linguistic device by which certain aspects of life may be more expressively evoked by means of their analogical relation to certain aspects of theatre. But when the play metaphor is used by an actor on stage, it simultaneously draws attention to the artistic medium of expression, inevitably evoking a rich complexity of responses to the interrelation of appearances and reality with regard to the expression and apprehension of truth in both art and life.

The manner and context in which the metaphor is used quite obviously affects the nature and degree to which the spectator's consciousness of the artistic medium becomes an active element in the communication.

> Even the common expression "to play the part," unless qualified generally implies nothing more than the accomplishment of a specific task.[4]

Such an instance does not strongly draw attention to the artistic medium, to the actor in his role. But when Fabian says of the plot against Malvolio, "If this were played upon a stage now I could condemn it as an improbable fiction" (Twelfth Night III.iv.140-1), the responses generated are more complex. On one level there may be a passing attempt to forestall objections to the artificiality of the scene,[5] yet at the same time such a statement reminds the spectators that they in fact are watching it being played upon the stage. In sharing the spectator's perception of artificiality, Fabian the character may gain credence as a reliable source of information, but more importantly, Fabian the actor is asking the spectator to participate in the fun the actors are having on a purely theatrical level. Attention is drawn to the theatricality. Actor and spectator become united in that fun by sharing a mutually ironic awareness. Such a sharing, possible in all theatres, is part of the stock in trade for Elizabethans.

There are numerous instances of Shakespeare drawing attention to the actor in his role so the audience may enjoy the fun the actor is having with characters who, like Malvolio, are unable to perceive and enjoy the actor who is literally and figuratively "within" them. In A Midsummer Night's Dream, Shakespeare is exploring, among other things, the relation of theatre to illusion, to dreams, to lover's fantasies, to imagination. The fairies, and especially

Puck, are employed by Shakespeare to encourage the audience to enjoy the pure theatrical fun inherent in the behavior of the lovers and the mechanicals. "What, a play toward! I'll be an auditor--/ An actor too perhaps, if I see cause," says Puck when he discovers the mechanicals rehearsing (III. i.81-82). And prior to the lover's entrance, he says, "Shall we their fond pageant see? / Lord, what fools these mortals be!" (III.ii.114-15). When told of Silvius' unsuccesful wooing of Phebe, Rosalind says, "Bring us to this sight and you shall say, / I'll prove a busy actor in their play" (As You Like It III.iv.61-2). Rosalind and Puck are simultaneously or alternately actors and auditors, and as attention is drawn to the actor in his role, the audience is drawn into the theatrical fun at the expense of those characters who are incapable of standing outside themselves, incapable of sharing the balancing perspective of an observer.

Inevitably, the theatrical metaphor became associated with characters who, like the actor, did stand partially outside themselves as observers, who did function simultaneously on two different levels of awareness. Usually, but not always, such a dual awareness was associated with a desire to manipulate appearances so as to create a desired impression and obtain a desired end. In other words, the actor's dual awareness became associated with the dual awareness of a dissembler. Vice characters from the early plays had always regarded themselves as actors and their

schemes as dramatic performances.[6] But as with Puck and Rosalind, the Vice character, evil though he may be, invites the audience to join him in his theatrical play; and because the Vice is presented as an actor as much as an "evil," the audience accepts. Enjoying the superior knowledge of an observer, the audience cannot help identifying with the deceiver in his superiority over the ignorant.

In the first half of Richard III, Richard's attractiveness as a role-player tends to disguise the ethics of his actions. The audience is wooed by the same impish ingenuity that conquers Lady Anne. But as the play develops and concludes, the audience as well as the characters are increasingly disabused and disaffected. Shakespeare creates this transition by presenting Richard increasingly less as an actor and more as a character. As an actor, Richard drew the audience into the prankish theatricality of his deceit. Unknowingly, the audience was another of his victims. But as a character he becomes more easily the object of judgment. By controlling the degree to which the audience is actively aware of the actor in his role, Shakespeare allows the audience to discover its own capacity for misapprehension. Experientially, the audience discovers the limitations of a single point of view.

In this sense, the play (as in this sense do many of Shakespeare's plays) becomes a study of appearances, perception, and misapprehension. The theatre, a world in

which appearances are not "real," but nevertheless communicate truths about reality, becomes the natural metaphor by which to explore these issues. More than a metaphor, it becomes a method for structuring and manipulating the audience's perception of the very issue of perception. As observers of an experience which could be viewed from at least two different frames of reference, an experience which Shakespeare modulated to create myriad points of view within each larger frame of reference, the audience participated physiologically in the issues raised. Shakespeare makes his medium become a major part of his message.

The variations achieved are as many as the instances of occurrence. Buckingham, who knows, denies knowledge of Richard's true feelings.

> We know each other's faces,
> But for our hearts, he knows no more of mine
> Than I of yours--
> Nor I no more of his than you of mine. (III.iv.10-3)

The guileless Hastings, who lacks such knowledge, affirms his awareness of Richard's true feelings.

> I think there's never a man in Christendom
> That can less hide his love or hate than he,
> For by his face straight shall you know his heart.
> (III.iv.53-55)

Such blatant irony is given comic emphasis by Buckingham's intervening greeting of Richard.

> Had not you come upon your cue, my lord,
> William Lord Hastings had pronounced your part--
> I mean, your voice--for crowning of the King.
> (III.iv.27-29)

Shakespeare is having fun. By drawing attention to the actor as character and character as actor, Shakespeare allows the spectator to glimpse the controlling mechanism beneath the carefully maintained appearances catching itself in a near mistake. The device is standard fare in situation comedies. Shakespeare allows Buckingham to unconsciously utilize a theatrical metaphor, to then recognize the implications of the metaphor regarding Richard's sincerity, and finally to hurriedly change the figure of speech to a voting metaphor. The spectator's awareness of the actors in the roles of Richard and Buckingham is utilized to enrich his awareness of Richard and Buckingham in their roles as actors. Both levels of awareness involve the spectator experientially in the crucial issues surrounding the relationship between appearances and correct perception.

The image of the actor as a deceiver is not always so lighthearted. Shakespeare's early optimism, his conviction in the greatness of the actor and the stage begins to fade around the turn of the century until the idea of theatrical imitation becomes an image of disorder and futility.[7] The actor as a villain becomes an Iago, an Edmund, an Iachimo. In their roles as actors, these characters still implicitly involve the audience in their conspiracy, but the experience is no longer a pleasant one. But whether lighthearted or sinister, the image of the actor as a role-player always communicates some suggestion that the

surface appearance of human behavior need not completely reflect the inner reality.

But the image of the actor does not always suggest a player of roles. As with every aspect of his dramaturgy, Shakespeare was constantly experimenting, trying to find new uses for old techniques. His strategy for involving the audience was always somewhat different. One important function of the theatrical metaphor was to place the audience in a role within which its perspective upon the action would clarify the issues being raised. As early as the Henry VI plays, Shakespeare draws attention to the actor in order to intensify the audience's experience of the situation.

> Why stand we like soft-hearted women here,
> Wailing our losses, whiles the foe doth rage,
> And look upon, as if the tragedy
> Were played in jest by counterfeiting actors?
> (III Henry VI II.iii.25-8)

As always with the theatrical metaphor, a parallel is drawn between the actor and the character, which simultaneously attracts attention to the actor in his role as the character while the character's behavior is presented as the behavior of an actor. In this instance the effect is slightly complicated by the speaker, Warwick, seeing himself and his comrades in the role of audience watching the other characters as if they were actors. Even as the spectators in the theatre are reminded that the events they witness are only a "counterfeit" reality, they

simultaneously are encouraged to view the characters' inactivity in terms of their own passive roles, which provides them with an immediate experiential basis for identifying and viscerally understanding the situation of those characters. By drawing attention to the theatrical situation, Shakespeare creates a greater comprehension of the aesthetic situation than might be achieved by any attempt to make the audience forget that Warwick and his fellows are also actors on a stage.

In similar ways, Shakespeare often draws attention to the audience in its role as observer in order to heighten a dramatic effect. In Julius Caesar, following the horror of the actors bathing their hands in Caesar's blood "up to the elbows," the following interchange occurs.

> Cas: Stoop then, and wash. How many ages hence
> Shall this our lofty scene be acted over
> In states unborn and accents yet unknown!
> Bru: How many times shall Caesar bleed in sport,
> . . . . . .
> Cas: So often shall the knot of us be called
> The men that gave their country liberty.
> (III.i.111-18)

The gruesome sight of people bathing in blood is immediately balanced by the reminder that these are actors, that this is stage blood, that Caesar only bleeds in sport. The scene is further objectified by being placed in historical perspective; the audience is asked to see itself as merely one of many audiences which have viewed this reenactment over the years. Yet even as the artificiality of the present scene is noted, the reality of the original scene is suggested. There is

a suggestion that the scene will be reenacted in Capitols as well as on stages throughout history. The final irony is created by the disparity between their estimation of history's judgment and the actual judgment being made that very moment by the spectators surrounding the stage. Placed in the role of merely one of many audiences throughout history, the spectators are encouraged to view the bloody, misguided deeds through the irony of an historical perspective.

Sometimes the audience is asked to view itself in a more specific role. A number of critics have marveled at Shakespeare's brashness in drawing attention to the boy actor playing Cleopatra just prior to her death scene; they fear this will "break the illusion." But Shakespeare is merely utilizing his audience's capacity for multiple vision to enrich the experience. Cleopatra imagines being taken in triumph through Rome.

> The quick comedians
> Extemporally will stage us and present
> Our Alexandrian revels. Antony
> Shall be brought drunken forth, and I shall see
> Some squeaking Cleopatra boy my greatness
> I' the posture of a whore. (Antony and Cleopatra V.ii.216-21)

The audience is reminded that for two hours it has been watching a boy actor present the greatness of Cleopatra. Regardless of how good a job the boy may have done, Shakespeare, by emphasizing the disparity between the original and the representation, between the icon and sign, does not

destroy any "illusion" which may or may not have been present, but rather he heightens the grandeur of the original by emphasizing the inadequacy of the imitation. Yet at the same time, Shakespeare places the audience in the position of the Roman audience that Cleopatra imagines. Again the stage suggests that it no more captures the true greatness of Cleopatra than would the Roman imitation. Yet at the same time, the spectators participate directly in the image of what Cleopatra fears; they experience the image by becoming part of it. By drawing attention to the actor in his role, Shakespeare encourages the audience to see itself in a role which enriches the entire experience.

The final act of this play alternates between showing Cleopatra as an earthbound woman of flesh and an ethereal spiritual colossus. The image of the actor becomes associated with this communication in the final enigmatic lines of Charmian before the guard rushes in to discover Cleopatra dead.

> Now boast thee, Death, in thy possession lies
> A lass unparalleled. Downy windows, close,
> And golden Phoebus, never be beheld
> Of eyes again so royal! Your crown's awry.
> I'll mend it, and then play. (V.ii.318-22)

The spirit unparalleled has left; the imperfect body remains. As always with physical things, something is not quite right; the property crown must be adjusted on the actor's head. Cleopatra has gone; the actor remains. The theatre almost becomes an image of the limitations of the

physical. As Charmian, like Beckett's Hamm, begins to "play" her endgame, the play begins to draw to a close.

Drawing attention to the artificiality of the theatrical presentation in order to emphasize the reality of the situation being presented was a common use of the theatre metaphor. As the Duke says in As You Like It, "This wide and universal theatre / Presents more woeful pageants than the scene / Wherein we play in" (II.vii. 37-39). One of the most famous examples, drawn from the play most completely conceived of in theatrical terms, occurs after Hamlet has watched the First Player recite the speech about Pyrrhus killing Priam. The speech is written and, one would assume, spoken in the rhetorical style characteristic of an earlier period; the language is distinctly more artificial than that in the rest of the play. This difference is further emphasized by the more colloquial interruptions of the critic Polonius. The audience is treated to a view of two characters viewing and commenting upon the heightened acting of a third character. The disparity between these levels of behavior becomes Hamlet's theme.

> Is it not monstrous that this player here,
> But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,
> Could force his soul so to his own conceit
> That from her working all his visage wanned,
> Tears in his eyes, distraction in's aspect,
> A broken voice, and his whole function suiting
> With forms to his conceit? And all for nothing!
> For Hecuba!
> What's Hecuba to him or he to Hecuba,
> That he should weep for her? What would he do
> Had he the motive and the cue for passion

> That I have? He would drown the stage with tears
> And cleave the general ear with horrid speech,
> Make mad the guilty and appal the free,
> Confound the ignorant, and amaze indeed
> The very faculties of eyes and ears.
> (Hamlet II.ii. 577-92)

It is difficult to imagine the full impact these words would have had upon Shakespeare's audience, spoken, as they were, by Burbage in the part of Hamlet standing upon the open air platform of the Globe stage. Shakespeare is playing upon the multiple perspectives of his audience in order to explore the complex interrelationships between appearances and realities in both art and life. On the most obvious level, the character Hamlet observes a player become passionately moved by his own artificial rendition of an artificial story in artificial verse, and is thereby shamed by his own lack of response to very real and serious issues. In this sense, Shakespeare emphasizes the artificiality of the Player as an actor in order to bring out the reality of Hamlet's inability to act. Two different levels or degrees of reality (or artificiality) are created within the world of the play, which is itself a level of reality apart from the world of Burbage and the audience. The audience as a group of passive spectators identifies with the passive Hamlet observing the Player. But even as attention is drawn to the Player as an actor, attention inevitably is attracted to the actor playing the Player and consequently to Burbage playing Hamlet.

A similar blending of actor and character would be created by Hamlet's advice to the players. Shakespeare places a considerable burden upon the actor who must act a character advising other actors playing actors how they may most artistically act their characters. Everything the actor says immediately reflects upon every aspect of his behavior in saying it. In essence, Shakespeare is allowing Burbage to draw attention to the excellence of his own technique.

> Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounce it to you, trippingly on the tongue. But if you mouth it, as many of your players do, I had as lief the town crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus, but use all gently.
> (Hamlet III.ii.1-6)

While Burbage demonstrates his technique by drawing attention to his acting of a speech about how to act, Shakespeare is justifying his theatre in the face of threats from the Children's Companies.[8] Yet, simultaneously, these various awarenesses enrich the audience's perception of Hamlet in his antic role attempting to see through the various false faces presented to him by the other characters. It is in front of the actors that Hamlet, like Burbage, reveals himself.

Ironically, when Burbage/Hamlet begins to get worked up into a state similar to the Player's, his language becomes equally rhetorical. "Bloody, bawdy villain! / Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless villain! / Oh, vengence!" (II.ii.608-10). With typical brilliance,

Shakespeare has Hamlet, always more comfortable in the role of observer than participator, step outside himself and adopt the more judgmental perspective of the viewer. His insight becomes the audience's. His estimation of the Player was incorrect. Mere words, the actions of the actor, are not enough. Reflecting the structure of the opening of the soliloquy, Hamlet's altered self-criticism forces a re-evaluation.

> Why, what an ass am I. This is most brave,
> That I, the son of a dear father murdered,
> Prompted to my revenge by Heaven and Hell,
> Must, like a whore, unpack my heart with words
> And fall a-cursing like a very drab,
> A scullion!
> (II.ii.611-16)

In a flash of self-awareness, Hamlet/Burbage realizes that he should not try to copy the artificial actions of the actor, but the functional actions of the doer. To further complicate these issues and their relation to the spectators, Shakespeare has Hamlet choose another theatrical course of action, the germ of which had just manifested itself previously ("Make mad the guilty" II.ii.590). Within his role of antic madness, Hamlet tries to find the reality beneath the surface smiles of Claudius; Hamlet will use the beguiling appearances of a theatrical piece to dispel dissembling, and with false fire, smoke out truth. The relationships between truth, falsity, and the theatre are intricately explored throughout the play. We will return later to examine the Mousetrap scene as an instance of the theatrical

metaphor expanding into the play-within-a-play to involve an audience on increasingly complex levels of perception.

In passing, it should be mentioned that Shakespeare often makes reference to outdated plays, theatrical traditions, conventions, and characters. Richard, Duke of Gloucester compares himself to the "formal vice Iniquity" (Richard III III.i.82). Love's Labor Lost, a play which in some instances self-consciously recognizes the presence of an audience, makes reference to "an old infant play" (IV.iii.78) and "an old play" (V.ii.884). As the Duke and Duchess of York alternately condemn and defend their son in the most farcical manner, Bolingbroke turns to the audience to justify the abrupt change in style.

> Our scene is altered from a serious thing,
> And now changed to "The Beggar and the King."
> (Richard III V.iii.79-80)

The incessant, silly, endstopped rhyming, further invites the audience to enjoy the pure theatricality of the fun. With similar intent, the boy in soliloquy comments upon the surface appearance of Pistol by referring to him as ". . . this roaring devil i' the old play, that everyone may pare his nails with a wooden dagger" (Henry V IV.iv.75-76). Even as late in his development as King Lear, Shakespeare has Edmund comment upon Edgar's entrance: "And pat he comes like the catastrophe of the old comedy. My cue is villainous melancholy, with a sigh like Tom o' Bedlam" (I.ii.145-47). Ironically, Edmund briefly adopts a role which Edgar,

because of Edmund's dissembling, subsequently is forced to play to save his life. The series of roles he must go through before he "becomes" Edgar again parallels the progression of Lear and Gloucester. In each instance, the reference to an older theatrical tradition signals the audience how to relate to the material being presented. The actor-audience relation of a previous generation is invoked.

In her study of Shakespeare's changing attitudes towards the relation of illusion and reality, Anne Righter discovers that late in his career Shakespeare creates imaginative worlds in which illusion and reality are indistinguishable, in which "Shakespeare turns the world itself into a theatre, blurring the distinctions between art and life."[9] The change is reflected in the increased number of incidents depicting reality, either jokingly or seriously, being mistaken for a theatrical illusion. Cleopatra, the consummate role-player, coaches Antony as if he were an actor until his very real rage explodes.

> Cleo: Good now, play one scene
> Of excellent dissembling, and let it look
> Like perfect honor.
> Ant: You'll heat my blood. No more.
> Cleo: You can do better yet, but this is meetly.
> Ant: Now, by my sword--
> Cleo: And target. Still he mends,
> But this is not the best.
> (Antony and Cleopatra I.iii.78-84)

Cleopatra plays the role, not Antony; she tries to hide her disappointment with his departure. Shakespeare uses her

dissembling to accentuate the reality of Antony's rage and thereby the bitterness of her disappointment. Yet her games are presented in theatrical terms. The theatrical situation lends immediacy to the ascending levels of role and reality. In ways more subtle than an aside, Shakespeare, here late in his career, uses the theatrical metaphor to suggest levels of reality beneath the surface.

Using the theatrical metaphor to suggest or emphasize a deep reality rather than an artificiality can have a powerful effect. Nowhere is this more evident than in the final act of Cymbeline where the ironies of misapprehension compound. Shakespeare uses the power of the theatrical metaphor with uncharacteristically brutal irony. As Posthumus bemoans the loss of his wife Imogen, she, disguised as a page, steps forward to greet the husband who had unjustly renounced her. But as she tries to announce her presence, Posthumus assumes she is using the traditional means of applauding good acting to mock him.[10]

> Imo: Peace, my lord. Hear, hear--
> Post: Shall's have a play of this? Thou scornful page, There lie thy part. (Striking her. She falls)
> (V.v.227-29)

The surprise is so abrupt, so incongruous, and the reversal so absolute, that the effect in the theatre is almost comic in the blackness of its irony. The ease with which Posthumus is duped by surface appearances is brought forcefully home. Yet in her disguise, she is playing a part. An awareness

of the boy actor playing a girl dressed as a boy becomes unavoidably involved in these ironies of misapprehension. Yet the practically inextricable levels of role and reality become almost irrelevant in the face of the physical violence. For both actor and character the blow has reality. The text indicates that he/she is unconscious. The central issues of the play are evoked by the theatrical metaphor and polarized by the force of the "gestus."

Shakespeare used the overt theatrical metaphor in any number of different ways to involve the audience in the issues of the play. But in many more subtle ways, Shakespeare made more indirect reference to his theatre and its conventions in order to utilize fully his audience's theatrical awareness. Because of the implicit nature of these references, it is especially difficult to imagine the possible variations in effect upon the audience. But some attempt should be made at least to survey these references to fully appreciate the depth and texture made possible by the spectator's oscillating awareness of the actor in his role.

It is obvious how the direct references to theatrical activity such as occur in the "Pyramus and Thisbe" scene would naturally suggest to an audience its own participation in a theatrical experience. But a theatrical awareness may be utilized less explicitly by references to situations or conditions within the play which are similar to those within the theatre. Hamlet's reference to "You that look

pale and tremble at this chance,/ That are but mutes or audience to this act" (Hamlet V.ii.345-6), tends to refer to more than the Court of Denmark. Benvolio encourages Mercutio and Tybalt to remove their quarrel to some less public place because, "Here all eyes gaze on us," to which Mercutio replies, "Men's eyes were made to look, and let them gaze" (Romeo and Juliet III.i.56-57). Such simultaneous references to the social situation and the aesthetic situation tend to involve the audience more intimately in the action it observes. Always exploring variations upon variations, Shakespeare plays upon his audience's sensitivity to such dual references with statements having even more ambiguous reference. Demetrius asks Helena if she is not afraid to be alone with him in the forest, and she responds.

> Nor doth this wood lack worlds of company,
> For you, in my respect, are all the world.
> Then how can it be said I am alone
> When all the world is here to look on me?
> (A Midsummer Night's Dream II.i.223-26)

Helena speaks to Demetrius in the forest, and to the audience in the theatre.

References to conditions within the play which were exactly opposite to conditions in the theatre would also tend to create a tension between the audience's awareness of the two worlds in one. There are numerous instances of characters, alone onstage, commenting that no one can see them. Falstaff's statement that "Nothing confutes me but

eyes, and nobody sees me" (I Henry IV V.iv.129-30) is in the medieval tradition of comic appeals to the audience by a character who asks that the onlookers not inform other characters of his whereabouts.[11]

A similar tension is created whenever attention is drawn to theatrical conventions, a tension Shakespeare utilizes in any number of different ways. Shakespeare's audience was trained to accept the flat platform of the stage as representing any kind of locale. When Edgar convinces his father that he climbs a hill and stands on a cliff, the visual irony results from the flatness of the stage.

> Edg: You do climb up it now. Look how we labor.
> Glo: Methinks the ground is even.
> Edg: Horrible steep.
> (King Lear IV.vi.2-3)

But having been trained to allow the language to define the locale, an Elizabethan audience would have found Edgar's description of the Dover cliffs considerably seductive, would have easily identified with the perspective of Gloucester.

The daylight convention was frequently utilized by Shakespeare in a number of interesting ways. Even as Helena, in the speech previously quoted, indirectly draws attention to the spectators as she mentions her isolation in the forest, so too does she draw attention to London's daylight as she mentions the Athen's night.

It is not night when I do see your face,

> Therefore I think I am not in the night.
> (A Midsummer Night's Dream II.i.221-22)

Paradoxically, Shakespeare will draw attention to the daylight as a means of suggesting its opposite.

> Thou seest the heavens, as troubled with man's act,
> Threaten his bloody stage. By the clock 'tis day,
> And yet dark night strangles the traveling lamp.
> (Macbeth II.iv.5-7)

Shakespeare is either reminding his audience of performances which took place under threatening skies, or else he is likening the darkening of the skies in Macbeth's world to the symbolic darkening created by stage convention. In either case, Shakespeare uses the theatrical reality to feed the aesthetic illusion. Such is the case when Shakespeare makes Mercutio and Romeo even more attractive by having them share a theatrical joke with the audience at the same time that they tease one another. They bear torches, the conventional indication of evening.

> Mer: Come, we burn daylight, ho.
> Rom: Nay, that's not so.
> Mer: I mean, sir, in delay
> We waste our lights in vain, like lamps by day.
> (Romeo and Juliet I.iv.43-45)

The outbreak of rhyme reinforces the punch lines.

The uses of rhyme and other kinds of formalized speech constituted another convention which could be emphasized to create a desired effect. Shakespeare appears to have been particularly fond of emphasizing the artificiality or theatricality of certain situations by drawing attention to a rhyme; he does this throughout his career. In The Two

Gentlemen of Verona, after Speed delivers an aside containing a series of clanging rhymes, Valentine asks, "What are you reasoning with yourself?" Speed responds, "Nay, I was rhyming" (II.i.148-49). Throughout his plays, and especially in his early work, Shakespeare makes liberal use of both asides and extended rhyme. Here he chooses to make fun of both.

In Romeo and Juliet there is an especially interesting use of this device. Even as Shakespeare will consciously and cunningly switch from verse to prose and back again, so too will he alter the style and degree of formality or conversationality within the verse or prose in order to communicate a different level of consciousness on the part of the characters, and a different level of reality upon which the audience is to view the interaction. A famous example of this technique occurs when Romeo and Juliet share a sonnet together when they first meet (I.v.95-108). For a moment, the actors do not so much play the characters, as they do the character's most idealized and rarified emotional inner life. The relationship of actor to character is much different here than when the lovers are attempting to say goodnight after the balcony scene. Shakespeare uses the sonnet to create a "dream sequence." But after the language has returned to more conversational verse, and after Romeo has gone, Juliet reverts to rhyming in contrast to the strident tones of the nurse.

Jul: Prodigious birth of love it is to me,
That I must love a loathed enemy.
Nur: What's this? What's this?
Jul: A rhyme I learned even now
Of one I danced withal.
(I.v.142-45)

Although Juliet's behavior may be explained as an attempt to prevent the discovery of her secret, she is also remembering the moment of the shared sonnet, and Shakespeare draws attention to his technique in order to remind the audience. He has no qualms about doing this when there is greater game afoot. One thinks of Jaques' famous exit line in response to Orlando's entrance line, "Good day and happiness, dear Rosalind!" "Nay, then, God buy you an you talk in blank verse" (As You Like It IV.i.30-31).

In other equally implicit ways does Shakespeare draw attention to the actor and his theatre through verbal implication. Often he will make veiled reference to the actor playing the character in order to enhance a perspective upon the character. Amidst the incredible suffering presented in King Lear, Edgar never completely forsakes his role, and to maintain a sympathetic Edgar, Shakespeare must justify this to the audience. "My tears begin to take his part so much / They'll mar my counterfeit," says Edgar as he watches Lear act out his mad trial scene (III.vi.63-4). Later, when he encounters his blind father, it is as if the actor playing Edgar joins the actor Edgar is self-disgust. The reality of the suffering being presented mocks the facile and inadequate technique of the medium through which

it is presented. "Bad is the trade that must play fool to sorrow, / Angering itself and others" (IV.i.40-41).

In a totally different context, Autolycus, referring ostensibly to his singing ability, makes a triple pun: "I can bear my part, you must know 'tis my occupation" (The Winter's Tale IV.iv.301-2). We have the rogue assuring the revelers that he can sing the harmony of a song because he is a professional singer. Yet simultaneously he communicates to the audience on two different levels. He can bear the part of deceiver because he is a professional thief, and he can bear the part of the character Autolycus the deceiver because he is a professional actor.

Another great rogue conceived of and presented as an actor is Falstaff. In one of the speeches that most actively suggests this, Falstaff discusses the relation of dissembling to reality in a way that evokes the theatrical conventions of the presentation. Hal and, presumably, the audience believe that Falstaff has been killed. After a brief eulogy over each body, Hal exits, leaving the two representatives of different moral codes motionless on the stage. The audience accepts the motionless actors as characters in death. But the actor Falstaff, and the actor playing Falstaff rise.

> 'Sblood, 'twas time to counterfeit, . . . Counterfeit? I lie, I am no counterfeit. To die is to be a counterfeit, for he is but the counterfeit of a man who hath not the life of a man. But to counterfeit dying when a man thereby liveth is to be no counterfeit, but the true and perfect image of life

indeed.
(I Henry IV V.iv.113-20)

The word "counterfeit" had long been associated with the actor even as a painting was considered to be a counterfeit of life. The scene already has been given a theatrical orientation by Falstaff's earlier aside to the audience during the fight between Hal and Percy. "Nay, you shall find no boy's play here, I can tell you" (V.iv.75-76). The word "counterfeit" thus becomes even more overtly theatrical when Falstaff draws attention to the actor playing Percy.

> How if he should counterfeit too, and rise? By my faith, I am afraid he would prove the better counterfeit. . . . Why may he not rise as well as I? Nothing confutes me but eyes, and nobody sees me. (V.iv.124-30)

The spectators know the actor playing Percy (no doubt breathing heavily from the previous fight) can get up, even as they can appreciate the irony of Falstaff telling them to their faces that no eyes watch him. Shakespeare uses the spectator's theatrical awareness to enrich his perception of the multileveled behavior of this fascinating on-stage personage.

Another way Shakespeare makes the audience aware of itself is through the use of oblique moral statements drawn from the medieval tradition of behavioral prescription and admonition. When Leontes speaks, his words reach out to the audience as a present representative of the world at large.[12]

> And many a man there is, even at this present,
> Now, while I speak this, holds his wife by the arm,
> That little thinks she has been sluiced in's absence
> And his pond fished by his next neighbor, by
> Sir Smile, his neighbor.
> (The Winter's Tale I.ii.192-96)

A similar reference by Iago achieves a similar effect.

> There's millions now alive
> That nightly lie in those unproper beds
> Which they dare swear peculiar.
> (Othello IV.i.68-70)

Less explicit, this reference, nevertheless, treats the audience in the Globe as representative of the world.

One of the most playful ways of referring to the audience is to have a character, who in the play world is in another country, refer to the strange characteristics of Englishmen. The character makes a statement of belief; the actor shares a joke with the audience. Such is the case when Iago talks about Englishmen being drunkards (Othello II.iii.77-90), or when the grave digger mentions that Hamlet's madness will go unnoticed in England where all are as mad as he (V.i.166-70). Seeing Caliban, Trinculo wishes he were in England. "There would this monster make a man--any strange beast there makes a man" (The Tempest II.ii.30-32).

References to Englishmen constitute a specialized variety of the ubiquitous topicalities, contemporary references, and anachronisms which previously have been mentioned as providing a natural link between the world of audience and character. Shakespeare can draw his audience's

attention to the theatrical situation either by a reference to the stage and its conventions, or by a reference to the audience and contemporaneous situations. In Hamlet, a theatrical reference that is also topical and anachronistic does both. During the discussion of the competition of the Children's Companies, and immediately following Rosencrantz's statement that the children even out do "Hercules and his load" (the sign of the Globe Playhouse), Hamlet responds that it is not strange that the public should betray the professional stage, since those who scorned Claudius prior to his being King now pay up to a hundred ducats for his picture (II.ii.378-85). The many spectators in the audience who patronize the Children's Companies are linked with those who betrayed Hamlet's father. Shakespeare and Burbage chastise those spectators, and Hamlet finds a metaphor to express his sense of betrayal. The fickleness of the public is given immediate relevance. Reality and the play simultaneously reinforce each other.

Shakespeare utilizes numerous verbal strategies to draw his audience's attention to the social reality of the theatrical situation in order to enrich the audience's perception of the aesthetic reality being presented. Sometimes he will make an overt comparison between the world and the stage. At other times he will have characters refer to a theatrical situation within the play, which draws attention to the theatrical situation through which the

play is being presented. Each instance draws the spectator's attention to the actor and the theatre. The previous discussion suggests that Shakespaare draws attention to similarities or differences between the actual situation and the imagined situation either to emphasize something artificial in the imagined world being presented, or else to suggest that some aspect of the imagined world is much more real than the artifice of the presentation. Most importantly, the theatrical metaphor, whether implicit or overt, structures the various mental points of view from which an audience perceives the action on the stage. Even as Shakespeare encourages the audience to view the actor functioning outside the character, he suggests that the character is an actor standing outside of some deeper reality; and, conversely, even as the actor is seen as a reality inside the artifice of the character, so the character is seen as a reality inside the various kinds of artifice he presents to the eyes of other characters.

In Love's Labor's Lost, Shakespeare, perhaps more self-consciously than in any other play, treats his audience to numerous degrees of theatrical artificiality. Yet Costard's audience can accept none.

> Cos: "I Pompey am--"
> Boy: You lie, you are not he.
> (V.ii.549-50)

Although the Boyet is unable to accept the simultaneous awareness of Costard and Pompey, the fact that Shakespeare

is willing to draw attention to the actor playing Costard playing Pompey suggests that his audience was.

NOTES

[1]Bradbrook, Themes and Conventions, pp. 120-21.

[2]Bradbrook, Elizabethan Stage Conditions, p. 71.

[3]Charles R. Forker, "Shakespeare's Theatrical Symbolism and Its Function in Hamlet," Shakespeare Quarterly, XIV, No. 3 (Summer, 1963), p. 215.

[4]Righter, Idea of the Play, p. 64.

[5]Bethell, Popular Dramatic Tradition, p. 33.

[6]Righter, Idea of the Play, pp. 64-65.

[7]Ibid., pp. 139-40.

[8]Harrison, ed., Complete Works, pp. 45-46.

[9]Righter, Idea of the Play, p. 172.

[10]Harrison, ed., Complete Works, p. 142, ll.227-28n.

[11]Righter, Idea of the Play, p. 58.

[12]Ibid., p. 57.

CHAPTER IV

THE BOY ACTOR IN FEMALE ROLES

One of the most intriguing strategies employed by Shakespeare to exploit his audience's ability to perceive stage behavior as having simultaneous relevance within numerous spheres of reference involves his use of boy actors in female roles. As with the other Elizabethan stage conditions, Shakespeare's audience accepted without question the use of boys to play women's parts simply because it had never known any other kind of theatre. The spectators accepted Juliet as a boy as easily as they accepted night scenes in daylight. Their awareness of the imaginary world of the play was in no way disturbed by their simultaneous awareness of the incongruous theatrical reality presenting that world. Certainly the use of boy actors did not prevent the playwrights from utilizing a considerable amount of kissing and embracing between the boys as women and their male lovers.[1] Yet even as the playwright could implicitly draw attention to the daylight convention to achieve a specific effect, so also could he draw attention to the boy actor convention. Mention has been made of the boy playing Cleopatra complaining that a squeaking boy actor would attempt to play her greatness in the streets of Rome

(Antony and Cleopatra V.ii.216-21).

The convention did have some notoriety, if only in the Puritan tracts of writers such as Goddon and Gossen. To their condemnation of the decadence of such a practice, Thomas Heywood replied in An Apology for Actors in 1608.

> To see our youths attired in the habit of women, who knowes not what their intents be? Who cannot distinguish them by their names, assuredly knowing they are but to represent such a lady, at such a tyme appoynted?[2]

Heywood here points to an evidently common condition in the Elizabethan theatre: the audience knew the actors by name and had no problem distinguishing them from the character they played. The playwright would have had little difficulty in drawing attention to the boy/girls as sexual oxymorons. The audience maintained a simultaneous awareness of actor and character.

It is difficult, nevertheless, to assess the degree to which the many sexual references made by female characters are designed to exploit the audience's awareness of the boy actor playing the role. When Beatrice says, "Oh, that I were a man!" (Much Ado About Nothing IV.ii.305), there are possible implications that the youth of the boy is used to reinforce the social helplessness of the woman. A similar communication could occur when Portia says she has "a man's mind, but a woman's might" (Julius Caesar II.iv.8). When St. Joan La Pucelle says, "And thou shalt find that I exceed my sex" (I Henry VI I.ii.90), there is a definite

suggestion that the actor's sex is used to reinforce character qualities. But when Angelo says to Isabell "Be that you are, / That is a woman. If you be more, you're none" (Measure for Measure II.iv.134-35), and when Pericles says that if his daughter endured more than he did, then "thou art a man, and I / Have suffered like a girl" (Pericles V. i.137-38), it is less easy to affirm a conscious strategy of utilizing an audience's awareness of boy actors.

Yet in other instances the evidence is more substantial, as when the sexual issues occur in relationship to another theatrical reference. Falstaff attacks the femininity of the hostess by saying, "for womanhood, Maid Marian may be the deputy's wife of the ward to thee" (I Henry IV III.iii. 129-30). There is evidence that the Hostess and other older women's roles were played by older men rather than boys,[3] and Maid Marian was played by a man in a morris dance as being lumpish and awkward.[4] The audience could be expected to appreciate the joke on more than one level.

One of the most intricate uses of this acting convention occurs during the blatant theatrical comparisons created by the overt play-within-a-play. The various strategies of communication reveal themselves most clearly in the induction to The Taming of the Shrew. Shakespeare chooses to open the induction by having the hostess, a female character played by a male actor, trying to get money from Christopher Sly. Sly appears to address the hostess

by shouting after her/him, "I'll not budge an inch, boy" (i.14). To fool Sly, the Lord gives instructions that his page be dressed and mannered as a lady. He should model himself after noble ladies, speak soft and low, provide embraces and kisses and tears, using an onion to do so if necessary (i.105-30). The image of the perfect wife is initially associated with the trickery of a deceiver. The issues surrounding the relationship between artistic appearances, the perception of onlookers, and the reality being presented are given further adumbration in relation to paintings of Cytherea in sedges "which seem to move and wanton with her breath" (ii.54), and Daphne "Scratching her legs that one shall swear she bleeds" (ii.60). All this occurs within the context of Sly being deceived by the servants of the Lord into believing that he himself is a lord awakened after fifteen years of sleeping. Christopher Sly and his world, by implication, become a dream.

> Am I a lord? And have I such a lady?
> Or do I dream? Or have I dreamed till now?
> (ii.70-71)

Dreams, illusions, appearances, art, theatre, role-playing, deception become intertwining concerns in relation to the difficulties encountered by human perception in its attempt to apprehend the full reality of a situation, and more specifically, the difficulties encountered by wives and husbands.

The levels of role-playing become further complicated

when the Page enters as the lady his wife. An actor plays the Page who in turn plays a woman, not as a theatrical convention, but as a tactic to deceive. The joke in the scene would seem to involve the difficulties encountered by the Page in playing a woman, the various mistakes he makes in lapsing back into the behavior of a boy, and the tension created by the possibility that Sly might "see through" the faltering imitation of this amateur. At the outset, Shakespeare makes fun of the convention that he will employ throughout the rest of the play. Sly inspects the playacting Page with lecherous eye.

> Servants, leave me and her alone. Madam, undress you, and come now to bed.
> (ii.118-19)

Appropriately enough, the players, having been previously suborned, now enter to perform a play about the taming of a shrew, and Sly seats his wife by his side as the play begins. The remainder of the action thus becomes a play-within-a-play. Significantly, in the outer play the audience observes a boy actor playing a male Page dressed as a woman in the role of a dutiful wife, performing for Sly in order to deceive him. In the inner play, the audience observes two boy actors playing male actors dressed as women in the roles of alternatingly dutiful and undutiful wives, performing for Sly in order to entertain him. (They, like Sly, have been deceived, and believe him to be a great lord.) It is unclear whether Sly accepts the boy actors

as women without being deceived at the same time that he is deceived by the Page as woman, because the play, designed to prevent him from returning to his diseased sleep, very soon begins to send him there (I.i.254). The audience, nevertheless, watches a boy dressed as a woman in the role of wife watching a play in which two boys dressed as women play wives. The various levels of role behavior on which the action can be perceived, lend an added complexity to the issues raised by the inner play. What is masculine behavior and feminine behavior? To what extent are the roles adopted by men and women deceptive, as opposed to being merely expected? What is the proper role for a wife or for a husband? To become the ideal wife, must a woman play the part the Lord describes to the Page, and thus deceive her husband as the Page deceives Sly? Is this the lesson Katharina learns? Presumably the Page and Sly remain onstage the entire play as constant visual reminders of the different levels of role-playing beneath the behavior of Katharina and Petruchio. But even if they exit, even if the audience forgets about them as Shakespeare appears to have done, the image and function of the actor have become solidly associated with the behavior of the characters in the inner play, and, in turn, with the issues of courtship and marriage.

Shakespeare's handling of the Page in this way is especially significant because it is the only time Shakes-

peare makes extended use of a male character dressed in woman's clothes. Other than characters who function as female actors within a play-within-a-play (e.g.,Francis Flute), the only other men dressed as women occur in The Merry Wives of Windsor. Falstaff briefly disguises as a woman to elude the jealous Master Ford (The Merry Wives of Windsor IV.ii.190-96), and two unnamed boys disguise as fairies to deceive Falstaff, but inadvertently seduce the would-be suitors of Anne Page. In the latter instance, the blurring of convention and character is similar, albeit incidental. Doctor Caius mistakes a boy character dressed in female fairy garb for Anne, and goes off and marries him; Slender makes the same mistake, and goes off and almost marries a different boy. Fenton goes off and marries the "real" Anne, who is a boy actor in the same kind of costume, and thus, as a perceptual icon, identical to the other two. All three are boy actors dressed as women; only one is accepted as presenting a female character (V.v.106-7). But the trio only briefly appears together, and other than providing an implicitly theatrical joke, little is made of it.

> I came yonder at Eton to marry Mistress Anne Page, and she's a great lubberly boy.
> (V.v.193-94)

Shakespeare makes a more extended and complicated use of men dressed as women in the explicitly theatrical context of the play-within-a-play created in A Midsummer

Night's Dream. Unlike the instances in The Merry Wives of Windsor and the Induction to The Taming of the Shrew, here a man dresses as a woman not to disguise or deceive, but to put on a play. And unlike the instances of male actors playing female parts in the "inner plays" of Hamlet or The Taming of the Shrew, here the actor has extended introduction prior to adopting his female role. He retains his identity as a male character even as he attempts to act the role of a woman.

Before examining Shakespeare's use of Francis Flute as Thisbe in A Midsummer Night's Dream, mention should be made of Shakespeare's use of the mechanicals and the fairies to provide a theatrical framework within which the dream-like behavior of the lovers can fully express itself. After beginning in the ordered world of daylight Athens, the play moves into the magic and mysterious realm of the moonlit forest. Appropriately, it is here that the fairies interact with the lovers and the mechanicals in a very theatrical manner prior to a return to Athens to present the most extended play-within-the-play ever utilized by Shakespeare. The first entrance of the mechanicals establishes the self-consciously theatrical tone of the play. "Is all our company here?" asks Quince, immediately establishing the mechanical as an aspiring company of actors (I.ii.1). The mechanicals establish a fundamental reality in the play; they are set apart from the world of lovers and fairies

(who are also lovers) as both low-born characters and as comic actors. As rude tradesmen and as clowns, the men become associated with the theatrical arts and the relationship of those arts to the realities and fantasies they attempt to represent. Thus, in part, the mechanicals function as an image of the inadequacies of the theatrical icon in its attempt to capture the essence of more etherial realities.

Shakespeare is consistently preoccupied with the problems of identifying the reality beneath appearances, but he is also concerned with the artist's related problem of presenting, describing, identifying reality using limited artistic tools. In order to apprehend or artistically present the true reality of situations correctly, ordinary powers are not enough; a special imaginative power is needed.[5] The mechanicals'naive attempts to create theatrical reality help to justify Shakespeare's own presentation of the fairies. In no other play do so many "supernatural" characters appear for such extended lengths of time, yet they must be presented by actors of the same size and shape as those presenting the other characters. By placing the first scene of the mechanicals' preparations immediately before the first introduction of the fairies, Shakespeare provides the audience with an explicitly theatrical perspective through which to view the presentation of the fairies and their world. The spectators are not so literal

as Bottom. They are aware that

> The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
> Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven,
> And as imagination bodies forth
> The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
> Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing
> A local habitation and a name.
> (V.i.12-17)

The mechanicals remind the audience, as they remind Theseus, of its imaginative obligation. "The best in this kind are but shadows, and the worst are no worse if imagination amend them" (V.i.214-215).

The rehearsal of the mechanicals links the power of dreams and the power of the fairies with the power of the theatre by means of an ingenious yoking of multiple perspectives. In the previous scene, Titania has had the love flower squeezed upon her eyes, and now lies sleeping in her bower visible to the audience. The audience has just seen Lysander awaken with passionate love for Helena; the potency of the flower has been demonstrated, and a fantasy world created. Anticipation of Titania's awakening having been created, into this twilight world of fairies and magic flowers lumber the earthbound mechanicals to rehearse a play. The medium which has created the fantasy now draws attention to its own cleverness and its own limitations. Titania, asleep, no doubt dreaming fairy dreams, and yet a boy actor in girl's clothes, remains onstage to emphasize the juxtaposition visually. The crudity and sublimity of the stage become associated with the central issues of love.

Immediately attention is drawn to the theatrical surroundings in the paradoxical manner relished by the Elizabethans. "Pat, pat, and here's a marvelous convenient place for our rehearsal" (III.i.2). For an Elizabethan audience the theatrical ironies would be particularly pointed. Titania's continued presence on stage would sustain the previous localization of the stage in the forest; the audience would accept the stage floor as grass and the tiring-house as bush. Shakespeare plays his game by having Quince reverse the convention in transforming the forest back into a stage.

> Pat, pat, and here's a marvelous convenient place for our rehearsal. This green plot shall be our stage, this hawthorn brake our tiring-house; and we will do it in action as we will do it before the Duke.
>
> (III.i.2-6)

The joke is of course sustained on one level or another throughout the rehearsal, with the audience being given a specific reminder of the staging paradox a bit later when Quince reminds his actors, "When you have spoken your speech, enter into that brake. And so every one according to his cue" (III.i.76-78).

In this way, Shakespeare draws his audience's attention to the paradox of the stage as a forest as a stage. An appropriate beginning, because the scene turns into a discussion/demonstration of the nature of Elizabethan theatrical conventions, the joke being that the mechanicals

do not understand them. Bottom fears that the spectators will be unable to distinguish actors from characters, and thus will believe that the character actually kills himself, and that the lion is really a lion. Thus they decide to have a prologue to explain that the characters do not die, but are only actors. They further decide to emphasize the distinction between actor and character by having the actors' names announced and by having the actor's head stick through the neck of his lion's costume so that the audience will realize that he is "a man as other men are" (III.i.44-45). The joke is more pointed for an Elizabethan audience which has accepted full_size actors as minute fairies for the last two acts, and boy actors as women for two centuries or more. The spectators have seen the very actors who are speaking in numerous different parts, and, as is the case with repertory companies, know each by name. Part of their theatrical pleasure is in seeing the same icon of the actor present different characters. The mechanicals worry about creating a distinction that always existed.

Shakespeare is making fun of the naive rustic sensibility, but he also, to some extent, seems to be burlesquing both the older tradition of symbolism and the newer tradition of incipient realism.[6] Because the play requires moonlight, the realistic Bottom demands that an almanac be checked to see if the moon shines the night they play. Quince, turning to the older symbolic tradition, suggests

that an actor may enter "with a bush of thorns and a lantern, and say he comes to disfigure, or to present, the person of moonshine" (III.i.61-62). The irony, of course, is that the actors, standing under the midday English sky, are themselves presenting characters acting in moonlight, the same moonlight that Titania, still visible, went to sleep in. Shakespeare is willing, indirectly, to draw attention to his actors, stage, and theatrical conventions in order to burlesque the traditions which would either attempt to conceal or blatantly flaunt them. At the same time, he undermines any possible criticism of his own efforts at dream-making.

Shakespeare also emphasizes the various paradoxical levels of reality upon which the action is progressing in relation to the equally paradoxical aspects of love and, finally, of dreams as well. Puck enters to emphasize further the function of the theatre as a link between the crude reality of the mechanicals and the fantasy of love and dreams in the form of fairyland.

> What hempen homespuns have we swaggering here,
> So near the cradle of the Fairy Queen?
> What, a play toward! I'll be an auditor--
> An actor too perhaps, if I see cause.
> (III.i.79-82)

Through the convention of the aside, Puck, the fairy most an actor in his puckishness, and played by a puckish actor, contacts the audience as actor and character. For a moment, he achieves greater rapport and thus greater

reality for the audience than the mechanicals who are upstage busy making their preparations; for a moment he creates an implicit play-within-a-play (a situation which will be discussed later in greater detail). Thus the irony of "What a play toward!" Puck the actor adopts the audience's point of view and simultaneously comments upon the play of Shakespeare's and the play of Bottom's. Shakespeare, throughout, often chooses to make implicit comparison between the two plays. An actor in both plays, Puck, for the moment, will play audience to Bottom and Flute, as Titania sleeps on.

As the Laurel and Hardy of Athens enter in their roles as Pyramus and Thisbe, the perspectives upon the action presented to the audience become considerably complex. Represented here are at least four different levels of reality upon which an audience may view at least four separate sources of interest. The audience watches Puck watching the mechanicals watch Quince as he watches and corrects Bottom and Flute as they attempt to present Pyramus and Thisbe. Added to these linked levels of perception is the blind perspective of the sleeping Fairy Queen dreaming an after dinner's sleep of idealized love. The mechanical's play is a parody of her dream, a dream which is soon to be actualized in yet another crude parody of love, theatre, and fantasy that will later be called Bottom's dream. And

surrounding and enriching the audience's awareness of these different levels of reality and role-playing receding into the depth of theatrical fantasy is the awareness of the Lord Chamberlain's Men, an awareness created implicitly by the juxtaposition of the levels themselves, and explicitly by the clowning of Kempe and company.

> Qui: Speak, Pyramus. Thisby, stand forth.
> Bot: "Thisby, the flowers of odious savors sweet--"
> Qui: Odors, odors.
> Bot: "--odors savors sweet."
> (III.i.83-86)

Including The Globe Theatre itself in his comment, Puck remarks, "A stranger Pyramus than e'er played here" (III.i. 90). The embarrassed Flute ("Must I speak now?"), trying to squeak out his lines in as "small" a voice as he can, inevitably becomes a parody of the boy actor convention (III.i.91).

> Most radiant Pyramus, most lily-white of hue,
> Of color like the red rose on triumphant brier.
> (III.i.95-96)

The flower imagery of these lovers, like their hyperbole, mocks the conventions of love within which Lysander and Hermia, Demetrius and Helena have been plighting their troth, even as the exaggerated acting style mocks the theatrical presentation of such love. And whether or not this imagery reminds the audience of the juice which has transformed the vision of Lysander and is working that moment upon the vision of the visible Titania, the behavior of Flute itself cannot fail to remind the viewers of the boy

playing not only a woman, but a woman fairy. The perceptual alterations created by theatrical conventions allow the audience to participate directly in the similar perceptual distortions created by love and fantasy.

The pattern repeats itself when Bottom in his ass's head reenters and frightens his fellows, even as his fellows were afraid they would frighten the ladies with their lion's head; and when Titania, responding to the same theatrical image, falls in love with him. The various misperceptions and altered states of awareness, whether caused by ignorance, magic, or love, tend to be presented as either theatre or dream, or some combination of both. "The lunatic, the lover, and the poet / Are of imagination all compact" (V.i. 7-8), and as a spirit of the imagination, Puck, who likes best things "That befall preposterously" (III.ii.121), encourages Oberon to perceive the mad behavior of the lovers as a theatrical event.

> Shall we their fond pageant see?
> Lord, what fools these mortals be!
> (III.ii.114-15)

So also are theatrical events seen as dreams, as when Titania, disabused by the antidote flower, feels her frolic with Bottom in an ass's costume was a vision or a dream (IV.i.71-80). The lovers, left alone on stage when the morning has come, include the theatre and the audience in their gaze as they try to find a reality to which to relate. "Methinks I see these things with parted eye, /

When everything seems double" (IV.i.193-94). For Shakespeare correct perception apprehends the ambiguous and often contradictory duality of things, a duality of perception characterized no better than by an audience's perception in the theatre. This relationship is made explicit when Bottom, the last sleeping figure remaining on the stage sits up and looks at the audience. "When my cue comes, call me, and I will answer" (IV.i.204-5). Actors have been known to fall asleep on stage, and they are famous for forgetting lines and cues. Will Kempe could be expected to have fun with this line. Like the rest, Bottom imagines his experience to have been a vision or a dream, and, appropriately, Shakespeare has him decide, because of the unreality of the dream, to theatricalize it. He will have Quince turn it into a ballad to be sung at the end of the play. Continually, Shakespeare enriches his communication by manipulating his audience's immediate experience of the artistic medium itself.

It is perfectly fitting, therefore, that Shakespeare should end this play with a play-within-a-play. Without going into an extended analysis of this rich and complex scene, it can be pointed out that the entire play in both style and content has been moving toward this culmination in marriage and theatre. The inner play of "Pyramus and Thisbe" celebrates the genius and the limitations of the theatrical medium even as it provides an indirect commentary

upon the love intrigues and fantasy that have preceded it. Flute as Thisbe burlesques yet compliments the boys playing girls in the court audience. The lovers as audience comment upon the rustic players as lovers. And perhaps most importantly, Shakespeare treats the audience to a joke upon himself and his theatre as well; yet even this glorifies the range of both. Crude clowns as well as idealized lovers and ethereal spirits can hold their sway. The theatricality supports and emphasizes the spirituality while at the same time throwing a new perspective on the issues of love and dream. Addressing the audience in the epilogue, the actor playing Puck rounds off these issues with an idea Shakespeare was to reconsider in a different light near the end of his career.

> If we shadows have offended,
> Think but this, and all is mended,
> That you have but slumbered here
> While these visions did appear,
> And this weak and idle theme,
> No more yielding but a dream.
> (V.i.430-35)

The play, overtly now, reaches out to embrace the audience within the duality of its vision.

It is within this context that the actor playing Flute playing Thisbe draws attention to the actors playing the female lovers. If Flute has taken the advice of Quince and is playing the role in a mask (I.ii.51), then his performance is even farther removed from the performances of the boy actors who have quite successfully been playing

the female parts throughout the course of the play. The mechanicals are easy targets for the audience of lovers.

> A mote will turn the balance, which Pyramus, which Thisbe, is the better--he for a man, God warrant us, she for a woman, God bless us.
> (V.i.324-26)

The underlying irony, of course, is that although the performances of the lovers may have been better, their behavior in the forest was not much less strange than that they mock. Viewing them in their mutual roles as actors, the audience perceives this continuity, appreciates these double-biting barbs.

As previously mentioned, Shakespeare rarely uses the device of having a male character dress as a woman, either within or apart from a theatrical context. But in eight different plays he has ten different female characters dress as men. His strategy in this is not always to draw attention to the male actor playing the role, but more often than not some use is made of the audience's awareness that the character's disguise is the actor's reality.

For the Restoration and later audiences, the popularity of the device derived from the sustained visual delight in beholding the shapely legs of the female actress in skin-tight netherstocks, and from the combined visual and aural delight in watching a female actress attempt to ape the behavior of a man. The sex of the actor was a constant reminder of the sex of the character. For Shakespeare's audience, the reverse was true. Unless reminded, the

audience might forget that the male actor, dressed as a male and behaving as a male, was in fact a female character in disguise. But when reminded, the Elizabethan spectator is given an added perspective upon the action. He does not simply watch a woman playing a man, but rather a man playing a woman playing a man.

The joke is significantly different therefore when a character describes how a woman must alter her behavior to become a man. When Portia tells Nerissa how she will behave as a man, in fact, two boys imitating the behavior of women are describing how they will behave as women imitating the behavior of men.

> Por: When we are both accoutered like young men,
> I'll prove the prettier fellow of the two,
> And wear my dagger with the braver grace,
> And speak between the change of man and boy
> With a reed voice, and turn two mincing steps
> Into a manly stride, and speak of frays
> Like a fine bragging youth. . . .
> . . . . . .
> And twenty of these puny lies I'll tell,
> That men shall swear I have doscontinued school
> Above a twelvemonth. I have within my mind
> A thousand raw tricks of these bragging Jacks,
> Which I will practice.
> Ner: Why, shall we turn to men?
> Por: Fie, what a question's that
> If thou wert near a lewd interpreter!
> (The Merchant of Venice III.iv.63-80)

Of course they are very near a large number of very lewd interpreters who no doubt laugh raucously along with Shakespeare at the boy/women impishly batting their eyes at the audience. Because of his acting convention and its easy acceptance by his audience, Shakespeare not only

communicates an interesting view of men and women, but simultaneously communicates an interesting view of men's views of women's views of men.

A similar communication occurs when Pisanio counsels Imogen to disguise as a man in Cymbeline.

> You must forget to be a woman. Change
> Command into obedience, fear and niceness--
> The handmaids of all women, or, more truly,
> Woman it pretty self--into a waggish courage,
> Ready in gibes, quick-answered, saucy, and
> As quarrelous as the weasel.
> (III.iv.157-62)

After a bit more urging, Imogen replies, "Nay, be brief. / I see into thy end, and am almost / A man already" (III.iv. 168-70). A theatrical awareness here not only is utilized to highlight certain differences between men and women, but also to make a passing joke. An equally playful use of the boy actor convention occurs when Jessica expresses her embarrassment with her male clothes by saying that "Cupid himself would blush / To see me thus transformed to a boy" (The Merchant of Venice II.vi.38-99). When she wishes to be obscured, Lorenzo responds, "So are you, sweet, / Even in the lovely garnish of a boy" (II.vi.44-45). Jessica's concern is perfectly proper, but an Elizabethan audience aware of the actor in his role, simultaneously would be aware of what amounts to a subtle tribute to the power of the convention itself.

A more complex utilization of the Elizabethan penchant for assimilating multiple perspectives on multiple

levels of relevance occurs in The Two Gentlemen of Verona when Julia, disguised as a boy page in the service of Proteus the man she loves, attempts to win for him the love of another woman, Silvia. The ironies compound as the unreceptive Silvia tries to gain more information about the woman she pities, Proteus' former love Julia. When asked about Julia's height, Julia, disguised as a boy (a boy actor dressed as a boy speaking to a boy actor dressed as a girl), responds.

> When all our pageants of delight were played,
> Our youth got me to play the woman's part,
> And I was trimmed in Madam Julia's gown,
> Which served me as fit, by all men's judgments,
> As if the garment had been made for me.
> Therefore I know she is about my height.
> And at that time I made her weep agood,
> For I did play a lamentable part.
> Madam 'twas Ariadne passioning
> For Theseus' perjury and unjust flight,
> Which I so lovely acted with my tears
> That my poor mistress, moved therewithal,
> Wept bitterly; and would I might be dead,
> If I in thought felt not her very sorrow!
> (IV.iv.164-77)

The levels upon which this speech may be interpreted are many, and there are many perspectives within each level. The implications are complex even if the presence of boy actors is ignored.

A page, who is Julia in disguise, describes how he played a woman's part in a play, dressed in Julia's clothes. The theatrical artifice described is thus a description of the character's reality. The lamentable part played by the page is identical to the part Julia plays now. The final

four lines quoted suggest an emotional identification between Page as actor and Julia as audience (both wearing Julia's clothes) that characterizes the reverse of the present situation of Julia being the actor in the clothes of the page. Such multiple relevancies richly satisfied the Elizabethan love of analogy, paradox, and contradiction. Everything must be both itself and something else, and all the better if the former and the latter contradict each other. Thus the Elizabethans would relish the additional complicating awareness of the boy actors.

As has been suggested, the effect of the boy actors upon the awareness of the spectator would be analogous to the effect of an oxymoron, an analogy, or a pun. The boy actor contradicts the female character he plays, or at best provides an analogy. Yet when attention is drawn to that contradiction which is an analogy, it functions as a visual pun or a play on words with simultaneously contrasting relevancies. When the female character disguises as a man, the pun is no longer visual, but by implication becomes threefold. The single visual icon has three simultaneously contrasting levels of relevancy. In this light Julia's speech becomes more complex. The actor playing Julia has in fact been playing the woman's part dressed in Julia's clothes, is Julia's height, has made her weep, and quite possibly has "in thought" felt her very sorrow. The speech and the situation begin to explore both the nature of

acting and unhappy love in a way that shows them inextricably combined. After Silvia leaves, Julia is left alone with the audience.

> Alas, how love can trifle with itself!
> Here is her picture. Let me see. I think,
> If I had such a tire, this face of mine
> Were full as lovely as is this of hers.
> . . . . . .
> Her hair is auburn, mine is perfect yellow.
> If that be all the difference in his love,
> I'll get me such a colored periwig.
> (IV.iv.189-96)

A wig and a dress are the only essential differences between either the characters or the actors. As she leaves, Julia uses a word that can mean actor, counterfeit, and picture. "Come, shadow, come, and take this shadow up" (IV.iv.202). Elizabethans loved multiple meanings, verbal, visual, and the two in conjunction.

Shakespeare often uses his audience's ability to sustain these multiple levels of awareness in order to explore the similarities and differences in behavior and nature between men and women, and to enrich the audience's perception of character. This is perhaps most evident in Twelfth Night and As You Like It, plays centrally concerned with the similarities and differences between men and women.[7] Many writers have commented about the ironies created by the woman disguising as a man. But rarely does anyone discuss the third level of irony, the irony perceived by an Elizabethan audience watching a boy actor in the role.

The two scenes between Viola and Dule Orsino are examples. In their first scene, the Duke speaks to Viola as she appears in her disguise as the page Cesario.

> For they shall yet belie thy happy years
> That say thou art a man. Diana's lip
> Is not more smooth and rubious; thy small pipe
> Is as the maiden's organ, shrill and sound,
> And all is semblative a woman's part.
> (I.iv.30-34)

The familiar irony, the irony that communicates on our modern stages, results from the audience's awareness that the Page the Duke compares to a woman, is actually a woman. This irony would communicate to Elizabethans. But the Elizabethan audience also would be able to enjoy the ironic awareness that the woman the Duke falsely believes to be a boy is actually a boy after all. Everything the Duke says is true about the Page in one sense, about Viola in another, and about the boy actor in yet another. The boy actors were cast as they were because every thing about them was "semblative a woman's part."

During the second meeting between the two, many issues surface concerning the differences between men and women, issues informed largely by the ironies surrounding the Duke's ignorance as to the true sex of his page Cesario. And although no direct attention is drawn to the actor, nevertheless, the boy actor, as a simultaneous representative of male and female, provides a much more balanced view of the issues than the volatile Duke. The Duke has argued that,

> Our fancies are more giddy and unfirm,
> More longing, wavering, sooner lost and worn,
> Than women's are.
> (II.iv.34-36)

Yet when it is suggested that a woman may have as great a love for him as he for Olivia, he contradicts himself.

> There is no woman's sides
> Can bide the beating of so strong a passion
> As love doth give my heart, no woman's heart
> So big to hold so much. They lack retention.
> (II.iv.96-99)

Viola, of course, contradicts him with her loving gaze even as he speaks, yet as the male view of the female view of the male, her speech is accepted perhaps as being more knowing and more disinterested than if spoken by a female actress.

> Vio: We men may say more, swear more, but indeed
> Our shows are more than will, for still we prove
> Much in our vows, but little in our love.
> Duk: But died thy sister of her love, my boy?
> Vio: I am all the daughters of my father's house,
> And all the brothers too. And yet I know not.
> (II.iv.119-24)

The audience's awareness of the actor receives a more sustained evocation in the scenes between Viola and Olivia. When they first meet, the situation is quite similar to the previous situation that existed between Julia and Silvia. Viola, disguised as the page Cesario, comes to win the love of the unreceptive Olivia for Orsino, the man she loves. Shakespeare has conceived the scene in theatrical terms; he encourages the audience to view the characters as actors performing on a number of different levels of reality for

a number of different audiences.

As Olivia prepares to hear Orsino's embassy, she assumes a physical disguise of sorts; she adds to her costume of mourning by having a veil placed over her face, and then ensconces herself next to Maria and perhaps some other female attendants on one side of the stage (I.v.175). Through one of the upstage doors enters Viola with her attendants coming down to occupy the other side of the stage. Unsure as to who is the lady of the house, Viola crosses the "no-man's" land and begins a very elevated, artificial speech directed at Olivia who has agreed to answer for the lady. "Most radiant, exquisite, and unmatchable beauty" (I.v.181-82). The veil of course amplifies the joke, and causes Viola to turn to the others.

> I pray you tell me if this be the lady of the house, for I never saw her. I would be loath to cast away my speech, for besides that it is excellently well penned, I have taken great pains to con it.
> (I.iv.182-83)

When questioned, she demurs.

> Vio: I can say little more than I have studied, and that question's out of my part. Good gentle one, give me modest assurance if you be the lady of the house, that I may proceed in my speech.
> Oli: Are you a comedian?
> Vio: No, my profound heart. And yet, by the very fangs of malice I swear, I am not that I play. Are you the lady of the house?
> Oli: If I do not usurp myself, I am.
> (I.v.189-97)

The two levels of reality obvious to everyone are the levels of memorized speech and social role. Viola clearly

distinguishes between the memorized praise and the real scorn, while Olivia uses her veil to separate what might be called her role as a caustic interrogator from her proper role as lady of the house. The levels are reflected in the changes in Viola's manner of speech.

> Most certain, if you are she, you do usurp yourself; for what is yours to bestow is not yours to reserve. But this is from my commission. I will on with my speech in your praise, and then show you the heart of my message.
>
> (I.v.198-202)

Viola is functioning on more levels for more audiences than is Olivia. She performs Orsino's sweet speech on one level, and expresses her own displeasure on another. But when Olivia asks her if she is an actor, and she responds, "I am not that I play" (I.v.195), she is performing for the audience in the Globe. She responds on one level as Viola who is not the page she plays, and on another level as the boy actor who is not the girl he plays. The audience is invited to perceive the action as having simultaneous relevance on a number of different levels of theatricality from a number of different points of view.

This pattern continues throughout the scene with less pointed reference to the different levels of acting being presented by these two boy actors playing female characters. Viola contends her speech is poetical and that she took pains to memorize it. Olivia does not want to waste time with "so skipping a dialogue" (I.v.213). Tiring of these social games, Viola asks for a private audience

because, "What I am, and what I would, are as secret as maidenhead" (I.v.232-33). Alone, free from the social pressure of performing for their attendants, they yet continue to perform for each other till Viola attempts to strip away yet another level of role by asking Olivia to unmask, to remove her veil. She does so with the enigmatic rejoinder, "Look you, sir, such a one I was this present" (I.v.252-53).

As they continue to interact, a new level of behavior begins to emerge in the growing interest shown by Olivia toward Orsino's page. Viola, adopting yet another level of role behavior, begins to describe how she would behave if she were wooing Olivia, and, to make her assumed role even more seductive, Shakespeare provides her with one of his most musical speeches.

> Halloo your name to the reverberate hills,
> And make the babbling gossip of the air
> Cry out "Olivia!"
> (I.v.291-93)

Presented with this new perspective upon the Page, seeing him by means of the adopted role as a potential lover, Olivia is entranced and responds with words heavily laden with feeling. "You might do much" (I.v.295). Shakespeare has conceived the scene in terms of the various layers of artificial behavior which comprise and impede social interaction. The audience perceives and assimilates the numerous different levels of simultaneous interaction in ways that intimately involve it in the process of misapprehension and

misunderstanding. The boy actors, one dressed as a girl, the other dressed as a girl dressed as a boy, become sustaining visual icons or emblems of their own dissembling.

The implicit communication of the actor as icon is suggested perhaps most strongly during Viola's soliloquy to the audience in which she realizes that she is the object of Olivia's love.

> Fortune forbid my outside have not charmed her!
> . . . . . .
> I am the man. If it be so, as 'tis,
> Poor lady, she were better love a dream.
> (II.ii.19-27)

The actor and the character together constitute an emblem that has an inside and an outside, the outside being the dream, the inside the reality. But, of course, a person in disguise, like the actor, constitutes a similar emblem; both are instant metaphors for any disparity between internal state and external behavior. The added irony in this instance derives from the audience's awareness that "the man" is the dream of one emblem and the reality of the other. Viola presents her multiple nature to the audience in a way that simultaneously enunciates a central conflict in the play.

> As I am man,
> My state is desperate for my master's love;
> As I am woman--now alas the day!--
> What thriftless sighs shall poor Olivia breathe!
> (II.ii.37-40)

The use of the boy actors as emblems is perhaps more pointed during their second meeting when they share an interchange that depends for its full meaning upon an

audience's ability to assimilate many different levels of simultaneous role behavior.

> Oli: I prithee tell me what thou think'st of me.
> Vio: That you do think you are not what you are.
> Oli: If I think so, I think the same of you.
> Vio: Then think you right. I am not what I am.
> Oli: I would you were as I would have you be!
> Vio: Would it be better, madam, than I am?
> (III.i.150-55)

These actor-character emblems enrich Shakespeare's comic exploration of the difficulties involved in attempting accurately to ascertain and successfully win over the true affections of a person one loves. All the major characters in the play face this problem.

A related problem is dealt with in similar fashion, but with a new and complicating twist in As You Like It. In this play, Shakespeare appears to use the female in male disguise as a means of revealing aspects of personality and behavior which conventional standards of femininity would normally demand remain hidden.[8] The use of boy actors in the women's roles facilitated this process. Shakespeare prepares the audience to accept Rosalind's behavior as being more like her appearance than her reality when she first enters in disguise.

> I could find in my heart to disgrace my man's apparel and to cry like a woman. But I must comfort the weaker vessel, as doublet and hose ought to show itself courageous to petticoat, therefore, courage, good Aliena.
> (II.iv.4-8)

It is significant that, as in Twelfth Night, Shakespeare presents two boy actors acting women's roles, one dressed

as a woman, the other as the boy he is, and yet here, both in disguise, both altered from what they were. Here Shakespeare is not trying to create the confusions that result from misapprehension. The boys as girls, one appearing masculine, the other feminine, exist more purely as emblems, exist as two different sides of "feminine" behavior. Because they are both the same, as boy actors and as female characters, the differences must be emphasized by means of externals, by means of clothes. The role of the doublet is to comfort the petticoat. Shakespeare is preparing to focus on sex roles.

When she next appears and hears that Orlando is near by, Rosalind finds it not so easy to conform her internal stirrings to her external appearance.

> Dost thou think though I am caparisoned like a man, I have a doublet and hose in my disposition?
> (III.ii.204-6)

> Do you not know I am a woman? When I think, I must speak.
> (III.ii.264-65)

But when he appears, she finds she can gain control and "under that habit play the knave with him" (III.ii.314-15). Throughout the rest of the scene Celia says not a word, but merely watches in silence as Rosalind performs for her and, through her, for the audience. Yet at the same time, Celia, dressed as a woman, the image of demure femininity, becomes a visual onstage representation of the subject of their discussion. Rosalind, Celia, and the audience respond to

and appreciate, at Orlando's expense, the statements of this Ganymede in relation to each different layer of role behavior.

> I thank God I am not a woman, to be touched with so many giddy offenses as he hath generally taxed their whole sex withal.
>
> (III.ii.365-68)

The complexity of the levels increases as Rosalind describes how she as Ganymede did play the role of a woman to cure a youth of love.

> At which time would I, being but a moonish youth, grieve, be effeminate, changeable, longing and liking, proud, fantastical, apish, shallow, inconstant, full of tears, full of smiles, for every passion something and for no passion truly anything, as boys and women are for the most part cattle of this color.
>
> (III.ii.429-35)

As he often does, Shakespeare implicitly draws attention to his boy actors, and in this instance, equates them with the women they play. Here the audience watches a boy play a girl play a boy who talks about how he played a girl. Prepared, the audience will soon see what has been described.

Rosalind's many different roles become complicated even further when she decides to participate in the "pageant truly played" between Silvius and Phebe. With unknowing wisdom she states, "Bring us to this sight and you shall say, / I'll prove a busy actor in their play" (III.iv.61-62). Shakespeare adds to the different aspects of love presented in the play by repeating the device he used in Twelfth Night, having a female character fall in love with

another female character in a male disguise. The joke is even more piquant with male actors playing the roles. The scene prepares for the virtuoso scene between Rosalind and Orlando in which the disguised Rosalind plays Rosalind.

At the outset, the scene is given a theatrical orientation by Jaques' undercutting of Orlando's first attempt at treating the country boy as his beloved Rosalind.

> Orl: Good day and happiness, dear Rosalind!
> Jaq: Nay, then, God buy you an you talk in blank verse. (Exit)
>
> (IV.i.30-33)

By drawing attention to his verse convention, Shakespeare implicitly draws attention to all his conventions, particularly the boy actor in female roles. Orlando, in pretending that this boy is Rosalind, is doing exactly what the actor playing Orlando does throughout the play. The common practice of actors treating other actors as their lovers on the stage is used to reinforce Orlando treating this boy as a lover. Orlando and the actor who plays Orlando are now playing the same game. Only on the Elizabethan stage was this level of interaction manifest, when two boys dressed as boys stood onstage playing love games with each other. The scene must be experienced in this way to apprehend the full richness of the alternating perspectives created by the shifting roles the actors play.

A boy actor plays Rosalind who is playing a boy who is playing Rosalind. Everything that happens onstage may

be perceived as having relevance on any one or all of these levels of behavior. Certainly all the references to the disguised Rosalind as a substitute for the "real" Rosalind apply with equally relevant irony to the boy actor playing Rosalind.

> Ros: And I am your Rosalind.
> Cel: It pleases him to call you so, but he hath a Rosalind of a better leer than you.
> (IV.i.65-67)
>
> Ros: Am not I your Rosalind?
> Orl: I take some joy to say you are, because I would be talking of her.
> Ros: Well, in her person I say I will not have you.
> (IV.i.89-93)

It is possible that the actor playing the part of Rosalind is playing her here as he played her when she wore female clothes, and played her in male clothes using his own natural behavior. In this case, what is natural for the actor is a role for Rosalind and vice versa. The effect is the reverse of what it would be for a modern audience watching female actors.

The situation allows both Rosalind and the actor the opportunity to shift in and out of a variety of different roles to reveal the actor's virtuosity and to create an expansive view of Rosalind as a personality. In her word games with Orlando, Shakespeare allows Rosalind to reveal a wit and boldness not conventionally associated with the behavior of a woman in love. Orlando, on the other hand, exhibits the kind of emotional frailty normally associated

with feminine behavior. By a theatrical trick Shakespeare has them switch sex roles.

> Ros: Well, in her person I say I will not have you.
> Orl: Then in mine own person I die.
> Ros: No, faith, die by attorney. . . .Men have died from time to time and worms have eaten them, but not for love.
> Orl: I would not have my right Rosalind of this mind, for I protest her frown might kill me.
> Ros: By this hand, it will not kill a fly.
> (IV.i.92-111)

Rosalind becomes the comforter of the vulnerable Orlando.

Shakespeare allows the "inner" Rosalind to reveal itself from time to time, but immediately has her switch back into one of her harder roles.

> Orl: Then love me, Rosalind.
> Ros: Yes, faith, will I, Fridays and Saturdays and all.
> Orl: And wilt thou have me?
> Ros: Aye, and twenty such.
> Orl: What sayest thou?
> Ros: Are you not good?
> Orl: I hope so.
> Ros: Why then, can one desire too much of a good thing?
> (IV.i.115-24)

Rosalind has already taught Orlando how to woo her, now she is purging him of romanticism; in her "masculine" role she is teaching him to be a "man."

Before Orlando can adapt to one role, she switches to another, keeping him off balance by pulsating reversals of intent. Rosalind trains him to accept her in many moods. Finally Rosalind decides to act out a mock marriage that functions implicitly as a play-within-the-play, a dramatic strategy that will be discussed later. Rosalind will be

the wife, Orlando the husband, and Celia the priest. But Rosalind, like Bottom in A Midsummer Night's Dream, wants to play all the parts, and hardly gives the other players a chance.

> Ros: What do you say, Sister?
> Orl: Pray thee, marry us.
> Cel: I cannot say the words.
> Ros: You must begin, "Will you, Orlando--"
> Cel: Go to. Will you, Orlando, have to wife this Rosalind?
> Orl: I will.
> Ros: Aye, but when?
> Orl: Why now, as fast as she can marry us.
> Ros: Then you must say "I take thee, Rosalind, for wife."
> Orl: I take thee, Rosalind, for wife.
> (IV.i.126-37)

On top of all the other roles she assumes, Shakespeare has Rosalind functioning as stage manager and director of this little playlet in which all three characters see themselves as actors, and all three actors are boys.

The situation generates excitement by allowing Shakespeare at any moment to reveal some aspect of the many Rosalinds within, through the guise of the external role ostensibly being adopted. Alternatively, and often simultaneously, the audience is allowed glimpses of the actor, of lovesick Rosalind, of Rosalind's image of how a man behaves (Ganymede), and Rosalind's image of how a man would present Rosalind to another man. The actor must constantly shift his technique to accommodate each facet. The explicit tribute to Rosalind's ability in manipulating the various levels of roles, made ignorantly by Orlando, is a

simultaneous tribute to the skill of the actor and the cleverness of Shakespeare himself.

> Orl: But will my Rosalind do so?
> Ros: By my life, she will do as I do.
> Orl: Oh, but she is wise.
> Ros: Or else she could not have the wit to do this.
> (IV.i.158-61)

The audience's awareness of a controlling personality within all the layers of pretense allows the roles designed to conceal Rosalind from Orlando to reveal a kaleidoscopic Rosalind to the audience, a Rosalind which could have been revealed in no other way.

The situation allows Shakespeare the freedom to look even into the future, beyond the romanticism of the wedding vows. The fact that one of the many Rosalinds is speaking lends an added piquancy to the image of a Rosalind ten years later.

> Maids are May when they are maids, but the sky changes when they are wives. I will be more jealous of thee than a Barbary cock pigeon over his hen, more clamorous than a parrot against rain, more newfangled than an ape, more giddy in my desires than a monkey. I will weep for nothing, like Diana in the fountain, and I will do that when you are disposed to be merry. I will laugh like a hyen, and that when thou art inclined to sleep.
> (IV.i.148-57)

The volatile behavior she describes, she has in part been demonstrating. The audience is invited to consider whether this vivacious young lady, as entrancing as she might be as a lover, would yet be tolerable as a roommate. Finally, the audience's view of this fascinating onstage personage,

this intriguing boy/girl, is a composite image of all the roles she/he plays.

After Orlando leaves, Celia and Rosalind practically switch roles. All during the banter between Orlando and Rosalind, it must be remembered, Celia remained onstage as a more or less silent observer. As has been suggested, she provides the visual reminder of conventionally accepted feminine behavior in front of men. Some suggestion of her disapproval was evident in her resistance to playing the role of priest in the mock marriage, but essentially she remained an image of demure sweetness. Even as Orlando's exit allows Rosalind to reveal the lovesick girl beneath the hardminded antiromantic behavior, so does his exit allow Celia to reveal the rather coarse indignation beneath her modest exterior.

> Cel: You have simply misused our sex in your love prate. We must have your doublet and hose plucked over your head, and show the world what the bird hath done to her own nest.
> Ros: O Coz, Coz, Coz, my pretty little coz, that thou didst know how many fathom deep I am in love! But it cannot be sounded. My affection hath an unknown bottom, like the bay of Portugal.
>
> (IV.i.205-12)

Once again, Shakespeare uses Celia, a boy in woman's dress, to balance the behavior of Rosalind in man's. Celia presents the traditional stage image of how women behave in front of men versus when they are alone; Rosalind presents the opposite view. Separately as actor-characters, and jointly as masculine-feminine, they become an image of the range

and complexity of feminine behavior, a range unrecognized by contemporary standards.

> Ros: I'll tell thee, Aliena, I cannot be out of the sight of Orlando. I'll go find a shadow and sigh till he come.
> Cel: And I'll sleep.
> (IV.i.220-23)

The reversal is complete. Shakespeare utilizes his boy actors (in character's clothes) and the convention of disguise (characters in concealing clothes) to explore the relationships between internalized and externalized levels of role behavior. In other plays he explores the more serious sides of these issues, but here he focuses upon varieties of masculine and feminine behavior.

The interaction between external role and internal reality, a consistent preoccupation with Shakespeare, is examined again and again from different angles in this play. With comic seriousness, Shakespeare again reveals the doubleness of Rosalind by relating her behavior to issues of sex and histrionics. Rosalind swoons when she sees the handkerchief soaked with Orlando's blood.

> Oli: You a man! You lack a man's heart.
> Ros: I do so, I confess it. Ah, sirrah, a body would think this was well counterfeited. I pray you tell your brother how well I counterfeited. Heigh-ho!
> Oli: This was not counterfeit. There is too great testimony in your complexion that it was a passion of earnest.
> Ros: Counterfeit, I assure you.
> Oli: Well then, take a good heart and counterfeit to be a man.
> Ros: So I do. But, i' faith, I should have been a woman by right.
> (IV.iii.164-77)

Rosalind's sex here seems to defeat her acting ability. She fails in her attempt to "have a swashing and a martial outside, / As many other mannish cowards have / That do outface it with their semblances" (I.iii.122-24). But of course Rosalind's acting failure is the boy actor's success; where she fails to alter external behavior to conform to the opposite of her sex, the boy actor succeeds.

Yet, lest the central issues of the play be forgotten, and to epitomize interrelationships established between masculine and feminine behavior as viewed from a histrionic perspective in terms of layers of adopted or assumed roles, Shakespeare provides a brilliant coda to the play. He breaks with the custom of having only actors dressed as men deliver an epilogue, and gives the epilogue to the actor who has been playing Rosalind. He breaks with tradition to emphasize untraditional feminine behavior in relation to the various roles that must be adopted by the actor.

A very special relationship exists between an actor and the audience during epilogues. The actor steps farther outside the play and farther outside his role than he usually does at any time during the course of the play itself. He overtly uses the second person form of address. Yet at the same time, he never completely abandons the identity of his character, although the relationship between the character and the actor will vary from epilogue to epilogue even as it varies within the course of a single play. It is

significant that Shakespeare uses this special relationship created by the epilogue, a relationship in which the audience's awareness of the actor is usually much greater than its awareness of the character, the reverse of the normal situation within the play, to enrich further the audience's perception of the composite of roles called Rosalind and, through her, the composite of roles that is a woman.

> It is not the fashion to see the lady the epilogue, but it is no more unhandsome than to see the lord the prologue.
> (Epilogue.1-2)

By breaking with tradition, by utilizing the epilogue's emphasis on the actor, and by direct comparison, Shakespeare continues to expand his audience's image of what constitutes a woman.

> I am not furnished like a beggar, therefore to beg will not become me.
> (9-10)

Attention is drawn to the actor's clothes. For four acts the audience has watched this actor dressed as a man, but behaving as a woman would act a man. Now it watches the actor dressed as a woman but, most likely, behaving as the male he is. There is a touch of irony in this boy, dressed as a girl but behaving as a boy, using his clothes as his excuse for not begging. For over two hours the audience has been watching him play all manner of roles unhampered by his attire. This man/woman/actor, alone on stage, reaffirms his status as a visual emblem, uniting all the images into one.

> My way is to conjure you, and I'll begin with the women. I charge you, O women, for the love you bear to men, to like as much of this play as please you. And I charge you, O men, for the love you bear to women--as I perceive by your simpering none of you hates them--that between you and the women the play may please. If I were a woman I would kiss as many of you as had beards that pleased me, complexions that liked me, and breaths that I defied not. And I am sure as many as have good beards or good faces or sweet breaths will, for my kind offer, when I make curtsy bid me farewell.
>
> (11-22)

In conclusion, it should be noted that, as with the theatrical metaphor, Shakespeare will on occasion draw attention to his boy actors in female roles merely to make a joke, but more often, he is utilizing his audience's awareness and acceptance of the theatrical reality as a strategy of communication. By manipulating his audience's fluctuating awareness of the actor and the stage, Shakespeare finds ways of enriching the audience's perception of character and theme. The enrichment occurs in two major ways. A theatrical awareness inevitably draws attention explicitly or implicitly to the analogous theatricalities in the character's behavior and, by another analogy, in our daily lives. An awareness of the actor playing the character invariably draws attention to the character as an actor in the dramatic situation, and the social acting necessitated by social life. The depth or complexity of a character is created by the number of roles which the character adopts during the course of the action. An awareness of the actor suggests and adds to that perception of depth. An

awareness of the actor draws attention to the interrelated analogies between theatrical reality, theatrical creation, and the theatrical aspects of life; it draws attention to the process which allows the communication to occur and become meaningful.

The second major way in which a theatrical awareness enriches the artistic communication is by creating multiple perspectives upon stage behavior through which the spectator can assimilate meaning from numerous points of view. Shakespeare often draws attention to his boy actors in order to encourage his audience to consider an issue, simultaneously or alternately, from a masculine and a feminine viewpoint. To understand fully the extent to which Shakespeare can control theatrical perception by controlling the perspectives through which the action is viewed, it is necessary to examine Shakespeare's use of the dramatic strategy that most aptly characterizes the Elizabethan theatrical experience: the-play-within-the-play.

NOTES

[1]Robertson W. Davies, Shakespeare's Boy Actors (London: J.M. Dent and Sons, Ltd., 1939), pp. 185-186.

[2]Quoted in Ibid., p. 11.

[3]Ibid., p. 140.

[4]Harrison, ed., Complete Works, p. 641, ll. 129-30n.

[5]Daniel Seltzer, "'Their Tragic Scene'": The Phoenix and the Turtle and Shakespeare's Love Tragedies," Shakespeare Quarterly, XII, No. 2 (Spring, 1961), p. 91.

[6]Styan, Shakespeare's Stagecraft, p. 29.

[7]Emily Brown Stanley, "Seeing and Perceiving: A Study of the Use of Disguised Persons and Wise Fools in Shakespeare" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, The University of Florida, 1960), p. 66.

[8]Ibid., p. 55.

CHAPTER V

THE-PLAY-WITHIN-THE-PLAY

On the simplest level, the phrase play-within-the-play is used to describe the presentation of a play by characters in a play, and , essentially, could be considered a plot device. But because the situation being presented on the stage is identical to the situation existing in the theatre, a multitude of implicit comparisons is being suggested. On the most obvious level, the characters in the play who are watching other characters put on a play are performing an activity identical to that of the spectators in the theatre. In their common activity as observers, they share similar points of view which provide the basis for many more implicit and explicit comparisons between the kinds of activities that take place in a theatre, in the play, and in daily life.

For an audience which expected to be contacted directly, the play-within-the-play was an ingenious device for involving it in the play without violating the overtly self-contained action. The spectators identify with the onstage observers who become an audience representative, a temporary intermediary between play and audience. As with direct address, the play-within-the-play created a middle

ground between the social reality of the audience and the aesthetic reality of the dramatic situation in which the actor and spectator could have more intimate contact. As is obvious from previous discussion, such contact occurs and is encouraged at many different times and in many different ways during the course of a play. Thus it can be said that the spectator's awareness is constantly oscillating towards a view of character as a series of roles being played both simultaneously and in sequence, from the role of the actor on up to the highest layer of performed behavior. Even as the spectator often views the behavior before him as a series of roles within roles, depending upon the number of levels, so too can he be said to view the action as a series of plays within plays. The number of levels perceived by the spectator is determined by the ingenuity of the playwright.

Damon and Pithias (1565) by Richard Edwardes appears to have been the first play to use the play-within-the-play in a consistent and structural fashion to aid in uniting the stage action with the audience's presence.[1] The relationship is a refinement upon the situation created by Medwall in Fulgens and Lucres some sixty five years before. Then the audience was overtly included in the action of the play; here the inclusion is implicit by means of an onstage surrogate.

The use of the overt play-within-a-play as a

structural principle for an entire play occurs in The Rare Triumphs of Love and Fortune (?1582), and A Looking Glass for London and England, but the full potential of the device is not realized until The Spanish Tragedy (c. 1589). During the entire play, the characters in the induction, Revenge and the ghost of Andrea, sit on stage above the action in the God-like position of observers, watching the play with the audience, an observable intermediary between the world of the audience and the world of the play within.

This relationship becomes more complex when Hieronymo decides to stage his own production, the tragedy of Soliman and Perseda, in which everything which seems to be a theatrical production is in fact real (Middleton later utilized the device in Women Beware Women). Four levels of orientation are thus created, the third and fourth blending inextricably together.

> ...The Spanish Tragedy deliberately builds upon the idea of the world as a stage. Here, for the first time, that new attitude towards the audience upon which Shakespearian drama was to rely can be seen fully worked out. Preeminently a man of the theatre, profoundly aware of its unexplored potentialities, Kyd was even more successful than Richard Edwardes in uniting that medieval sense of contact with the audience with the concept of the self-sufficient play. There is no extra-dramatic address in The Spanish Tragedy. It is as self-contained as the Senecan tragedies on which it was modelled. Through the actor-spectator Don Andrea, through certain deliberate uses of the world as a stage image in the form both of simple statement and of plays within the play, the relation of illusion to reality , actors to audience, is constantly being examined and redefined.[2]

A general recognition of the fascination with the interpenetration of theatre and life made possible a new relationship between actors and audience.

Righter describes the conventions based upon this relationship as functioning in three related ways.

> They express the depth of the play world. Secondly, they define the relationship of that world with the reality represented by the audience. Used within the "reality" of the play itself, they also serve to remind the audience that elements of illusion are present in ordinary life, and that between the world and the stage there exists a complicated interplay of resemblance that is part of the perfection and nobility of the drama itself as a form.[3]

But in her analysis of specific instances, she concentrates almost exclusively upon Shakespeare's use of the play metaphor as an image to reinforce the thematic concerns of the play, or as a reflection of Shakespeare's changing attitudes toward the theatre and drama during his career.

> For Elizabethans, then, the relation of illusion to reality was anything but simple. The play, holding a mirror up to nature, was bound to reflect the reality represented by its audience. Yet this audience was also forced to recognize the encroachments of illusion upon its own domain. . . . Elizabethans were constantly being reminded of the fact that life tends to imitate the theatre. . . . Used in a multitude of ways, to describe the nature of deceivers, the splendour of man's life and its transience, the inexorability of Fortune, or the character of individual moments of time, the play metaphor was for Elizabethans an inescapable expression, a means of fixing the essential quality of the age.[4]

But she rarely discusses the manner in which each specific instance involves the audience in the stage action, the manner in which the audience's oscillating awareness of the

actor is utilized for specific artistic ends. This chapter will examine the play-within-the-play to discover how it utilizes the spectator's awareness of the actor and the stage to enrich the complexity of his involvement in the experience presented before him.

Even using the broadest definition of the device, Shakespeare may be said to have utilized the overt play-within-the-play merely six times. Hamlet and A Midsummer Night's Dream contain the only true plays which are presented. The Taming of the Shrew is itself a play-within-a-play, but it could be more accurately described as a play with an induction, inasmuch as Christopher Sly ceases to have a verbal function in the play after the first scene. The presentation of the Nine Worthies in Love's Labor Lost is just that, a presentation of characters one at a time. The only interaction is between the actor and the audience; there is none between characters. The theatrical presentations in Timon of Athens and The Tempest are more properly masques within plays in which singing and dancing predominate over impersonation. These are the six. The scenes between King and Son staged spontaneously by Hal and Falstaff in I Henry IV function as plays within the major play, but are not planned theatrical productions staged for an audience. The same may be said of the even less formalized burlesque of Ajax by Thersites, and of other similar imitations or impersonations. Shakespeare was not as fond of the overt

device as many of his contemporaries were. But an analysis of the overt device is helpful in gaining a full understanding of the multitude of ways in which Shakespeare implicitly creates little theatrical events within the larger play.

Inasmuch as the "Pyramus and Thisbe" play within the larger play of A Midsummer Night's Dream has been discussed to some extent, it is appropriate to focus the examination of Shakespeare's use of the play-within-the-play upon the only other fully developed example of the device: "The Mousetrap" scene from Hamlet. Even as the examination of the "Pyramus and Thisbe" scene revealed Shakespeare's exploitation of his audience's theatrical awareness to serve the ends of comedy, an examination of "The Mousetrap" reveals something of Shakespeare's exploitation of that same awareness to serve a more serious purpose. Before concentrating upon the scene itself, it will be helpful to examine briefly the theatrical context in which the scene occurs.

Many writers have commented upon the abundance of theatrical metaphors and theatrical references in Hamlet, and how Shakespeare presents the action and the issues of the play in strongly theatrical terms.[5] The opening line, "Who's there?" may be said to voice one of the central issues which recurs over and over again throughout the play with increasingly theatrical overtones. The dramatic action may be viewed as composed of many little clandestine

dramas within the larger play, dramas acted out by each character in the guise of many different roles played for a different audience of different characters at different times. There is scarcely a character in the entire play who, at one time or another, does not alter his or her behavior, who does not adopt a role with the sole objective of creating an impression in the eyes of observers which differs from the truth. The image of the actor is aptly suited to such concerns. Yet at the same time, each character is attempting to discover the reality that lies beneath the roles the others play, attempting to discover who's there. At the same time that he is acting, each character is a scrutinizing audience of the other.

Hamlet's first extended speech in the play overtly verbalizes the problem of differentiating between the external appearances of behavior which a man may control, and the internal reality which he may hide.

> Seems, madam! Nay, it is. I know not "seems."
> 'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good Mother,
> Nor customary suits of solemn black,
> Nor windy suspiration of forced breath--
> No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,
> Nor the dejected havior of the visage,
> Together with all forms, moods, shapes of grief--
> That can denote me truly. These indeed seem,
> For they are actions that a man might play.
> But I have that within which passeth show,
> These but the trappings and the suits of woe.
> (I.ii.76-86)

The King immediately responds, and, in this juxtaposition, his behavior as a "seemer" is given its first strong

suggestion. Claudius is one of the few characters in the entire Shakespearean canon about whom Shakespeare keeps his audience in suspense. For the first two acts, the problem of Hamlet is the problem of the audience: Is Claudius guilty? Both Hamlet and the audience attempt to see through the guise of external roles in which Claudius envelopes himself. Only just prior to "The Mousetrap" is the audience given information denied to Hamlet, when Claudius speaks his first aside.

> The harlot's cheek, beautied with plastering art,
> Is not more ugly to the thing that helps it
> Than is my deed to my most painted word.
> (III.i.51-53)

Shakespeare confirms the audience's suspicion that Claudius is not what he appears in order to focus its efforts even more strongly toward the task of totally penetrating the disguise, the task of discovering the full reality of his inner motives. In this way, the spectator's attention is readied for "The Mousetrap." Only after he has created the intense concentration of perception demanded by this play-within-the-play does Shakespeare allow Claudius to reveal the full truth. Only after this scene does the audience receive confirmation of the fact that Claudius did indeed murder his brother. Shakespeare violates tradition and his normal practice throughout his career by keeping his audience in ignorance; he goes out of his way to make the audience share the experience of Hamlet's dilemma, to make

the spectator view the action through Hamlet's eyes.

The ironies surrounding Hamlet's and the audience's mutual search for truth are of course compounded by Hamlet's repeated attempts to employ the mechanics of the theatre to achieve that end. To discover the truth beneath the roles of others, he decides to stoop to their level of seeming, to adopt a role himself, to put on an antic madness. This aspect of Hamlet's behavior has long been noticed.

> Hamlet is an actor. Like any character in whom Shakespeare was greatly interested, he plays a role. He plays indeed many roles, being supreme in tragedy as Falstaff was in comedy. . . . Like Falstaff, he shows the man he is by being many men. With the exception of Horatio there is no person in the play for whose benefit he has not conceived and studied a part.[6]

And with the exception of Horatio there is scarcely a character who has not studied a part for Hamlet's benefit. Surrounded by false appearances, Hamlet himself adopts false appearances, while he, the other characters, and the audience use false appearances to search for the truth beneath the false appearances of others. Critics have therefore been encouraged to view the characters as playwrights as well as actors.

> There is hardly a scene in the whole work in which some character is not trying to dramatize another. Almost every important character acts at some moment like a playwright, employing a playwright's consciousness of drama to impose a certain posture or attitude on another.[7]

Hamlet can be viewed as playwright and actor, but also as chorus and audience to his own performance.

> Hamlet is caught in a maze of antinomies. He both chooses his "role" and has it forced upon him by fate. He must live in the divided worlds of good and evil, of fact and fiction, of actuality and feigning, of spectator and performer. His part requires of him both action and passivity, and he is constantly stepping out from behind his mask to serve as chorus to his own tragedy.[8]

Even as Hamlet acts out many different roles as he attempts to see through the false roles of others, so too does he decide to use the artifice of a play to force out the real behavior of the spectators. The power of the Player King's acting shames him for his own inactive behavior, yet this very process reaffirms the power of illusion over reality.

> Hence the theatre to Hamlet, to Shakespeare, and to the audience becomes a symbol for making unseen realities seen, for exposing the secret places of the human heart and objectifying them in a way without which they would be unbearable to look upon. We see ourselves, as it were, through a looking glass. Thus the mirror image is connected in Hamlet's mind with acting and, by extension, with other forms of art which penetrate hypocrisy and pretense.[9]

By adopting the role of madness, Hamlet is free to express his real responses, responses which normally would have to be concealed within the behavior demanded by social propriety. Within this context in which artful pretense may be viewed as both more and less real than the world surrounding it, Hamlet prepares to put a play before the eyes of the King.

The situation prior to "The Mousetrap" scene must be kept in mind as it existed for the contemporary audience. The audience has seen the Ghost, and knows Hamlet's charge.

It has seen Hamlet adopt an antic disposition, has seen him become preoccupied with the false appearances which those around him maintain in the face of contradicting realities, has seen him become obsessed with the lack of "honesty" in men and, with sexual implications, in women. The audience, like Hamlet, becomes increasingly aware of the roles and deceptions practiced by all the characters. All but one. As previously mentioned, the audience knows that Claudius is hiding something, and, as does Hamlet, it suspects the truth. But the spectator is not accustomed to being kept in suspense. His attention, along with Hamlet's, becomes riveted upon the King as "The Mousetrap" begins.

Shakespeare also has made a special effort to activate his audience's awareness of its theatrical surroundings. The theatrical surroundings have been utilized not merely to encourage the spectator to view the characters as actors and spectators (although this certainly is a primary objective), but also to encourage the spectator to remain aware of the actors playing the characters, and themselves as viewers of the action. The relationship between Burbage and Hamlet the actor is analogous to the relationship between the audience and Hamlet the observer. The social reality of the theatrical situation provides the audience with an immediate experience of the issues of the play.

Ironically, one of the major ways in which Shakespeare stimulates his audience's theatrical awareness is by

glorifying the actor as artist and by attacking the audience as judge. When the players are first mentioned as visitors to Elsinore, the competition of the Children's Companies is given as the reason for their traveling. As was previously discussed, Hamlet equates the spectators in the theatre with the fickle public of Denmark. A current and important issue is used both to chastise the spectators and simultaneously to put them in a defensive stance with regard to the issue of loyalty. As observers and as being inconstant, the audience, whether or not it likes the roles in which it is cast, becomes linked with the court of Claudius.

When the Players enter and begin reminiscing with Hamlet, he remembers a speech which "pleased not the million, 'twas caviar to the general" (II.ii.56-57). In speaking the speech, the First Player creates an implicit play-within-the-play with Hamlet and Polonius playing audience to the performance. Polonius becomes a parody of the insensitive audience member.

> Pol: This is too long.
> Ham: It shall to the barber's, with your beard. Prithee, say on. He's for a jig or a tale of bawdry, or he sleeps. Say on.
> (II.ii.520-23)

Hamlet praises the actors as being the "abstract and brief chronicles of the time" (II.ii.548-49), and although he is critical of certain kinds of acting, acting which is untrue to nature, he associates it with audiences who demand it, "the groundlings, who for the most part are capable of

nothing but inexplicable dumb shows and noise" (III.ii.11-13).

> Now this overdone or come tardy off, though it make the unskillful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve, the censure of the which one must in your allowance o'erweigh a whole theater of others. (III.ii.27-31)

> For there be of them that will themselves laugh, to set on some quantity of barren spectators to laugh too, though in the meantime some necessary question of the play be then to be considered. (III.ii.44-49)

All these references tend to glorify the power of the theatre and to emphasize the importance of a spectator being judicious, attentive, and perceptive just prior to "The Mousetrap." Thus, through the use of such references and by denying the audience any definite confirmation of the truth about Claudius, Shakespeare creates in the audience a heightened state of awareness. Shakespeare's preparation is complete.

The functioning of the play-within-the-play in Hamlet may be understood more fully if the action can be visualized as Shakespeare might have presented it on his stage before his audience. The genius of the play-within-the-play resides in its ability to work upon the eyes as well as the ears of the spectators, its ability to control perception, its ability to integrate shifting perspectives upon the action as conduits of complex information.

"The Mousetrap" scene begins with Hamlet and Horatio alone on stage. Most probably they are far downstage plotting their strategy, involving the audience in their conspiracy.

Hamlet instructs the audience along with Horatio.

> There is a play tonight before the King.
> One scene of it comes near the circumstance
> Which I have told thee of my father's death.
> I prithee when thou seest that act afoot,
> Even with the very comment of thy soul
> Observe my uncle. If his occulted guilt
> Do not itself unkennel in one speech
> It is a damned ghost that we have seen
> And my imaginations are as foul
> As Vulcan's stithy. Give him heedful note,
> For I mine eyes will rivet to his face,
> And after we will both our judgments join
> In censure of his seeming.
> (III.ii.80-92)

Hamlet cocks his head; he hears the approach of King and Court. As the audience of characters prepares to enter, Hamlet readopts his antic role, and sets the stage for his own personal drama which will occur between him and Claudius.

> They are coming to the play. I must be idle.
> Get you a place.
> (III.ii.95-96)

A Danish march is heard, its heavy, measured, ordered rhythm setting up a pattern of anticipation, the expectations associated with a procession, a parade. The loud formal sound is in marked contrast to the subdued mood of personal intimacy created by Hamlet and Horatio. The public sound breaks through the private atmosphere, its measured beats incongruous with the visual image of Horatio scurrying to his observation post and Hamlet hurrying to meet the procession, adjusting his appearance and behavior to appear properly "idle" in his performance before the Court. Having been involved in the conspiracy, the audience also adjusts itself in anticipation of watching Hamlet's play and the

Players' play working to disrupt the performance of Claudius as honorable King.

The audience immediately associates itself with the perspectives of these two men as observers of the action that is to follow. All eyes, both on the stage and in the pit and gallery, focus upon one of the upstage doors. Trumpets sound a flourish, increasing the anticipation and further establishing the formality of the situation. Finally, the King, Queen, and Court, magnificently and ostentatiously dressed in contrast to the simple, dark colored costumes of the "students" onstage, all enter in a formal procession. It is a very "theatrical" entrance, a theatricality purposely emphasized in relation to the occasion to which they come. Guards enter bearing torches which add to the spectacle of the entrance, and establish the time of day as evening. This night time convention accepted by the audience, together with the flickering reality of the actual flames, adds to the mystery and the tension.

Although it is impossible to reconstruct the staging of this scene as it would have been presented on Shakespeare's stage, the dialogue, nevertheless, gives strong suggestions as to the actions and positionings as they may have occurred. Hamlet speaks to each character as he enters. It is possible that Hamlet stands and speaks to them as they walk by, but it is more probable that he escorts each character to a position upon the stage. Hamlet wants each

character in a specific position so that he and Horatio will be able to observe Claudius with little difficulty. More importantly, Shakespeare wants Claudius in a position so that the audience can easily observe him. Therefore, it is most likely that Hamlet, under the guise of his assumed madness, breaks into the stately procession and disrupts its formality by guiding characters to various positions around the stage. This also allows the audience to perceive Hamlet in the role of stage manager, simultaneously setting the stage for his own secret play, for "The Mousetrap," and for the play of William Shakespeare. Immediately the audience would be encouraged to perceive the action simultaneously on numerous different levels of reality which continue working throughout the scene.

The positionings onstage are also somewhat conjectural, but using the same reasoning, we can imagine Claudius seated upstage in a position clearly visible to everyone in both the offstage and onstage auditoriums. His reactions are the focus of the scene. Using Henslow's property list as a guide, we can imagine him seated in his throne on a raised dais with his Queen and counselor Polonius at his side. Hamlet and Ophelia would necessarily be far downstage opposite the King, probably sitting on one of the downstage corners with Horatio stationed at the other. They, along with the audience, need to have a good view of the King. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern together with the

Lords and Attendants would be positioned around the outskirts in a semi-circle circumscribing this important triangle.[10] It is important to notice how such a triangle further encourages the audience to share the perspective of Horatio and Hamlet as they focus in on the apex which is the King.

As Hamlet disrupts the procession ushering each character to his place, the switch from the use of intimate blank verse in the previous scene to the use of a rough irregular prose provides a further disruptive contrast. The language is laden with ironies which emphasize the theatricality of the action on all its many different levels. The two chief actors in the central drama which is about to take place exchange words. Shakespeare emphasizes that it is only words they exchange, words which act to conceal rather than communicate.

> King: How fares our cousin Hamlet?
> Haml: Excellent, i' faith, of the chameleon's dish. I eat the air, promise-crammed. You cannot feed capons so.
> King: I have nothing with this answer, Hamlet. These words are not mine.
> Haml: No, nor mine now.
> (III.ii.97-102)

The image of the chameleon suggests the actor's protean capabilities; the image of his food, the emptiness inside the appearance. The suggestion is that Hamlet's emptiness results from empty promises, with the implication that the promises are preparing him for the slaughter. The audience

is reminded that the words of the King and Hamlet are not theirs on any of the levels upon which they are acting. The words belong to one or all of their many roles.

Shakespeare continues to urge upon the audience a theatrical view of the action.

> Ham: My lord, you played once i' the university, you say?
> Pol: That did I, my lord, and was accounted a good actor.
> Ham: What did you enact?
> Pol: I did enact Julius Caesar. I was killed i' the Capitol. Brutus killed me.
> Ham: It was a brute part of him to kill so capital a calf there.
>
> (III.ii.103-11)

Aside from all the playing with words which Hamlet does in playing his role of madness, Shakespeare continues to insinuate upon the audience images and ideas that suggest numerous points of view. The image of Polonius as an actor is given renewed reinforcement, and becomes associated with the idea of political figures killing or being killed by close friends. In this way, Shakespeare indirectly reminds the audience of the issue the Player's play will deal with, and the central issue concerning Claudius that Hamlet is attempting to confirm. At the same time, Shakespeare provides his audience with an interesting foreshadowing of Polonius's fate when he attempts to play the part of unseen spectator in the Closet Scene and becomes killed inadvertently in the mistaken role of King.

By drawing attention to the theatricalizing of murder,

Shakespeare simultaneously draws attention to the mechanics of his own presentation. In Julius Caesar, Shakespeare employed the image of Caesar's murder being reenacted on stages throughout the history of the theatre; it was perhaps a scene the audience associated with repeated theatrical reproduction. Hamlet's playing upon the word "part" associates acting as doing with acting as pretending. The ways in which Shakespeare works upon the eyes and ears of his audience are many. Having taken the social performers to their places, Hamlet asks, "Be the players ready?" and, appropriately enough, Rosencrantz responds (III.ii.111-12).

Hamlet scorns his mother's request to sit by her, in order, he says, to lie down with Ophelia. Polonius is pleased to have his suspicions about Hamlet's madness confirmed. But the audience, although it can accept Hamlet's desire to taunt both women for their lack of "honesty," knows he is moving to where he can have a full front view of the King. During his interaction with Ophelia, Hamlet, as he often does throughout the play, releases his real hostility through the guise of his madness to the point that role and reality blend and become indistinguishable. Hamlet becomes his role. His preoccupation with his mother's sexual infidelity becomes linked with Ophelia's enforced rejection. Throughout the bantering, the audience knows where Hamlet's attention is centered. "For look you how cheerful my mother looks" (III.ii.133-34). Hamlet is still

looking upstage. Throughout all this, Shakespeare reminds the audience of Hamlet the theatrical creation. "Oh God, your only jig-maker" (III.ii.132). "'For, oh, for oh, the hobbyhorse is forgot'"(III.ii.145). The final image prior to the dumb show is of a theatrical event.

The physical staging of the scene, a triangle which is an inverted V narrowing in upon the King, functions as the close-up camera angle in cinema, the positioning of Hamlet and Horatio serving as a lens to magnify the slightest reaction of the prominently placed King. The drama as it will occur between Hamlet and Claudius has been staged by Hamlet with such deliberation that the audience will be encouraged to view "The Murder of Gonzago" as a play within Hamlet's play within Shakespeare's play, a play-within-a-play-within-the-play. The tension mounts as the innermost play is about to begin.

Because Shakespeare and Hamlet are attempting to draw a parallel between the Player King and Queen on one hand, and Claudius and Gertrude on the other, the entrance of the actors to perform the dumb show would be in marked contrast to the bombastic entrance of Claudius and his Court. By an ingeniously mirrored reversal, the artificial acting and appearance of the Player King and Queen is used to unmask the reality beneath the social artificiality of the "real" King and Queen. This process begins at the outset, the mournful reedy sound of oboes signaling the

entrance of the actors in sharp contrast to the spirited march and trumpet flourishes that preceded the entrance of the Court. A somber mood is established. The Player King and Queen enter, no doubt through the same door used by Claudius and Gertrude, and progress to the center of the stage, the center of the triangle, and stand directly in front of the "real" King and Queen. The entrance and the positioning strongly reinforce the extended series of comparisons that will be presented. The real King and Queen present a falseness; the false King and Queen present a reality. The audience practically sees double with the one pair immediately behind the other. The comparison visually is forced upon the spectator; his eyes need not move.

To appreciate the full impact of the comparison, a consideration of the acting style must be made. Regardless of how "realistically" or"formally" Richard Burbage is acting Hamlet, it is obvious from the writing style that, in comparison, the Player King and Queen are acting with greater bombast and artificiality. The audience would accept the behavior of Shakespeare's actors as normal stage behavior however extreme it may have been. In order to distinguish Hamlet's actors from his own, Shakespeare provides them with a much more artificial speech and behavior. The different levels of reality must constantly be insisted upon for the play-within-the-play to have maximum effect.

Shakespeare insists upon making the Players' behavi-

or extreme for another important reason. By emphasizing the extremity of the Players' artificiality, he creates a more compelling parody of the less extreme but equally artificial behavior of Claudius and Gertrude. The Player King and Queen enter "very lovingly, the Queen embracing him and he her" (III.ii.146). This action, performed in an exaggerated acting style, would burlesque the entrance of Claudius and Gertrude, and, quite probably, the kind of behavior the couple is engaging in immediately behind the Players. The effect of this parody would be made more cutting by the dress of the Players. Shakespeare would want to distinguish the artificial costumes of the Players from the actual costumes of the Court, and the poverty of a company forced to leave the city to play in the provinces would justify the use of props and costumes that are cheap, artificial, and shabby. The effect of this shabbiness superimposed visually upon the expensive, luxurious garments of Claudius, Gertrude, and the Court would further heighten the parody, suggesting the shabby reality beneath the surface munificence.

Shakespeare's major strategy in using the dumb show, as some writers have suggested,[11] is to prepare the audience.

> For the dumb-show, by representing the murder which they have heard the Ghost describe, indicates to the audience how Hamlet is about to test King Claudius, so that, sharing Hamlet's knowledge, they may watch for the moment of the King's self-betrayal.[12]

By presenting the staging of the play without the words, Shakespeare makes it unnecessary for the audience to watch the staging when it is repeated. The audience may listen to the words while they watch Claudius and Gertrude. In this way Shakespeare even more ingeniously unites the Players with the pretenders. The effect is similar to the effect in cinema when the camera focuses on a close-up of one person while another speaks. The words are merely a means of evoking the human response of the person who holds our attention; they become associated and, in a sense, belong to the person who is not speaking. The situation is much more pronounced for an audience that listens to an actor playing a king while watching a king acting the role of honorable innocence for the eyes of the same onstage audience. The words not only become associated with Claudius and Gertrude, they almost appear to emanate from the silent couple against their will. The Players become unwitting spokesmen for the unspoken within their upstage avatars.

The question arises as to what Claudius is doing during the dumb show. The text provides no definitive answer. From the moment he speaks just following his entrance, until his exit, he is silent, except for two brief questions about the name and argument of the play. No one makes any direct remarks about his behavior. If Claudius does not see the dumb show, he then slowly discovers what the play is about as it is presented. But S. L. Bethell

argues persuasively:

> If Shakespeare had intended Claudius not to see the dumb show, he would have inserted something quite definitely into the dialogue to inform the audience of the position.[13]

If Claudius watches the dumb show, it means the contest between Claudius and Hamlet begins at the outset. Ophelia's inability to comprehend the dumb show suggests that it would not appear improper to anyone in the Court; only Claudius would relate the depicted events to his own situation, yet, having no reason for offense, he would be forced to maintain an outward serenity. Seeing no apparent response, Hamlet could not act. But Shakespeare's audience would be aware immediately of the silent struggle between the two as they sit face to face amidst the ignorance of the limited perspectives surrounding them. Assimilating the various levels of awareness presented onstage, the audience prepares itself for a long struggle. Who will show what, when, and who will see and understand it?

Following the dumb show, Shakespeare takes the unusual action of employing a prologue as well. Both the dumb show and the prologue function on a different level of theatrical reality than the play itself. Thus when the Prologue enters, Shakespeare's audience watches his actors functioning in numerous different spheres of reference. Some of Shakespeare's actors are playing the roles of actors, and one of those actors is playing the added role of a Prologue who stands midway between Claudius' Court and the

reality represented by the play which of course employs actors on yet another level of theatrical orientation. Hamlet draws attention to these levels by emphasizing the direct address of the Prologue in relation to the indirect communication created by actors within the play. "We shall know by this fellow. The players cannot keep counsel, they'll tell all" (III.ii.151-52). Having drawn his audience's attention to his players, the layers of roles they play, and the fact that they will communicate meaning to their audience, Shakespeare then has Hamlet relate the actor's use of appearances to the use of "show" employed by the characters, specifically Ophelia.

> Oph: Will he tell us what this show meant?
> Ham: Aye, or any show that you'll show him.
> (III.ii.153-54)

Hamlet makes a sexual joke; the Prologue speaks his three line apology, and finally the inner play begins. It is almost as if Shakespeare brought on the Prologue merely to establish another level of theatrical reality and to allow Hamlet to draw attention to the actor, as both artificer and communicator, in all his many roles.

At this point it is necessary to examine in more detail the manner in which the play-within-the-play begins working upon the perceptions of the audience. As has been suggested, the play-within-the-play is an effective tool for dramatic communication because, in its most simple form, it creates at least three distinct yet interacting levels

of orientation upon which the action may be perceived. On the fundamental level, the level of social reality, the audience perceives actors playing the roles of characters in a play performed for its benefit. On the second level, what may be considered the first level of aesthetic reality, the audience watches characters in imaginary circumstances serving as an audience to a play being presented in those circumstances by other characters. On the third level, a second level of aesthetic reality, the audience watches the characterizations of those other characters function within a second play involving a second set of imaginary circumstances.

Such a structure creates numerous potentials for communication. First of all, everything that happens upon the stage is susceptible to two or three different interpretations depending upon the frame of reference in which it is viewed. The actors in "The Mousetrap" may be perceived as either Shakespeare's actors, Hamlet's actors in Shakespeare's play, or as a king and queen in an Italian drama. The relationship between these levels provides the audience with a series of interrelated perspectives as potential conduits for simultaneous communication. The audience's perception of the actor in the Globe Theatre reinforces, supplements, and in some way alters its perception of the actor at Elsinore, while simultaneously reinforcing, supplementing, and altering its perception of the Italian

King. In the dumb show, when the Poisoner returns to the Queen "seeming to lament with her" over the man he killed, the audience's awareness of the other levels of orientation would tend to reinforce its perception of the false appearance this character presents. In essence, a fourth level of orientation has been created by the deceptive role-playing of this character.

Thus, although the play-within-the-play creates only three different levels of theatrical orientation, it is possible for any number of different levels of reality to be created on any single level of theatrical orientation by means of the deceptions and duplicity practiced by the personages functioning on that level. The perception of the interrelationships between different levels of reality, both between different levels of theatrical orientation and on any single level of orientation, become so complex as to defy description. The play-within-the-play creates a multitude of kaleidoscopic perspectives upon the relationship of what we call reality to the many kinds of appearances involved in art, acting, deception, false promises, betrayal, hypocrisy, artificiality, and pretense.

The situation is made even more complex because, in the most literal sense of Hamlet's advice, the play-within-the-play holds the mirror up to nature; the audience perceives not only the mirror images of the actors playing their roles, not only the mirror images of characters acted

by other characters, but also a mirror image of themselves as audience. The structure itself with its two groups of actors and its two groups of audiences creates a series of built-in analogies, a series of mirror images receding into depth. Thus, the two central and interrelated functions of the play-within-the-play are first, to create a series of analogies between theatre and life with the inevitable focus upon disparities between appearances and reality; and secondly, to create a series of simultaneous and interrelated perspectives which provide numerous points of view upon a single issue or person, and thus structure an audience's perception of the theatrical experience.

Some sense of the complexity of the perspectives presented to the audience by the play-within-the-play can be grasped by returning to an examination of the situation in Hamlet as "The Mousetrap" begins. Shakespeare has set his stage so that his audience is acutely aware of each group of onstage spectators. The audience watches an image of itself, a group of watchers. In this way, the issue of observation and perception becomes emphasized in relation to the attempt to "discover," see through, unmask, and reveal. Usually it is easier to discover the true response of a person while watching him watch something else, than while watching him do something when he is aware of being watched. Shakespeare here reveals his characters to his audience by allowing the audience to watch them watching something else.

Shakespeare's ploy is Hamlet's. The audience is encouraged to share the perspective of Hamlet and Horatio as watchers of the watchers.

At the same time that there is this emphasis upon assimilating juxtaposed perspectives, the very theatrical nature of the occasion along with the many theatrical references puts a strong emphasis upon the actors playing the characters and upon the characters as actors. As has been suggested, each character has chosen to adopt some false appearance for this social occasion. Hamlet feels that his Mother has been false to his Father even as Ophelia has been false to him, and as he pretends to be mad, Ophelia is pretending loss of love for Hamlet, the King and Queen are pretending to be righteous, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are pretending interest in Hamlet's welfare, and Polonius, in his own unconsciously destructive way, is pretending to be wise. As the play proceeds, the pretense of art begins to apply pressure to these social pretenses. The company of players in their theatrical roles simultaneously evoke and reflect the adopted roles of the characters they entertain.

These adopted roles are revealed to the audience by means of a network of visual as well as verbal ironies, as evidenced by each character's position upon the stage in relation to the object of his concentration. As in all scenes, but particularly here where watcher watches watcher,

the audience is invited to share and compare the perspectives of all its onstage surrogates, and the positioning onstage encourages the audience to associate with each individual's perspective in a different way. Because of the conspiratorial opening of the scene, and because of their shared activity as observers of the observed, but, equally so, because of their downstage positioning looking up at the play, Horatio and Hamlet become identified with the audience. It is almost as if they were in a middle ground between audience and stage looking in on Claudius and the Court. This positioning suggests an implicit play-within-the-play even prior to "The Mousetrap."

The upstage position of Claudius encourages the audience to watch him watching, rather than to join him watching. Initially, Claudius may be flirting with Gertrude or commending Rosencrantz and Guildenstern for encouraging, as he thinks, Hamlet's interest in the distraction of a play, but after the dumb show he cannot for long avoid the gaze of the man sitting across from him on the stage. A major source of dramatic energy in the scene comes from the audience watching Claudius slowly discover that Hamlet and Horatio are watching him watch the play. As the action in the inner play becomes more and more a parallel of Claudius's situation, Claudius discovers and must perform for more and more eyes in the Court that turn from the play to catch a glimpse of his reaction. Hamlet allows both

audiences to see Claudius's social performance in a theatrical context. He forces Claudius against his will to become a major actor in the play-within-the-play, a role encouraged by the King's prominent position upon the stage. And meanwhile, "The Murder of Gonzago" goes on.

The other upstage actors contribute their unique perspectives to the total picture. Polonius is silent, perhaps content in the correctness of his diagnosis, perhaps spending more time studying Hamlet than the play. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are also silent, content with having satisfied Claudius, enjoying what they think to be Hamlet's guileless diversion. They and Polonius look across the stage at Hamlet enjoying their separate, confident misinterpretations of Hamlet's behavior, interpretations which, because of their positioning, the audience shares and assimilates into the total picture of role-playing and misapprehension. Gertrude's attention is split between Hamlet and her husband, even as Ophelia's is split between Hamlet and her father, both showing the strain of the conflicting roles they are forced to play in their attempt to bridge the gap between divided loyalties.

Finally, in the middle ground between upstage and downstage are the Lords and Attendants who establish the scene as a social situation. They prevent the royal family from lapsing into their private behavior. There are appearances to be kept. The eyes of these Lords place an

added restraint upon Claudius as he undergoes the pressure applied by Hamlet and the play-within-the-play. The perspectives of these Lords also provide a norm against which the perspectives of all the others become measured. From their position in the middle ground, their attention alternates between the play in the middle of the stage, Hamlet's performance downstage, and, ultimately, the performance of Claudius upstage. The ignorance of these unknown characters makes them the perfect indicator of the changes in focus that occur during the scene, and provides the perfect ironic contrast to the devious intentions, pretenses, and ulterior motives the audience can read in the faces of most of the onstage spectators.

Before the inner play has even begun, the audience is confronted with this variety of perspectives which it must gauge and assimilate, perspectives emphasized by the character's positioning as well as his focus of concentration upon the stage. The juxtaposition of perspectives itself creates a strong communication. But equally important, the juxtaposition creates a system of interrelated patterns of perception. Shakespeare has set up his stage so that any information fed into this network of diverse and disparate interests will produce a complex chain reaction of responses. The audience does not merely focus intently upon how the King will react, it also must assimilate the series of reactions and interactions as they dart

around the stage affecting one another and in turn, affecting the King. Having created this system within which Claudius and Hamlet sit in a silent struggle, Shakespeare is ready to inject new information into the system, the play which Hamlet calls "The Mousetrap."

As the play is about to begin, Hamlet comments that the prologue is short, "as woman's love" (III.ii.164), an insistent preoccupation of Hamlet's in relation to both Ophelia and his Mother, and, significantly, a central issue in the play that follows. The nature of love becomes associated with the kind of behaviors an actor might play, and, inevitably, with the kind of behaviors exhibited by those actors now in the role of audience. Gertrude was capable of playing the role of lover to both King Hamlet and his brother Claudius; Ophelia was able both to play and not to play the role of lover to Hamlet; Claudius professes love to both the brother that he murdered and to the brother's wife. Although the major dramatic interest in the scene results from the audience watching Hamlet watching the King watching the Players, the audience listens to the Players as they speak, and the concern with the transcience of love strongly informs their comprehension of the interacting perspectives.

The Player King and Queen standing in their shabby insubstantial costumes before the magnificence of the "real" King and Queen speak their artificial language in artificial

accents. But what they say provides comment as much as does their visual and aural appearance. As Hamlet and the audience watch the King and Queen watching the Player King and Queen, the actors begin discussing the relationship between love and time, the issue Hamlet brings up just prior to the play. The Player King talks about the length of their love, the Queen of her fear that it will end. The King suggests that he will die and that she will take a second husband. She responds, "In second husband let me be accurst! / None wed the second but who killed the first," and Hamlet cues the audience to check the various reactions around the stage: "Wormwood, wormwood" (III.ii.189-91). The issue of remarriage may provoke a few askance glances at the King, but only Hamlet, Horatio, and the audience rivet their attention to him to see if he appears to make any connection between remarriage and murder. Claudius cannot help but notice the gaze of these two angling in on him. He attempts to preserve his appearance of calm and returns to the play.

The Player King goes on to present arguments which tend to vindicate rather than condemn Gertrude's behavior. He states that in the course of time passion and purpose weaken, and that love, rarely in one's control, can be evoked again by unforeseen external circumstances. "So think thou wilt no second husband wed, / But die thy thoughts when thy first lord is dead" (III.ii.224-25). As always,

Shakespeare provides his audience with a new perspective upon false promises and the inevitable betrayal of the past that occurs with the passage of time. The play cuts both ways, and here provides an argument against the behavior of Hamlet.[14] Shakespeare never provides formula answers, never argues only one side of a question. Claudius will reveal a more human side during his soliloquyin the next scene, typically, after the audience has become convinced of his villainy.

The Player Queen takes exception to the King's argument and asserts, "Both here and hence pursue me lasting strife / If, once a widow, ever I be a wife!" (III.ii.232-33). As is often the case, Hamlet's attention becomes more fixed upon his Mother's lack of loyalty than upon his Uncle's alleged murder. "If she should break it now!" says Hamlet (III.ii.234), commenting ostensibly upon the Player Queen's vow, but indirectly upon Gertrude's remarriage. Not content with mere implication, Hamlet confronts Gertrude with the obvious parallel. "Madam, how like you this play?" (III.ii.239). No doubt a certain amount of tension has been created in the onstage onlookers as these issues have been discussed. With this question, all eyes turn from the play to focus upon Gertrude. How will she respond? There is an embarrassed pause. Gertrude and Claudius have become for a moment the overt object of the Court's attention. They, for a moment, are forced into the role of actors in

Hamlet's play. Aware of the parallel between herself, the social actress, and the ersatz actress Queen (both of course played by boys), Gertrude tries to remain calm and yet offer some defense to the eyes that look in on her. "The lady doth protest too much, methinks" (III.ii.240). Shakespeare's audience can imagine the memories being revived, the comparisons being made between Kings. Did Gertrude also deny any possibility of remarriage? Gertrude, forced to view her relationship with Claudius in a new perspective, is guided to a new realization, a realization shared by the audience through identification with her. Time blurs memory. Love gravitates to what it can touch.

During all of this, Claudius cannot come too readily to Gertrude's defense for fear of giving himself away. But finally Hamlet pushes too hard. "Oh, but she'll keep her word" (III.ii.241). Even if the line is read innocently as a defense of the Player Queen, a direct comparison is being suggested. "Oh, but <u>she'll</u> keep <u>her</u> word." Claudius may now appear to defend his wife as he attempts to bend Hamlet from his purpose. He asks if there is anything offensive in the argument of the play, when obviously the issues already discussed are recognized by everyone to be in poor taste. But under the pressure of the eyes of his Court, Claudius cannot afford to appear peremptory or defensive. Shakespeare has Hamlet turn the audience's attention from infidelity to murder, once again associating the

audience's theatrical awareness with the issue of pretense. "No, no, they do but jest, poison in jest--no offense i' the world" (III.ii.244-45). Again there is the implication that they do but jest. Hamlet has suggested a parallel between the Player Queen and Gertrude's remarriage, now he suggests that there is a parallel with Claudius. The audience has watched Claudius grow more and more apprehensive as the scene has progressed; it has watched as more and more onstage spectators have turned their attention from the play toward where Claudius and Gertrude sit; now it watches as Hamlet pushes Claudius toward a direct confrontation. How will Claudius respond? "What do you call the play?" (III. ii.245).

The diversionary tactic is resisted by Hamlet who, having shifted the focus, is no longer willing to let the play work on its own. The lines of combat have formed. Claudius and Hamlet have both committed themselves, and Hamlet must attack. "Your Majesty, and we that have free souls, it touches not. Let the galled jade wince, our withers are unwrung" (III.ii.251-52). Hamlet uses the eyes of the onstage spectators to pressure Claudius out of his role. Claudius sees the method in Hamlet's madness and fights for control in this social situation. He does not speak again until his exit, but the focus is on him throughout as Hamlet works the tension up to a feverish pitch.

At this point the distinctions between the inner

and outer play begin to blur. Hamlet rises and begins to become involved in the action of the inner play to the point that attention increasingly is drawn to the play occurring between him and Claudius. The audience's attention is overtly drawn to the blending of the levels of theatrical reality and its relationship to the blending of pretense and sincerity within human relationships.

> Oph: You are as good as a chorus, my lord.
> Ham: I could interpret between you and your love,
> if I could see the puppets dallying.
> (III.ii.255-56)

Briefly and bitterly Hamlet taunts Ophelia with the crude sexuality of married love, and then immediately associates this issue with the pretense of the actor and the deceit of the murderer. His words and his gaze link Claudius with the actor as he builds the tempo and urgency of the scene he creates.

> So you must take your husbands. Begin, murderer.
> Pox, leave thy damnable faces and begin...Come,
> the croaking raven doth bellow for revenge.
> (III.ii.262-64)

The words function on every level of the audience's awareness, uniting the actors and characters with their various kinds of roles and performances. The audience listens to an actor playing an actor who is playing a poisoner in a burlesqued style for the King's Court, while it watches an actor playing the King who <u>is</u> a poisoner pretend he is not. Hamlet functions as an actor on all these levels at the same time, attempting to put increasing pressure upon the

pretense of the King. At that moment,he himself is bellowing for and, in some small measure, getting his own revenge. By means of an onstage surrogate, Hamlet symbolically poisons Claudius's eyes as well as his ears.

The audience in the house watches the spectators onstage, themselves characters functioning on multiple levels of reality, attempting to assimilate and understand the various dramas occurringbefore them. Shakespeare's audience sees an image of itself. The stage and the house become united in the attempt to see through appearance, to discover the truth of the situation. As the Player Poisoner places the poison in the Player King's ear, Hamlet completely takes over the play thrusting its significance upon the King in the eyes of all his Court. Hamlet's rising voice, emphasizing crucial phrases, lifts Claudius out of his seat.

> Ham: He poisons him i' the garden for his estate. . . The story is extant. . . .You shall see anon how the murderer gets the love of Gonzago's wife.
> Oph: The King rises.
> Ham: What, frighted with false fire!
> (III.ii.272-77)

Again Hamlet draws attention to the relation between theatrical illusion and behavioral reality. The Queen, ironically, asks Claudius much the same question that he had asked Hamlet at the beginning of the scene. "How fares my lord?" (III.ii.278). With the cry for more light, with torches swirling around the stage, Claudius, his Court, the Players all exit in wild confusion, a marked contrast to the

measured, artificial formality which marked their entrance to the scene. The various plays have merged into a mass exit, each character defining the nature of his awareness of what has happened by the nature of his exit.

As at the beginning of the scene, two characters are left alone on stage. The cycle has completed itself. The Player's play may have been disrupted, but Hamlet's play has been a success. He thinks of himself as having been an actor in his own play.

> Would not this, sir, and a forest of feathers. . . get me a fellowship in a cry of players, sir?
> (III.ii.286-89)

The audience is placed back on a personal level which seems all the more real and friendly for the layers of pretension that Hamlet has stripped away.

> Ham: O good Horatio, I'll take the ghost's word for a thousand pound. Didst perceive?
> Hor: Very well, my lord.
> Ham: Upon the talk of the poisoning?
> Hor: I did very well note him.
> (III.ii.297-301)

Hamlet, Horatio, and the audience at the beginning of the scene were united by their common interest in the guilt of Claudius, and by their shared visual activity in pursuing that interest. Now they share the fruits of their labor, their mutual perceptions. The audience's ability to share and assimilate numerous different perspectives upon numerous different levels of theatrical orientation is utilized to full advantage by Shakespeare's manipulation of the play-within-the-play. The scene revealed multiple varieties and

degrees of artificiality, pretense, deceit, and, finally, moral chaos, in terms of multiple varieties and degrees of theatricality intertwined and superimposed upon one another. The final visual image the audience is left with is of actors with most of their roles abandoned, amid the flashing of torches, scurrying frantically from the stage.

So much time was spent doing a meticulous examination of a single scene in order to suggest the complexity of Shakespeare's visual and aural technique in creating multiple perspectives upon the dramatic action through a manipulation of his audience's awareness of the actors and the theatre. For an audience that expected to be contacted and involved, the play-within-the-play is an ingenious device, allowing the audience to identify with, and thus to experience, many different points of view at the same time. The play-within-the-play allows the actor to create and play upon many different relationships with the audience in that middle ground where the social reality of the audience and the aesthetic reality of the character merge and blend together within the mystery of the actor's art. The audience's image of a character is formed by an oscillating awareness of numerous roles played both simultaneously and in sequence in terms of both theatricality and sincerity. The awareness of each role mutually informs the awareness of every other role. An understanding of the workings of the play-within-

the-play makes it easier to understand the workings of devices which work in similar fashion, devices which may be said to create an implicit play-within-the-play.

NOTES

[1]Righter, Idea of the Play, p. 69.

[2]Ibid., pp. 72-73.

[3]Ibid., p. 78.

[4]Ibid., pp. 75-76.

[5]Lionel Abel, Metatheatre: A New View of Dramatic Form (New York: Hill and Wang, 1963), pp. 45-58; Forker, "Theatrical Symbolism," pp. 215-229; Righter, Idea of the Play, pp. 138-47.

[6]Mark Van Doren, Shakespeare (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1939), p. 197.

[7]Abel, Metatheatre, pp. 45-6.

[8]Forker, "Theatrical Symbolism," pp. 218-19. My discussion of the metaphoric implications of theatrical references was influenced considerably by this provocative article.

[9]Ibid., p. 217.

[10]Styan, Shakespeare's Stagecraft, pp. 130-31. The staging of this scene and similar scenes is suggested.

[11]Bethell, Popular Dramatic Tradition, p. 153; Styan, Shakespeare's Stagecraft, p. 132.

[12]Bethell, Popular Dramatic Tradition, p. 153.

[13]Ibid., p. 154.

[14]It is interesting to speculate as to which "dozen or sixteen lines" (II.ii.566) are those composed by Hamlet. All the speeches of the Player King express a sympathetic understanding of the transcience of female love, and all the Queen's speeches are, in themselves, too short. Did Hamlet interrupt before the players used his speech? Did Shakespeare forget to use Hamlet's lines?

CHAPTER VI

THE IMPLICIT PLAY-WITHIN-THE-PLAY

During his entire career, Shakespeare demonstrated a continuing interest in what might be called the implicit play-within-the-play, situations which encourage the audience to perceive the actor functioning upon more than one level of theatrical orientation within the many levels of aesthetic reality which unite the play with the social reality of the audience. In this sense, the strategies discussed thus far, the overt theatrical metaphor, references to various aspects of the theatrical milieu, and the boy actor convention all may be said to create in the audience an awareness of different levels of drama being performed within the central play. These strategies encourage the audience to view the actor as moving outside his character toward making a direct contact with the audience, and they encourage the audience to view the character as moving more deeply inside the play by adopting more roles in which to clothe himself. By encouraging the audience to perceive the onstage behavior as operating on many different levels of reference, such strategies encourage the perception of character as a series of roles within roles, and the action

as a series of plays within plays.

The same may be said of most of the Elizabethan dramatic conventions. The prologue, chorus, epilogue, induction, and dumb show are all conventions which allow the actor to adopt a role outside the action of the play in order to comment upon something that is happening within the play. This choric function of the actor often manifests itself within the body of the play, most noticably during a direct address to the audience when the actor steps completely outside the play to talk to spectators using the second person form of address. The low comics are generally associated with this kind of stage behavior. Launce in The Two Gentlemen of Verona looks out at the audience during soliloquy and says, "Nay, I'll show you the manner of it" II.iii.15-16), or "You shall judge" (IV.iv.18). A similarly direct contact is created when Falstaff, watching Hal and Hotspur engaging in a violent sword fight, turns out to face the audience saying, "Nay, you shall find no boy's play here, I can tell you" (I Henry IV V.iv.75-76).

Yet even during those soliloquies and asides which contain no overt recognition of the audience's presence, there is the sense of an ambiguous contact being made partly as actor and partly as character.

> Sometimes the dramatis personae exchange speeches in the modern manner, where each character has his limited role and remains inside it: sometimes the character, still inside his role, will approach the spectators; sometimes again a character may transcend

> the limits of his special role and assume a kind of choric speech, in which he states the total situation and expresses the "moral" or central significance of the play.[1]

Elsewhere the use of a character as a chorus to comment upon himself or some other aspect of the play is called "depersonalisation."[2] Gertrude's description of Ophelia's death is mentioned as necessitating the kind of observation that is incongruous with Gertrude's identity as a person (Hamlet IV.vii.167-84).

> Gertrude loses her identity during an entire speech, so that she may perform the part[3] of messenger to inform us of Ophelia's end.

Prince Hal's soliloquy to the audience informing it that he is biding his time is cited as an instance of the playwright conveying information directly to the audience (I Henry IV (I.ii.218-240).

> An audience used to speeches addressed directly to themselves, in which they are, as it were, taken into the confidence of a stage character, would understand Prince Henry's soliloquy in this way, as an objective statement of the facts; they would not think of it as implying this or that[4] unfortunate blemish in his princely nature.

In terms that we have been using, the actor may be said to have a variety of relationships with his character, and a variety of relationships with his audience while functioning to varying degrees "inside" and "outside" of that character.

Shakespeare's audience was equally accepting of the actor in "non-human" roles in which his physical appearance might merely suggest the dramatic entity he presents. An

actor plays Hymen in As You Like It (V.iv.114), Jupiter in Cymbeline (V.iv.92), Cupid in Timon of Athens (I.ii.127). As a chorus, an actor plays Time in The Winter's Tale (IV.i) and Rumor in II Henry IV (Induction) wearing a coat painted with tongues. Occasionally Shakespeare has a character dress in a symbolic role as when Tamora and her two sons enter as Revenge, Rape, and Murder in Titus Andronicus (V.ii), or when Falstaff dresses as Herne, and Pistol as Hobgoblin in The Merry Wives of Windsor (V.v.). Throughout the plays, actors play various different kinds of spirits, ghosts, apparitions, fairies, or figures in dreams. In The Tempest, Prospero has his spirits play the roles of Iris, Ceres, Juno, nymphs, reapers (IV.i.60-138), and perhaps most interestingly, dogs and hounds which chase the low comics off the stage (IV.i.255). Shakespeare's audience accepted a few men as representing an army, and, with the necessity of double casting, was well practiced in accepting one actor as many different characters. The audience was accustomed to accepting a great disparity between the actor's reality and his dramatic function. It was accustomed to accepting the actor's behavior simultaneously on numerous levels of reference.

Shakespeare creates various kinds of implicit plays within his drama in order to exploit his audience's ability to assimilate meaning on numerous levels of reference. Sometimes a character will imitate or impersonate another

character for the benefit of an onstage audience. The study of Shakespeare's use of "The Murder of Gonzago" suggests the number of complex perspectives that may be generated by such a strategy. A similar relationship is created by situations in which characters perform for other characters extemporaneously. Many of these imitations are merely brief burlesques, designed to get a laugh from both the viewers on the stage and viewers in the pit, as when Hal imitates Hotspur (I Henry IV II.iv.115-25), Falstaff burlesques Pistol's manner of speech (II Henry IV V.iii.106), Kent imitates a courtier (King Lear II.ii.111-14) as does Hamlet Osric (Hamlet V.ii.116-25), and Enobarbus and Agrippa mimic Lepidus in his extreme praise of both Caesar and Antony (Antony and Cleopatra III.i.5-20). More extended and a bit more intricate is Thersites' impersonation of Ajax with the aid of Patroclus for the audience of Achilles (Troilus and Cressida III.iii.271-300), but the effect is the same.

Much more complex is the implicit play-within-the-play in I Henry IV created by Hal and Falstaff for the Hostess and their cronies at the Boar's Head Tavern. As in Hamlet, Shakespeare here uses his audience's theatrical awareness to reinforce its perception of Falstaff, Hal, and Henry IV as composite series of roles adapted to each situation. In the soliloquy some writers suggest is spoken by the actor standing somewhat outside the character, Hal

speaks to the audience.

> I imitate the sun,
> Who doth permit the base contagious clouds
> To smother up his beauty from the world,
> That, when he please again to be himself,
> Being wanted, he may be more wondered at
> By breaking through the foul and ugly mists
> Of vapors that did seem to strangle him.
> (I Henry IV I.ii.220-26)

Hal is an imitator, a role-player, who consciously manipulates appearances to control the image he presents to the eyes of others.

As a conscious manipulator of other people's impressions, Hal "takes after" his father. During their interview, his father expresses his disappointment with Hal not so much in terms of anything his son did or did not do, but rather in terms of how he is being viewed "in the eyes of men" (III.ii.40). Henry IV goes on to explain his strategy of controlling appearances, how he arranged to be seen as little as possible by the people so that when he did appear he was greeted with such wondering gaze "as is bent on sun-like majesty / When it shines seldom in admiring eyes" (III. ii.79-80). Both men are consciously managing the impressions they make on others. Both view themselves as imitating the sun to men's eyes. Only their strategies are a bit different. The audience perceives this, but Hal does not choose to inform his father as to how similar they are. His father is one of the objects of his strategy. Hal merely promises to "be more myself" (III.ii.93).

The audience is encouraged to view the manipulation of appearances practiced by these two politicians in theatrical terms, because previously it has seen two different versions of the scene acted out by different actors on the same stage. To prepare Hal for the meeting with his father, Falstaff has persuaded him to act out the scene. Shakespeare uses this device to prepare the audience with a theatrical perspective of the subsequent scene, while simultaneously preparing the audience for the subsequent scene in which Hal banishes Falstaff. Yet at the same time Shakespeare creates numerous other effects. Through the theatrical perspective, he allows the audience to perceive different characters in numerous different roles, and thus expands the image of the characters in the eyes of the audience. And he makes a number of theatrical jokes along the way. Like the overt play-within-the-play, such an implicit playlet is a very economical device for achieving numerous condensed effects.

A brief look at the scene suggests the number of levels upon which it works. Falstaff begins by using the stage props of the tavern as his props for his courtroom. This draws attention to the theatrical nature of the props themselves, while preparing the audience to view the "real" throne, crown, and scepter in the subsequent scene as merely stage props, an appropriate awareness for the conversation that occurs between the politician father and son.

The ludicrous image of Falstaff balancing a cushion on his head while holding a knife as a scepter is equally preparatory. It may be that the scene is designed to burlesque the Admiral's Men as G. B. Harrison suggests,[5] but it cannot help, to some extent, to poke fun at the actor playing the King, and at any actor who ever played a king. The audience's image of Falstaff inevitably becomes associated with its image of regality.

> Give me a cup of sack to make my eyes look red, that it may be thought I have wept; for I must speak in passion, and I will do it in King Cambyses vein.
> (II.iv.423-26)

Falstaff of course is the ideal person for the role; he has long since demonstrated to the audience his ability to sustain a false appearance in the face of all opposition.

> Fal: And here is my speech. Stand aside, nobility.
> Hos: Oh Jesu, this is excellent sport, i' faith!
> Fal: Weep not, sweet queen, for trickling tears are vain.
> Hos: Oh, the father, how he holds his countenance!
> Fal: For God's sake, lords, convey my tristful queen, for tears do stop the floodgates of her eyes.
> Hos: Oh Jesu, he doth it as like one of these harlotry players as ever I see!
> (II.iv.428-37)

The hostess is viewed by Falstaff as the queen, by herself and the audience as a spectator. The fun here is created by the disparity between Falstaff's view of the Hostess and the view the audience sees for itself, a disparity resulting from the juxtaposition of two different levels of theatrical reality. Yet at the same time, the scene comments upon Falstaff's theatrical behavior "in life" as well as the

theatrical behavior of Henry IV and the future Henry V.

The scene also looks forward to the time when Hal unmasks, becomes himself, and banishes Falstaff in his new role as King. Ironically, it is Falstaff who brings the subject up, and under the guise of King encourages Hal to banish everyone except for John Falstaff. When they switch roles, a number of interesting things happen. The relationship between Falstaff and Hal essentially has been one of a father and a son; Falstaff normally requests the deference owed to his age, and Hal normally plays along. But when Hal becomes King, the roles will be reversed as Shakespeare reverses them now. Always the clown, Falstaff is so caught up in acting, here the role of callow youth ("I'll tickle ye for a young Prince, i' faith." II.iv.488-89), that he is unaware that Hal unlike himself, is not burlesquing the part, but is speaking as he would if he were King. In playing the role of his father in this implicit play-within-the-play, Hal drops the role he has been playing in life and becomes himself. The audience simultaneously sees Hal's view of his father (adding a new image to the composite of roles that is perceived as the King), the reality underneath Hal's present behavior, and a preview of the Henry V that is to come. Because of the many levels of relevance, the four simple monosyllables of banishment become one of the strongest statements in the play: "I do, I will" (II. iv.527). This improvisation has been a rehearsal for more

than one scene to come. The two actors remain staring at each other in silence, caught outside their normal roles, till loud pounding and Bardolph interrupt.

Falstaff attempts to preserve the playlet. "Play out the play. I have much to say in the behalf of that Falstaff" (II.iv.531-32). But the Sheriff has come to search the house, and Hal, the consummate controller of appearances, realizes that another drama must be put on.

> Hal: Go, hide thee behind the arras, the rest walk up above. Now, my masters, for a true face and a good conscience.
> Fal: Both which I have had; but their date is out. (II.iv.549-52)

By switching the roles within an improvised play, and by switching the roles in relation to an outside threat, Shakespeare expands his audience's image of the characters, prepares for subsequent scenes, and suggests the many similarities between acting on the stage and off.

An even more complex manipulation of multiple theatrical perspectives occurs during the implicit play-within-the-play created by Lear's staging of a mock trial after Gloucester has persuaded him to come in out of the storm. Here there is no conscious attempt to perform for an audience, but the misapprehensions of madness become associated with theatrical perception, and many actors in many different ways play many different roles. The actor playing Lear is playing him as a madman who sees things not there. The actor playing the Fool is playing him as being half-

witted. And the actor playing Edgar is playing him as pretending to be mad, and in this condition being taken over by the personalities of various fiends. Kent provides the objective perspective in this scene, the onstage audience with which the audience most completely identifies. Yet he too, it must be remembered, is in a disguise, presumably having shaved off a beard and adopted an accent along with a change of clothes ("If but as well I other accents borrow/ That can my speech defuse, my good intent / May carry through itself to that full issue / For which I razed my likeness" King Lear I.iv.1-4). But it may be assumed that, surrounded by three apparent lunatics, he would have dropped any altered manner of speech.

Within this context of already stratified levels of stage behavior, Lear begins to act out the mock trial of his daughters. The ironies are blatant and rather pathetic as Lear begins to seat the filthy, rag-clad Edgar in the position of judge at the trial along with the Fool in his motley coxcomb. Lear stands staring at the place he imagines his daughters to be while Edgar who is Tom pretends to be possessed by the fiend. The audience assimilates all these differing wild perspectives, sympathizing with Lear while comprehending the bitter image of justice presented by Shakespeare, a visual image later reinforced by Lear's mad lecture on justice to the blind Gloucester.

> See how yond Justice rails upon yond simple thief.
> Hark, in thine ear. Change places and, handy-
> dandy, which is the Justice, which is the thief?
> (IV.vi.155-58)

The Fool appears to go along with Lear's play, but then breaks outside the play by drawing attention to the theatrical reality.

> Fool: Come hither, mistress. Is your name Goneril?
> Lear: She cannot deny it.
> Fool: Cry you mercy, I took you for a joint stool.
> (III.vi.51-55)

As previously mentioned, Shakespeare has Edgar step outside his several roles to emphasize further the levels upon which the scene functions.

> My tears begin to take his part so much
> They'll mar my counterfeiting.
> (III.vi.63-64)

Some writers have commented upon how the assumption of a disguise such as employed by Edgar tends, in and of itself, to create an implicit play-within-a-play.[6] In a manner similar to the functioning of a chorus or, more subtly, a soliloquy or an aside, the disguise encourages the audience to perceive the actor in two different roles, one more removed from the central action of the play than the other. That which conceals a role from the characters reveals a role to the audience.

> A disguised character is virtually two persons. One personality is maintained for the companions, who are deceived; and the other personality for the spectators, who are not deceived. This immediately gives an opportunity for double meanings or veiled allusions.[7]

A disguise externalizes part of the multiple personality of the actor-character. The clothes themselves, the character's costume, become the visual manifestation of one level of theatrical orientation, one layer of adopted behavior among the many layers of roles assumed by the actor. The over fifty different instances of masking and disguising occurringin twenty-five different plays of Shakespeare attest, in part, to his interest in the visualization of role-playing. The audience sees an actor in the costume of a character who puts on the clothes of an assumed personage: a character within a character creating an implicit play-within-a-play.

The ubiquitious deceptions in Shakespeare's plays function in a similar fashion. Increasingly Shakespeare appears less interested in the mistaken identity produced by disguise, and more interested in the various kinds of misunderstandings that result from deception and misperception.[8] Deception can be thought of as a specialized kind of disguise created when a character adopts language and behavior in order to create misapprehension of the truth; the character may be said to clothe himself in falsehood. As is the case with disguise, the character functions on two different levels simultaneously. On one level he is representing the truth of a situation as openly and candidly as possible; on another level he is consciously orchestrating his every action and inflection in order that his role

as a reliable presenter of the truth may appear genuine. The character is acting for the eyes of other characters, while simultaneously functioning as the playwright and director of the performance he fabricates. The audience perceives all these roles from both the limited point of view of the character deceived and from the broader view of the deceiver.

In such a situation when a number of different roles are functioning on at least two different levels of awareness, a very special relationship is created between the actor and the audience. Even as the actor is playing the character of the deceiver for the benefit of the audience, so is the deceiver playing a character for the person being deceived. Even though there is no deception involved in the first instance of role-playing, the parallel is similar enough to encourage the audience to become especially aware of the actor playing the character even as they watch the character functioning as an actor. The audience is encouraged to identify with the deceiver in sharing with him a greater knowledge than the other characters. The audience is in on the joke, and in a sense becomes an accomplice in the act. The actor playing the deceiver and the deceiver playing the actor, the identical personage in different contexts, performs as much for the audience as for the character being deceived. With the slightest look or inflection he can generate a laugh or a snicker of ironic

recognition as he draws the audience into his game. The skill of the actor is so closely associated with the skill of the deceiver that the audience's awareness of both blends together. At the same time, the actor-deceiver always stands a bit outside his role, checking himself, serving as audience to his own performance. In this, the audience is further encouraged to identify with him, and is further encouraged to see his performance before the other characters as a minor play within the larger drama.

These aspects of the relationship between the deceiver and the audience are perhaps most clearly exemplified in the opening scene of Richard III. At the very outset of the play an actor the audience has seen in many previous roles enters and begins to walk the thirty or so feet down to the front of the stage. Is the actor going to speak a prologue? No other play of Shakespeare's begins with a single actor speaking to the audience unless he speaks as a prologue or a chorus. The audience expects to be addressed directly by the actor. The actor does address the audience, but not as an overt chorus, rather as a character serving a choric function. Shakespeare has achieved his purpose. Before the audience properly is aware of the fact, it is relating to this character as it would to the actor playing the role.

Faced with the problem of sustaining an entire play based upon the actions of one character of unmitigated evil who is onstage most of the time, Shakespeare makes Richard

attractive to his audience during the first half of the play by drawing it into the fun the actor is having and the fun that Richard is having as an actor. Rather than having the audience watch Richard relating to another character at the opening of the play, the kind of detached observation that encourages judgment, Shakespeare has the audience, at the outset, make direct contact with this onstage personage who has such an attractively ironic perception of his situation. Before the play has even begun, Richard in his strong downstage position has established a personal relationship with the audience.

Having established this relationship with the audience, Richard begins to fashion his first of many little plays-within-the-play.[9] He tells the spectators to their faces that he is going to be a villain, and that he has begun by arranging for his own brother George, the Duke of Clarence, to be imprisoned because of a prophecy he has suggested to the King that his murderer's name begins with G. As Richard finishes speaking downstage, having drawn the audience as a group of accomplices into his intrigues, George, a victim of these intrigues, enters upstage on the way to the Tower. During his soliloquy, Richard, in effect, has established a relationship with the audience outside the action of the play. As he moves upstage to speak to his brother, as he moves back inside the play to begin the first character interaction, he takes the audience's

point of view with him. In sharing his knowledge, the audience shares his view of the situation; it is encouraged to see things through his eyes. Richard, and the actor playing Richard, on the other hand, sustains an awareness of the audience's presence even after he has moved back inside the character interaction of the play, an awareness he maintains by making, in a number of implicit and explicit ways, periodic contact with the eyes and sensibilities of his audience.

As Richard performs for Clarence the role of concerned brother inside the central action of the play, the actor inside Richard, both literally and figuratively, is playing the role of clever deceiver for an audience he has prepared for his performance, and at the same time, part of this multi-faceted personage is standing outside both performances acting as playwright, director, and critic of everything that takes place. The scene is energized for the audience by the tension created between its perception of Clarence's limited understanding and its involvement in and appreciation of the cleverness of Richard's performance. Richard becomes so involved in his performance for the audience that he almost destroys his role by making a joke that even Clarence cannot miss. When Clarence tells him that he is being imprisoned because his name is George, Richard responds with attempted seriousness.

> Alack, my lord, that fault is none of yours.
> He should for that commit your godfathers.
> (I.i.47-48)

And then as if he has solved the entire matter:

> Oh, belike His Majesty hath some intent
> That you should be new-christened in the Tower.
> (I.i.49-50)

Greeted with a blank stare from Clarence, in spite of the laugh from the audience he was working for, Richard must quickly return to his role of pretended ignorance. "But what's the matter, Clarence? May I know?" (I.i.51).

When Brakenbury, the Lieutenant of the Tower, interrupts, Richard begins to use him as a straight man, and begins performing for the still stony-faced Clarence as well as the audience. When they have finally exited, Richard, left alone onstage, turns back to the audience, and although using the kingly form of address, implicitly includes the audience as a participant in his little drama.

> Simple, plain Clarence! I do love thee so
> That I will shortly send thy soul to Heaven,
> If Heaven will take the present at our hands.
> (I.i.118-20)

Immediately thereafter, Hastings, another future victim of Richard , enters, drawing Richard back upstage and back into his role. When Hastings exits, Richard returns again downstage to the audience. In these ways, by establishing a direct contact between the actor and the audience through the use of the soliloquy, by dividing the action between the upstage and downstage portions of the platform, and by exploiting the dual nature of an actor's performance

during the act of deception, Shakespeare encourages the audience to perceive the action as an implicit play-within-the-play, and the character as an actor performing numerous simultaneous roles.

Disguise and other forms of deception are not the only kinds of stage behavior that encourage the audience to perceive the character as functioning on more than one level of reality. Some writers have commented upon the manner in which a character's affectations or self-deceptions may be said to create a play-within-the-play.[10]

> Pistol is the product of Shakespeare's abiding interest in the undeclared play within the play, dramatic illusions created within the structure of life itself which lead the unsuspecting to confuse artifice with reality.[11]

The awareness that Pistol differs from the role he plays encourages the audience to view him as a character presenting himself as a play for other's appreciation. The same may be said of Falstaff, Parolles, Don Armado, and other characters whose bluff exterior the audience is allowed to see beneath.

By adopting various kinds of external pretense, numerous Shakespearean characters encourage the audience to perceive them in theatrical terms, as characters performing their own little plays within the larger drama. Perhaps more than any other character Richard II verbalizes the issues surrounding the assumption of roles by a character, and in this he emphasizes the roles being played by the

actor.

> Thus play I in one person many people,
> And none contented. Sometimes am I King,
> Then treasons make me wish myself a beggar,
> And so I am. Then crushing penury
> Persuades me I was better when a king.
> Then am I kinged again. And by and by
> Think that I am unkinged by Bolingbroke,
> And straight am nothing. But whate'er I be,
> Nor I nor any man that but man is
> With nothing shall be pleased till he be eased
> With being nothing.
> (Richard II V.v.31-41)

Alone onstage with the audience, delivering the first and only soliloquy in the entire play, Richard the actor and the actor playing Richard characterizes his multi-leveled behavior throughout the play. The audience perhaps remembers Bolingbroke's aside to the audience some one hundred lines previously,

> Our scene is altered from a serious thing,
> And now changed to "The Beggar and the King."
> (V.iii.79-80)

At the end of All's Well That Ends Well, the actor playing the King steps forward and delivers to the audience a brief six line epilogue that begins, "The King's a beggar, now the play is done" (V.iii.335).

Cleopatra is another character who, like Richard, consciously and unconsciously stages her behavior not so much to deceive as to indulge herself, and work her will. She is willing to alter appearances in order to protect the truth, especially when it concerns her feelings about Antony. She describes her strategy to Charmian, and then

executes her little drama throughout the rest of the scene.

> See where he is, who's with him, what he does.
> I did not send you. If you find him sad,
> Say I am dancing; if in mirth, report
> That I am sudden sick.
> (Antony and Cleopatra I.iii.3-5)

When Antony enters, she immediately becomes sick. Then she plays the martyr when he says he will leave. Then she turns on him in a rage. She is taken aback for a moment when she learns that Fulvia's death is the reason for his leaving, but, in a totally unpredictable move, she criticizes him for not mourning Fulvia. Then she begins to feel sorry for herself, seeing in his response to Fulvia how her own death will be received. "But let that be. I am quickly ill and well, / So Antony loves" (I.iii.72-73). She immediately revives and begins encouraging Antony to stage his good-by scene in the same theatrical manner.

> I prithee, turn aside and weep for her,
> Then bid adieu to me, and say the tears
> Belong to Egypt. Good now, play one scene
> Of excellent dissembling, and let it look
> Like perfect honor.
> (I.iii.76-80)

Yet these high spirits immediately dissolve and give way to what, for the first time, appears to be "sincere" sorrow simply because she has such difficulty adopting the role.

> Courteous lord, one word.
> Sir, you and I must part, but that's not it.
> Sir, you and I have loved, but there's not it--
> That you know well. Something it is I would--
> (I.iii.86-89)

Failing in these attempts to guard her pride with well formed expression, she finally yields to an expression of

despair whose richness and power resides in an eloquent failure of syntax.

> Something it is I would--
> Oh, my oblivion is a very Antony
> And I am all forgotten.
> (I.iii.89-91)

The incredible magnitude of this character results from the audience's perception of the plethora of roles embodied in the onstage personage, ranging from a boy actor, to a very physical woman, to the spiritual essence of feminine grandeur.

Certain characters like Hotspur and Coriolanus are depicted as being unable to adopt the social role demanded by the situation. The interest such characters generate is evoked, in large measure, by the scarcity of individuals who are unable to alter their behavior when it is in their own best interests to do so. Coriolanus is fascinating because he cannot do what is so easy for us, what society trains us to do from birth.

> He would not flatter Nepture for his trident,
> Or Jove for's power to thunder. His heart's his
> mouth--
> What his breast forges, that his tongue must vent,
> And, being angry, does forget that ever
> He heard the name of death.
> (Coriolanus III.i.256-60)

But the very characteristics that were a virtue in war become a liability in peace. When his mother tries to educate him in the political arts, the discussion occurs in theatrical terms, which draws attention to the irony of an actor playing a character who cannot adopt an expedient

social role.

> Would you have me
> False to my nature? Rather say I play
> The man I am.
> (III.ii.14-16)

Volumnia, the politician par excellence, argues, in essence, that an honorable end justifies a dishonest means, and goes so far as to rehearse for her son the manner in which he should physically stage his behavior in order to achieve the most powerful effect.

> Go to them, with this bonnet in thy hand,
> And thus far having stretched it, here be with them
> Thy knee bussing the stones--for in such business
> Action is eloquence, and the eyes of the ignorant
> More learned than the ears--waving thy head,
> Which often thus, correcting thy stout heart,
> Now humble as the ripest mulberry
> That will not hold the handling.
> (III.ii.73-80)

The added irony here is that Shakespeare is not only revealing to his audience one aspect of his own visual technique as a dramatist, but is also having Volumnia describe the exact type of behavior she will use to win over Coriolanus at the end of the play. During that scene Shakespeare puts theatrical language in the mouth of Coriolanus as if to remind the audience that, ironically, it is Volumnia who is acting a well rehearsed role, a role her son is unable to play.

> Like a dull actor now
> I have forgot my part and I am out,
> Even to a full disgrace.
> (V.iii.40-42)

> Behold, the Heavens do ope,
> The gods look down, and this unnatural scene

They laugh at.
(V.iii.183-85)

Having finished the rehearsal, Coriolanus agrees to attempt to play the actor before the people.

> Cor: You have put me now to such a part which never
> I shall discharge to the life.
> Com: Come, come, we'll prompt you.
> Vol: I prithee now, sweet son, as thou hast said
> My praises made thee first a soldier, so,
> To have my praise for this, perform a part
> Thou hast not done before.
> Cor: Well, I must do 't.
> Away, my disposition, and possess me
> Some harlot's spirit!
> (III.ii.105-12)

As before, the audience is encouraged to perceive stage behavior as functioning on multiple levels of motivation, and character as a composite series of roles. Like Richard II, Richard III at the end of his play appears to share, and thus to express, his audience's multiple perceptions of himself, and, by extension, other complex characters.

> What do I fear? Myself? There's none else by.
> Richard loves Richard; that is, I am I.
> Is there a murderer here? No. Yes, I am.
> Then fly. What, from myself? Great reason why--
> Lest I revenge. What, myself upon myself?
> Alack, I love myself. Wherefore? For any good
> That I myself have done unto myself?
> Oh no! Alas, I rather hate myself
> For hateful deeds committed by myself!
> I am a villain--yet I lie, I am not.
> Fool, of thyself speak well. Fool, do not flatter.
> (Richard III V.iii.182-92)

The actor, character, and character's roles argue and compete for control. The audience is treated to an implicit play-within-the-play performed by the various roles that constitute the reality of this onstage personage.

There are many other ways in which Shakespeare encourages his audience to view his actors in many different roles in relation to their characters, and the characters in many different roles in relation to the play, but one of the most effective ways he has of doing this is by means of strategic positioning of onstage observers, particularly eavesdroppers. A brief discussion of the workings of perception in the theatre will aid the analysis of Shakespeare's use of onstage observers to structure stage space and the audience's experience of the characters and the play.

Every character onstage is an observer as well as a performer. He watches other characters perform even as he is performing himself. When two characters interact upon the stage, the audience not only watches them in action, it also watches them watching the other character. Thus, the audience not only sees the actions of each character for itself, but also sees the actions of each character as perceived by every other character who is watching. One of the most exciting aspects of the theatre available for the playwright's exploitation is the audience's ability to share and assimilate each character's point of view while simultaneously maintaining its own.

A number of possibilities for communication are made possible by this phenomenon. First of all, in sharing to some extent each character's point of view, the spectator

has a tendency to anticipate each character's response on the basis of what he knows about the character, and on the basis of his own personal response. Any time anything happens onstage, the spectator immediately has a personal response and, simultaneously, a sense of how the other characters will respond. A character is understood in terms of how his perspective differs from the perspective of the spectator, and how his response differs from how the spectator feels he would respond in the given situation with the given perspective. This tendency for the spectator to anticipate each character's response is one of the playwright's strongest tools. The playwright may either satisfy the expectations of the spectator, producing in the spectator a sense of understanding and inevitability, or he may contradict the expectations of the spectator, and produce the surprise that leads to a discovery about the character and, finally, to a revaluation of the character and the manner in which he will respond in the future.

The spectator's tendency to share each character's point of view also allows the playwright to utilize the strong possibilities for communication inherent in the juxtaposition of perspectives. The audience is not merely shown the manner in which confusions, misunderstandings, and misapprehensions occur, it experiences these things in the act of simultaneously embracing divergent and incongruous perspectives. At the same time, the audience's view of

character and situation is enriched by being experienced in terms of so many different frames of reference. The audience makes comparison between each character's image of each other character, and in turn compares each with its own. The audience's capacity for a sympathetic understanding of another's situation is expanded along with its capacity to grasp many perspectives upon a single issue or situation. Shakespeare's use of onstage observers expands and intensifies the perspectives upon the action, and thus helps to structure the audience's experience of the issues in the play.

Shakespeare's use of formal groups of observers was given a good deal of attention during the analysis of his use of the audience during the play-within-the-play scene in Hamlet, and here need only be mentioned. All crowd scenes encourage the audience to identify with the perspective of the observers, yet at the same time the crowd's reactions may be strongly juxtaposed to the audience's own reactions, or the reactions expected by the characters the crowd observes. This is especially true if the behavior of the characters has been specifically staged for the crowd's benefit. In Richard III, Buckingham and Richard have carefully planned their staging of the scene before the crowd, and execute the scene at great length to an appreciative audience in the theatre. But the onstage crowd stands silent the entire time, exits with Buckingham,

reenters at Buckingham's request, and says only "Amen," in response to his ringing proclamation of Richard as King. It is almost as if Shakespeare wanted his audience to appreciate how the effect of clever acting can be wasted on a stupefied audience.

The final act of Measure For Measure consists of a series of scenes staged for the benefit of various onstage audiences. Even though the Duke normally does not like to "stage" himself to the people's eyes (I.i.69), he chooses to reenter the city in a large procession so that all the characters in the drama he plans can be present as both actors and audience. He has instructed each character in the part he must play, but has not informed him that others will be playing parts as well. Each spectator onstage has only a limited understanding of what will happen. Even the audience is not yet aware of the number of characters who are acting under the Duke's direction. Duke Vincentio structures his drama so that each character in playing out his part will force the other characters as spectators to make some discovery about themselves; and Shakespeare structures his drama so that his audience will experience the truth being revealed through the incongruities between what characters know and what they do. Not unlike Hamlet, the Duke uses rehearsed behavior to reveal the truth beneath various kinds of appearances; the entire act is composed of a series of literal and figurative unmaskings before the

judging eyes of onstage spectators.

As the Duke performs his little drama amidst the limited levels of awareness surrounding him, at his side remains Angelo in his role of righteous integrity. While Isabella makes her accusations of Angelo, and as the Duke in his role defends him, Angelo says hardly a word. But in spite of his relative silence, the audience, as it did with Claudius, constantly checks his reactions for a chink in the armor. Shakespeare often uses a silent, knowing observer amidst the ignorant in order to create the feeling of a play being performed within the larger drama. Celia was mentioned as serving such a function in the scenes between Orlando and the disguised Rosalind.. When Macbeth reenters after having murdered the drugged grooms, he begins speaking in exaggerated language, and, immediately, Lady Macbeth faints (perhaps to distract from the unconvincing aspects of Macbeth's acting), but Banquo, who has reason to be suspicious, stands silent and watches. The others are convinced, because very soon they make Macbeth King, but the audience watches Banquo to see the seeds of suspicion being sown (Macbeth III.i.96-131). All during the scene in which Cleopatra seduces Antony into having "one other gaudy night" (Antony and Cleopatra III.xiii.183), Enobarbus stands in the background watching, his cynicism a visual undercutting of their impulsive passion. His reactions have prepared the audience for his brief soliloquy when

the others have exited. "I will seek / Some way to leave him" (III.xiii.200-1). In a similar way, the audience's observation of Aufidius watching Volumnia comments upon the performance which will save Rome but destroy her son (Coriolanus V.iii.92-202).[12]

The potential for communication provided by onstage observers is perhaps more apparent in those scenes in which the observer is clearly separated from the thing he watches and thus may clearly speak his mind. Sometimes the comment is made before and after the scene as at the opening of Antony and Cleopatra. Demetrius and Philo discuss briefly the dotage of their general, and then step back and let Antony and Cleopatra come in and demonstrate the dotage. The audience of course can perceive the more attractive aspects of the famous couple's behavior, but the silent observation of the soldiers provides the balancing perspective. When the couple exits, the two soldiers return to the foreground and reconfirm the change in Antony. Thus, during the initial presentation of the two lovers, they are perceived by the audience, in part, as actors playing a drama that is viewed through unapproving eyes (I.i).

More often characters establish themselves as observers of a scene by separating themselves through the use of periodic asides. Such a technique allows blatant juxtapositions. Jack Cade glorifies his heritage to the onstage crowd in justification of his right to the crown,

while Dick and Smith present his true heritage to the audience in asides (II Henry VI IV.ii.34-70). King Edward tries subtly to seduce Lady Grey, while Gloucester and Clarence blatantly express his intentions in asides to the audience (III Henry VI III.ii.1-117). Throughout his career, Shakespeare often provides a character with periodic asides in order to present to the audience an alternative perspective upon the scene. Usually the commenter is separated visually from what he watches, as is Apemantus at Timon's banquet (Timon of Athens I.ii.30). In this way, Shakespeare visually reinforces the juxtaposition of perspectives while simultaneously encouraging the audience to view the action being observed as a theatrical performance within the play.

Shakespeare rarely used the dumb show in his plays, but was particularly fond of using what might be called an implicit dumb show, those instances in which a character comments in an aside to the audience about silent action that is mutually observed. During one of the dumb shows in Pericles he has Gower commenting upon the silent action (IV.iv.21-29), and two gentlemen comment upon the dumb show in Henry VIII (IV.i.35-55). Shakespeare appears to have preferred to have a character guiding his audience's perceptions. Many times Shakespeare merely has a group of characters passing across the stage while another group of characters define themselves for the audience by their responses. Shakespeare chooses to present Cressida to the

audience on the upper stage (Troilus and Cressida I.ii. 193-94), with Pandarus selling her on the good and bad points of the soldiers as they return from the field (I.ii. 200-261). One of the audience's first images of the two is of a seller and a buyer of men. In Coriolanus there is good reason for believing that the silent passage of Volumnia and Virgilia across the stage was intended to be a funereal contrast to the jubilance of the people (V.v.1-7).

One of Shakespeare's strategies in employing such devices is to provide a contrast between the audience's interpretation of what it sees, and what the character says he sees. In The Winter's Tale, Leontes, after he has failed, watches his wife Hermione succeed in persuading Polixenes to extend his visit. The audience watches Hermione and Polixenes continue their silent social banter as they move upstage, but the scene is suddenly darkened when the audience realizes how Leontes views that same scene.

> But to be paddling palms and pinching fingers,
> As now they are, and making practiced smiles,
> As in a looking-glass, and then to sigh, as 'twere
> The mort o' the deer--oh, that is entertainment
> My bosom likes not, nor my brows!
> (I.ii.115-19)

The action continues upstage as Leontes tries to turn his concentration to his son, but is unable to resist periodic glances at the upstage action. "Still virginaling / Upon his palm!" (I.ii.125-26). The audience is presented with two views of the same scene. It perceives the actors pre-

senting harmless social interaction; Leontes, standing partially outside the play, sees the characters as actors attempting to hide a mutual lust. The scene is energized by the tensions created between diverse perspectives on the same stage behavior.

A similar juxtaposition of perspectives occurs in Othello, a play centrally concerned with problems of perception. After bantering with Desdemona, Iago moves downstage while the extravagant Cassio begins entertaining Desdemona upstage. Here, as happened in The Winter's Tale, the harmless upstage scene is seen through the distorted perspective of a downstage observer. Iago does not misinterpret the scene, but he allows the audience to see how it could be misinterpreted. Shakespeare, as Iago does to Othello, presents his audience with alternative views of Desdemona.

> He takes her by the palm. Aye, well said, whisper. With as little a web as this will I ensnare as great a fly as Cassio. Aye, smile upon her, do, I will gyve thee in thine own courtship. You say true, 'tis so indeed. If tricks as these strip you out of your Lieutenantry, it had been better you had not kissed your three fingers so oft, which now again you are most apt to play the sir in. Very good, well kissed! An excellent courtesy! 'Tis so indeed. Yet again your fingers to your lips? Would they were clyster pipes for your sake!
> (II.i.168-79)

Iago, the consummate actor, stands outside the play and guides the audience's vision toward the performance of another kind of actor in another kind of play. The audience's immediate experience of the artifice of the theatre

reinforces its perception of the acting of both Cassio and Iago, each master of his own strategy of manipulating appearances, but unsuccessful in the other's art. The audience must assimilate interacting levels of theatrical acting, deceptive acting, and social acting. At the same time, it discovers something more about Iago's way of seeing things, and through his eyes sees Desdemona and Cassio in a context that prepares it for things to come.

Much the same gestalt governs Shakespeare's use of eavesdropping scenes. The plays contain over thirty-five separate instances of characters eavesdropping on other characters. Sometimes the eavesdroppers are silent and only watch. At other times they speak in an aside to the audience or in aside to fellow observers. At still other times the observers may do most or all of the talking while the character observed is engaged in some kind of activity. Shakespeare uses such scenes to fulfill many different dramatic functions simultaneously; the economy of the device is one of its major virtues. Many times Shakespeare uses eavesdropping primarily to effect a necessary change in the plot, provide information, allow discovery, and so forth. Yet a major result of such scenes is to structure the audience's perception in ways not possible with other equally suitable means of servicing the plot.

The eavesdropping scene divides the stage into separate sources of visual interest,[13] the watchers and

the watched, providing at least two separate and mutually informing perspectives upon the situation and the issues presented. At the same time, a theatrical tone is imparted to the scene; the observed activity becomes an implicit play-within-the-play, and the behavior of the characters being observed is suggested to be a performance of some kind on one or more levels of reality. This situation provides multiple perspectives of both the characters and the action on a number of different levels of reality. These perspectives may be communicated by any number of visual and aural combinations; the audience must constantly check the movements of the watcher against the word of the watched, must balance sight and sound, must constantly scan the stage to compare the reactions of the watchers with its own reactions to the watched.

When Toby, Andrew, and Fabian eavesdrop on Malvolio (Twelfth Night II.v.27-195), perceptually the scene is rather simple, although somewhat unusual inasmuch as the observers have attempted to structure the activity they will observe. Thus the focus is not on the observers in terms of how they will react to the discovery of new information as it is when Hamlet and Horatio watch the funeral they will discover to be Ophelia's (Hamlet V.i.240-77), or when Valentine overhears Proteus pleading his love to Silvia (The Two Gentlemen of Verona V.iv.19-60); rather the focus is on them in terms of the enjoyment they are having in

discovering that Malvolio's self-love is deeper than they expected. The image the observers have of Malvolio is sharply contrasted in the ping-pong dialogue with the image Malvolio has of himself. The audience watches Malvolio acting a role that only he can believe in, its eyes switching back and forth to check and compare.

More complicated are those scenes involving multiple eavesdropping. In Love's Labor's Lost, Shakespeare creates what amounts to a parody of eavesdropping when Berowne and the other three lovers each in turn proclaims his secret love to the audience, and then hides, only to watch another enter and do the same. When they are all hidden preparing to observe Dumain, Berowne, the first to hide, looks out to the audience and aptly characterizes the situation. "All hid, all hid, an old infant play" (IV.iii.78). Longaville eavesdrops on Dumain, unaware that he also is being observed. The King watches the two of them, unaware that Berowne watches all three. Shakespeare places the audience in the position of being the fourth eavesdropper in the series, able to enjoy the experience that, on the next level down, Berowne himself enjoys.

> Like a demigod here sit I in the sky,
> And wretched fools' secrets heedfully o'ereye.
> (IV.iii.79-80)

Each of the four levels of increasingly greater awareness informs the others, and prepares the audience for the parallel ironies to be created by the sequential revelations.

Shakespeare has treated his audience to what, in its structuring of perception, amounts to a play-within-a-play-within-a-play-within-a-play.

The scene utilizing multiple eavesdropping in Troilus and Cressida has only three sources of visual interest, but has more characters and thus more perspectives for the audience to assimilate, and it involves the audience much more deeply in the interplay of contrasting perceptions of behavior. The play concerns itself to some extent with the problems of correct perception, and one's appearance in the eyes of others. Ulysses is able to manipulate both Ajax and Achilles by convincing them that they can be nothing unless they are well received in the eyes of others. He cautions Achilles much as he might have cautioned Troilus. "The present eye praises the present object" (III.iii.180). Cressida has been presented in ways which increasingly reveal an emerging duality to the eyes of the audience that is hidden from the eyes of Troilus. The audience has seen her go marketing for men with Pandarus (I.ii.200-61), and has heard her confession of her own ability to dissemble (I.ii.308-321). The sleazy presence of Pandarus during the love scenes functions as a visual metaphor for the ugly side of physical love.

In her first encounter with Troilus, Cressida reflects an ambivalence similar to that displayed in her later scene with Diomedes.

> Hard to seem won. But I was won, my lord,
> With the first glance that ever--pardon me,
> If I confess much, you will play the tyrant.
> I love you now, but not, till now, so much
> But I might master it. In faith, I lie.
> My thoughts were like unbridled children, grown
> Too headstrong for their mother. See, we fools!
> Why have I blabbed? Who shall be true to us
> When we are so unsecret to ourselves?
> (III.ii.125-33)

Cressida herself begins to recognize a duality in her nature over which she has little control. Shakespeare prepares his audience for the scene to come.

> I have a kind of self resides with you,
> But an unkind self that itself will leave
> To be another's fool.
> (III.ii.155-57)

The final scene in which she appears allows the audience to perceive Cressida from several different simultaneous points of view. The final image of Cressida is a composite image expressed by the entire stage. Diomedes enters with his flaming torch (V.i.93), establishing the time of day as evening, and, even in the actual daylight on the Globe stage, adding a lambent visual texture to the fluctuations in Cressida and in the scene. Cressida and Diomedes are most probably upstage center, while Troilus and Ulysses observe from one downstage corner and Thersites from the other.[14] Much like the staging of the play in Hamlet, the downstage characters function to focus the audience's vision upon the upstage scene.

In many ways, the stage is set up to reflect symbolically the nature of Cressida's personality and the

nature of her struggle. Here, as much as in any other play, Shakespeare uses characters as images of abstract qualities. Thersites in this scene replaces Pandarus as the image of the repulsive aspects of sexual desire, and, like Pandarus, he functions to provide the audience with an alternative to the point of view represented by Troilus. Like a gargoyle, Thersites smiles his toothless smile out at the audience, and then turns upstage to look in on the picture of Troilus and Ulysses across the stage looking up at Cressida and Diomedes upstage center. The jaundiced eye of Thersites guides the perception of the audience, and colors everything that happens at the other two centers of visual interest.

Across the stage stands the sly, experienced Ulysses and the naive, romantic Troilus. Even as Pandarus and Thersites present the sordid side of sexual relationships, Troilus presents the idealized side. Thus Troilus and Thersites divide the stage into opposing camps on a field of love that dispenses with the artificial distinction of Greek and Trojan. Yet the sexual struggle clearly suggests the larger war of which it is a part. In the middle stands Cressida, pulled in one direction by Diomedes, the pretty external appearance of those dark desires embodied in the syphilitic Thersites, and pulled in the other direction by the loyalty expressed in the idealized devotion of Troilus. Ulysses stands as the pragmatic schoolmaster , training

Troilus to see things clearly and whole. Shakespeare sets his stage, not only to control his audience's perception of the events, but also to manifest visually the poles between which the action oscillates.

Having created such a richly communicative context, Shakespeare can afford to relax the language and allow information to be transmitted to the spectators visually. The dialogue between Cressida and Diomedes is rich in gestic suggestions, it pulls them together to touch and whisper, and then pushes them apart. These fluctuations express the conflict in Cressida, and motivate the asides of Troilus and Thersites as they participate in the visual tug-of-war. Shakespeare forces his audience to see all the touching as simultaneously an excitement to rage and despair from Troilus on one side of the stage, and an excitement to erotic fantasies from Thersites on the other. When the couple in the upstage play pull apart, the downstage reactions are equally dissimilar.

Shakespeare keeps the dialogue between the upstage pair purposely vague to maintain the suspense in the onstage and offstage observers, as well as to focus attention upon the visual communication. Cressida has sworn to "bestow" something upon Diomedes, yet every time he moves in to gain assurance, she moves away; and every time he starts to leave, she moves after him and draws him back. Thersites punctuates the movement.

Cres: Sweet honey Greek, tempt me no more to folly.
Ther: Roguery!
Diom: Nay, then--
Cres: I'll tell you what--
Diom: Foh, foh! Come, tell a pin. You are fore-sworn.
Cres: In faith, I cannot. What would you have me do?
Ther: A juggling trick--to be secretly open.
Diom: What did you swear you would bestow on me?
Cres: I prithee do not hold me to mine oath.
Bid me do anything but that, sweet Greek.
Diom: Good night.
(V.ii.18-28)

But she calls him back. This pattern of coitus interruptus continues throughout the scene with Cressida being forced to be increasingly physical in order to detain him ("She strokes his cheek" V.ii.51), and thus increasingly exciting both Troilus and Thersites in differing directions, and the audience in a combination of both.

The upstage scene comes to a close when Cressida gives, then takes back, and then has snatched from her the sleeve that Troilus had given her. The sleeve, and the physical passing of it back and forth between the characters, become yet another visual manifestation of what Cressida has taken from Troilus, and her ambivalent reaction toward giving it to Diomedes. To be true to one she must forswear the other. During the giving and the taking of the sleeve and all the physical interaction it implies, the audience is encouraged constantly to check the reactions of Troilus and Thersites. The scene focuses upon how things are seen. The audience simultaneously experiences the scene through its own eyes and through two totally disparate perspectives.

Cres: Here, Diomed, keep this sleeve.
Troi: O beauty! Where is thy faith?
Ulys: My lord--
Troi: I will be patient, outwardly I will.
Cres: You look upon that sleeve, behold it well.
He loved me.--O false wench!--Give 't me again.
Diom: Whose was 't?
Cres: It is no matter, now I have 't again.
I will not meet with you tomorrow night.
I prithee, Diomed, visit me no more.
Ther: Now she sharpens. Well said, whetstone!
Diom: I shall have it.
(V.ii.66-76)

The tug-of-war finally ends when the intensified ambivalence finally builds to a decision.

Cres: Well, well, 'tis done, 'tis past. And yet
it is not. I will not keep my word.
Diom: Why then, farewell.
Thou never shalt mock Diomed again.
Cres: You shall not go. One cannot speak a word
But it straight starts you.
Diom: I do not like this fooling.
Ther: Nor I, by Pluto. But that that likes not you
pleases me best.
Diom: What, shall I come? The hour?
Cres: Aye, come. O Jove! Do come. I shall be
plagued.
Diom: Farewell till then.
Cres: Good night. I prithee come.
(V.ii.97-106)

The dialectic created by these two is reinforced by the stage positioning, the point of view, and the behavior of Troilus and Thersites, which in turn intensifies the dialectic experienced by the audience. Each spectator in his own way has been pulling for Cressida to resist, or for Diomedes to conquer, or perhaps a little of both. Every impulse in one direction, the stage counters with an impulse in the opposite direction. The audience experiences direct involvement in this smaller version of the larger

war.

In both its technique and its subject the scene is particularly concerned with the relationship between behavior and perception. Before she leaves, Cressida practically addresses Troilus to his face while implicitly speaking to the audience. As always, Thersites, leering in from his corner of the stage, balances the observation with one of his own.

> Cres: Troilus, farewell! One eye yet looks on thee,
> But with my heart the other eye doth see.
> Ah, poor our sex! This fault in us I find,
> The error of our eye directs our mind.
> What error leads must err. Oh, then conclude
> Minds swayed by eyes are full of turpitude.
> Ther: A proof of strength she could not publish more
> Unless she said "My mind is now turned whore."
> (V.ii.107-14)

In the dialogue remaining in the scene, Troilus attempts to reconcile his previous image of Cressida with what he has just experienced.

> Ther: Will a' swagger himself out on 's own eyes?
> Troi: This she? No, this is Diomed's Cressida.
> (V.ii.136-37)

Eventually, he must accept the paradoxical duality of her nature. "This is, and is not, Cressid!" (V.ii.146). Troilus did in fact see two different Cressidas, his own and Diomed's. The audience on the other hand experienced at least five or six different Cressidas: the one seen by Thersites, the one seen by Troilus, by Ulysses, by Diomedes, the one seen by Cressida herself, and its own view, which includes an awareness of the actor in the role, and,

finally, is a composite impression of all possible perspectives. The visual experience created by the eavesdropping encourages a theatrical awareness by suggesting a play-within-a-play, and simultaneously creates multiple perspectives upon the many layers of aesthetic reality within the play itself. The audience experiences a continuum between itself, the boy actor, and the deepest layers of Cressida's character.

A similar use of theatrical perspectives to create and communicate images of character and characters' images of one another may be found in Othello. In this play, Shakespeare employs a strategy which might be called a staged eavesdropping. The strategy is used to great comic effect in Much Ado About Nothing, in which Beatrice and Benedick alternately are allowed to overhear a staged discussion in which it is revealed that they are loved by the other who is afraid to reveal it. What the audience perceives as a drama being performed within the play for an audience of one, Beatrice and Benedick perceive as a serious discussion of the truth. Yet the audience also perceives the change in each character's perspective of the other. Thus, although neither's external behavior may be altered from what it was, each interprets the other's actions as having a totally different significance.

> Bene: Ha! "Against my will I am sent to bid you come in to dinner." There's a double meaning in that.
>
> (II.iii.266-68)

By allowing the audience to experience the alteration of each character's view of the other, Shakespeare more immediately engages the audience in the misperception which, in this instance, transforms illusion into reality.

A similar strategy is employed in Othello, but for a more serious purpose. Othello's misperception of Desdemona is significantly different from the misperception of Cressida by Troilus, and Beatrice by Benedick. The view Troilus has of Cressida is too narrow and must be expanded to include her full reality. Circumstances allow the false view Benedick has of Beatrice to become true. But Othello starts with an accurate perception of Desdemona, and by a painful process, this view is distorted into the opposite of what it was. Troilus is unaware that there is a double meaning in the behavior of Cressida; Othello believes there is double meaning in the behavior of Desdemona, but is mistaken.

The play is centrally concerned with Iago's systematic alteration of Othello's perception of Desdemona. But what is often ignored is the systematic way in which Shakespeare alters the perception of the audience through a manipulation of theatrical perspectives. Mention has been made of the manner in which Iago's downstage description of Cassio and Desdemona presented the audience with a direct experience of the image he intends to create in the mind of Othello. Like Richard III, Iago is experienced by the

audience as actor and stage manager. He usurps the downstage area of the platform during his many soliloquies, draws the audience into his confidence, and then turns its vision upstage to the characters who enter to be manipulated within the little drama he shares only with the viewer. When he has done his work, he returns to the audience to tell them how he has done, and what he intends to do next. The audience is encouraged to view the action as a drama being orchestrated by Iago within the larger play. In being Iago's sole confidant, the audience inevitably becomes a collaborator in the plotting. Iago guides the audience's perceptions even as he guides Othello's.

Shakespeare has Iago begin his assault on Othello's perceptions by means of the same strategy he used to assault the eyes of the audience with the same image. Iago and Othello enter at a distance while Cassio, at Iago's request, is downstage presenting his suit to Desdemona (III.iii.29). Being the gentleman, Cassio no doubt takes her hand as he begs his leave; she politely restrains his exit, but he, ashamed to meet the man he feels he has disappointed, hurries quickly away.

> Emi: Madam, here comes my lord.
> Cas: Madam, I'll take my leave.
> Des: Nay, stay and hear me speak.
> Cas: Madam, not now. I am very ill at ease,
> Unfit for mine own purposes.
> (III.iii.29-33)

On this cue, Iago, as Cassio slips away, begins to act his

favorite role of having a hideous monster in his thoughts.

> Iag: Ha! I like not that.
> Oth: What dost thou say?
> Iag: Nothing, my lord. Or if--I know not what.
> Oth: Was not that Cassio parted from my wife?
> Iag: Cassio, my lord! No, sure, I cannot think it,
> That he would steal away so guilty-like,
> Seeing you coming.
> (III.iii.34-40)

This is the web that spider Iago has promised the audience. The audience itself four scenes before directly experienced the manner in which Iago's distorted perspective could transform innocent behavior between Cassio and Desdemona into something very suggestive. All during the following temptation scenes it is this visual image that sticks in Othello's mind, an image the audience can share.

After this visual image has been reinforced, transformed, and embellished by the constant verbal images of Desdemona being topped, of Cassio plucking up kisses from her lips, laying his leg over her thigh, lying with her, on her, Othello is ready for the next visual encounter with Cassio, which is staged as a scene of eavesdropping. As stage manager of the play he is creating, Iago has been busy. He has gotten Cassio to leave the stage while he revives Othello from his trance. He then sends Othello to an upstage corner of the stage with the following directions.

> Do but encave yourself,
> And mark the fleers, the gibes, and notable scorns,
> That dwell in every region of his face.
> For I will make him tell the tale anew,
> Where, how, how oft, how long ago, and when
> He hath and is again to cope your wife.

I say but mark his gesture.
(IV.i.82-88)

Once again, Iago plans to create a damning visual image out of innocent behavior by controlling the viewer's perspective upon the scene. As prologue to his own play, he explains to the audience exactly what will happen. He will question Cassio about Bianca, about whom he cannot help but laugh, and "as he shall smile, Othello shall go mad" (IV.i.101).

In the two previous scenes in which Iago was the eavesdropper, he altered the audience's perception of the scene by giving a sexual interpretation to guiless actions. Shakespeare now repeats the pattern he has used twice before, allowing the audience to watch a watcher watching an activity that the watcher misinterprets. Previously Iago merely had altered the frame of reference in which the activity was viewed. In this instance he also functions as an actor and director of the activity while it is being viewed. Initially, the audience watched Iago watching Cassio and Desdemona; then the audience watched Iago and Othello watching Cassio and Desdemona; now the audience watches Othello watching Cassio while Iago serves as a surrogate Desdemona. In each instance, the observers can hear nothing and must interpret the significance of what is happening solely on the basis of visual information. The audience has experienced two different instances of Iago's manipulation of such behavior, and now waits for the third.

The burden upon Iago is to create a scene that is visually convincing to Othello without drawing the suspicions of Cassio. By doing so he creates in the audience the tension that results from having to maintain simultaneously two contradictory interpretations of the same situation. Othello stands upstage so that the audience can watch his physical reactions as he watches the physical reactions of Cassio and Iago; Cassio and Iago are downstage so that the audience can hear and appreciate the intimate nuances of the true interpretation of the scene. Shakespeare gives Othello a theatrical metaphor to further emphasize the irony of his perceptions in contrast to the show Iago is putting on. "Do you triumph, Roman? Do you triumph?" (IV.i.121-22).

The language throughout suggests a great deal of physical by-play between the downstage performers. As Cassio begins to act out Bianca's behavior on Iago's body, the audience watches Othello's image of Desdemona becoming Cassio's view of Bianca.

> Cas: She was here even now. She haunts me in every place. I was the other day talking on the sea bank with certain Venetians, and thither comes the bauble, and by this hand, she falls me thus about my neck--
> Oth: Crying "O dear Cassio!" as it were. His gesture imports it.
> Cas: So hangs and lolls and weeps upon me, so hales and pulls me. Ha, ha, ha!
> Oth: Now he tells how she plucked him to my chamber. (IV.i.135-46)

As Cassio caresses various parts of Iago's anatomy, the

audience watches Othello's image of Desdemona become associated not only with Cassio's view of Bianca, but with Iago himself. The actions revive an image that previously was only verbal.

> In sleep I heard him say "Sweet Desdemona,
> Let us be wary, let us hide our loves."
> And then, sir, would he gripe and wring my hand,
> Cry "O sweet creature!" and then kiss me hard,
> As if he plucked up kisses by the roots
> That grew upon my lips. Then laid his leg
> Over my thigh, and sighed and kissed, and then
> Cried "Cursed fate that gave thee to the Moor!"
> (III.iii.419-26)

Othello now has his "ocular proof" (III.iii.360).

To compound image upon image, Shakespeare brings the "real" Bianca onstage. She is not the fawning creature acted out by Cassio, and the crudity of her behavior functions as a metaphor for the image of whore now firmly implanted in Othello's mind. "Let the Devil and his dam haunt you!" (IV.i.153). Bianca's possession of the handkerchief further links her to Othello's increasingly altered image of Desdemona, while providing more ocular proof of Iago's fabrications. As with Troilus after his observation of Cressida, Othello emerges from hiding with two conflicting images of Desdemona: the image created by his personal experience, and the image created by Iago's alteration of his perceptions, the image of the whore Bianca.

> Aye, let her rot, and perish, and be damned tonight, for she shall not live. No, my heart is turned to stone, I strike it and it hurts my hand. Oh, the world hath not a sweeter creature.
> (IV.i.192-95)

The audience has watched Othello's changing image of Desdemona change him, has watched his blindness to the duplicity of Iago result in his perception of a nonexistent duplicity in Desdemona, has watched Iago change the image of Desdemona from saint to whore. Now that this image is firmly implanted in Othello's mind, an image he and the audience have witnessed acted out before them, Shakespeare brings on the "real" Desdemona so that the image and the reality may collide. The dramatic genius that he is, Shakespeare creates this collision before the representative of the Duke and Senators of Venice, so that the tensions and humiliations are maximized. It is one of the most painful scenes in all of Shakespeare's plays.

As has been suggested, the scenes of eavesdropping, and observations scenes in general, fulfill many simultaneous functions. In the scene just studied, the implicit suggestion of a play-within-the-play perfectly reinforces the recurrent image of Iago as an actor ("I am not what I am" I.i.65), and emphasizes the uncomfortably intimate relationship that Iago the actor (and the actor playing Iago) sustains with the audience throughout the play. At the same time, the situation presents the audience with multiple perspectives upon the action. Yet even as Shakespeare manipulates his audience's perspective upon the action to encourage a perception of stage behavior on different levels of reference, so does Iago manipulate

Othello's perception of Desdemona to suggest that she functions on more levels than are immediately apparent. The image of Desdemona that Othello develops is centrally an image of what he sees, and Shakespeare stages his scenes to encourage the audience to share that vision. But the audience must also share the pleasure Cassio enjoys in acting out the caresses of Bianca, and the pleasure Iago has in duping his superiors. Forcing the audience to experience, to assimilate, and to resolve the dialectic created by conflicting, often painful, multi-leveled perspectives upon human behavior constitutes the genius of observation scenes, of all dramatic situations functioning implicitly as plays-within-plays, and, it could be said, of the theatrical medium itself.

NOTES

[1]Bradbrook, Themes and Conventions, pp. 111-12.

[2]Bethell, Popular Dramatic Tradition, p. 91.

[3]Ibid., p. 91.

[4]Ibid., p. 69.

[5]Harrison, ed., Complete Works, p. 632, l. 437n.

[6]Abel, Metatheatre, p. 66.

[7]Victor Oscar Freeburg, Disguise Plots in Elizabethan Drama (New York: Columbia University Press, 1915), p. 15.

[8]Stanley, "Seeing and Perceiving," p. 14.

[9]Herbert Randolph Coursen, Jr., "A Spacious Mirror: Shakespeare and the Play-Within" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, The University of Connecticut, 1965), p. 1. Concealed motives are said to create a play-within-the-play.

[10]Abel, Metatheatre, p. 66.

[11]Righter, Idea of the Play, p. 129.

[12]Styan, Shakespeare's Stagecraft, p. 108.

[13]Ibid., pp. 103-5. The staging of eavesdropping scenes is discussed.

[14]Ibid., pp. 129-30.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

> Thus play I in one person many people,
> And none contented.
> (Richard II V.v.31-32)

This study is based upon the assumption that audiences in the theatre are cognizant, in various ways and to various degrees, of the actor performing the role of his character. Evidence was presented to suggest that Elizabethan stage conditions and the historical development of the stage-audience relationship provided a theatrical environment which accentuated the audience's awareness of actors on a stage in a theatre. A tradition of perceiving truth by means of allegory and analogy, together with a natural love of doubleness, paradox, and incongruous juxtapositions encouraged Elizabethans to maintain a simultaneous awareness of the actor and the character, encouraged them to perceive stage behavior functioning simultaneously in different spheres of reference.

Shakespeare's plays were studied to discover the dramatic strategies by which he evoked and exploited the audience's theatrical awareness to enrich the dramatic experience being communicated, the strategies dependent upon

an audience's ability to view stage behavior within multiple frames of reference. First were examined the numerous verbal references to the theatrical environment, statements or metaphors which directly or indirectly draw an audience's attention to some aspect of the social reality as it exists in the theatre during performance. Each specific reference functions differently, but always some parallel is being drawn between the theatrical action of representation and the dramatic action being represented. Shakespeare draws attention to the behavior of the actor as an analogous complement or contrast to the behavior of the character. Many times the audience is encouraged to view the actor as a performer, the performer as a character, and the character as a performer within the world of the play. The theatrical experience presents a hierarchy of interrelated realities, in various degrees of concord and conflict, on a continuum stretching from the actor into the deepest levels of the play.

Shakespeare draws attention to the similarities between the theatrical performance and the action performed to provide the audience with an immediate image of the dramatic action being performed. The audience's perception of the actor performing his role upon the stage reinforces its experience of the character's situation in the play. The audience often is encouraged to view the character not only as an actor, but as a spectator, in which case its own

role as a group of passive observers increases its understanding of the character's situation. In his plays, Shakespeare repeatedly explores the problems surrounding the accurate perception of truth in the guise of its many deceptive appearances, appearances that cause confusion in comedy and disaster in tragedy; the audience's consciousness of the similarities between the reality of the actor "within" the character and the reality of the character within the various appearances he adopts is utilized to communicate these issues.

Shakespeare also will draw attention to the disparities between the theatrical icon and the dramatic object to achieve specific dramatic effects. Often he will allow the actor to step outside his role and share a joke with the audience at the expense of the character. This has the dual effect of uniting the audience with the stage by creating a comradeship between actor and audience, while simultaneously discouraging a simplistic identification with the character.

> But the double consciousness of play-world and real world has the solid advantage of "distancing" a play, so that the words and deeds of which it consists may be critically weighed in the course of its performance. An Ibsen drama, attended to passively, is discussed afterwards in abstract terms; but in a Shakespearean play, criticism is an integral part of apprehension, and apprehension thereby becomes an activity of the whole mind.[1]

At other times, attention is drawn to the disparity between the theatrical icon and the dramatic object in order to emphasize the limitations of artistic expression. Yet

by emphasizing the inadequacy of the theatrical image, Shakespeare asserts the unmatchable reality of the original. He encourages the audience to imagine what it does not perceive by pointing out the limitations of what it does perceive. He overtly employs this strategy in his use of the chorus in Henry V.

> But pardon, gentles all,
> The flat unraised spirits that have dared
> On this unworthy scaffold to bring forth
> So great an object. Can this cockpit hold
> The vasty fields of France? Or may we cram
> Within this wooden O the very casques
> That did affright the air at Agincourt?
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Piece out our imperfections with your thoughts.
> Into a thousand parts divide one man,
> And make imaginary puissance.
> Think when we talk of horses that you see them
> Printing their proud hoofs i' the receiving earth.
> For 'tis your thoughts that now must deck our kings,
> Carry them here and there, jumping o'er times,
> Turning the accomplishment of many years
> Into an hourglass.
>
> (I.Prologue.8-31)

Shakespeare encourages the audience to use the disparity between icon and content as a spur to its imagination. "Yet sit and see, / Minding true things by what their mockeries be" (IV.Prologue.52-53). The imagination is Shakespeare's great ally.

The study next focused upon Shakespeare's use of a single theatrical convention to exploit his audience's multiple consciousness: the boy actor in female roles. Although the use of boy actors was normally accepted by the

audience without question, Shakespeare, on numerous occasions, draws attention to the convention in order to communicate certain ideas about the nature of masculine and feminine behavior. Special use is made of the convention when a female character dresses as a male. The boy actor playing the girl disguised as a boy may alternately express the masculine view, or the feminine view, or the view of one in the eyes of the other. In the case of Rosalind, Shakespeare creates even more layers of role-playing, and allows the audience to perceive her behavior constantly fluctuating from one plane of reality to another. The image of the character in the minds of the spectators becomes a composite series of roles extending from the boy actor to the female character, to the boy she impersonates, to the Rosalind she has the boy impersonate, to the impersonations of tutor, bride, priest, wooer, and wife that one or all of these boy/girl mirror images act for the benefit of Orlando. The hermaphroditic onstage personage forces the audience to revalue traditional sex roles in terms of the manifest disparities between external appearances and internal realities.

Even as Shakespeare uses an audience's awareness of artistic pretense to provide an immediate experience of the false appearances in life, so also does he relate the paradoxes of theatrical perception to an accurate perception of human behavior. Correct perception in both the theatre and in life necessitates the apprehension of the ambiguous

and often contradictory dualities of human experience. Truth is seen to reside in neither of two contradictory views, but in the simultaneous assimilation of all views. Shakespeare uses his audience's acceptance of the onstage personage as not merely a boy actor, not merely a female character, not merely a rustic swain, not merely a lovesick girl, not merely a cynical man, not merely a realistic woman, but rather all combined in order to explore the many antinomies of human experience, especially with regard to masculine and feminine behavior. By providing his audience with multiple perspectives upon a character or an issue, Shakespeare creates a kaleidoscopic composite of images that must be assimilated whole for the perception to be accurate.

Next was examined one of the most effective devices for creating complex theatrical perspectives: the play-within-the-play. While the theatrical metaphor and the boy actor convention draw attention to the reality of the theatre by either verbal reference or suggestive behavior on the part of the actor, the play-within-the-play activates a theatrical awareness by the manner in which it visually structures the stage. The play-within-the-play scene in Hamlet was examined to demonstrate Shakespeare's use of stage positioning to control the perspectives through which the audience experiences the action. The play-within-the-play overtly creates two distinct levels of aesthetic reality on the stage, and at the same time emphasizes the

performance of the actors playing the characters as well as the various levels of acting engaged in by the characters the actors play. Therefore, implicitly, numerous levels of reality are being suggested. The individual perspectives provided by each onstage watcher, provide numerous channels for complex communication. The audience not only sees its own interpretation of the situation, but must scan the stage to grasp and assimilate the various divergent perspectives of other watchers on the stage. Each view adds to the depth of the images of character and situation that the audience experiences. The final view of the characters and the situation embraced by the audience is an amalgam of its own perspective with each individual view represented on the stage.

In creating multiple perspectives upon stage behavior, and in encouraging the audience to view character as a composite series of roles, many Shakespearean dramatic strategies were shown to function implicitly as plays within the larger play. Most Elizabethan dramatic conventions encourage the audience to view the actor apart from his role. The numerous instances in which characters adopt artificial behavior, imitations, disguise, deceptions, and various kinds of affectations, by presenting the character operating on more than one level of aesthetic reality, draw attention to the social reality and the actor's control of the various convolutions of role-playing. The social and psychological

role-playing of characters such as Cleopatra on one end of the continuum of adopted behaviors inevitably suggests the actor functioning within the various layers of adopted behavior at the other end of the continuum. The audience's awareness of each layer of artifice provides a new perspective that must be assimilated into the composite image of roles that is the character.

One of the most intriguing ways in which Shakespeare uses an implicit play-within-a-play to structure theatrical perception and create character images is by the use of onstage observers. Onstage observers were shown to create an implicitly theatrical situation, while providing the multiple perspectives that produce multiple views of stage behavior. Shakespeare uses an observation scene to expand both the audience's and Troilus' image of Cressida's reality as a character. The audience's view of Cressida is enriched by the perception of already ambivalent behavior from disparate points of view. Shakespeare also uses onstage observers to create false views of characters, as when he allows the audience to share Othello's altered image of Desdemona. An agonizing tension in the audience is created between the image of Desdemona it knows to be true, and the image of Desdemona Shakespeare forces it to experience through the eyes of Othello. The audience's consciousness of the paradoxes surrounding its perception of the actor in his many roles reinforces its experience of Othello's

confusion. The audience understands that "Nothing that is so is so" (Twelfth Night IV.i.9), that "nothing is / But what is not" (Macbeth I.iii.141-42).

> The final organization of Shakespeare's experience is thus functionally related to the dual consciousness of play-world and real world, characteristic of Elizabethan playhouse psychology. If Shakespeare put the whole of life into his plays, he reciprocally interpreted life in terms of the theatre.[2]

As a closing note it is appropriate to mention the relationship of this study to modern theatre practice. Increasingly, modern playwrights and directors have begun to explore possible ways of using the audience's awareness of the actor during performance. Increasingly, workers in the theatre have begun to recognize that the immediate sensory impact of the theatre as a medium of communication is prior to any effect produced by the analogical relationship of that sensory experience to behaviors in life. As Marshall McLuhan says,

> Each form of transport not only carries, but translates and transforms, the sender, the receiver, and the message.[3]

Experimentation has been done with purely "iconic" theatre which makes no attempt to represent some other kind of experience, a theatre which is all medium and no message. It is possible that continued examination of Shakespeare's use of the audience's theatrical awareness might have two results: more productions might consciously manipulate the theatrical environment as a strategy of production as did

Peter Brook recently in his carnival-styled production of A Midsummer Night's Dream, and secondly, more plays might explore ways of involving spectators in the theatrical experience that are more subtle than a physical encroachment upon the stage. The bodily participation of the Jacobean masque signaled the end of an era. We must find a new beginning.

NOTES

[1]Bethell, Popular Dramatic Tradition, p. 33.

[2]Ibid., p. 41.

[3]Marshall McLuhan, Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1964), p. 91.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abel, Lionel. Metatheatre: A New View of Dramatic Form. New York: Hill and Wang, 1963.

Baldwin, Thomas Whitfield. The Organization and Personnel of the Shakespearean Company.

Benedetti, Robert L. The Actor at Work. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970.

Bentley, Eric. The Life of the Drama. New York: Atheneum, 1967.

Bethell, S. L. Shakespeare and the Popular Dramatic Tradition. London: Staples Press, Ltd., 1944.

Bradbrook, M. C. Elizabethan Stage Conditions. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968.

_____. Themes and Conventions of Elizabethan Tragedy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966.

Brook, Peter. The Empty Space. Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1972.

Brown, John Russell. Shakespeare's Plays in Performance. Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1969.

Clark, Barrett H. European Theories of the Drama. Rev. and ed. by Henry Popkin. New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1965.

Coursen, Herbert Randolph Jr. "A Spacious Mirror: Shakespeare and the Play-Within." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, The University of Connecticut, 1965.

Creeth, Edmund, ed. Tudor Plays: An Anthology of Early English Drama. Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1966.

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

Davies, W. Robertson. Shakespeare's Boy Actors. London: J. M. Dent and Sons, Ltd., 1939.

Eisenstein, Sergei. Film Form and the Film Sense. Ed. and trans. by Jay Leyda. Cleveland: The World Publishing Co., A Meridian Book, 1957.

Eliot, T. S. Selected Essays. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1950.

Ellis-Fermor, Una. The Frontiers of Drama. London: Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1945.

Fenton, Doris. The Extra-Dramatic Moment in Elizabethan Plays Before 1616. Philadelphia: The University of Pennsylvania, 1930.

Forker, Charles R. "Shakespeare's Theatrical Symbolism and Its Function in Hamlet." Shakespeare Quarterly, XIV, No. 3 (Summer, 1963), pp. 215-229.

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

Goffman, Erving. The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life. Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1959.

Granvilee-Barker, Harley. Prefaces to Shakespeare: Hamlet. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1965.

Gregory, W. A. The Director: A Guide to Modern Theatre Practice. New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1968.

Gunkle, George. "Empirical Research in Theatre: State of the Art, 1970." Educational Theatre Journal, XXIII, No. 2 (May, 1971), pp. 171-177.

Harbage, Alfred. Shakespeare's Audience. New York: Columbia University Press, 1941.

Joseph, Bertram L. Acting Shakespeare. New York: Theatre Arts Books, 1960.

_____. Elizabethan Acting. London: Oxford University Press, 1951.

Kerr, Walter. "The Delusion About Illusion." New York Times, July 21, 1968, sec. 2, pp. 1-3.

Kjerbuhl-Petersen, Lorenz. Psychology of Acting. Trans. by Sarah T. Barrows. Boston: Expression Co., 1935.

Kott, Jan. "The Icon and the Absurd." The Drama Review, XIV, No. 1 (Fall, 1969), pp. 17-24.

Longfellow, Layne A. "Body Talk: The Game of Feeling and Expression." Psychology Today, Vol. 4, No. 5, October, 1970, p. 46.

McLuhan, Marshall. Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1964.

Nelson, Robert James. Play Within A Play: the Dramatist's Conception of his Art: Shakespeare to Anouilh. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1958.

Righter, Anne. Shakespeare and the Idea of the Play. Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1967.

Sedgewick, G. G. Of Irony: Especially in Drama. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1948.

Seltzer, Daniel. "'Their Tragic Scene': The Phoenix and the Turtle and Sahkespeare's Love Tragedies." Shakespeare Quarterly, XII, No. 2 (Spring, 1961), pp. 91-101.

Shakespeare, William. Othello. Ed. by John Dover Wilson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971.

_____. Shakespeare: The Complete Works. Ed. by G. B. Harrison. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1948.

Sharpe, Robert Boies. Irony in the Drama. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1959.

Stanley, Emily Brown. "Seeing and Perceiving: A Study of the Use of Disguised Persons and Wise Fools in Shakespeare." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, The University of Florida, 1960.

States, Bert O. Irony and Drama. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1971.

Stoll, Elmer Edgar. Art and Artifice in Shakespeare. New York: Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1963.

Styan, J. L. The Elements of Drama. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963.

_____. Shakespeare's Stagecraft. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967.

Van Doren, Mark. Shakespeare. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1939.

Wickham, Glynne. Shakespeare's Dramatic Heritage. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1969.

Wren, Robert M. "Ben Jonson as Producer." Educational Theater Journal, XXII, No. 3 (October, 1970), pp. 284-290.